



Annual steel production planned to reach 18.5m tons **4**



First women-only factory opens in Iran **12**



Iran's Zahra Nemati best Para archer of the Year **15**



Morteza Arab-Khazaeli wins Vista Contemporary Art Prize **16**

Marine cruise missile successfully tested

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran has successfully test-fired its newest marine cruise missile in ongoing naval exercises in southern waters of the Persian Gulf, Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan said on Monday.

"The newest marine missile cruise, dubbed 'Nasir', was launched and hit the target successfully during the massive military drill in the country's southern waters," Dehqan was quoted as saying.

The minister did not give any more details.

The Iranian navy is staging its annual navy drills in an area of two million square kilometers, spanning the Strait of Hormuz, the Sea of Oman, north of the Indian Ocean and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.

Iran has developed homegrown military hardware over the past years, learning from a long war waged by Iraq in the 1980s, when the country ran on a shrinking storage of arms and equipment imported mainly from the U.S.

On Saturday, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said Iran's most advanced destroyer, Sahand, will be launched in the near future as the third home-grown warcraft. **→2**



Iran means business

A team at International Research Networks (IRN) organised an excellent Iran Business Symposium on Feb. 21+23, 2017, at the Renaissance Hotel in Amsterdam. It was attended by Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, Italy, and many other EU countries and beyond.

The purpose of the conference was to further create a better multilateral understanding and to serve as a platform whereby the global business and investment community could discover the latest developments and opportunities within the newly opened economy of Iran following the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly called the nuclear deal. The forum was also intended to provide an opportunity for open discussion.

Mahmood Khaghani, the conference chairman and advisor to the Education & Research Institute of Iran Chamber, of Commerce, Industries, Mines & Agriculture (ICCIMA), pointed to the resilience of Iranians and outlined the priorities of the government. Khaghani said Iran needs, first and foremost, know-how and technologies. The Tehran government is also interested in joint production in Iran, export to neighbouring countries, and export oriented foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as technology partnership in petroleum/energy downstream industries. Khaghani was delighted to share the news that "since the success of JCPOA and its implementation there has been \$11 billion FDI in Iran."

It was further highlighted at the symposium that Iran's 6th five-year economic development plan is targeting an average growth rate of 8%. To achieve this goal, \$50 billion per annum investment will be needed.

Officials laud Asghar Farhadi for Oscar win



See page 16

British thinking about Iran won't primarily be affected by U.S.: security expert

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — A senior fellow at the Center for Security Studies at Georgetown University and at the Brookings Institution says "official British thinking about relations with Iran will not primarily be affected by the U.S. administration."

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Paul Pillar says, "London's thinking about relations with Iran will still naturally go in many of the same directions as German and French thinking."

Following is the text of the interview with Paul Pillar:

■ Can Brexit affect British foreign policy, particularly toward Iran?

A: British foreign policy obviously will be oriented less toward the continent of Europe and more toward distant allies, with the United States being the most important of those allies.

We already have seen efforts by the government of Theresa May to shore up the relationship with Washington, despite difficulties in that regard associated with Donald Trump being the U.S. president. Brexit probably will make little or no difference in British policy toward Iran; London's thinking about relations with Iran will still naturally go in many of the same directions as German and French thinking.

■ What will be the impact of Trump's election on Iran-England relationship?

A: Given Trump's unpopularity among the British, there will be less inclination than there might otherwise have been to maintain solidarity, for the sake of solidarity, with the U.S. administration regarding relations with Iran.

Official British thinking about relations with Iran will not primarily be affected by the U.S. administration but rather by Britain's own political and economic interests.

■ Will Brexit prompt Britain to sell more arms to Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region?

A: There might be some increased efforts to promote such arms sales, as a compensation for the overall economic disruption and loss of other markets associated with Brexit.

■ And how the election of Trump will affect Iran-EU relations?

A: The impact, if any, will be essentially the same as the impact in Britain--Europe leaders will do what they regard as best for Europe and for international peace and security, without any special deference to Washington.

Iran reiterates unfaltering support for Syria, Iraq

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — On Monday, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani reiterated Tehran's unwavering support for Iraq and Syria in the face of terrorism.

"Our assistance is in line with protecting power of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said in a ceremony held to commemorate martyrs of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iran provides advisory assistance to Syrian

and Iraqi armies ever since the two countries were caught off the guard by terrorist groups.

He said certain countries claim that they are in fight with terrorism in the Middle East but their campaign has reached nowhere.

In making the comments, Larijani was hinting at regional coalitions formed by some Arab countries and the U.S. to contain terrorism in the region.

Larijani also said that the protection unit

of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has the heavy responsibility of maintaining and protecting the security in the country.

"We have always witnessed awareness of the IRGC's parliamentary protective forces by which it has accomplished the mission of countering the plots. The fact that the IRGC is forerunner in martyrdom-seeking moves is our source of pride," he said.



Tehran Times/ Mohammad Moheini

Goldfish buyers herald Norouz

With Norouz - the Iranian New Year starting on March 21 - approaching, people buy goldfish which adorns haft-seen table, an arrangement of seven symbolic items all starting with the letter S in the Persian alphabet. According to the tradition, a goldfish in a bowl represents life.

Trump will abide by nuclear deal, Iran says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that Donald Trump's administration will abide by the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"My assumption is that Mr. Trump and his administration will abide by the JCPOA... We have received this message from the European countries that they will support their companies for cooperation with Iran," Araghchi told a conference on the Iranian economy.

Araghchi added, "I am optimistic that the JCPOA will continue its path and the new economic atmosphere will be maintained."

Araghchi, the deputy foreign minister for legal and international affair who was heavily involved in drawing up the text of the JCPOA in negotiations with great powers, also said that a violation of the nuclear agreement will harm the U.S.

President has repeatedly expressed his displeasure with the nuclear deal, claiming it only favors Tehran. However, before his inauguration as president he said it is difficult to abrogate a deal which has been endorsed by the UN Security Council. **→2**

Abbas: No state should relocate Israel embassy

The Palestinian Authority (PA) has warned all foreign countries against relocating their respective embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to East al-Quds (Jerusalem), which the Palestinians want as the capital of their future state.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas made the remarks in an address to the 34th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva on Monday.

Campaigning for the United States elections, Donald Trump vowed to move the American Embassy to East al-Quds in a sign of recognition of the city as the capital of an Israeli "state."

This is while Palestinians want the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967, as part of a future Palestinian state, with East al-Quds as its capital.

"We call for the establishment of a system, which would guarantee the independence of the Palestinian state with East al-Quds as its capital, within the boundaries of the 4th of June, 1967," Abbas asserted, referring to the precise date when Israel staged the occupation.

