

TEHRAN TIMES

Tehran won't let
\$2b 'international
theft' takes effect:
Velayati **2**

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Shahnameh captures readers' imaginations: Finnish translator

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Manijeh Rezapoor

I met Jaakko Hameen-Anttila, a professor of Arabic and Islamic studies in the University of Helsinki, on a cool April morning in Tehran a few days after his translation of the first half of Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece Shahnameh into Finnish had been introduced in the metropolis.

Hameen-Anttila said he believes the epic masterpiece makes a good read for a foreign audience since there is a philosophy of thoughts in the Shahnameh that captures the imaginations of readers.

"I think Ferdowsi also realized that he had a message but he also knew that in order to get people to read his works, he had to put them in the form of narratives, and that is why the stories in the Shahnameh are excellent", he explained.

Hameen-Anttila considered the translation of the Shahnameh a demanding task; however, he said, "I want to emphasize that it was a work of love. I enjoyed doing it, although sometimes it was difficult and tiring. I received the best reward from the book itself and I became more familiar with Ferdowsi."

As a schoolboy, he found it interesting to read the Shahnameh. "I got interested in Persian literature when I was a school boy, when I was 14 or 15. Then I started reading and finishing books in English about Persian culture in general. My first acquaintance with Ferdowsi occurred when I started learning Persian by myself, by reading old text books from the 19th century. There were some stories in the appendices, and one of the textbooks contained an excerpt from Ferdowsi, the birth of Zal.



See page 12

Runoff parliamentary elections held

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran held runoff parliamentary election, where 139 candidates vied for 69 seats in the 290-strong parliament.

Elections were held in 55 constituencies in 21 provinces.

The election will shape the power structure between a coalition of reformists and moderates versus principlists.

Polls opened at 8 a.m. and continued until 7 p.m. However, the voting time was extended 2 hours in all constituencies except two in Fars province.



© YIC.ir/Behnam Abedi

See page 9

Zarif to Ban: U.S. court ruling is fake and phony Iran firm to take every lawful measure to restore the stolen property, Zarif says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Tehran and Washington have never been off the media's radar screen. For one reason or another. After the successful signing of the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a new challenge has added more complexity to the uncharted waters.

According to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, almost \$2 billion in frozen Iranian assets must be turned over to American families of people killed in the 1983 U.S. barracks bombing in Beirut.

The ruling has drawn Tehran's strongest reactions, particularly Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

In addition to calling the verdict "highway robbery" and threatening to take the case to international arbitration, Zarif has penned a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, formally starting Iran's second international confrontation with the U.S.

→2

Asia's Iran oil imports surge 50% in March

Asian imports of Iranian oil in March jumped 50% from a year earlier as shipments into India and South Korea have climbed since international sanctions were lifted on Iran's disputed nuclear program.

The strong exports point to Iran's success in regaining market share in Asia after the sanctions were eased in January. Before 2012, Iran exported around 2 million bpd, with more than half going to Asia, mainly China, South Korea, India and Japan. Tehran has been banned from selling oil to the US for decades.

Iran's oil flows to Europe have also begun to pick up after a slow start.

Imports by Iran's top four buyers – China, India, Japan and South Korea – came to 1.56 million bpd in March, up 49.9% from a year ago, government and tanker-tracking data shows.

India's imports last month totaled 506,100 bpd, the highest in five years, the data showed. The nation's imports from Iran are set to surge to a seven-year high during the fiscal year of 2016-17, industry sources said.

South Korea's imports in March fell slightly from a two-year high in February to 264,452 bpd but were still 94.5% higher than a year ago. Imports by China and Japan fell from a year ago.

(Source: Gulf Times)

Turmoil sure to follow Saudi reform plan unless handled transparently: international business expert

Professor Hossein Askari says the reform 'will be politically challenging for the Al-Sauds and the government'

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — An international business expert who served as special advisor to Saudi finance minister is of the opinion that the reform plan unveiled by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman "will be politically challenging for the Al-Sauds and the government."

The plan, unveiled on April 25, is aimed at ending the Saudi kingdom's "addiction" to oil and transforming it into a global investment power. The initiative is approved by the cabinet. Hossein Askari, professor of International Business at George Washington University, tells the Tehran Times that "turmoil is sure to follow unless (the reform) handled very wisely, transparently, equitably and slowly."

Following is the full text of the interview:

The Saudi government has ratified the 2030 prospect plan. What made Saudi Arabia to ratify such a plan?

A: Let me give you a brief background as I try to answer your question. Saudi Arabia has, maybe and finally, come to terms with the fact that that oil revenues cannot sustain its future. This is something that all countries that are major oil exporters and rely heavily on oil/natural gas for government revenues and exports revenues must address. I have spent a better part of half of my life preaching this fact and suggesting the reforms and policies that assure a thriving and sustainable economy for resource dependent countries. However, all governments including Iran have not adopted the basic reforms.



At its core, the reforms must include institutional reforms that lay the foundation for sustainable and vibrant economies. Here I list them: The

rule of law; a modern constitution; economic/financial policy reforms to include sound business regulations and their monitoring and enforcement; consistent long-term economic goals and policies; reduction in both the size of the government sector and unproductive and wasteful subsidies; reduction in government dependence on oil revenues over a period of 10-15 years so that oil revenues can eventually go into a sovereign wealth fund, adoption of an effective and equitable tax system to replace oil revenues for financing the government's budget; and the establishment of a transparent and well-managed sovereign wealth fund to receive oil revenues in order to provide similar benefits to all future generations of citizens."

→9

Iran, Italy join hands in training counter narcotics police of Afghanistan

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran and Italy collaborated on a counter narcotics training project for Afghan officers which was held in Amin Police University, Tehran, Tasnim news agency reported.

Over the courses the Iranian and Italian anti-narcotics experts delivered training to Afghan anti-drug officers.

Iran's Chief of Anti-Drug Police General Ali Moayyedi noted that fighting drugs needs global effort, expressing hope for more regional and transregional cooperation to fight this global issue.

Moayyedi made the remarks during



the closing ceremony of the training project which was held with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in attendance.

He explained that transferring and accumulating knowledge of this matter

would help countries in fighting the battle against drugs.

"Iran and Italy have taken a major step towards transferring knowledge and experience on drugs," the police chief said, adding, Afghanistan has made an active participation as well.

He additionally thanked Iran and Italy's foreign ministers who signed an agreement on boosting cooperation between the two countries on drug related issues.

European countries, he pointed, are inclined to transfer knowledge and experience on the battle against drugs and Italy is a forerunner among them.

CONDOLENCES

Dear Ali Asgari

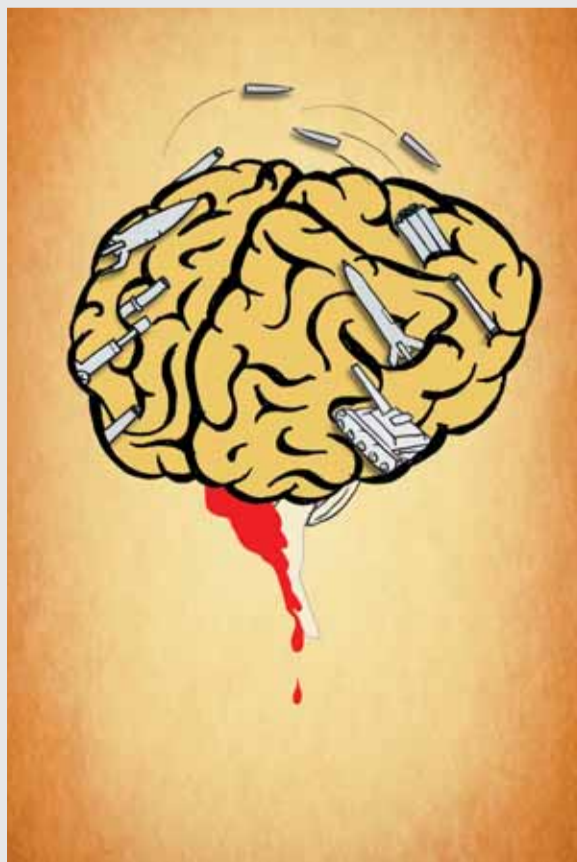
Managing director of Tehran Times and Mehr news agency
The staff in Tehran Times and Mehr news agency offer condolences to you on the death of your beloved brother. May his soul rest in peace.

CONDOLENCES

Dear Heidar Rezaei

Your colleagues at the Tehran Times and Mehr news agency heard with great sorrow about the death of your nephew. We offer our sincere condolences to you in this time of sorrow.

PEEK FRAME Tehran Times/Idea by: Ali Kushi
Cartoon by: Seyyed Rouallah Mirmohammadi



CICA backs full implementation of nuclear deal

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In a statement issued on Thursday, CICA - Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia - among other things called on all relevant parties to fully implement the JCPOA, commonly called the nuclear deal.

The nuclear deal, signed in July 2015 and implemented in January 2016, obliges all sides (Iran, the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China) to respect the terms of the agreement.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Morteza Sarmadi represented Iran in the CICA meeting held in Beijing.

In its final declaration CICA also expressed support for Iranian initiative for a united world against violence and extremism, officially known as WAVE.

Following is the text of the two articles related to WAVE and JCPOA:

We emphasize that the international community should jointly combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and support full implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We also emphasize the need to jointly curb the spread of terrorist and extremist ideologies; and promote interreligious and interethnic tolerance, dialogue and understanding. In this context we welcome the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution entitled: "A World against Violence and Violent extremism" (A/RES/70/109) on 10 December 2015, initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and call for the full implementation of this Resolution.

We acknowledge the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and E3/EU+3. We hope that all relevant parties will fully implement JCPOA and the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 in good faith, which will contribute to enhancing mutual trust among regional countries.

NEWS

Lifted trade ban will boost Iranian poultry exports

Market experts foresee a significant boost in Iranian poultry exports as a result of the lifting of international sanctions on Iran this year. The country's opportunities in terms of poultry meat exports, are huge, despite various challenges.

"Giving the existing potential of the poultry industry, Iran currently has the ability to export 1 million tons of poultry meat per year. At the moment, Iran produces more than 2 million tons of poultry, primarily chicken, and 900,000 - 950,000 tons of eggs per year, while the volume of egg products this year will probably be about 1 million tons," stated Habib Amini, director of the department of poultry and beekeeping at the country's Ministry of Agriculture.



"Iran currently holds 10th place in the world in terms of poultry production. Currently we have 23,000 specialized broiler farms. In the time of the trade embargo Iran was forced to restructure its production to become fully self-sufficient and has been so, for several years now," said head of the National Association of Poultry Farmers of Iran (NAPFI) Homayoun Darabi.

According to Darabi, the main importers of Iranian poultry are Saudi Arabia and Iraq. They also supply poultry to Syria, Libya and Afghanistan. The lifting of the trade embargo this year should open the way for Iranian poultry to Russia, Pakistan and the European Union markets. Also, the country is exploring possibilities for export of poultry meat to countries in the South-East Asia region.

300,000 tons of chicken for export

Last year the government introduced an export subsidy in the amount of \$0.55 per kilogram of chicken supplied to foreign markets. Next year the country may increase this figure, meanwhile according to the country's officials within the coming year following the lifting of the food embargo Iran has the ability to boost poultry exports by nearly 250,000 - 300,000 tons, according to Deputy Agriculture Minister Hamid Adjanu. A substantial amount of the Iranian authorities hopes rest on the Russian market.

"Iran aims to establish poultry meat exports to Russia in the amount of 10,000 tons per month or 120,000 tons per year. This is not our maximum, and should there be a greater demand from the Russian market we can easily boost the volume of delivery," commented Adjanu, adding that Iranian poultry has good quality and can be more competitive on price, compared to Brazilian products, which account for the largest share of Russian poultry imports.

"Along with Russia, Iran may also boost the volume of deliveries to the traditional markets of Iraq and Afghanistan. They purchase 5,000 tons of Iranian poultry monthly and we believe, that this figure may be increased to least 8,000 tons," Hamid Adjanu said. "In fact, Iran has only just started to explore its export opportunities. Previously, the country has been able to supply poultry abroad only to the 'most friendly nations' which agreed to conduct trade without the use of the SWIFT banking system for payment. With the lifted trade ban the geographic sales possibility is greatly expanded," he added. Representatives of NAPFI also say that the country may establish chicken exports to South-East Asian countries. However, the market players in Iran have not, so far, determined what the potential could be. This is something that will develop in the years to come.

(Source: worldpoultry.net)

Turkey sees 'significant momentum' in trade ties with Iran

Turkey aims to increase trade and economic ties with its neighbor Iran following the lifting of international sanctions, Turkish Customs and Trade Minister Bulent Tufenkci said in Ankara Friday.

"We believe economic relations between Turkey and Iran will gain a significant momentum with the lifting of sanctions."

He said the Gurbulak-Bazargan customs gate between the two countries will be rebuilt.