"We reiterate our appeal for an international protection regime for the Palestinian people," he added.

Abbas also told member states on Monday that Israel was moving towards an "apartheid solution" in Palestine in light of a new Israeli law passed earlier this month that legalized dozens of Jewish-only settlement outposts built on private Palestinian land.

Abbas was the first of more than 100 dignitaries to speak at the high-level portion of this year's session.

The last and only time Abbas addressed the council was in 2015.

■ Israeli land theft

The Israeli parliament on February 6 rubber-stamped the so-called "Legalization Bill," which retroactively legalized structures built on Palestinian land.

The move came barely two months after the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved a resolution declaring that settlement construction "constitutes a flagrant violation under international law." **→13**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Drugs seizure rise
9% in Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Anti-drugs initiatives **d e s k** implemented by Iran in 2016 brought about a nine percent increase in seizures of illegal drugs compared to the same period last year, Interior Minister said on Monday.

Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli made the remarks in an international conference on cooperation against illicit drugs and related organized crimes here in Tehran with UN Executive Director of Office on Drugs and Crime Yuri Fedotov in attendance, IRNA reported.

He further pointed out that the average production of illegal drugs surged by 43 percent in Afghanistan in Dec. 2016 compared to the same period last year.



Use of anti-revolution
media for campaigns
would be a crime:
Judiciary

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — It would be a crime **d e s k** if presidential candidates use anti-revolution media during their campaigns, Iran's Judiciary chief said on Monday.

Sadeq Amoli Larjani also said that although a few months remain to the election, the complexities of the matter makes it necessary for all bodies to take utmost care to ensure healthy elections, IRIB news agency reported February 27.

He also invited the to-be candidates to observe moral codes and not forget "the goal".



Rouhani due in
Zahedan

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani **d e s k** will visit Zahedan in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

According to provincial officials, Rouhani plans to inaugurate Zahedan International Airport's second runway, an airline Co., Chehel Koreh copper mine and factory, and Iranshahr-Chabahar gas pipeline through a video conference, Mehr reported on Monday.

Additionally, the president is scheduled to attend the opening ceremony of an urban gas pipeline and visit with the citizens.



Principlists seek
coalition ahead of
elections

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Principlist groups will **d e s k** start talks on forming a coalition for the presidential election, due in May, head of Islamic Coalition Party said, ISNA reported on Monday.

Mustafa Mirsalim welcomed the idea of numerous principlist candidates for presidential election, saying that after the presidential debates they would finally conduct talks to form a coalition.

However, he suggested, numerous principlist candidates would lead to a run-off and then by forming a coalition principlist would secure a victory over President Hassan Rouhani.



IRGC: Dabbing at
economy intended
to help governments

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The fact that the IRGC has **d e s k** initiated itself into economic activities is to help governments, the commander of Khatam ul-Anbiya Construction headquarters said on Monday.

"The IRGC considers it a mission to play a role in reconstruction (of the country) and it has always been the governments which have requested its entry into various reconstruction areas," Brigadier General Ebadollah Abdollahi said, Nasim reported.

As the Iraq-Iran war ended, it was decided to tap IRGC for civil development, he underlined.



UN to station
anti-money
laundering staff
in Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's Interior Ministry has **d e s k** said the Law Enforcement, Organized Crime and Anti-Money-Laundering Unit of the United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime is going to station staff in Iran.

"They have recently promised us they will station experts on money laundering in the Tehran office," Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Monday, ILNA reported.

"Just this afternoon we will submit some cases to these experts to see actually how they go about the measures and their promises," Fazli said.

Iran not favoring ECO distracted by peripheral tensions

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Just two **d e s k** days ahead of the 10-nation Economic Cooperation Organization, an official with Iran's Foreign Ministry said the bloc should press ahead with its mission regardless of what he called the "surrounding tensions."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is not interested in tensions surrounding ECO to get into the organization," Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour was quoted as saying on Monday.

"We believe that ECO should be the harbinger of unity and consensus between member states."

Iran and Turkey, coupled with Pakistan as founding members of ECO, are at loggerheads over the current situation in the Middle East.

Tehran and Ankara support opposite sides in the conflict in Syria with Iran backing the government of President Bashar al-Assad while Turkey has backed elements of the Syrian opposition.

While the two, along with Russia, have contributed to a fragile ceasefire to take force in Syria since Dec. 30, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and President Tayyip Erdogan have accused



Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour

Tehran of destabilizing the region.

In response to Cavusoglu who claimed Iran was "undermining" regional stability through pursuing what he called a "sec-tarian policy" during the Munich Security Conference, Tehran said "we will be patient with their positions."

"But there is a certain cap for our patience," said Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi in a press

conference a week ago in Tehran, hours before Tehran summoned the Turkish ambassador in Tehran over the comments.

Aside from political discords, ECO has fallen short of adopting an integrated, unified economic policy, "although cooperation has grown stronger compared to the past in the transit field," according to Rahimpour.

There's hope that this year's summit,

attended by seven presidents including Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, will look into ways to expand collaboration in areas of culture, economy, tourism, etc.

Pakistan will host the 13th ECO summit on March 1 in the federal capital, the prime minister's top foreign policy aide Sartaj Aziz announced on Saturday, according to the Pakistani Express Tribune.

The summit will deliberate upon ways and means to augment cooperation in areas of connectivity, trade, energy, tourism, investment, industry, economic growth, productivity, social welfare and environment, he said.

The event's theme is 'Connectivity for Regional Prosperity'.

The summit was preceded by a meeting of senior officials on February 26-27 while the Council of Foreign Ministers will meet on February 28, the Pakistani official said.

Set up in 1985 in Tehran, ECO now includes seven other regional nations: Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

The last ECO summit was held in October 2012 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and the 21st meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers was held in November 2013 in Tehran.

Rouhani welcomes expansion of ties with Indonesia

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian President **d e s k** Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that Iran welcomes expansion of ties with Indonesia in areas of politics, economy, culture and science.

"Level of relations, especially in economic area, between Iran and Indonesia should be expanded given the two countries' capabilities," he said during a

meeting with Darmin Nasution, the special envoy of Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

Rouhani said that the Iranian companies are ready to help expand refineries in Indonesia.

Nasution said that Indonesia is determined to expand cooperation with Iran in various spheres, especially economy.

Indonesia is ready to expand cooperation with

Iran in energy sphere through investment in Iran's oil fields and also participation of the Iranian companies in Indonesia to build and develop oil refineries, he added.

The special envoy added Jakarta seeks to import more oil and gas from Iran. He also said that central banks of the two countries have reached good agreements on banking cooperation.

Tehran says policy towards Riyadh is 'clear'



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Govern- **d e s k** ment spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said on Monday that Iran's stance on Saudi Arabia is "clear", noting the Islamic Republic has adopted an "active" policy towards Riyadh.

Questioning Riyadh's actions in Syria and Yemen, Nobakht said Saudi officials should be able to defend their policies regarding terrorism.

"The Islamic Republic's stance on Syria is clear," he said, adding, "And Saudi Arabia should [be able to] defend itself about the atrocities and infanticide committed in Yemen."

Saudi Arabia launched an intensive military campaign against Yemen in March 2015. The war has so far cost thousands of lives and pushed the poor country of Yemen into starvation.

Nobakht also criticized Saudi officials for using harsh words against Iran. In the recent security conference

in the Germany city of Munich, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir labeled Iran "the single main sponsor of terrorism in the world".

On whether Iran plans to participate in the Hajj rituals in 2017, Nobakht said Tehran and Riyadh have been holding talks on the issue and that the outcome of the talks will be announced when the two countries conclude the negotiations.

Iran suspended dispatching Hajj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia over security concerns. The decision came after a deadly stampede during Hajj rituals in Mina in September 2015 when at least 460 Iranians lost their lives.

In the latest round of talks between the two countries, an Iranian delegation met with the Saudi minister at the Pilgrimage Ministry in Jeddah on Friday. The meetings aim at setting the arrangements needed to enable Iranian pilgrims to enter Saudi Arabia in order to perform Hajj rituals.

Iran urges Armenia, Azerbaijan to end hostilities



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** Iranian Foreign Ministry late on Sunday called on neighboring Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic to settle the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue through dialogue, ISNA reported."The Islamic Republic of Iran urges its two northern neighbors to exercise restraint and advises the two sides to make concerted efforts to restore peace and resolve the conflicts through dialogue," Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi Qassemi insisted in a statement as tensions between the two countries escalated again.

It came after Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense issued a statement confirming that a new skirmish erupted between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh on Saturday, leading to death of forces from both sides.

"On February 25, military units of

the Azeri armed forces destroyed the permanent firing position, shelling positions and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) of the Armenian side," the statement read.

The spokesman further expressed hope that the international community would help put an end to the conflict.

He also voiced Iran's readiness to assist and cooperate with both sides to help restore peace to the region.

Dating back to 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict began and escalated into armed clashes following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The region has been struggling with continuous tensions and border skirmishes despite a ceasefire signed back in 1994.

In April 2016, a new Moscow-brokered ceasefire went into effect, temporarily halting the fighting. However, the two sides have since accused one another of violating the truce.

Trump to sign new travel order on Wednesday

POLITICS **U.S.** President Donald **d e s k** Trump is expected to sign a new refugee and immigration executive order on Wednesday, one day after addressing lawmakers at a joint session of Congress, Associated Press reported.

A senior administration official told the news agency of the plan to sign a new order this week, speaking on condition of anonymity. The new travel ban was actually expected to be signed last week, but White House spokesman Sean Spicer said the President had delayed the order "to make sure that we execute this, it's done in a manner that's flawless".

The previous visa ban, signed on 27 January, temporarily restricted entry to the U.S. for citizens of seven Muslim majority countries: Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. It also suspended the U.S. refugee program for 120 days and banned Syrian refugees indefinitely.

However, a federal judge in Seattle issued a temporary restraining order against the Trump administration's restrictions shortly afterwards, ruling that it was unconstitutional and therefore, stopping the ban nationwide.

Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly has called the new revised order

a "more streamlined version" of the first travel ban, which sparked mass protests across America. The new travel ban reportedly has "minor technical differences", according to senior White House adviser Stephen Miller.

Miller told Fox News that the revised travel ban would "have the same basic policy outcome as the first, but would be responsive to the judicial ruling" that stopped it. The Court of Appeal advised for the order to be redrafted so it wouldn't risk violating the U.S. constitution, which forbids discrimination on the grounds of religion.

The new executive order is expected to make clear that green card holders – immigrants with an indefinite right to live in the U.S. – are exempt from the ban.

The countries affected by Trump's executive order, however, have already been singled out under American immigration law since the days following 9/11. Trump's order only lists Syria by name and refers to the other countries in reference to a 2015 Obama-era law, more specifically the "8 U.S.C. 1187(a)(12)". Additionally, Trump is not the first president to exclude Saudia Arabia from the scrutiny following 9/11. ➔13

Trump will abide by nuclear deal, Iran says

1 ➔

"The international consensus against Iran" before the nuclear deal has turned into an "international consensus against Trump in support of the JCPOA, the senior diplomat noted.

The international nuclear agreement is supported by all except the U.S. president, the Zionist regime of Israel and some regional countries,

he pointed out.

Elsewhere, Araqchi said what Iran achieved during the nuclear negotiations was the result of the people's resistance and not the Western countries' favor.

Iran and the six major powers (the U.S., Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany) finalized the text of the JCPOA in July 2015. It took effect in January 2016.

Marine cruise missile successfully tested

1 ➔

Also, during the drills "Dehlaviyeh", an advanced guided anti-ship missile system, was tested successfully.

Iran's enhanced presence in the regional waters have brought about more secure marine routes, threatened by pirate attacks. Now, Iranian frigates patrol in an area of 2,100,000 km2, according to Sayyari, with more than 44 flotilla of warships so far dispatched to high waters.

The missions have contributed par-

ticularly to a safe passage of upwards of 3,844 trade ships and tankers attacked by pirates, according to Sayyari.

However, there have been occasional incidents in the region between Iranian and U.S. navies.

In November 2016, a small Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards vessel pointed its weapon at a U.S. military helicopter in the Strait of Hormuz, which U.S. Navy officials called "unsafe and unprofessional".

‘10 attacks a day’ against refugees, shelters in 2016

More than 2,500 refugees in Germany were attacked last year, according to a report by the interior ministry, raising fears over the safety of those who have fled war and persecution.

In a statement, the interior minister citing police figures said that Germany recorded more than 3,500 attacks in total against refugees, migrants and their shelters last year, amounting to nearly 10 acts of anti-migrant violence a day.

The attacks left at least 560 people injured, including 43 children.

“People who have fled their home country and seek protection in Germany have the right to expect safe shelter,” the interior ministry said, according to the AFP news agency.

In one case, a German neo-Nazi was sentenced to eight years in jail in February for burning down a sports hall set to house refugees, causing damage worth \$3.7m.

In another example that shocked the country one year ago, a crowd of on-lookers cheered and applauded as an asylum shelter went up in flames in the country's former communist east.