In 2015, trade volume between the two sides reached \$10 billion. According to the minister, the plan is to increase the volume to \$30 billion level in the coming years.

Turkey tries decisively for the expansion of economic ties with Iran, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said in a meeting with the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in Tehran on April 16.

Expressing content with his trip to Tehran, Davutoglu underlined his country's decisiveness in expanding vigorous relations in various economic fields, specifically in banking, and noted that some measures have been done on the way to reinforce cooperation between the two sides' stock exchange markets.

The Turkish prime minister, elsewhere, underscored the vitality of converting the current preferential trade agreement (PTA) between the two countries into free trade agreement (FTA) in future.

Earlier this month, Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Mahmoud Vaezi visited Davutoglu in Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee, where expressed Iran's readiness to develop ties with Turkey in banking and tourism sectors.

Davutoglu, for his part, said that his country is keen to invest in Iran's different sectors, including tourism, emphasizing that the administrations of both countries should direct their private sectors toward the realization of shared economic aims.

(Source: agencies)

Iran's gasoil exports double during Mar. 20-Apr. 25: official

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran has exported the average of 9 million to 9.2 million liters of gasoil per day since the begging of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) until April 25, according to National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOOPDC) Managing Director Seyed Naser Sajjadi.

As the official told the Mehr news agency, in the preceding calendar year (which ended on March 19, 2016), the figure stood at 4.5 million to 5 million liters per day and now the volume is almost doubled.

Replacing more gasoil with natural gas as the feed-stock of power plants and industrial units, due to upsurge in the country's natural gas output, and also implementation of fuel consumption management programs count for the upturn in the exports of gasoil, he added.

"Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan, and some countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus are among the buyers of Iran's gasoil", the senior official said adding, "Moreover, several shipments of gasoil have been sailed to international markets."

The contract for exporting two million tons of gasoil to Iraq will soon be inked to turn the neighboring country into largest buyer of the Iranian oil product, Mehr reported on Friday.



Given that Iran possesses surplus capacity for the production and supply of gasoil, the export of the strategic oil product to neighboring countries and the Middle East region has been put on the agenda.

Iranian, French oil institutes to sign MOU

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The French Institute of Petroleum titled Institut Francais du Petrole (IFP) is slated to pen an MOU with Iranian Research Institute of Petroleum Industry on oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical cooperation, the Shana news agency reported on Friday.

According to the report, the two institutes

plan to boost cooperation on the issues of increasing production, water management, sweetening natural gas, establishing a joint center for running international specialized courses to provide services to Iran's oil industry and to that of the region, and etc.

The intended contract will be endorsed during the 21st International Oil, Gas, Re-

fining and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran Oil Show 2016) which will be held from May 5 to 8 in Tehran.

This is the country's first oil show in post-sanction era and number of foreign participants has notably increased. As reported, 996 domestic companies and 634 foreign ones from 35 countries, as well as 157 rep-

resentatives of foreign companies in Iran will take part in the event.

China, South Korea, Turkey, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, Austria and Finland are among the countries that plan to set up their special pavilions in this show, which will be held at Tehran Permanent International Fairground.

British banks weighing Iran sanctions lift

Britain's biggest banks are to set up a high-level panel to navigate the removal of western sanctions against Iran amid continuing U.S. opposition to some foreign economic engagement with Tehran.

Sky News has learnt that the British Bankers' Association (BBA) has agreed to form a working group to examine the

implications of the sanctions move.

The decision to establish the group was reached at a BBA board meeting last week, according to industry sources.

The working group's creation comes as UK banks come under pressure from the Government to expand links with Tehran ahead of a trade visit to Iran led by Sajjad Javid, the Business Secretary,

which is due to take place next month.

But sources said that many BBA members, which include UK-headquartered and international banks with operations in Britain, had expressed unease about forging closer ties with Iran.

Jes Staley, the Barclays chief executive, responded to a letter from David Cameron earlier this year on the issue in

which he referred to "the considerable divergence in both approach and intention between the EU, which is taking a positive approach towards Iran, and the U.S., where primary sanctions remain in place, thereby prohibiting U.S. individuals or entities from engaging directly or indirectly in business related to Iran".

(Source: Sky News)

PICTURE OF THE DAY SHANA Hasan Hosseini



Ambassador of the Netherlands to Tehran Susanna Terstal (C) and the representative of Royal Dutch Shell Company in Iran (R) met Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (L) in Tehran on April 27.

Russian-Iranian cooperation in energy sector may bring results soon

MOSCOW (TASS) — Russian-Iranian cooperation in the energy sector may bring good results over the short term, the Iranian Ambassador in Moscow, Mehdi Sanai said in an interview with the Kommersant Daily publication.

"Iran and Russia have held useful talks on energy issues," he said. "Talks between large Russian corporations and the Iranian side are incite hope and are moving ahead and I believe we'll see good results in that field shortly."

The Iranian government is interested in the Russian companies' presence in various investment sectors, Sanai said.

"Seaports, including the southern ones located on the Persian Gulf coast may be the objects of attention and interest," he indicated. For instance, India has reached a major agreement on with Iran regarding a section in the seaport of Chabahar. Apart from logistics, foreign businesses may take interest in the facilities, transport fleet on the Caspian Sea, and the railway linking Azerbaijan and Iran, Sanai said.

Like at no other time previously, everyone realized today the importance of making the North-South transport corridor a practical functioning project.

Amazon profit tops estimates as fast delivery, cloud fuel growth

Amazon.com Inc's sales and profit topped estimates on robust demand for quick-turnaround delivery, cloud services and gadgets like the Kindle and Echo, adding to evidence the e-commerce giant can make money even as it invests heavily in future hardware, software and entertainment.

The results were a validation of Jeff Bezos's customer-centric philosophy and the Amazon Prime membership model, sending the shares up more than 13 percent in late trading. The co-founder and CEO continues to invest to add services to the company's \$99-a-year subscription program by delivering products in as little as an hour and creating exclusive video programming for online streaming.

RBS losses more than double to £968m

Royal Bank of Scotland has reported a £968m loss for the first three months of 2016 - more than double the loss in the same period last year.

RBS said a one-off dividend payment of £1.2bn to the UK government dragged down an otherwise profitable period.

Operating profits rose to £421m for the quarter, up from just £37m in 2015, but total revenue fell 13% to £3.06bn.

RBS is still 73% owned by taxpayers after its government bailout during the financial crisis.

The bank said that excluding the one-off payment to the government, which will allow RBS to resume paying dividends to private shareholders in due course, it would have posted a profit of £225m.

Ford reports best first quarter in 113 years

Ford Motor's profits more than doubled during the first three months of the year, giving the 113-year old automaker its best first quarter in its history.

Ford's results were lifted by strong U.S. sales and a continued turnaround in Europe. Ford's European profit during the first quarter topped all of the company's European earnings collected during the entirety of 2015.

Overall the number of cars Ford sold worldwide last quarter rose nearly 10% to 1.7 million, lifting revenue to \$38 billion. Net income jumped to \$2.5 billion from \$1.2 billion a year earlier. And its automotive operating profit also more than doubled to nearly 10%.

Persian silk textile history: textile images

During the 17th century, the Persian aristocracy wore their social status on their sleeves. They were anything but timid about flaunting their rank through the use of rich textiles. They regaled themselves and their horses with these luxurious woven accoutrements and spread them unabashedly on the walls, floors and furniture of their magnificent palaces, even using them to decorate their coffins. In many cases, the textiles were given to royals as tribute.

Persia's shimmering woven silk textiles, often inspired by poems and miniature paintings, exuded a refinement that is a great source of inspiration for design today a sometimes vivid, sometimes pale palette, urbane and understated composition, with cosmopolitan touches imported by way of the merchants of Venice. These gracious courtly works, with their origins based upon naturalistic images of flora and fauna, established the sophisticated design vocabulary of the Safavid Empire in its sumptuous textiles as well as its majestic Persian carpets. They are quite a contrast to the geometric abstractions found in a wide range of colorful tribal designs one associates with Persian textiles and rugs woven in the outlying villages.

The history of brocaded silk weaving dates back to the time before the Sassanid

The history of brocaded silk weaving dates back to the time before the Sassanid dynasty. At that time this handicraft was exported to Europe and Rome. After the Sassanid period, due to the fact that the use of gold was prohibited for men, so weaving of this kind of cloth was almost stopped.

id dynasty. At that time this handicraft was exported to Europe and Rome. After the Sassanid period, due to the fact that the use of gold was prohibited for men, so weaving of this kind of cloth was almost stopped. During the Mogul era, the textile industry was almost forgotten in Iran, and the masters, for fear of their lives, lived in hiding. The textile industry was revived during the Safavid period, and during the reign of Shah Abbas, brocade artists were asked to migrate to Isfahan, and start working in the royal workshops.

During the period between the 11th and 13th lunar hijira centuries, weaving of brocaded silk declined; and during the Qajar era and the past regime, brocaded silk and velvet were used in formal dresses, upholstery of furniture and curtains of courts. At the present period, some masters such as Mahmud Farshchian, have put forward novel designs by increasing or decreasing some ornamental ele-



Persian Silk Brocade, Brocade weaver: Master Seyyed Hossein Mozhgani (1974 A.D)

ments. Brocades are woven by means of old tools, and its raw materials are silk and gold and silver lace (braid) and are dyed by means of natural stuffs and materials.

In ancient times, ornament making workshops produced valuable textiles for home consumption as well as for exports. Some samples of silk materials from the beginning of the Islamic period and woven in Sassanid style are available now and can be found in private collections and in European churches. For example, the design of the face of Jesus Christ is found in Saint Victoria Church, and the piece of cloth on which the design of elephant is woven, is preserved in "Sceance" Cathedral.

According to historical narrations, two thousand years ago some pieces of cloth were made with gold and silver laces used in their design and fabric. As far as proportionality and coordination of designs and color are concerned, the designs of the Sassanid cloth attained the utmost degree of artistic perfection. The Sassanid designs are mostly birds, animals, hunting ground and horsemen as well as some abstract designs. After the Sassanid period, on account of the fact that men were forbidden to use gold, so, brocades were not made for a relatively long time until the Seljuqi period. During the Islamic period, the brocade and gold designs of animals and birds such as lions, phoenix and eagles made on the fabric of cloth were quite glorious, demonstrating the progress of textile technique during the Seljuqi period. Among the decorative elements of cloth weaving during this period, one could mention the designs of tulips and water lily.

During the succeeding periods, new designs were initiated by designers and textile weavers, which laid the foundation for an independent, genuine and creditable identity of textile of the Safavid peri-

od. But before that date that is during the Mogul period the textile was forgotten in Iran for many years, and brocade makers lived in hiding for a long time out of fear of their lives.

The Golden Period for Textiles begins from the Safavid Era.

The silken Safavid pieces of cloth are of three kinds:

1 - Simple fine silk; 2 - Brocade or gold silk; 3 - Silken velvet

Three pieces of cloth were used for dresses of aristocrats, commanders, kings and courtiers. They were decorated by designs of human beings, animals, birds, flowers and plants as well as scenes of war and feasts. During the period of Shah Abbas, the second, valuable brocade and golden velvet pieces of cloth continued to be woven skillfully and with a great care, which bore the name of the weaver, called "Ghias". There are two small pieces of dated silk cloth from the Shah Abbas era in Metropolitan museum. The name of the weaver, Shah Hossein, and the date 1008 lunar hijira year are inscribed on it. The famous weavers of this era were: Ghias, Abdullah, Bin Mohammad, Moezzeddin, Ibne Ghias and Issa Abbasi.

During the Shah Abbas era, some royal workshops were established and brocade artists were asked to migrate to Isfahan and revive this ancient art. Their cooperation showed that the community of brocade makers could produce and market valuable pieces of work. During this period, in addition to Isfahan, Yazd and Kashan were centers of brocade artists in Iran. During the period between 11th and 13th hijira centuries, production of brocade and silk cloth was reduced and was replaced by calico and various kinds of needle lace.

Brocades and gold cloth were used

mostly by dignitaries and commanders, whereas other kinds of decorative pieces of cloth, such as velvet and satin were worn by men and women. Brocades and golden velvet, in their historical course, attracted the attention of brocade artists during the Qajar period, and this art was retained, more or less, from one generation to another; and in the past regime too, it was used as decorative clothes, upholstery of court's furniture, ceremonial dresses as well as curtains of general or special halls.

■ Making of silk in nature

In Iran, during the spring month of Ardebahest (late April), the process of spinning silk thread starts with silkworm breeders buying boxes of eggs of the silk moth, Bombyx mori (Latin for 'silkworm of the mulberry tree'). They place the eggs in a warm place or in an incubator to help speed the hatching of the eggs, a process that takes about ten days. The eggs will hatch into larvae called silkworms.

At the same time, mulberry trees will have grown new leaves which silkworm breeders buy to feed their silkworm larvae. In Iran, mulberry trees grow in Gilan, Mazandaran, Khorasan, Eastern Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Yazd and Kerman. Once the larvae hatch they eat the leaves of the mulberry continuously.