Ulla Jelpke, an MP for the socialist Die Linke party, blamed anti-migrant violence on proponents of the country's far-right and urged the government to take stronger action.

“We’re seeing nearly 10 [criminal] acts a day,” she told the Funke Medien-gruppe, a German regional newspaper



group. “Do people have to die before the right-wing violence is considered a central domestic security problem and makes it to the top of the national policy agenda?”

There were 988 attacks including arson on shelters for refugees and asylum seekers, a similar number to last year. In

2014, there were only 199 such cases.

The sharp rise in hate crimes came after Germany, which hosts the largest refugee population in Europe, took 890,000 asylum seekers in 2015 at the height of Europe's refugee crisis.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to welcome refugees polarized the

country and fuelled support for far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

The number of arrivals fell sharply in 2016 to 280,000, mainly due to border closures on the Balkan overland route and an European Union deal with Turkey to stem the flow.

(Source: al Jazeera)

German hostage beheaded by Abu Sayyaf militants in Philippines

A German man has been beheaded by Abu Sayyaf militants in the southern Philippines after a deadline to pay his ransom passed, the Philippine government has said.

A video posted by the Philippines-based extremist group Abu Sayyaf and distributed by SITE Intelligence Group identifies the man as Jurgen Kantner, who has been held captive since November.

It was the second time Kantner, 70, had been abducted. He was held along with his partner, Sabine Merz, by Somali pirates for nearly two months in 2008.

In a text message to CNN, Philippines Secretary Jesus Dureza, the Presidential Peace Adviser, said the government strongly condemned “the barbaric beheading of yet another kidnap victim.”

“Up to the last moment, many sectors, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines, exhausted all efforts to save his life. We all tried our best. But to no avail,” he said.

A German official said the government was still checking the video's authenticity.

The group had demanded 30 million Philippine pesos (\$600,000) in exchange for Kantner's release, setting a deadline

of February 26.

Abu Sayyaf announced in November last year that they had kidnapped Kantner and his partner in the waters off Malaysia's Sabah state, according to Philippine officials.

Merz was shot and killed by the militants soon after, the Philippine News Agency reported.

■ War against Abu Sayyaf

The beheading emerges as the Philippine government wages a war against Abu Sayyaf, based in the restive province of Mindanao in the country's far south.

Abu Sayyaf is a violent terrorist group of some 200 to 400 members that is largely fragmented.

The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, but the south has historically had a large Muslim population. Abu Sayyaf's stated aim is to establish an independent Islamic state on the southern island of Mindanao.

The group first became active in the early 1990s and was responsible for bombings across the southern Philippines and in the Malaysian state of Sabah.

The seas around the Philippines are the most pirated in the world, according to data producer IHS Markit.

(Source: CNN)

Trump budget plan boosts Pentagon, trims State Dept., EPA

The White House will send federal departments a budget proposal containing the defense spending increase that the new United States President Donald Trump promised, financed partly by cuts to the U.S. State Department, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other non-defense programs, two officials familiar with the proposal said.

One of the officials said Trump's request for the Pentagon included more money for shipbuilding, military aircraft and establishing “a more robust presence in key international waterways and chokepoints” such as the Strait of Hormuz and South China Sea.

A second official said the State Department's budget could be cut by as much as 30 percent, which would force a major restructuring of the department and elimination of programs.

The officials requested anonymity because the draft budget had not been made public yet.

Trump, in a speech to conservative activists on Friday, promised “one of the greatest military buildups in American history.”

Some defense experts have questioned the need for a large increase in the U.S. military spending, which

already stands at roughly \$600 billion annually. By contrast, the United States spends about \$50 billion annually on the State Department and foreign assistance.

The amounts that Trump is proposing to add to the Pentagon budget and trim elsewhere are not yet publicly known.

John Czwartacki, a spokesman for the White House's Office of Management and Budget, said the budget blueprint would be released in mid-March.

The budget plans that the White House is expected to send to departments and agencies on Monday are just one stage in a lengthy process.

The agencies can argue for more funding, and final spending plans must be approved by the U.S. Congress.

Trump's budget assumes annual economic growth of 2.4 percent, the second official said. While campaigning for the presidency last year, Trump called for a “national goal” of 4 percent economic growth.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, speaking on Fox News earlier on Sunday, said Trump's budget would not seek cuts in federal social programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

(Source: Reuters)

Second Scottish independence referendum divisive: London

A British government spokesman has warned against the ramifications of a likely Scottish independence referendum as an unnecessary divisive measure.

The remarks came against the backdrop of media reports that Scottish nationalists are bracing for another independence referendum, possibly at the same time when the British government plans to formally trigger the Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty to start formal negotiations on leaving the European Union.

In a 2014 referendum, 55 percent of the Scots voted against independence, but the discussions about the issue gained steam again following the Brexit vote in June 2016.

While England and Wales voted to leave the EU, 62 percent of Scottish voters cast their ballots in favor of staying inside the bloc.

According to The Times newspaper, the British government is preparing itself for Scotland's likely referendum plans.

Moreover, informed sources told Reuters last week that the semi-autonomous Scottish government, run



by the pro-independence Scottish National Party, is increasingly confident about the prospect of winning a second independence referendum.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has urged the Scottish voters to use the upcoming council elections to make it clear to the Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon that they do not favor a second independence

referendum.

Senior sources at the British Conservative Party have warned that blocking another referendum will prompt a massive public backlash in Scotland and garner more support for an independence vote.

On Wednesday, British Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell said that Scotland would leave the EU, whether or not it becomes an independent state.

In response to Mundell's comments, a Scottish government spokesperson said, “Scotland faces being dragged out of Europe against its will by a Tory (Conservative) government with just one MP out of 59 in Scotland, but that MP – David Mundell – seems totally oblivious to the irony of him seeking to lay down the law on what should happen next.”

Prime Minister May has promised to begin the Brexit process in March and complete it by 2019. The EU has warned that Britain would have less than 18 months to reach a deal to exit the bloc once Brexit negotiations begin.

(Source: agencies)

Indonesian police shoot dead ISIL-linked attacker

Indonesian police have shot dead a suspected militant linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group during a firefight at a government office on Java Island.

Police exchanged fire during an hour-long standoff with the man after a small bomb was set off at about 8:30 a.m. (0130 GMT) in a park in the city of Bandung on Monday.

The attacker, who threw a second bomb at officers during the gun battle, fled into a building belonging to local authorities op-

posite the park and set it ablaze.

Witnesses described terrifying scenes as the attacker stormed into the building brandishing a dagger and began starting fires.

Local TV footage showed heavily armed police firing on the office through clouds of smoke.

The police eventually manage to shoot the militant in the stomach and he died later in hospital.

Police have seized the guns and two backpacks carried by the attacker.

Police said the attacker was a former terror convict from an ISIL-linked network called Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD).

The national police chief, Tito Karnavian, said the attacker had demanded that authorities release his associates from prison.

Meanwhile, authorities were also searching for a second person involved in the assault. Witnesses said they had seen the attacker on a motorbike with someone else before the initial bomb blast.

JAD has been blamed for a series of recent attacks in Indonesia including an as-

sault in Jakarta last year. The gun and bomb attack, claimed by ISIL, in the capital left four attackers and four civilians dead.

Indonesian law enforcement agencies have arrested hundreds of militants during a sustained crackdown in recent years.

At least 400 Indonesians have reportedly joined the ISIL terrorist group in the two conflict-plagued Middle Eastern countries of Iraq and Syria. Dozens of the extremists have returned to Indonesia after wreaking havoc in Syria.

(Source: Press TV)

Iraqi forces retake key bridge in western Mosul

Iraqi security forces have managed to take control of a key bridge and a neighborhood as they push further into western Mosul, the last major urban stronghold of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists in the country.

Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Yarallah - the commander of ‘We Are Coming, Nineveh Operations’ - said the Iraqi forces captured the neighborhood of Jawsaq as well as what is known locally as the fourth bridge across Tigris River on Monday.

He added that the Iraqi forces raised the national flag above several buildings in the neighborhood after inflicting heavy losses on ISIL terrorists, without elaborating.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Federal Police Rapid Response Force, whose troops were involved in Monday's operations, said the advance followed “fierce” clashes with ISIL elements.

Major General Thamir Ahmed added that the terrorists fought back with snipers, anti-tank missiles and car bombs.

He also acknowledged that Iraqi forces also suffered casualties, but did not give a specific number.

The capture of the bridge is strategically important as it could establish an important supply route, which would be used to bring in army reinforcements and supplies from the government-controlled eastern side of the city.

ISIL terrorists overran Mosul in June 2014. Iraqi government forces, backed by fighters from allied Popular Mobilization Units - better known in Arabic as Hashd al-Sha'abi - managed to liberate the eastern quarter of Mosul from the clutches of ISIL terrorists in January, three months after launching the operation to regain control of the country's second-largest city.

(Source: Press TV)

Senior Taliban leader killed in Kunduz air raid

A senior Taliban commander has been killed in an air raid in northern Afghanistan, the armed group said on Monday.

Mullah Abdul Salam Akhund, who oversaw a Taliban offensive that briefly seized Kunduz city in 2015, had previously been reported dead several times by Afghan officials.

Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban spokesman, confirmed Akhund's death in a statement blaming the United States.

Akhund was one of three fighters killed in an air raid by an unmanned aircraft in the Kunduz province, a senior Taliban official in the province told the Reuters news agency on condition of anonymity.

“He was on a journey a few days ago and stopped at a house at Dasht-e-Archi town [in Kunduz] when the drone fired missiles,” the official said.

The raid killed Akhund and eight other Taliban members, Sher Aziz Kamawal, a senior police commander in northern Afghanistan, said.

A U.S. military spokesman said an American jet had carried out a bombing raid in the city on Sunday, but the command did “not have confirmation of the results”.

Taliban gains in the Helmand and Uruzgan regions, where they also threaten provincial capitals, have underlined the group's growing strength and exposed weaknesses in the government.

The group maintains that its fight is against foreign military forces and the foreign-backed government, not ordinary Afghans.

On Sunday, its Leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, urged Afghans to plant more trees in a statement, calling on civilians and fighters to “plant one or several fruit or non-fruit trees for the beautification of Earth and the benefit of almighty God's creations”.

The message, carried on official Taliban outlets, was a shift from the usual fiery rhetoric against the Afghan government and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces.

(Source: al Jazeera)

Israeli jets carry out new airstrikes on Gaza Strip, injure four Palestinians

At least four people have sustained injuries after Israeli military aircraft carried out a string of airstrikes on areas in the Gaza Strip in yet another act of aggression against the besieged Palestinian coastal territory.

Gaza's Health Ministry spokesman, Ashraf al-Qidra, said the four Palestinians were moderately injured when Israeli fighter jets struck Nahda neighborhood of the border town of Rafah on Monday afternoon, Arabic-language Quds Press news agency reported.

Witnesses, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Israeli fighter jets had also fired two missiles at a military site belonging to the Hamas resistance movement -- known as Shuhada (Martyrs) outpost -- west of Nuseirat refugee camp just after 1 p.m. local time (1100 GMT).

An Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle fired a missile at a monitoring post east of Rafah as well, with no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

Shortly afterward, Israeli warplanes launched three missiles at Hitteen outpost in the city of Beit Lahia, located about five kilometers north of Gaza City.

The airstrikes came shortly after the Israeli military claimed that a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip had hit an open area in southern occupied territories, but caused no injuries or damage.

The Israeli military frequently bombs the Gaza Strip, with civilians being the main target of such attacks.

On February 9, Israeli warplanes targeted a lifeline tunnel in Rafah, leaving two Palestinians dead and five others injured. Gazans use the tunnels to bring basic commodities into the coastal enclave.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in living standards as well as unprecedented unemployment and poverty.

(Source: Press TV)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Australian companies eyeing expansion of ties with IMIDRO

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Australia's Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources Secretary Richard Bolt in a Monday meeting with Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian in Tehran, expressed content about cooperation between Australian companies and IMIDRO during the past two years, hoping for expansion of ties.

As IRNA reported, Bolt said that the two sides have experienced cooperation on implementing some projects as well as consulting and can improve their ties in other fields including mining, regarding their expertise, technology, and education potentials.

Karbasian, for his part, referred to Iran's gas resources and Australia's iron ore mines saying that the two countries can collaborate on converting iron ore to steel.



Iran's intl. steel expo to host 70 foreign companies

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 70 foreign and 156 domestic exhibitors will participate in the 20th International Steel Exhibition of Iran which is due to open today in the northwestern city of Tabriz and will wrap up on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

"This year the exhibition is witnessing a threefold rise in the number of the foreign participants which is promising," Ali Shafi'i, the secretary of Iron & Steel Society of Iran, told in a press conference.



Polish trade delegation due in Tehran next week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — A Polish trade delegation headed by the country's deputy minister for economic development will visit Iran on March 6, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) announced on Monday.

Representatives of the Polish companies accompanying the country's deputy minister plan to hold talks with Iranian counterparts to discuss business opportunities.