In Yazd, the town of Taft situated some

According to historical narrations, two thousand years ago some pieces of cloth were made with gold and silver laces used in their design and fabric. As far as proportionality and coordination of designs and color are concerned, the designs of the Sassanid cloth attained the utmost degree of artistic perfection.

18 km southwest of Yazd city is a major silkworm breeding centre.

After the larvae (the silkworm) have molted four times, that is when they are in the fifth instar, they lose their appetite and are ready to transform themselves into moths. To protect themselves while they are in a vulnerable almost motionless transformational pupa state, they enclose themselves in a protective cocoon enclosure. The cocoon is made out of silk thread, a continuous natural protein filament that they produce in their salivary glands and exude to form the filament.

The larvae's cocoon is built up from about 300 to 900 metres (1,000 to 3,000 feet) of silk filament. The filament is fine, lustrous, and about 10 micrometers (1/2,500th of an inch) in diameter. Each cocoon consists of about a kilometre of silk filament, and about 2,000 to 3,000 cocoons are required to make a pound of silk.

(Source: textileart.com)

How did WW1 end?

Contrary to Marxist mythology, the First World War ended not through mutiny or popular uprising, but through decisive military defeat. Certainly, the major combatants were exhausted, and their peoples weary of the war, but the only country voluntarily to withdraw from the war was Bolshevik Russia.

Germany launched its forces into a huge offensive in France in the spring of 1918, breaking the trench deadlock and threatening Paris. The Allies regrouped, broke the German advance and counter-attacked. On 8 August, at Amiens, Haig inflicted a devastating defeat on the Germans - German general Erich Ludendorff called it the 'Black Day of the German Army'.

Further heavy defeats followed, and by September both he and Paul von Hindenburg [a senior military figure] were demanding an end to the war. Faced with total defeat, in November the Germans forced the Kaiser to abdicate and declared a republic, which then asked for an armistice. It is difficult to conceive that this would have happened had Germany not been crushed on the battlefield.

(Source: History Extra)

A CLOSER LOOK Tips for traveling well

A traveler ventures into a snake cave on the Indonesian island of Flores and is bitten by an angry python while standing waist-deep in bat guano. An old Indiana Jones plot? Nah, it's just one true-life challenge deftly handled by Karen Barry, the unflappable nurse for the National Geographic Society. From HQ in Washington, D.C., Barry is charged with keeping explorers safe and free of disease in every corner of the globe, from Papua New Guinea to the jungles of Peru. Here she answers your travel wellness questions.

I just booked a safari/Amazon boat trip/Himalaya expedition. Now what? Visit a travel medicine clinician at least one month prior to departure. A consultation will include risk assessment, which takes into account your exact itinerary—specific cities, types of accommodations, seasons, style of travel.

■ I love street food, but it doesn't always love me. How can I avoid Delhi belly (traveler's diarrhea)? Remember the golden rule about food: Boil it, peel it, cook it—or forget it. Wash hands often, and carry hand sanitizer. Don't eat raw veggies washed in water or anything in which water has (or may have) been added, such as juices or fruit sold by weight. Still, you may get diarrhea anyway. Before leaving, ask your physician for an antibiotic. If meds don't help, you could have a parasite and should report symptoms to a doctor.

■ How can I stay malaria-free? Mosquitoes feed from dusk to dawn. Stay in well-screened areas, use insecticide-treated bed nets, and cover up. Travel clinicians can identify which medications are effective in the specific areas you're visiting, as resistance to some drugs has developed in parts of the world. Bring a map of where you're going. No detail is too small.

■ I have itchy bug bites, and my knees hurt. Do I have --malaria? Probably not, but it's true that joint pain can be a warning sign of malaria. Same with flu-like symptoms, fever, headache, and fatigue. Symptoms can develop as early as seven days after exposure to the Anopheles mosquito bite. Severe cases can cause seizures, mental confusion, kidney failure, coma, even death—so report any concerns immediately.

■ How do I deal with motion sickness? Stay away from heavy, spicy, or fatty foods before and during travel; avoid strong odors; find a part of the plane or boat that's less bumpy, like the area over the wing on an aircraft. Low cabins near the center of the vessel generally rock less. Bonine helps and is sold over the counter. (Source: National Geographic)

History of shadow puppets

More than 2000 years ago, a favorite concubine of Wu Emperor of the Han Dynasty died of illness; the emperor missed her so much that he lost his desire to reign. One day, a minister happened to see children playing with dolls where the shadows on the floor were vivid. Inspired by this scene, the smart minister hit upon an idea. He made a cotton puppet of the concubine and painted it.

As night fell, he invited the emperor to watch a rear-illuminated puppet show behind a curtain. The emperor was delighted and took to it from then on. This story recorded in the official history book is believed to be the origin of shadow puppetry.

Shadow puppets were first made of paper sculpture, later from the hides of donkeys or oxen. That's why their Chinese name is pi ying, which means shadows of hides. Shadow puppetry was very popular during the Tang and Song Dynasties in many parts of China.

Shadow puppetry was related to politics. In Beijing, for example, during the reign of Emperor Kangxi, this folk art was so popular that there were eight generously paid puppeteers in one prince's mansion. Chinese Shadow Puppetry When the Manchu rulers spread their rule to various parts of China, they brought the puppet show with them to make up for the fact that they could not appreciate local entertainment due to language barriers.

From 1796 to 1800, the government forbade the public showing of puppet shows to prevent the spreading of peasant uprising at the time. It was not until 1821 that shadow puppet shows gained some vigor.

Today, shadow puppetry shows face extinction like other traditional art forms such as Nuo Drama.

■ Features of Shadow Puppet Show

Shadow puppetry wins the heart of an audience by its lingering music, exquisite sculpture, brisk color and lively performance.

One mouth tells stories of thousands of years; a pair of hands operates millions of soldiers. This is how the shadow puppeteer works. Nicknamed the business of the five, a shadow puppet troupe is made up of five people. One operates the puppets, one plays a horn, a suo-na horn, and a yu-kin, one plays banhu fiddle, one is in charge of percussion instruments, and one sings. This singer assumes all the roles in the puppet show, which of course is very difficult. That is not all; the singer also plays several of the over 20 kinds of musical instruments in a puppet show. These ancient musical instruments enhance this ancient folk art.

Chinese Shadow Puppetry The stage for shadow puppet is a white cloth screen on which the shadows of flat puppets are projected. Shadow puppet looks similar to paper-cut except that their joints are connected by thread so that they can be operated freely. The scene is simple and primitive; it is the consummate performance that attracts the audience.

For example, a puppet can smoke and breathe out a smoke ring with operator help. In one drama, as a maid sits in front of a mirror, her reflection matches her actions. The operator plays five puppets at the same time, each of which has three threads. Ten fingers handle 15 threads. No wonder the operator is compared to the 1000-hand Kwan-yin.

(Source: Travel China Guide)

PICTURE OF THE DAY IRNA/Morteza Aminoroayae



Mausoleum of Persian mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) (R) and tomb of Persian poet and Sufi Attar Neyshaburi (c.1145 - c. 1221) are located in the city of Neyshabur, Khorasan Razavi Province, Iran

What U.S. elections should look like in a real democracy

By Susan Abulhawa

The United States presidential primaries are unfolding an impossibly grim choice for citizens voting in the November general elections. On one hand is Donald Trump, an egomaniac racist with an insatiable appetite for power, a fifth-grade vocabulary, and little or no experience in political or intellectual life. On the other hand is Hillary Clinton, arguably a war criminal, destroyer of nations, from

Honduras to Iraq to Libya, champion of environmental devastation, and holder of the title "America's most corrupt politician in 2015".

Having an understanding of Clinton, I find myself feeling that as a Palestinian American Muslim woman, I'd rather find myself in a Donald Trump internment camp rather than live in a world led by Clinton's chauvinistic, neoliberal, faux-feminist warmongering.

Bernie Sanders has already made it clear that he would not run as an Independent be-

cause, he said: "I do not want to be responsible for electing some right-wing Republican to be president of the United States."

This not only seems like an ego-driven betrayal to the millions of his supporters, but it is based on an inconclusive prediction. It is entirely conceivable that Sanders, with the right strategy, could also split Trump's supporter base and walk away with the presidency as a third party candidate.

Although Trump and Bernie hold opposing



social, philosophical, economic and political views, their appeal to voters is based on the same principle.

Both candidates are viewed as political mavericks willing to challenge the status quo. Their support base is predominantly people who feel disenfranchised from a dual-party system.

Contrary to popular perceptions, Trump's supporters are not particularly ideological.

→9

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Saudi Arabia, 9/11, and what we know about the secret papers that could ignite a diplomatic war

Twenty-eight secret pages of a report locked away in a room in the Capitol in Washington lie in the centre of a crisis between America and Saudi Arabia which threatens to have severe and widespread repercussions.

The U.S. Congress is considering legislation which would enable the families of victims of the September 11 attacks to sue Saudi Arabia, presented by the West as its most valuable ally in the Middle East, over alleged links with al-Qaeda terrorists who carried out the attacks on New York and Washington.

The issue had cast a long shadow over the recent visit of President Barack Obama to Riyadh, with the Saudis threatening to sell off \$750b of American assets they hold if the bill is passed by Congress.

The classified pages are in a file titled "Finding, Discussion and Narrative Regarding Certain Sensitive Narrative Matters", which have never been published from the findings of the Joint Congressional Inquiry into the attacks which killed 3,000 people and injured more than 6,000 others.

Former President George W Bush claimed the publication of this part of the report would damage America's national security by revealing "sources and methods that would make it harder for us to win the War on Terror".

But there is growing clamour for declassification of the pages along with allegations about attempts by the Saudis to keep their alleged role in the attacks hidden. The latest public figure to demand disclosure was Rudi Giuliani, the mayor of New York at the time of the attacks.

■ Saudi prince's role

A Saudi prince, claimed Giuliani, had given him a cheque for \$10m (£7m) in an effort to persuade him to deflect attention away from the Kingdom. The former mayor said he returned the cheque after tearing it up. He declared: "His money he can keep and go burn it in hell. The American people need to know exactly what was the role of the Saudi Arabia government in the attacks: we are entitled to know who killed our loved ones and who almost killed us all."

It was reported that White House officials have said privately that at least some of the 28 pages will be made public.

And former Democratic Senator Bob Graham, the former head of the Senate intelligence committee, reiterated his belief that Saudi Arabia was involved in the attacks at the highest level. He said "The most important unanswered question of 9/11 is: did these 19 people conduct this very sophisticated plot alone, or were they supported? So who was the most likely entity to have provided them that support? I think all the evidence points to Saudi Arabia. I think it covers a broad range, from the highest ranks of the Kingdom through these, what would be private entities."

Two Congressmen, both of whom have seen the secret document, are behind the bipartisan motion for declassification. Stephen Lynch, a Massachusetts Democrat, held that the report offers evidence of links between "certain Saudi individuals" and the terrorists behind the 2001 attacks. Walter Jones, a Republican, said it also sheds light on why President Bush was so opposed to publication: "It's about the Bush administration and its relationship with the Saudis."

The current round of exporting hardlines traced back to 1992 when the Saudi Arabia's senior Wahabi clerics issued a Memorandum of Advice to the royal family effectively threatening a putsch unless they were allowed to play a central role of the policies of the Kingdom both home and abroad.



The alleged links of the Ministry's officials to the September 11 plotters is a key claim in the projected lawsuit. Giuliani's charge of attempted bribery against the Saudi prince came a day after it was revealed that the flight certificate of an al-Qaeda bomb maker named Ghassan Al-Sharbi, who had taken flying lessons for the September 11 mission, was found in an envelope stashed away at the Saudi embassy in Washington.

The certificate, along with other documents was found at the embassy during investigations after he was captured in 2002 in Pakistan, which has become a conduit for Wahabi-funded terrorism.

There was also a connection, it has emerged, between the Kingdom's legations in America to two Saudis, Nawaf al-Hamzi and Khalid al-Mindhar, who had arrived in the U.S. in 2000 as the part of the first wave of September 11 hijackers.

■ Saudi agent

The two men were set up in an apartment in San Diego by Omar al-Bayoumi, a fellow Saudi, who also helped them with social security paperwork and information about flying courses. There were reports that he also introduced them to Anwar al-Awlaki, who later became known as the "Bin Laden of the internet" and was killed in an American drone strike in Yemen.

Al-Bayoumi received Saudi government funding for his stay in the U.S. through a Saudi aviation services

company called Dallah Alco. He was listed in FBI files before the September 11 attacks as a Saudi agent (something the authorities in the Kingdom deny).

Al-Bayoumi acknowledged to U.S. investigators that he had an hour-long meeting with Fahad al-Thumairy, an official of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, who he described as his spiritual mentor at the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles, the same day that he had met al-Hamzi and al-Mindhar. Two years later al-Thumairy was stripped of his diplomatic immunity and deported from the U.S. because of suspected terrorist links.

Osama Basnan, another Saudi living in San Diego at the time, also spent time with the hijackers, al-Hamzi and al-Mindhar. Basnan received around \$75,000 from Princess Haifa bin Sultan, the wife of Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. The money was said to be for medical treatment for Basnan's wife. Some of it went to Al-Bayoumi. Basnan was arrested for visa fraud in August 2002 and deported two months later to Saudi Arabia.

The lawsuit being brought over alleged Saudi culpability claims that some of Princess Haifa's money was used in the upkeep of the two hijackers in San Diego. The FBI maintains it has no evidence of this and the 9/11 Commission stated it had found no link between the attacks and the royal family.

Al-Bayoumi moved to the UK in July 2001 and began a PhD course in business management at Aston University in Birmingham. He was arrested ten days after the September 11 attacks by British police at the request of the FBI. However, the U.S. authorities subsequently said they had found no link between him and terrorism. He was released, continued his studies at Aston and later moved back to Saudi Arabia. Under Congressional pressure the FBI later reopened the case, but stood by its previous decision.

(Source: Independent)

There is growing clamor for declassification of the pages along with allegations about attempts by the Saudis to keep their alleged role in the attacks hidden.

"The most impossible job in the world" may finally go to a woman this year

The United Nations, the international organization with a mandate to address some of the world's biggest humanitarian issues, will elect a new secretary general to replace Ban Ki-moon in 2016. And this year, "the most impossible job in the world" could finally go to a woman.

Former New Zealand PM Helen Clark announced her candidacy for secretary-general on April 4, joining former Croatia PM Vesna Pusic, director general of UNESCO Irina Bokova from Bulgaria, and deputy PM of Moldova Natalia Gherman. A win by any one of these women would be a historic first for the 71-year-old organization.

According to the job description on the UN website and official charter, the UN requires the secretary-general be "equal parts diplomat and advocate, civil servant and CEO" and serve as the "Chief Administrative Officer of the organization." He or she must rub elbows with world leaders, serve as a moderator when international conflict arises, and bring any issues that threaten international peace to the UN Security Council.

Past secretary generals have used their position to lobby for gender equality and work with world leaders to serve as mediators in the middle of global conflicts.

Former secretary-general Kofi Annan won the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the UN in 2001 for its work building "a better organized and more peaceful world."

■ Gender equality

Given the organization's egalitarian mandate, the UN's struggles with gender



IRINA BOKOVA

equality are particularly stark. In a global organization that has made achieving gender equality one of its main priorities, why not lead by example?

And yet, the world remains a decidedly patriarchal place, politically speaking. As of Jan. 2015, there were only 19 female heads of state or government actively serving the world, according to UN Women. In the past 50 years, 63 out of 142 nations studied by the World Economic Forum have had female government leaders.

Indeed, studies show that women make better leaders than men when evaluated on a variety of metrics. In one study, conducted by the Harvard Business Review, 7,280 leaders from a variety of organizations were evaluated on the 16 competency skills that HBR believes are most important for leadership effectiveness based on years of research. Women scored higher than men in 12 of



HELEN CLARK

the 16 skills.

The study, further explained in Business Insider, also revealed that women improve their leadership skills as they age. While most men over 40 stop asking for feedback and taking initiative, women continue to ask for feedback and work on self-improvement later in their careers. The candidates for secretary-general are all experts in their respective fields, having previously served as heads of state, members of parliament or leaders within the UN itself. It would seem that in this context, women might actually make better leaders than their male counterparts.

But leadership roles are not based solely on merit. As a case in point, the selection of the secretary-general is an opaque process that takes part largely behind closed doors. The Security Council, made up of five permanent members and 10 elected members, appoints a number of candidates. The General As-

sembly, the 193-member governing body of the United Nations made up of representatives from every member nation, must then vote on those candidates. A two-thirds majority is required to win the election.

While the Security Council selects candidates, the Council's five permanent members have veto power to any individual choice. Of these five—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States—only France and the UK have been lead by women in the modern political era.

Three of the four women and seven of the eight total candidates running represent eastern European countries. Irina Bokova from Bulgaria is one of the perceived favorites, according to the Economist. She currently runs UNESCO, a sizable UN agency that focuses on education, science and cultural reforms, so she's well-versed in the organization's bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, in an attempt to make the process more democratic and transparent, the UN is changing things up (slightly) this year. As part of this change, a website listing every candidate's name, resume, and application is available online. Each candidate has also been required to submit a 2,000-word essay listing their qualifications and motivations. There are a number of public-facing events scheduled for the campaign, including a question and answer debate session in the UN Trusteeship Council on Apr. 13 where UN members, nonprofits, business, and other organizations asked candidates questions in person.

(Source: Quartz)

Women might actually make better leaders than their male counterparts.

COMMENT

What's really holding back reconstruction in Nepal

By Thomas Bell

A year ago last weekend, an earthquake in Nepal killed around 9,000 people and destroyed three quarters of a million homes. There's been a lot of water under the bridge since then.

The survivors may feel that not much has happened: around two million of them are still huddled miserably under tin sheets and tarpaulins, awaiting the onset of a second monsoon. Meanwhile, among the direct and indirect consequences of the disaster, billions of dollars have been pledged (but not spent); the country's rulers rushed out a flawed and contentious new constitution, provoking months of protests in which dozens died; and this in turn led to a four-month disruption of imports from India that crippled the economy.

It's been a dreadful 12 months, which have left many people deeply depressed about the state of the country.

■ Patchy humanitarian response

After that, one probably has to look at what hasn't happened. Thanks to a difficult, slow, and patchy humanitarian response, which probably at least managed to give most people something, and a large measure of luck, there has been no secondary disaster.

There's been no major outbreak of disease. A weak monsoon last year meant there were fewer devastating landslides on the weakened slopes than feared.

In difficult circumstances, immediately after the quake, a Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was hurriedly completed.

This proved to be quite seriously flawed, but was the basis for a donor conference at which \$4.1bn of reconstruction aid was pledged.

Four days before the conference, the government decided that the money would be spent by a National Reconstruction Authority (NRA).

But as soon as the money was pledged, politicians switched their attention to power politics. The "fast track" constitution had a lot to do with forming a new government, which would control this unprecedented windfall.

Rebuilding private houses is the biggest and most difficult task of reconstruction.

Around 26,000 people remain in camps, with no plan for their relocation.

■ Survivors poorly served

It's not actually surprising that the survivors have been so poorly served: the survivors of flooding and landslide disasters in preceding years haven't yet been taken care of either.

Amid all these problems, the four-and-a-half month "blockade" of imports, especially fuel, across the Indian border deepened the crisis. It caused great public hardship, perhaps especially in urban areas which are most reliant on imported commodities, and massive damage to the economy. It also undoubtedly hindered humanitarian operations.

The international community found it necessary to make a series of unpublicized demarches (or official diplomatic requests) to the government to ensure that the relatively small amount of fuel which was needed for humanitarian logistics was made available.

About seven tankers a month were required by each of the three "humanitarian hubs". Somewhat belatedly, the government obliged.

On December 2, six months after the donor conference, following much political interference in the selection of its CEO, the NRA was finally established. However, it remains only semi-functional because of understaffing. Bureaucrats think it would be "career suicide" to work there.

On the anniversary of the disaster, the NRA is only now beginning the first, modest disbursement of reconstruction funds. Critically, "epic levels of uncertainty" remain over which projects will be implemented.

It is, of course, easy to blame the government, and it does bear most of the responsibility - especially after taking so much trouble to discourage or hinder others from doing anything to help. For many months, survivors were even told not to rebuild their own homes.

But it is almost as important to ask where the internationals stand in this fiasco. After all, they are paying for much of it, as well as supposedly being a font of expertise.

It appears that by early this year the international community was beginning to realize that the NRA was not going to be ready to "concretize" the donors' pledges with actual plans in time to have anything to show on the anniversary.

■ Donors confused

By March they started talking about doing a Post Disaster Needs Framework (PDNF, to go with the PDNA) "which has taken up everybody's time for the last six weeks". This is a planning document to be launched with great fanfare as a mark of progress on the anniversary.

"I would say that there's a 50 percent chance that after next week we'll never hear of it again," says one of those who spent time on it.

Even some bigger donors say in private that they "don't know what's going on".

According to an insider, they are "letting themselves be driven". Smaller donors are "totally confused, and who can blame them?"

"What can you do?" says another, "It's all got tangled up in politics."

One might just as well ask: "If you can't get the job done, then what are you paying for?"

Indeed, it seems that some donor headquarters are now asking that. With three "Level Three" emergencies currently going on around the world, plus the European refugee crisis, there is a great danger that Nepal will lose some of the funds that have been pledged if it can't put them to good use soon.

At the beginning, there was much talk of "building back better", not so often heard these days. Practitioners see post-disaster reconstruction as an opportunity to make the country more "resilient" to the next disaster.

Who, for instance, will respond to secondary disasters such as landslides this monsoon? At the moment there is no answer to that question, and the Home Ministry and NRA are each pointing to the other.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

NEWS IN BRIEF

**Iranian researcher
converts agricultural
waste into biofuel**

An Iranian researcher has advised a method to convert agricultural waste into biofuel, and won the 29th Khwarizmi International Award (KIA).

Project manager Mohammad Jafar Taherzadeh who has won the second place of the Khwarizmi Award in basic research, told Mehr News that one of the problems in the agricultural sector is the production of waste which is ultimately useless.

He added that the waste and debris are utilized as the most abundant renewable resources to produce valuable products, including organic fertilizers, biofuels, green and organic solvents and Amino Acids.

Taherzadeh underlined however that the production of valuable materials from the waste is very costly and time-consuming due to its complex structure.

He went on to say that the process requires complex, multi-step methods that include pretreatment, enzymatic hydrolysis, fermentation and purification.

Taherzadeh, who is a professor in the University of Borås in Sweden, added that the facilitation of these processes is very important since it could produce biofuels from agricultural waste.

The "research mainly deals with the design of an efficient and inexpensive process for the production of valuable products such as bioethanol, biogas, amino acids, green solvents and polyesters in the laboratory, pilot and industry levels.

(Source: Mehr)

**Researchers use a vitamin
to slow the aging of
internal organs**

Researchers have for the first time successfully tested a vitamin's ability to help the internal organs of elderly mammals regenerate their cells.

Scientists at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL) gave mice Nicotinamide riboside (NR), which proved to have a positive effect on the functioning of stem cells.

It is hoped that the method used will prove useful for treating a number of degenerative diseases, allowing vital organs and muscles to regain the regeneration process that deteriorates with age.

"We supplied NR as a supplement to the diet of 700-day-old mice, which is an advanced age even for a lab mouse," Dongryeol Ryu, second author of the study, tells Newsweek. The "mice that received the substance lived longer than the mice that didn't receive it."

No negative side-effects were observed in the mice given NR, even at high doses. NR, which is a form of vitamin B3, has not been scientifically tested on humans but is already available in certain nutritional supplements found in the U.S.

The EPFL researchers said caution should be observed when it comes to branding NR an elixir of youth, as further studies are required. One avenue of study would be to make sure the vitamin does not also boost the functioning of pathological cells, such as those found in cancerous tissue.

(Source: newsweek.com)

**Tunisian start-up introduces
blade-free wind turbine**

The Tunisian start-up Saphon Energy has created a bladeless wind turbine that is more efficient than traditional ones. Inventors say that it produces twice as much energy at a much lower cost, is safer for birds and is ideal for developing countries.

About fifty will provide enough energy for a village with a population of about 1,000 and are extremely quiet. Called Saphonian, the turbine was inspired by the sails of ancient Carthaginian ships that competed for dominance in the Mediterranean Sea during the Roman Empire. The disc, similar to a pot cover, is mounted on top of a pole reminiscent of the mast of ship and serves to collect wind energy through a wave-motion converter.

All wind turbines are subject to the Bertz's Law, which indicates that the maximum power that can be extracted from the wind is 59%. However, the developers of the Saphonian say that their product can surpass this limit due to not having blades and manage to convert up to 80% of the wind hitting its surface into electricity. Saphon Energy won the Gulfstream Navigator Award 2015, opening it up to large investors.

Its project is also financed by such market giants as Microsoft, which is seeking sustainable ways to feed its huge cloud-computing systems across the world. However, the best application of it - given its lower costs - may be in developing countries, which will use Saphonian as an intelligent and economic solution for providing off-grid energy.

The Tunisian start-up already has a partnership with India, where it would like to set up a wind park with 50 turbines having a 20-KW capacity each, for a total of 1 MW, which would provide electricity for about a thousand inhabitants of a small community.

(Source: ansamed.info)

New heart failure drug fast-tracked for approval

The NHS in England is approving funding for a new heart failure drug called sacubitril valsartan.

This is the first of a new kind of medication called angiotensin receptor neprilysin inhibitors. It helps the heart by widening blood vessels to increase blood flow and reduce blood pressure.