The companies present in the delegation are active in the fields of mining machinery, engineering, oil and gas equipment, legal services, railway, road and rail infrastructure, commercials, cosmetics, edible oils, ICT, agriculture and fertilizers.



Car output up 31.9% in 11 months yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian car makers manufactured 1.224 million vehicles in the first eleven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2016-February 18, 2017), with 31.9 percent rise compared to the figure of the same period of time in the previous year, IRIB reported on Monday.

Also, the number of passenger cars manufactured in the country during the mentioned time span stood at 1.138 million, showing 41.8 percent growth from the figure of the preceding year.

Iran is scheduled to manufacture 1.35 million cars by the end of the current calendar year (March 20, 2017), Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohsen Salehinia had announced in last April.

As Salehinia underlined, the government seeks to improve the quality as well as the quantity of the domestically produced cars on the way to boost their exports.

Italian companies to continue investing in Russian economy despite sanction

Italian companies actively invested in the Russian economy in 2016 and do not intend to stop cooperation with Russian partners this year, Italian Ambassador to Moscow Cesare Maria Ragaglini said.

According to Ragaglini, the decision of Russian authorities to diversify the economy provides great opportunities for Italian companies that use sophisticated technologies in nearly whole spectrum of production and paves the way for making productive investments and for setting up joint ventures with Russian partners.

"I should say that last year Italian companies actively invested in Russia. And this year the process will continue. I am sure that we have a great potential for further growth," Ragaglini told Rossiya 24 broadcaster.

Italy is among EU states, which continue active economic cooperation with Russia despite EU sanctions and has repeatedly called for lifting them. Several Italian regional councils have already approved resolutions, urging to lift anti-Russia sanctions and some Italian businessmen proposed mechanisms to bypass these restrictions.

In October 2016, Russia and Italy held the 14th session of the bilateral Council on Economic, Industrial, Monetary and Financial Cooperation, which was the first such meeting after a break of four years. The two states signed contracts worth 1.4 billion euros (\$1.57 billion) at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in June 2016.

(Source: Sputnik)

Annual steel production planned to reach 18.5m tons

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Annual crude steel production in Iran is planned to reach 18.5 million tons by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Jafar Sarqini told IRNA on Monday.

Iran's crude steel output stood at 16.708 million tons in the past calendar year and at 16.805 million tons in its preceding year.

The country aims to increase total output to 55 million tons and export between 20 and 25 million tons of steel annually by the end of its 1404

(March 2025-March 2026) Outlook Plan.

According to the Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian, domestic steel industry has reached 50 percent of the planned goals that it has been expected to reach based on the mentioned outlook plan.

As a major steel producer in the region, Iran boosted its steel mills across the country in recent years, as central Isfahan and southwestern Khuzestan provinces remain the

NZ signs agreements with Iran on resumption of meat exports

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — New Zealand has signed an agreement with Iran for the resumption of meat exports to the country.

The agreement was signed between Iranian Veterinary Organization and New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries in Tehran at the presence of New Zealand's Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy and Iranian Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Hojati.

The two sides have agreed to an

arrangement which provides the conditions for resumption of chilled and frozen sheep and beef exports to Iran.

According to a report by New Zealand Herald, the country's meat exports to Iran failed to pick up following the lifting of sanctions last year because of Iranian restrictions.

Meat is New Zealand's second-largest commodity export after dairy, and was worth \$5.92 billion in 2016.

Dollar treads water as investors eye Trump speech

The dollar edged up from a 2-1/2-week low against the yen on Monday but struggled to gain traction elsewhere, as investors awaited a speech this week by U.S. President Trump for clues on his economic agenda.

Trump is set make his first major policy address to the U.S. Congress today, and is expected to give some details on his planned infrastructure spending and tax reform.

But market participants worry that if the plans laid out are too vague or look slow to execute, that could weigh on a dollar that reached 14-year highs earlier this year on the back of the "Trumpflation trade" - a view that Trump's policies would shore up inflation and growth.

"The market is still waiting for further details of President Trump's economic stimulus plans, including looser regulation, comprehensive tax reform, and higher infrastructure investment," said MUFG currency analyst Lee Hardman, in London.

"If (he) fails to provide further reassuring details in the address, the market is likely to be left disappointed, which at the very least could prompt the market to push back the timing of likely stimulus beyond this year," he added.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Sunday that Trump will use the event to preview some elements of his sweeping plans to cut taxes

for the middle class, simplify the tax system and make American companies more globally competitive with lower rates and changes to encourage U.S. manufacturing.

Having hit a low of 111.92 yen JPY= in early trading in Asia, the dollar was up 0.3 percent at 112.29 yen by 0845 GMT. Against a basket of major currencies it was flat at 101.15 .DXY.

Economic data on Friday put pressure on U.S. bond yields and the dollar, showing new home sales grew less than expected in January and consumer sentiment weakening.

But speculators have not counted the dollar out. They increased bullish bets on the U.S. dollar for the first time in seven weeks, according to Commodity Futures Trading Commission data released on Friday and calculations by Reuters.

The euro edged up just 0.1 percent on Monday to \$1.0575 EUR=, as concerns that far-right anti-EU leader Marine Le Pen could win France's upcoming presidential election continued to weigh on the single currency.

Despite another raft of polls showing Le Pen losing either to centrist Emmanuel Macron or the right-wing Francois Fillon, investors, mindful of the shocks of Brexit and Trump's victory, have not counted her out, and many fear that she could lead France out of the euro zone.

(Source: Reuters)

Rising policy uncertainty driving slowdown in global trade: World Bank

By Anthony Rowley

Growth in world trade continues to slow, the World Bank has warned in a worrying report in which it identifies what is termed a "surge in economic policy uncertainty" as a principal contributor to the further decline in world trade growth seen during 2016.

"Global trade growth continued to be slow for a fifth consecutive year in 2016 which showed the weakest trade performance since the 2008-2009 global financial crisis," the World Bank said in its newly published annual Global Trade Watch.

This is the latest in a series of official reports to flag slowing world trade growth as a sign of potential trouble ahead for the global economy, and the first such to be published since US President Donald Trump took office last month.

The report makes clear, however, that Trump's protectionist inclinations - US withdrawal from major trade pacts such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the threatened imposition of US border taxes - are not the only sources of concern for world trade.

"Policy uncertainty in Europe and the United States had a negative impact on trade by reducing overall global growth," according to the paper's authors, World Bank Group economists Cristina Constantinescu, Aadiya Mattoo and Michele Ruta.

"In a more uncertain environment, firms may choose to postpone investment and export decisions and consumers may cut back spending," the report said. "The threat of unravelling trade agreements may also hurt trade growth by adding to policy uncertainty."

Late last year, the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said that "the slowdown in world trade growth, if sustained, will have serious



consequences for the medium-term growth of productivity and living standards".

Trade policy "has significant potential to reinvigorate trade growth but the political environment for reforms is difficult, with a growing polarization of OECD electorates into pro and anti-globalization supporters", the OECD added.

Likewise, the International Monetary Fund in its World Economic Outlook published around the same time noted: "Global trade growth has decelerated significantly in recent years.

"After its sharp collapse and rebound in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the volume of world trade in goods and services has grown by just over 3 per cent a year since 2012 - less than half the average rate during the previous three decades".

The latest World Bank report says that "preliminary data suggest that world merchandise trade grew by a little more than one per cent in 2016 compared to 2 per cent in 2015 and 2.7 per cent in 2014.



major steel producers.

According to the World Steel Association, Iran produced 17.89

million tons of crude steel in 2016, registering an 11-percent growth compared to the figure in 2015.

"This is a crucial step for New Zealand meat companies as they look to re-enter the Iranian market," Guy said.

The sides also discussed an action plan for agricultural cooperation in the year ahead, Guy said.

The two countries are also working on kiwifruit opportunities in Iran, where import restrictions prevent New Zealand from selling the country's most valuable fresh fruit.

New Zealand kiwifruit marketer

Zespri International and Iran's Ministry of Agriculture signed a Statement of Intent outlining undertakings to further explore commercial opportunities in Iran, Guy said.

Iran has well-established kiwifruit orchards and supply chains and produces the fruit in New Zealand's off-season, he said.

Along with other Western countries, New Zealand lifted sanctions against Iran in February last year.

More than one in 10 staff at U.S. banks work in Asia

Top American banks riding high on Donald Trump's presidency have hired almost 120,000 people in low-cost Asian economies, creating potential tensions with the new administration, which has pledged to bring jobs back to the US.

High quality global journalism requires investment. Please share this article with others using the link below, do not cut & paste the article. See our T&Cs and Copyright Policy for more detail. Email ftsales.support@ft.com to buy additional rights.

Bank of America, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo and Goldman Sachs employed 12 per cent of their total global workforce in Asian support centers in 2015 — the most recent data available. This compared with 10 per cent of overall jobs in 2013, according to figures compiled for the Financial Times by McLagan, a pay benchmarking company.

US banks have increasingly sought to cut costs and jobs at home to combat tougher regulation and sluggish revenue growth. David Warfield, associate partner at McLagan's performance practice, said the banks were likely to continue adding staff outside the US, despite the Trump administration urging companies to invest more at home.

Mr Warfield said there was still demand from global banks to hire more staff in Asia, particularly for compliance functions that have become increasingly important

following the financial crisis.

"Fifteen years ago, compliance roles would have been seen as essential to locate in the same building as the front office," he said.

"Today, these activities have been separated into business support roles and more specialized roles. The specialist roles are being supported from alternative offshore locations."

The number of banking staff working in offshore centers in Asia in compliance-related roles rose 18 per cent to 15,000 from 2013 to 2015, McLagan data show, while the numbers of Asian IT and operations jobs rose 6 per cent over the same period.

"For now, it's a steady trend — increased headcount across control functions, compared to the IT and operations functions which are largely in place and stable," said Warfield.

That trend could be disrupted by policies outlined by Trump, however, and in particular the review of financial sector regulations that Warfield said could "lessen the demand for support staff in compliance and other control functions".

"The big question will be technology and how that impacts on the more manual work [being done at service centers]," Warfield said, adding that the automation and efficiency from technological advancement could reduce overall job numbers in offshore centers in the long term.

(Source: Financial Times)

Lukoil seeking contribution to Iranian oil projects

Lukoil is seeking opportunities for growth in the Middle East as Iran opens more of its oil fields to international partners and other countries need technology to develop deposits, the Middle East head of Lukoil PJSC said.

The company is in talks with National Iranian Oil Co., the Persian Gulf country's state producer, about the Ab Teymour and Mansouri oil fields in western Iran, Al-Jebouri said.

The company is also interested to pump oil from offshore fields in Abu Dhabi and to produce heavy crude in Oman and Kuwait. Abu Dhabi, holder of most of the oil in the United Arab Emirates, is preparing to seek partners for the offshore fields by 2018, he said.

Oil will stabilize around \$55 to \$65 a barrel as OPEC fulfills its agreement to



cut output, with stockpiles and shale production keeping prices from rising much more, he noted.

Russia's second-largest oil producer

hasn't had to reduce production in Iraq as a result of the curbs pledged by OPEC, Gati Al-Jebouri said Monday in a Bloomberg television interview. Lukoil's output in

Iraq is about 400,000 barrels a day, he said. OPEC's cutbacks have brought a period of stability to the market, he said.

"We have a lid because of shale oil and we have a bottom because of the already proven decision and willingness of OPEC to maintain prices at a reasonable level," Al-Jebouri said.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, working in concert with 11 other producers such as Russia, reached agreement last year to reduce output to clear a persistent oil glut and revive prices. Brent crude oil, a global benchmark, has rebounded about 20 percent since OPEC decided at the end of November to restrict supplies for six months starting Jan. 1. Brent rose 0.8 percent to \$56.46 a barrel by 11:32 a.m. in Dubai.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Asia gets more crude oil from OPEC, Russia: Russel

January import data from China, India and Japan do little to show the impact of reduced crude supply, but do suggest that prices have risen in response to move by the producer group and its allies to remove some 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) from global oil markets.

Top importer China's January data provides a case in point.

Imports rose 27.5 percent from the year-earlier month to 34.03 million tons, equivalent to 8.01 million bpd.

That's an impressive increase, believed mainly to be on the back on ongoing additions to strategic reserves and rising demand from smaller, private refiners that are now allowed to import crude.

Saudi Arabia increased exports to China by 18.9 percent to the equivalent of 1.18 million bpd in January from the year earlier month.

This was also up a massive 40 percent from the 841,000 bpd China imported from the kingdom in December.

However, there is another factor to consider: Chinese customs data does tell us where each barrel of oil comes from, but it doesn't tell us when that barrel was shipped.

It's possible that the surge of imports from Saudi Arabia in January was partially related to barrels moving from floating or other storage to delivery, as traders responded to the expected tightening of the market and move of the oil futures curve from contango toward backwardation.

Nonetheless, even if some of the barrels arriving are from trade-related storage plays, it's still clear that China isn't feeling its supplies being constrained by the countries committed to cutting output.

Imports from Russia rose 36.5 percent in January from the same month in 2016 to the equivalent of 1.08 million bpd, while those from Angola surged 63.5 percent to 1.16 million bpd.