The drug is the first non-cancer drug to be fast-tracked through UK licencing by the regulator MHRA.

Assessors from the funding body NICE say sacubitril valsartan could help prevent many deaths and reduce hospital admissions for heart failure by more than 30,000 cases a year.

The treatment costs £3 per day and will be an option for people with moderate to very severe symptoms where the heart can only pump a reduced amount of oxygenated blood, called a reduced ejection fraction, and also whose heart failure is not controlled by the commonly used drugs such as angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (ACE inhibitors) or angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs).

In a statement, Professor Carole Long-

**Sacubitril valsartan is the first non-cancer drug to be fast-tracked through UK licencing by the regulator MHRA.**

son, director of the NICE Health Technology Evaluation Centre, says: "ACE inhibitors have been the initial gold standard treat-

ment for chronic heart failure for almost 25 years.

However, for some people their symp-

toms persist despite them being on the maximum dose. The committee heard from clinical experts and patient experts that a new treatment option would provide hope and generate optimism.

■ Innovative new treatment

"We are pleased to be able to recommend this innovative new treatment for those people with a severely reduced ejection fraction and whose symptoms can mean they are almost constantly bedbound.

"This recommendation will help ease the symptoms of very ill people, improve their quality of life and help them to take part in normal daily activities. It should also reduce their need for hospital treatment."

However, she says the drug may not be effective for everyone with heart failure: "There was not enough evidence to show the clinical and cost effectiveness of sacubitril valsartan in people who do not have such a severely reduced ejection fraction, or in people who have very mild symptoms, and for people who have not already had an ACE inhibitor or ARB, so the committee weren't able to recommend the drug for these people."

(Source: webmd.boots.com)

Huge subglacial lake discovered underneath Antarctica's ice

Antarctica might be an icy, barren, windswept landscape today, but millions of years ago it was home to thriving forests, dinosaurs, and a breathtaking landscape replete with rivers, lakes and massive canyons. Much of its past is still sitting there, buried underneath layers of ice, waiting to be discovered in the form of fossils and geology.

It's even possible that ancient creatures still live under Antarctica's ice, hidden for millennia beneath the continent's cold glacial cap.

Now researchers have made an extraordinary discovery that could house some of the continent's many secrets: a massive, 62-mile long, ribbon-shaped subglacial liquid lake, reports Motherboard.

The finding echoes the discovery of Lake Vostok in the latter half of the 20th century, another Antarctic subglacial lake from which samples have been taken that contain evidence of life. This new lake is slightly smaller than Lake Vostok, but its close proximity to an established research station means it could be more easily probed for life.

The lake was discovered after researchers noticed that ice at the surface was unusually grooved on a large scale, indicating the potential presence of liquid water below. It appears connected to a massive canyon — now considered the largest canyon system on Earth, which was recently discovered using the same method.

■ Subterranean channels

Subterranean channels leading away from the lake might still funnel flowing water into the ocean many miles away.

Since this lake would likely have been isolated, trapped under the ice, for around 25 million years, biologists are giddy at the possibility that ancient life forms could still survive within it.

The fact that signs of life have been discovered at Lake Vostok only increase the odds that creatures may be lurking in these icy waters too — perhaps alien-like creatures that have evolved strange features to help them survive in such a frigid habitat.

(Source: Mother Nature Network)

**Monsanto announces new technology to
make its GM crops more pest resistant**

Monsanto says it has developed breakthrough technology to help make its crops more resistant to bugs and pests. The new techniques will help target insects that have developed resistance to previously genetically modified crops.

The research was conducted by scientists at Harvard University in conjunction with Monsanto. The aim was to try and speed up the process of generating proteins, which have properties that can kill pests.

The team was using PACE (phage-assisted continuous evolution) technology, which is able to eliminate insects that have grown resistant to prior agricultural solutions. The PACE method is 100 times faster than other methods in trying to identify protein with insect killing properties, according to the research team.

"Scientific breakthroughs like PACE technology are key to continue bringing solutions to farmers to help them get more out of every acre," Tom Adams, vice president of biotechnology at Monsanto said in a press release.

The importance of the technique means that the proteins are able to be developed at faster than the insects and

pests are able to become resistant.

"It's a breakthrough in a way we can handle resistance in the future," Tom Malvar, the head of insect control discovery at Monsanto said, according to the Agriculture journal. "This technology is not limited to insect control. We envision this having broad applications," he added.

■ GM crop industry

In November, a report by Greenpeace slammed the genetically modified (GM) crop industry, for failing to tackle problems regarding superbugs caused by insects becoming resistant to previously genetically modified crops.

"GM crops can only increase yield by reducing losses to pests in years of high infestation, and this effect is not permanent as pesticide-producing crops lead to resistant 'superbugs'. GM crop yields have often failed to isolate the effects of GM technology from other factors, or to compare like-for-like farms," the report stated.

GM corn and soya beans have given smaller yields in recent years in the U.S. due to pests and weeds becoming resistant to weed killers used to protect the plants.

(Source: RT)

**NASA unveils details of Hubble
successor**

NASA has unveiled details of the successor to the aging Hubble Space Telescope, the James Webb Space Telescope. The largest space telescope ever built, NASA provided an animation of what they hope the telescope will be capturing.

The ultra-high-tech successor to the ageing Hubble Telescope will open an exciting new window on the cosmos, exploring unseen realms — some of which might harbor life, albeit not necessarily as we know it.

NASA engineers have revealed the James Webb Space Telescope, the largest of its kind ever built, has an eight-meter gold-coated mirror, seven times bigger than Hubble's. Fully deployed, the whole telescope will be as wide and long as a tennis court and about four storeys tall.

Scientists say it will be the world's premier observatory for the next decade, serving thousands of astronomers worldwide, including hundreds in Australia.

Under construction at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, the \$10 billion space-based telescope is a joint venture between the U.S., European and Canadian space agencies.

After being launched on an Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana in October

2018, it will study every phase in our universe's history, ranging from the first luminous glows after the Big Bang to the formation of remote solar systems capable of supporting life on planets like Earth.

■ The monster scope

The monster scope, known affectionately as Webb, will follow Earth's path around the Sun, from a distance of 1.5 million kilometers — far enough away to be undisturbed by our planet's light and heat.

Testing the mirrors for the James Webb Space Telescope, which NASA will launch in 2018.

Credit Ball Aerospace "Webb is designed to observe in the infrared because the most distant galaxies in the universe are only detectable in that band," said ICRAR-Curtin University astrophysicist Dr. Rob Soria.

So, all being well, it should shed light on the nature of dark matter — and even dark energy, a mysterious force driving the universe's accelerating expansion.

"Webb's bigger mirror means it will find much fainter objects than Hubble could in the colors it can detect," Dr. Soria explained.

(Source: The Sydney Morning Herald)

Does turmeric have proven health benefits?

Curcumin, the plant compound that gives turmeric its bright yellow-orange color, has demonstrated antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer and neuroprotective properties in lab and animal studies.

But "claiming that it can be useful for humans is premature, given the current evidence," said Barbara Delage, a scientist with the Linus Pauling Institute's Micronutrient Information Center who recently reviewed the published literature on the spice.

Few good human clinical trials have been completed, Dr. Delage said. Curcumin has "very poor bioavailability," she said -- that is, it doesn't stick around in the human body for very long, and little of the plant compound is ab-

sorbed. Attempts to develop forms of the compound that are better absorbed are under way, she said, but will need to be tested for safety and effectiveness.

Lab studies have shown that curcumin inhibits mediators of inflammation, and mouse studies found that, in rodents at least, it can ease colitis, blunt the immune responses in rheumatoid arthritis and reduce nerve inflammation in traumatic brain injury.

■ Clinical trials

In human studies, a few small clinical trials have found curcumin to be as effective as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for alleviating the stiffness and swelling of rheumatoid arthritis, and it was more effective than some

standard drugs used to reduce the severity and flare-ups of ulcerative colitis. But, Dr. Delage said, "You can't conclude anything with one or two small studies, and you have to be very skeptical because you know the bioavailability is terrible."

A clinical trial that examined the effect of a mixture of curcumin and other compounds on digestion found it improved nausea, bloating and gastric pain but not acid reflux in people with H. pylori infections. But that study had no control group for comparison, and other studies have found curcumin may actually cause gastrointestinal upset.

(Source: The NYT)

Moscow has voiced concerns over the landing of 150 United States soldiers in Rumeilan, northeastern Syria, without the consent of the Syrian government, calling it a "violation of the country's sovereignty."

"Speaking from the position of the Foreign Ministry, we can't help but be concerned about the fact that such actions are being carried out by the U.S. without the consent of the legitimate government of the Syrian Arab Republic," Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told TASS.

"It is a violation of sovereignty," he said. "I emphasize that a similar political assessment has already been given by official Damascus, and we express our full solidarity with it," the Russian diplomat said.

He added that "contacts between Russia-U.S. defense ministries are taking place on a daily basis."

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister said the issues are being discussed by "professionals who are well versed in the situation, its dynamics, and in the existing threats and challenges, which can be tackled by the corresponding contingents."

On Monday, U.S. President Barack Obama confirmed plans to increase American troop presence in Syria by deploying an additional 250 personnel, bringing the total to 300. He said the troops would help drive out the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Moscow slams Obama decision to send 250 more U.S. troops to Syria



The move raised eyebrows as it contradicts Obama's earlier promise not to put any "American boots on the ground in Syria." The first time Obama broke his 2013 pledge was when he sent 50 U.S. special operations forces to Syria last year, saying the move was a "counterterrorism" measure and not a step closer to

a ground invasion.

On Wednesday, about 150 U.S. soldiers arrived in the Kurdish-controlled town of Rumeilan in northeastern Syria, according to a report on Thursday by the SANA news agency. A source said part of the contingent immediately headed to the north of Raqqa province.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry reacted negatively.

"This intervention is rejected and illegitimate, and it happened without the Syrian government's approval," SANA quoted a source at the ministry as saying. The source added it was a "blatant act of aggression that constitutes a dangerous intervention and a gross violation of Syrian sovereignty."

As a truce was proclaimed in the country in late February, airstrikes against terror targets by Russia and the U.S.-led coalition did not stop. But after President Vladimir Putin ordered the start of the withdrawal of Russian forces from Syria last month, the coalition did not stop its activities.

Last week, U.S. Central Command disclosed that 20 civilians in Iraq and Syria were killed as a result of airstrikes targeting ISIL fighters between September 10 and February 2.

The report stated that the anti-ISIL coalition takes "all feasible precautions to avoid civilian casualties during the course of military operations," and that in all cases of civilian deaths it was determined that "all appropriate precautions were taken." (Source: RT)

Romania accuses the Saudi ambassador of sexual molestation and murder of a local female secretary

Lazar Comanescu, the Romanian minister of foreign affairs has summoned the Saudi ambassador to Bucharest following accusation that Abdulrahman I. Al Rassi has sexually abused and later murdered Ioana Veliscu, a

25-year-old Romanian medical student who worked in the Saudi embassy as a secretary.

"According to preliminary forensic reports, the victim had been

sexually abused and later strangled with a belt. Ioana's body was found

floating in a pond in the vicinity of Grozavesti Power Station, 24 miles south of Bucharest. (Source: liveleak)

China, Russia urge U.S. to drop Korea missile defense proposal

China and Russia urged the United States on Friday not to install a new anti-missile system in South Korea, after Washington said it was in talks with Seoul in the wake of nuclear arms and missile tests by North Korea.

The United States and South Korea have begun talks on possible deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system after North Korea tested its fourth nuclear bomb on Jan. 6 and conducted missile tests.

The nuclear test and missile launches are in violation of United Nations resolutions against North Korea backed by

Russia and China. U.S. and South Korean officials have expressed concern that the North could attempt a fifth nuclear test in a show of strength ahead of its Workers' Party congress, which begins on May 6.

North Korea test-fired what appeared to be two intermediate range ballistic missiles on Thursday, but both failed, the U.S. military said. Speaking at joint press briefing with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the United States should respect "legitimate concerns" of China and Russia over the missile system.

"This move goes beyond the defensive

needs of the relevant countries. If it is deployed it will directly impact China's and Russia's respective strategic security," Wang said.

"Not only does it threaten the resolution of the peninsula nuclear issue, it quite possibly could pour oil on the fire of an already tense situation, and even destroy strategic equilibrium on the peninsula."

North Korea's actions should not be used as an excuse to make moves that would escalate tensions, especially the U.S. deployment of an anti-missile system, Lavrov said, according to an interpretation in Chinese.

North Korea's drive to develop a nu-

clear weapons capability has angered China, Pyongyang's sole major diplomatic and economic supporter. But Beijing fears THAAD and its radar have a range that would extend far beyond the Korean peninsula and into China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Thursday that Beijing would not allow war and chaos to break out on the Korean peninsula.

North and South Korea remain technically at war after their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, rather than a treaty. The North routinely threatens to destroy South Korea and its major ally, the United States. (Source: Reuters)

Turmoil sure to follow Saudi reform plan unless handled transparently: international business expert

Based on this plan Saudi Arabia is going to prepare itself for post-oil economy. What are the hurdles for such a goal?

A: "The hurdles are simple to list but politically difficult to adopt and implement:

- Effective, comprehensive and equitable taxation of its citizenry (including the ruling Al-Saud family)
- A dramatic reduction in subsidies
- A dramatic reduction in the size of the public sector, public sector employment and public sector salaries (to become comparable to the private sector)
- Reduction in corruption and the privileges of the ruling Al-Saud family
- Institutional reforms that must include the rule of law and a modern constitution

All of these will be politically challenging for the Al-Sauds and the government. Each will cause a backlash from different segments of the society:

business interests, the ruling Al-Saud family, those with lucrative government jobs, the religious establishment, and even the general citizenry who lose the handouts afforded by benefits. Turmoil is sure to follow unless handled very wisely, transparently, equitably and slowly. All of this would have been

All of these will be politically challenging for the Al-Sauds and the government. Each will cause a backlash from different segments of the society: business interests, the ruling Al-Saud family, those with lucrative government jobs, the religious establishment, and even the general citizenry who lose the handouts afforded by benefits. Turmoil is sure to follow unless handled very wisely, transparently, equitably and slowly. All of this would have been easier during the good times. But rulers and governments do not adopt reforms unless they are forced!!"

easier during the good times. But rulers and governments do not adopt reforms unless they are forced!!"

According to the plan, Aramco will be changed into a holding company. What elements necessitate this for Saudis?

A: "Nothing necessitates this but, to my thinking, young Prince Mohammad

bin Salman desires to do this for a number of reasons:

-It will give the government a quick source of revenues, namely the proceeds from 5% or 10 % sales of ARAMCO shares through an IPO—in my opinion, this could raise them \$150 billion (5% IPO)-\$300 billion (10% IPO).

-It will introduce transparency into the management of oil and the public sector more generally.

-It will send an important signal to foreign investors and companies that the country is now open for business.

-It will then allow the government to sell a number of other public sector assets through IPOs; if it can do it in the case of oil, then it can do it for anything—such as PF (the public sectors' holdings in joint stock companies and the like), Saudia Airlines, etc.

-If all goes well and it is successful, it will cement Prince Mohammad's position and maybe move him up to the position of Crown Prince!!"

Protests erupt in Venezuela as power crisis deepens

Looting and violence have been reported in parts of Venezuela, as the country faces widespread food and power shortages, forcing the government to ration food and electricity.

Several towns and cities, including the second-biggest city Maracaibo, were hit by rioting on Tuesday and Wednesday after daily power cuts started from Monday.

Residents in the Caracas area of Petare this month said they were eating more starches and skipping meals because they could not find food or afford to buy what was available.

In a survey published by pollster Venobarometro on Thursday, 13 percent of Venezuelans said their household only ate once a day.

Another Venobarometro poll indicated more than two thirds of Venezuelans wanted President Nicolas Maduro to quit.

The opposition blames government mismanagement for the power crisis as well as for the shortage of food and basic supplies.

The opposition tried to sack the food minister, but it was blocked by President Maduro.

"We are facing the worst food emergency in Venezuela's history," said Ismael Garcia, an MP leading the motion to sack Food Minister Rodolfo Marco Torres.

The socialist president has already blocked several bills brought by the opposition by challenging them in the Supreme Court. His critics say he controls the court and the electoral authorities.

On Thursday, the opposition, which took control of the legislature in January, said that a million people backed its call for a referendum to remove the president.

The signatures will be handed over to the National Electoral Board, which will take a final call on whether the referendum can be organized.

Maduro blames the situation on an "economic war" against the country by capitalists and right-wing conspirators seeking to destabilize his government. He has vowed to press on with the socialist "revolution" launched by his late predecessor Hugo Chavez in 1999.

He also says the El Niño weather phenomenon has dried up the country's hydroelectric dams. (Source: agencies)

JUMP Runoff parliamentary elections held

Nearly 17 million people were eligible to vote. Until our closing hour there was no report about the election turnout.

The turnout in the first round of election, held on Feb. 26, stood at 62 percent.

Under the law, two candidates compete for every seat in the runoff and the one who wins a simple majority of votes wins the seat.



According to the latest communiqué of the Interior Ministry, election results will be announced on Saturday or early Sunday.

The next Majlis will start work on May 28.

Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazil, visiting the election headquarters in Tehran, said some complaints of election violations had been received during the election campaigns by rival candidates which have been studied.

Campaigns started on April 21 and lasted until 8 a.m. on April 28.

Rahmani Fazil also said so far no evidence has been found that executive bodies or other organizations have been involved in the elections in favor of a particular candidate or candidates.

What U.S. elections should look like in a real democracy

Although his base spans to the right in the political landscape, at least 20 percent of his supporters describe themselves as "liberal" or "moderate", with 65 percent ticking "conservative" and only 13 percent "very conservative".

Trump's supporters

Approximately half of his supporters are 45-65 years in age, 34 percent are over 65 years, and slightly more than half are women. The majority have a high school education or less, with only 19 percent earning a college post-graduate degree. Over a third earn less than \$50,000 a year.

In other words, Trump's support comes from under-educated, economically disadvantaged, middle-aged to older Americans ostensibly seeking lives of greater promise and opportunity.

Ironically, this is precisely the demographic that would be most favorably served by Bernie Sanders' proposed economic and social policies.

Trump's only articulated plans include schemes to rid the nation of brown people, which will ultimately offer his supporters nothing in the way of better lives. It is entirely reasonable to believe that making this truth apparent to voters could turn Trump fans into Bernie voters.

Such a scenario may be an uphill and risky battle, but real leaders should not shirk from a challenge when the public welfare is at stake.

Further to this point, it seems that Dr. Jill Stein has reached out to Sanders to join forces, possibly offering the support Green Party voters.

It is no secret that Republican Party leaders are desperate to derail Donald Trump's nomination and there have been suggestions to contest his nomination at in July at the Republican National Convention.

Although doing so could potentially weaken the Republican Party, it remains a possibility that party leaders might take that risk rather than put Trump forth as their candidate.

Unlike Sanders, Trump did not rule out an independent run if he does not secure the nomination. If that happens, a new reality would be created that could

assuage Bernie's reticence to also run independently, thus creating a four-way presidential race, moving the U.S. closer to what elections in a real democracy are supposed to look like.

Collective fate

It should be clear by now that Americans are acutely aware that our collective fate is being steered by a ruling elite whose principle pursuit is one of self-interest and consolidation of power as they simultaneously pay lip service to the very real human struggles in this country.

As the populace inches closer to the condition of irredeemable discontent - whether it is with rigged elections, sustained economic hardship or unrelenting social and environmental injustice - it would behoove the political establishment to comprehend that the status quo is untenable.

Lastly, and this is the most important point I can make: Real change can only ever come from popular mass movements. The leaders we have allowed in office in my lifetime have largely acted to curtail, discredit, and/or disband popular opposition, from the Black Panthers to the Occupy Wall Street movements.

We merely need a leader who will not actively block our efforts to organize as we work to expand labor unions, empower students, protect consumers, create activists, educate our young so that we might produce critical thinking, compassionate, and imaginative generations to steer us away from the current individualistic, rapacious capitalism setting our planet aflame. (Source: Al Jazeera)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

Mark Twain

LEARN ENGLISH

Insider Trading

Rita: I just got a **hot tip** from my brother to buy **stock** in McQ Corp.

Rick: Your brother works for McQ Corp., doesn't he?

Rita: Yeah, he's a director in the company, so he should know if **something big is brewing**.

Rick: If he's a director and he knows something that isn't **publicly disclosed** about the company, and he's telling you to buy stock, isn't that **insider trading**?

Rita: Insider trading?! I'm not a major **investor**. I don't plan to buy so many **shares** that I'll become a major **shareholder**. All I can afford are a few shares.

Rick: Still, he'd be considered a corporate **insider** and may be **breaching** his **fiduciary** responsibilities. Giving you this tip could get him, and you, into a lot of trouble.

Rita: Who are you, an **SEC regulator**? People do this kind of thing all the time, and there's nothing **shady** about it. If you're smart, you'd buy a few shares yourself.

Rick: Uh, no thanks. I don't think I'd look good in an **orange jumpsuit**.

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

hot tip: a good piece of advice about the likely result of a race, business deal etc.

stock: a share in a company something big is brewing: that something important is going to happen but no one knows exactly what it is, it's secret information

publicly: in a way that is intended for anyone to know, see, or hear

disclosed: to make something publicly known, especially after it has been kept secret

insider trading: the crime of using secret information that you have about a company or knowledge of a situation to buy or sell shares at a profit

investor: someone who gives money to a company, business, or bank in order to get a profit

share: one of the equal parts into which the ownership of a company is divided

shareholder: someone who owns shares in a company or business

insider: someone who has a special knowledge of a particular organization because they are part of it

breach: to break a law, rule, or agreement

fiduciary: involving trust, especially with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary

SEC: Securities and Exchange Commission

regulator: someone who makes sure that a system operates properly or fairly

shady: probably dishonest or illegal

jumpsuit: a piece of clothing like a shirt and a pair of trousers joined together, worn especially by women

orange jumpsuit: refers to the clothes worn by prisoners

QUIZ OF THE DAY

147) What does the idiom mean?

Give me a hand:

- a) help me
- b) applaud
- c) get married

(Quiz No. 146 missing word is: to *the* (rim)

PHRASAL VERB Sign away

Meaning: give up one's rights or ownership

For example: He signed away his property and joined a religious community.

ENGLISH PROVERB Death is the great leveler

Explanation: all people are equal when they die



Occupational fatalities drop by 21% in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Work-related deaths in Iran decreased by 21 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2015-March 2016) compared to the year before, Mehr news agency reported.

According to a report released by the forensics, 1,494 workers died during performing work-related tasks last year, a decrease of 397 deaths year on year.

Of the total number of work-related deaths reported over the past year merely 15 were women, meanwhile the report states that in the year to March 2015, deaths amounted to 1,878 among men and only 13 among women.

The leading causes of worker deaths are falls as for the previous year 44 percent of the deaths were resulted from falling. In other words, 658 workers died of falling.



The report indicates that 322 workers died of striking by a hard object, 247 died of electrocution, 56 died of burns, 70 died of lack of oxygen and the remaining 141 died of other reasons.

Over this one-year period, provinces of Tehran with 290, Khorasan Razavi with 106, and Isfahan and Mazandaran each with 97 deaths set the records for the highest occupational fatalities.

On the other hand Zanjan with 10, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad and South Khorasan each with 11, and Semnan with 15 deaths are of the least number of work-related fatalities over the same period.

Additionally, the number of injuries caused during course of work also shows a fall of 8.4 percent. The number of the injured is 27,510, of which 26,267 were men and 1,243 were women.

UK government faces second court battle over air pollution plans

High court to hear case against government's 'woefully inadequate' plans to tackle air pollution, just a year after losing in the Supreme Court

The UK government is to be sued in the high court over its air pollution plans, just a year after losing at the supreme court and being ordered to fulfil its legal duty to cut pollution rapidly.

A request for a new judicial review by environmental lawyers at ClientEarth was granted by a judge on Thursday.

ClientEarth argues the government is in breach of its legal duty to produce new air quality plans to cut pollution to legal levels in the "shortest possible time", despite being ordered to do so by the supreme court in 2015. The development puts the spotlight on the environment secretary, Liz Truss, who is named as the defendant in the new case.

Air pollution was called a "public health emergency" by MPs on Wednesday, and causes 40,000-50,000 early deaths every year. A report from two Royal Colleges of medicine estimated the cost of the damage at £20bn a year.

A deadline for the UK to meet EU air quality rules was missed in 2010 but the plan put forward by the government after losing at the Supreme Court would not cut pollution to legal levels until 2025 in some cities.

"The government's new plans to tackle air pollution are woefully inadequate and won't achieve legal limits for years to come," said ClientEarth lawyer Alan Andrews. "The longer they are allowed to dither and delay, the more people will suffer from serious illness or an early death."

"Today's decision means we will be returning to court to demand that ministers respect our right to breathe clean air," Andrews said. "The health evidence is mounting and, as



Protesters stage a die-in protest at an anti-pollution rally outside the Department for Transport in London, 27 April, 2016. Photograph: Tolga Akmen/Getty Images

we saw yesterday, MPs from across the political spectrum agree with us that the government is not doing enough."

Mary Creagh MP, chair of the environmental audit committee, which is currently investigating air pollution, said: "The government has dragged its feet on tackling air pollution and that is simply not good enough. It is about time the government set out a clear, comprehensive plan to go much further, much faster."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said: "Our plans clearly set out how we will improve the UK's air quality through a new program of Clean Air Zones, which alongside national action

and continued investment in clean technologies will create cleaner, healthier air for all. We cannot comment on ongoing legal proceedings."

The MPs' report said the government needed to do much more, including introducing a scrappage scheme for old, dirty diesel vehicles, giving dozens of cities stronger powers to deter polluting vehicles with charging schemes and acting to cut pollution from farms.

"There is clear consensus that the government's plans are wholly inadequate to address this public health crisis," said Kerry McCarthy, Labour's shadow environment secretary. "It should not take legal action to force the environment secretary to take urgent action and help save lives."

Penny Woods, chief executive of the British Lung Foundation, said: "This is the second time the government has been taken to court over air pollution. They must now take immediate action to prevent people being needlessly killed by the air they breathe. Air pollution affects everyone [and] it has greatest impact on the most vulnerable – children, the elderly, and those with lung conditions."

The government has been accused of trying to bury the news of its air pollution plans. The government released a draft of the plan required by the Supreme Court on the Saturday in September on which Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader of the Labour party. The final plan was published on "take out the trash day" in December, along with dozens of other ministerial statements and many hundreds of government documents.

(Source: The Guardian)

Labrador helps save Arizona man stranded in snowstorm

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Police say a man wearing only a T-shirt during a snowstorm would have frozen to death at the base of an Arizona mountain had it not been for an alert 2-year-old black Labrador mix.

Flagstaff officer Melissa Seay says the dog named Marley heard the man's cries for help, according to The

Arizona Daily Sun.

The dog's owner, John Paul Roccaforte, said he let Marley go outside around 1 a.m. when he started barking and wouldn't stop.

"He just kind of starts really sniffing around and then starts barking," Roccaforte said. "He just wouldn't let up. He was relentless."

Roccaforte said he went outside and eventually heard someone moaning and calling for help. He called 911. Paramedics and law enforcement arrived around 1:20 a.m.

First responders found a man who appeared to be in his mid-20s lying in a secluded area nearby. The man was wearing only a T-shirt with no coat. It

was about 32 degrees at the time.

"If that dog hadn't heard him out there, he would have definitely frozen to death for sure," Seay said.

After the rescue Marley was rewarded with cuddles and treats as well as an informal hero designation, which Roccaforte said the pup doesn't think too much of.

IN FOCUS IRNA/Mehdi Qorbani



Medical students from universities of medical sciences carried out diabetes and blood pressure test for free at Tehran's subway stations on Thursday.

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Wedding loans more than tripled

Majlis approved a bill on Sunday, based on which wedding loans will be more than tripled to 100 million rials (nearly \$2,800) for each of the spouses, IRIB reported.

Wedding loan which used to be 30 million rials (nearly \$850) for each of the spouses has now risen by more than three times. Additionally, the 3-year payback period has now increased to 4 years.

The law states that in order to support young couples and encourage marriage all banks are due to give top priority to the wedding loans so that by the end of each month less than 50,000 applicants remain in the waiting lists for the loans.

Meanwhile, the central bank has been tasked with monitoring the implementation of the law. Violation of the law is punishable by a fine levied by the central bank.

وام ازدواج ۲۰ میلیون تومان شد

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما نمایندگان مجلس روز شنبه قانونی را تصویب کردند که بر اساس آن تسهیلات قرض الحسنه ازدواج برای هر یک از زوجین را از ۳ میلیون تومان به ۱۰ میلیون تومان افزایش داشت.

تسهیلات قرض الحسنه ازدواج که سابق بر این مبلغ ۳ میلیون تومان برای هر یک از زوجین بود به مبلغ ۱۰ میلیون تومان با دوره بازپرداخت ۴ ساله به جای ۳ سال افزایش یافت.

بر طبق این قانون به منظور حمایت از ازدواج جوانان و تشویق آنها به امر ازدواج تمام بانک ها موظف هستند تا تسهیلات قرض الحسنه ازدواج را در اولویت نخست پرداخت قرار دهند به طوری که تعداد جوانان در صف وام ازدواج در پایان هر ماه کمتر از ۵۰ هزار نفر باشد.

بانک مرکزی وظیفه نظارت بر اجرای این قانون و جریمه بانک های متخلف در این زمینه را بر عهده دارد.

Azmoun: It's my dream to play for Iran at World Cup

SPORTS Iranian youngster Sardar Azmoun, **d e s k** who plays for FC Rostov, had a dream of playing at the World Cup when he was a child. He is now very close to his dream and believes that he will give his best for the Iran national team to reach the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

"The first world cup I remember watching on television was the 2006 tournament in Germany. I was at my cousin's house in Iran, I was very young ten or eleven years old we were watching Iran's last group game against Angola which finished 1-1. When Iran scored I celebrated widely and I remembered thinking I wanted to follow in their footsteps. I wanted to play in a FIFA World Cup one day and score goals for my country," Sardar Azmoun told FIFA.com.

"As a child I used to look up players like Ali Daei and Zalatan Ibrahimovic, watching and studying them thought me a lot as a player. Ali Daei was a gentleman and he still holds the record for the most goals in international football. Ibrahimovic is also a great player and as a fellow forward he is probably the player I most want to play like," The 21-year old striker added.

"In 2014 my dream of playing in a world cup nearly came true. I was in the provisional squad but I was dropped before the tournament. It wasn't a great feeling and maybe sad, I guess it wasn't meant to be. The coach knew what he wanted in his team and he recognized I wasn't quite ready that I still need to work on my game. To be honest that just made me hungrier to play at a World Cup; I believed in myself, I knew that I can play better and then I could develop more as a player," he added.

"To play for Iran is important to me; after I missed out in 2014 I started to think about what I need to do to be



selected in 2018. Even I'm part of the national team now I know it's not certain to be picked. I haven't reached my full potential but I as long as I continue to work hard I think I can establish myself," he added.

"Like every player who plays for the national team I want to help the team qualify and do well. I want to play at the World Cup here in Russia and I'll give my all to be there," Azmoun added.

Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic apologizes to fans



SPORTS Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic **d e s k** apologized to the team's fans for their loss to Naft Tehran in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Thursday.

With three weeks to go, IPL leader Persepolis was defeated against Naft 2-0 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in front of about 90,000 spectators and moved down to third place.

"First, I congratulate Naft Tehran due to victory. They took advantage of our mistakes. We have to be ready for Gostareh

Foolad match which has been scheduled for the next 10 days," Branko said.

"I am really sad because of the defeat. It's not right time to lose. I am ashamed of our fans that we could not make them happy," the Croat said.

"From now, title destiny is not 'in our hands' but we will never give up. We will do our best in the two remaining matches," he added.

Elsewhere, Esteghlal defeated Saipa 2-1 and returned to top of table on goal difference, followed by Esteghlal Khuzestan who beat struggling Rah Ahan 3-1 and Persepolis.

Iran Volleyball squad announced for World Olympic Qualifying



SPORTS Iran volleyball coach Raul Lozano has **d e s k** invited 21 players to the team for the World Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Tokyo, Japan from May 28 to June 5.

Iran will face powerful oppositions such as Australia, Canada, China, France, Japan, Poland and Venezuela in the Round-Robin tournament. The best Asian team along with the three top-ranked teams in the tournament will get the tickets to the Rio 2016

Olympic Games.

Iran Roster

Saeid Marouf, Mehdi Mahdavi, Mohammad Taher Vadi, Amir Ghafour, Shahram Mahmoudi, Amin Alavi, Mohammad Mousavi, Adel Gholami, Armin Tshakkori, Mohammad Fallah, Mostafa Sharifat, Saman Faezi, Milad Ebadipour, Farhad Ghaemi, Mohammadjavad Manavinezhad, Alireza Mobasheri, Hamzeh Zarrini, Rahman Davoudi, Mojtaba Mirzajanzpour, Farhad Zarif, Mehdi Marandi.

Tehran derby 33th most important derby in the world

SPORTS British website FourFourTwo has **d e s k** ranked Tehran derby as the 33th biggest derby in the world of football.

Here is the FourFourTwo article about Persepolis vs. Esteghlal rivalry:

If you don't think a game's worth mentioning until there's 50,000 people in the ground, you'll love the Tehran derby. Iran's two most successful teams both use the huge Azadi Stadium, and it's usually packed to its 95,000 capacity for this clash. It's a relatively young der-

by – Iranian football wasn't organized into a national league until 1970, and the sides first bumped heads in 1968. During the '70s the rivalry became class-conscious, with Persepolis as the people's club while Esteghlal – known as Taj until the 1979 Revolution – was seen as being supported by the elite.

In a noteworthy 1995 scrap, Persepolis were 2-0 up and sailing with 10 minutes left but a controversial penalty helped Esteghlal draw level. Such were the accusations of favoritism that the FA started to im-

port foreign referees for improved impartiality – but it didn't stop a 2000 brawl when needle between Esteghlal goalkeeper Parviz Broumand and Persepolis striker Payan Rafat led to the keeper whacking the forward in the face. The consequences – besides a black eye for Rafat – were post-match riots in which 250 buses were destroyed and 60 arrests made, including three players from each side.

Persepolis thrashed Esteghlal 4-2 in the latest meeting between the two teams two weeks ago.

Iran runner-up at Azerbaijan Wrestling Federation Cup

Iranian junior freestyle team finished in second place in the Azerbaijan Wrestling Federation Cup on Thursday.

The Iranian team claimed four gold, five silver and four bronze medals in the competition held at the "Sahadchi" Sport Olympic Center in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Mehdi Eshghi in the 46kg, Amir Parasteh in the 50kg, Mostapha Najafi in the 76kg and Erfan Jafari in the 100kg snatched four gold medals.

Ali Hafezi in the 42kg, Majid Dastan in 54kg, Hamed Rahimi in the 58kg, Amir Hossein Kavusi in the 63 kg,

and Sajjad Gholami in the 69kg won silver medals.

In the 42kg, Ali Azimi claimed a bronze medal. Amir Hossein Khodabakhshi won a bronze medal in the 46kg. Reza Aljanzadeh snatched a bronze medal in the 54kg and Erfan Ayoubi seized a bronze in the 100kg.

Azerbaijan won the competition with 86 points, followed by Iran (85) and Turkey (76).

The tournament brought 100 wrestlers from Azerbaijan, Iran, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Bulgaria, Russia, Iraq, Turkey and Kazakhstan together.

(Source: Tasnim)



Asian Weightlifting Championships: Iran's Mousavi wins silver

Ayoub Mousavi from Iran claimed a silver medal in the 2016 Asian Weightlifting Championships on Thursday.

In the 85kg weight category, Mousavi lifted 156kg in snatch and 198kg in clean & jerk for a total of 356kg.

Denis Ulanov from Kazakhstan won the gold medal

with a total of 373kg and bronze medal went to Su Ying from China with 355kg.

The tournament, which will run until April 30, has brought a total of 161 lifters from 30 countries together and serves as a qualification event for the Olympics.

(Source: Tasnim)

PAPER ROUND

Jose Mourinho told United job is his, Chelsea and Arsenal fight for Mkhitarian

The Old Trafford boardroom tell Jose Mourinho the job is his, Henrikh Mkhitarian is off to London while Manchester United are close to signing £46m wonderkid Renato Sanches. It's Friday's Paper Round.

Mourinho given assurances the United job is his

Jose Mourinho is still the man the boardroom at Old Trafford want, according to the Sun. They reveal that despite worries PSG's manager Laurent Blanc would be available to take on the gig at United, there have been reassurances made to Mourinho in the last couple of days that he still in demand by the Red Devils. The report also says negotiations have been at an advanced stage for a while and are close to being completed, ensuring the former Chelsea boss will earn a record £60 million over three years.

Paper Round's view: It's still very hard to tell what exactly is going behind the scenes, but it seems as if other interested managers have an uphill battle to convince United to make them a priority over Mourinho. This should be enough to keep us dreaming of a Pep vs Jose Manchester derby.

United seek to close £46m deal for teenage sensation Renato Sanches

Benfica's decision makers have arrived in London for talks with United according to the Daily Mail, as the Red Devils seek to finalise the signing of wonderkid Renato Sanches. Sanches is currently under contract at Benfica until 2021 with a buyout clause of nearly £60m, but the Mail are reporting they are willing to sell for £31m upfront with £15m in add-ons. The report says the lively box to box midfielder has a strong chance to head to United, pending on this round of talks.

Paper Round's view: £46m plus other handling fees is a lot of money for someone in their first season of football. By all means believe the hype, as Sanches has incredible speed, skill and spatial awareness. But it is a massive risk and no one is guaranteed to become world class. Time to haggle for a less risky price, United.

Arsenal join Chelsea's chase for Dortmund's Henrikh Mkhitarian

The Mirror are reporting that Henrikh Mkhitarian of Borussia Dortmund could be on his way to the Premier League, as Chelsea and Arsenal fight for the services of the Armenia international. Mkhitarian has reportedly made it clear he wants a move to London, as Dortmund fear they could lose the ace as early as the summer. The Gunners can offer him Champions League football next season whereas Chelsea can't, and it was a significant factor in Mkhitarian's failed move to Liverpool, opting for Dortmund instead because of the promise of elite European game time.

Paper Round's view: Mkhitarian would be interesting in Premier League football, purely to see how his pure pace would work in a more physical league. The promise of Champions League should be the decider on where he goes, depending on if Chelsea can stump up enough cash to make the wait a bit easier.

Swansea eye Joe Allen reunion

Joe Allen could be heading back to Wales, as Swansea are attempting to get the midfielder back from Liverpool, according to the Daily Mail. Allen left the club in 2012, after coach Brendan Rodgers brought him along to Merseyside and dubbed him the "Welsh Xavi". Allen is in the final year of his contract at Liverpool, with Swansea attempting to haggle the £10m price tag that the Reds have put on him.

Paper Round's view: Allen has shown a fair bit in the second half of the season, an obvious ploy now he's being made to play for that next Liverpool contract. Whether he's back at Swansea next season is entirely down to how Jurgen Klopp rates him as a player in an end of season review.

(Source: Eurosport)

Mauricio Pochettino agrees two-year Spurs contract extension

Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino has said he has agreed a two-year contract extension, ending speculation that he may quit the club in the summer.

The Spurs manager made the announcement in a press conference ahead of his side's match with Chelsea.

Pochettino said:

"It was an easy decision when you feel the love of the people and the potential of the club is massive, so why change?"

"We create a good atmosphere on the training ground and I think we can achieve big things in the future. I believe in this project and this club. I want to stay here."

Pochettino has recently been linked with the Paris Saint-Germain job, is one of the contenders to succeed Roy Hodgson should he step down after the Euro 2016 tournament and has been strongly rumoured to be a rival to Jose Mourinho for the Manchester United job.

The Argentine manager has seen Spurs mount their first serious Premier League title challenge, with hope for more success in future years. While mathematically still in with a chance of winning the league this season, Leicester are strong favourites.

This contract extension should end speculation over his career for at least the summer.

Our View

This appear to be, on the surface, a coup for Spurs. It would be the first time that they have made a serious and sensible step towards becoming a force in England, whereas in the past they have lost players like Dimitar Berbatov, Michael Carrick, Luka Modric and Gareth Bale. The extension of the contract will make it easier for them to persuade Harry Kane to refuse overtures from other clubs over the summer.

But it should not be overstated, as this is an extension for just two years, and will have little use should Pochettino decide that he'd like to quit at the end of next season. With Mourinho likely to go to United and Laurent Blanc likely to stay in Paris for another year, his loyalty is yet to be seriously tested by bigger, richer clubs.

(Source: Eurosport)





Poem of the day

Thus the branch will flourish of which he is the root
Because the beauty of the earth's plants depends on
the virtue of the seed.

Sadi

Prayer Times

Noon:13:01 Evening: 20:10 Dawn: 4:39 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:12 (tomorrow)

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari
■ Editor-in-Chief: Hassan Lasjerdi
■ Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 editor@tehrantimes.com
■ Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
■ Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450 ads@tehrantimes.com
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NEWS

Shiraz to display Gunther Uecker's paintings inspired by Hafez

T I A R T TEHRAN — A collection of paintings by German sculptor and op artist Gunther Uecker, all inspired by ghazals of Persian poet Hafez, will be displayed in an exhibition in Shiraz opening on May 1.

Entitled "Tribute to Hafez" ("Huldigung an Hafez"), the collection will be unveiled at the mausoleum of Hafez, but it will later go on display in a month-long exhibit at Tar-o-Pood Gallery, the director of Iran's Office for Visual Arts, Majid Mollanoruzi, said in a press conference on Thursday.

"The paintings inspired by ghazals of Hafez will be displayed in the exhibit to portray the two-year efforts of the artist on works by Hafez," Mollanoruzi added.

He said that Uecker has donated the works to the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, but first, they will be showcased in Shiraz.

"The collection will later be shown in the Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum in Tehran for one month," he asserted.

A number of Iranian and German officials are expected to attend the opening ceremony.

The 82-year-old Uecker is a member of the ZERO movement, best known for his signature use of nails arranged into tactile, sculptural paintings.

Uecker's oeuvre includes paintings, art objects and installations as well as stage designs and films. He is mainly interested in the eastern European avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s, but he is likewise fascinated by Asian cultures and their ideas.

His works can be seen in collections and at large fairs in both the West and the East. Uecker's artistic creativity reached a climax in 2000 with the prayer room he designed for the rebuilt Reichstag building in Berlin.

Shahnameh captures readers' imaginations: Finnish translator

T I A R T TEHRAN — That was the first thing I read in Persian.

He continued that he finds the story of Zakhak, the most interesting story of the Shahnameh. "Everybody would say Rustam, Sohrab, Bijan and Manijeh. But in addition to these stories admired by every individual, my personal favorite is Zakhak who met Kaveh, and Ferdowsi's ability to build his character. Zakhak starts as quite a nice young person, a young hero initially, and one could not say that he was bad in the beginning. He is ambitious and because of this, he transforms into a monster. This is also one of the best stories among the others."

To the question why he chose to focus on Ferdowsi and not other classical poets, he said, "I have always been fascinated by the Shahnameh. But I have also translated literary poetry earlier such as works by Hafez and Rumi. But I wanted to translate the epic poetry, so that the Finnish people would be able to read different kinds of Persian literature, not just the ghazals of Hafez and Rumi,

but also the Shahnameh. For me the Shahnameh has been the main work until now".

Asked if his choice had something to do with Kalevala—the Finnish national epic compiled by Elias Lönnrot—he replied, "There are some similarities between the two epics, but I would have translated the Shahnameh anyway. It makes more sense to the Finnish people since we have our own epic stories; they might be somewhat different but there are also similarities."

Hameen-Anttila also said that he chose the Persian version of the Shahnameh compiled by the distinguished Iranian Shahnameh researcher, Jalal Khaleqi-Motlag, as his original source, and translated Shahnameh from verse into prose. "I think this is what most other translators have done. That is, the translation is [the translator's] personal conception. It is more or less word by word. Basically, it is a very faithful translation; I have just made the language Finnish."

He next explained that the project took three years to complete. "I start-



Jaakko Hameen-Anttila in an undated photo

ed to translate from the beginning and ended with the death of Rustam. A complete translation of the first half appears in the first volume."

Hameen-Anttila translated a selection of Rumi's Masnavi-ye Manavi into Finnish, as well as excerpts from the Divan of Hafez and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. He has also translated "Man-

tiq at-Tayr" ("The Conference of the Birds") by Farid od-Din Mohammad ibn Ebrahim Attar.

He said he is planning to start work on the second half of the Shahnameh in a year or two, but that he would select one or two stories from the Shahnameh to translate into verse as his next projects.

NEWS IN BRIEF



"Yahya Didn't Keep Quiet" tops at Lebanese filmfest

T I A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Kaveh Ebrahimpur's social drama "Yahya Didn't Keep Quiet" won the award for best long fiction at the Tripoli Film Festival, which was held in the Lebanese city from April 20 to 27.

The film starring Fatemeh Motamed-Arya tells the story of a seven-year-old boy who severely tries to uncover the mysteries of his aunt's life. Tina Pakravan is the producer of the movie.

Seven other films from Mexico, Germany, Estonia, Palestine and Ireland were also screened in the section.



Museum of Persian Gulf maps opens on Hormoz

T I A R T TEHRAN — A museum showcasing historical documents and maps related to the Persian Gulf opened its doors to the public on Friday on Hormoz, an island located in the strategic waterway in southern Iran.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Ali Jannati, Hormozgan Province Governor Jasem Jaderi and several local officials and artists attended the opening ceremony, which was held on the Persian Gulf National Day.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Sculpture

■ Sculptures by Arash Fateh-Barkhordari are currently on display in an exhibition at Basmeh Gallery.

The showcase runs until May 11 at the gallery located at Block A, Park Prince Bldg., Hakim-Azam St., North Shiraz St.

Painting

■ A retrospective of painter Jalaleddin Sultan-Kashefi is underway at Gallery 26.

The exhibit named "Edge" runs until May 11 at the gallery located 26 Salmanpur-Zahir St., in the Farmanieh Sharqi district.

■ Shokuh Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Suzan Vaziri.

The exhibition named "My Beliefs" will come to end on

May 4 at the gallery that can be found on 16, Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St., Andarzgu Blvd.

Veteran singer Nader Golchin honored

T I A R T TEHRAN — Veteran singer Nader Golchin, famous for his renditions of memorable old-time songs, was honored during a ceremony at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Wednesday evening.

A large number of musicians from his time, including Abdolvahhab Shahidi, attended the ceremony.

The event began by screening a video featuring a short interview with the singer. It was then followed by an improvisation by santur virtuoso Fazlollah Tavakkol.

Vocalist Hamidreza Nurbakhsh, who is also the managing director of Iran's House of Music, praised Golchin's artistic career and said, "When we say Nader Gol-

chin is a good singer must give reasons why. The hidden characteristic in his voice has made him a distinguished singer.

"He enjoys a unique voice with a specific type of vocal sound with a vast and proper limit of singing. He also has a full knowledge of singing, making him into a perfect singer."

"Singers like Golchin prove that singing is not limited to classical performances, since he can also focus on other key components not necessarily related to classical singing, and yet he still remains a perfect singer," he explained.

"While he has engaged in a wide range of musical

activities, he can also be categorized as a pop singer. The pop music he offers is quite different, that is, he always offers a type of music that bears a sign of intellect," Nurbakhsh said.

A bust of Golchin was handed to the 80-year-old singer by Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Ali Moradkhani. Golchin, in his brief words, called love the main element in his success.

The ceremony was organized by Radnoandish Art and Cultural Institute, a private organization active in art and cultural activities.

"Playingthing," "Arrow of Eyelashes" and "Song of Caravan" are among the songs by Golchin.

PICTURE OF THE DAY

ISNA/Farzad Khaboshani



The Alliance Orchestra under the baton of Iranian-born French maestro Pejman Memarzadeh performs at Chehel Sotum Palace in Isfahan on April 27, 2016.

Robert Downey Jr. heaps praise on new Spider-Man Tom Holland

LONDON (Reuters) — Hollywood actor Robert Downey Jr. heaped praise on rising British star Tom Holland at the European premiere of "Captain America: Civil War" in London on Tuesday.

The "Iron Man" star said he was impressed by the 19-year-old actor who takes on the role of Spider-Man in the film.

"This Tom Holland guy is something else...thank you for lending us your national treasure," he said.

The new movie sees Marvel's usually friendly super heroes split. Chris Evans' Captain America fights for superheroes to govern themselves and goes head to head with his former ally, Robert Downey Jr.'s Iron Man, who wants the heroes to be governed by the United Nations.

Featuring a wide range of characters, including Jeremy Renner's Hawkeye and Anthony Mackie's Falcon, the movie has been largely well received by the critics so far.

Holland said he had a "great time" working with the cast, and that he was excited to attend the London premiere, which took place in the large Westfield shopping mall -- where he said he used to buy jeans.

Stuttgart art exhibit explores changing life in Iran

T I A R T TEHRAN — An art show underway at IFA Gallery in the German city of Stuttgart explores many aspects of changing life in Iran, the Institute for Foreign Relations (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen - IFA) has announced.

The exhibition, which opened on April 21, is showcasing polyptych light boxes by Iranian artist Dadbeh Bassir, video stills by Amsterdam-based Iranian artist Mehraneh Atashi and installations by Berlin-based Iranian artist Mona Hakim-Schuber.

The exhibition shows "traditional technologies, old legends and Persian poetry, looking at their significance

in today's social and political contexts and reflecting the transformation of traditional norms in a rapidly changing world," IFA Gallery stated on its website.

"Both Iranian architecture and these artistic positions question seemingly binary categories of past and present, tradition and modernity, seeking to combine them and make them productive for the future."

The exhibition also includes "Instant Past", which forms a section for Iranian architecture and provides an update of the presentation made for the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale.

This section examines different buildings in Iran undergoing mod-

ernization over the last century, after a process of refurbishment and reinterpretation of historical heritage had been initiated.

A video by Khosro Salarian and Sina Ahmadi juxtaposes "images of two formal idioms, Persian and modern". Old bowls from ceramic water pipes are woven together in a net to form an installation that combines traditional elements and contemporary patterns.

IFA Visual Department Ursula Zeller and the ministerial director of the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg, Claudia Rose, delivered speeches at the opening ceremony of the exhibition entitled "Giv-

ing Yesterday a Tomorrow... Iran: Architecture and Art", the Persian service of IRNA reported on Thursday.

"Iran is a land with millennia of high culture that has a population of 80 million, most of whom are young, educated people," Zeller said.

She emphasized the need for expanding cultural relations with Iran and said it would also help Iran and Germany increase their economic ties.

Rose called Iran a stable country that needs to reconstruct its economy and added, "German companies have announced their readiness provide what Iran needs in this way."

The exhibition will run until July 3.