Other OPEC producers also saw their share of Chinese imports grow by more than overall January imports, with Iraq up 43.2 percent and Venezuela by 80.1 percent.

The losers among major suppliers were Iran, with China's imports dropping by 1.3 percent in January, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), whose exports to China declined by 15.5 percent.

■ Volumes to Asia up, prices too

Turning to India, its imports from Saudi Arabia amounted to 925,700 bpd in January, up 36.1 percent from December and down 1.4 percent from the same month in 2016.

India also imported more in January than it did in December from OPEC members Iran (up 1.5 percent), Iraq (up 2.1 percent) and Angola (up 60.2 percent).

However, imports from the UAE were down 8 percent and from Kuwait by 41.4 percent, although that country isn't a major supplier to India.

In Japan, Asia's third-biggest oil importer, purchases from

top supplier Saudi Arabia fell to 1.3 million bpd in January from December's 1.43 million, but were still 11.8 percent higher than the same month last year.

Imports from Japan's number two supplier, the UAE, fell from 884,057 bpd in December to 752,973 bpd in January, while imports from Russia rose to 214,498 bpd from December's 194,285.

It's also worth noting that Japan's total January imports were 3.315 million bpd, some 349,000 bpd lower than December's 3.664 million bpd.

The picture that emerges is Asia is largely unaffected by OPEC and its allies' cuts to output - at least for now.

China imported 1.88 million of crude from the United States in January, the equivalent of one Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC). For the whole of last year, it imported the equivalent of two VLCCs from the United States.

If U.S. oil can compete price-wise with cargoes from the Middle East, it may tempt Chinese refiners to buy more, especially if the OPEC output cuts do drain stored oil and start to crimp available prompt cargoes.

For OPEC and Russia, the question may eventually become deciding whether they can continue to keep Asia well supplied and maintain their relative market shares, while still inflicting enough pain elsewhere to keep oil prices on a rising trend.

(Source: Reuters)

Extracting gas from SP platform 20 begins

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Gas extraction was started in the phase 20 of Iran's South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf) at Sunday night, Alireza Ebadi, the operator of South Pars phases 20 and 21 development project, announced.



Ebadi said that putting platform 20 of the gas field into operation is now in the final stages, Public Relations Department of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) announced on Monday.

Phase 20 is aimed at producing one billion cubic feet (around 25 million cubic meters) of gas per day.

POGC, which is in charge of implementing South Pars development phases, placed the platform of phase 20 on its jacket in the Persian Gulf in mid-November 2016.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Russia says in talks over Iranian oil purchases

Russia has been in talks of buying oil from Iran, Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Monday, confirming earlier reports.

At the sidelines of an economic forum in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, Novak told reporters he expected the deal to be reached "within weeks." The purchases will be carried out via Promsirieimport, a trading unit of Russia's Energy Ministry, he said.

Last week, Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported that Iran will begin selling 100,000 bpd of oil to Russia within the next 15 days and receive payment half in cash and half in goods and services.

(Source: Reuters)



SARMAN CO.

1832 Dr. Shariati Ave. Next to Pol-E-Roomi Tehran IRAN
Tel.: +98 21 226.137.52



The Longines Master Collection

Who, exactly, is running U.S. foreign policy?

By Frida Ghitis

Not a day goes by in the Netherlands without President Donald Trump making news. If you're an American traveling overseas, you have likely been buttonholed by locals asking you to explain what is going on with the new administration. The local news carries clips of Trump attacking the media, disparaging NATO or falsely suggesting a terrorist attack just occurred in Sweden. At the same time, top Cabinet officials are making the rounds in Europe, appearing to contradict the President on the most basic matters of foreign policy.

This is precisely the type of situation into which the U.S. Department of State -- America's foreign ministry -- would normally step in and allay confusion, make sense of the mixed signals and explain to the world precisely where the United States stands.

Oddly, the State Department has gone mum.

The last time the State Department held its "daily briefing" was January 19. That might as well have been another century.

Remember the days not so long ago? Barack Obama was President. Washington was a strong backer of the European Union; its commitment to NATO was rock-solid, beyond question, and everyone knew that the United States supported the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In those days, the thought that U.S. forces should have seized Iraq's oil were being dismissed as the rantings of a political candidate who defied all norms, supporting torture, proposing a temporary ban on all Muslims entering the United States and claiming he would build a giant wall to block immigration from the south.

That candidate, of course, was Donald Trump. He is now President, and his policies are in question; his State Department is not speaking, and his secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, is barely letting his voice be heard. By one count, Tillerson has uttered a grand total of 50 words in response to questions from the media. But never before has there been a greater need for an official translator of U.S. policies to the world -- and to the American people.



In the convoluted organizational chart of the Trump administration, the President's chief strategist, Steve Bannon -- another official with practically no government experience -- may well be the man directing the country's foreign policy.

■ Waves of policy contradictions

Consider the endless waves of policy contradictions from the administration. The day after Trump appeared to walk away from the two-state solution during a joint appearance with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters at the UN, "Anybody that wants to say the United States does not support the two-state solution -- that would be an error."

Days later, at a series of meetings in Europe, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis all but pleaded with America's European allies to ignore Trump's criticism of NATO and equivocation about whether he would come

to the aid of European allies. The United States, he told them, remains committed to NATO and to its "enduring trans-Atlantic bond."

Mattis then traveled to Baghdad, where he had to reassure Iraqis that, contrary to Trump's statements, "We're not in Iraq to seize anybody's oil." A few weeks earlier, Trump had stood at CIA headquarters and made exactly the opposite case. "We should have kept the oil," he said, referring to the earlier U.S. military presence in Iraq, and adding, "Maybe you'll have another chance." That, incidentally, would be a direct violation of international law.

Under normal circumstances, America's center of diplomatic activity -- the State Department -- would do its traditional job,

attempting to portray U.S. government policies as a coherent whole, consistent with U.S. values and laws, committed to upholding the country's obligations, determined to maintain America's role in the world.

The problem is that all of that is a cacophony of confusion right now. Nobody knows precisely what the Trump administration's policies are, beyond a hazy "America First" slogan and antipathy to immigration and multilateral trade deals.

Sure, it's early. And both Trump and his top advisers, in addition to Tillerson, have little if any government experience. The administration is off to a slow start on a number of fronts, including staffing.

But inexperience is only one of the reasons why America's interlocutors to the world have gone quiet.

Indeed, worry over the murkiness surrounding the Trump administration's views extends all the way to Washington. Among the questions that loom large is: Who, exactly, is running U.S. foreign policy?

■ A key policy maker

Normally, the secretary of state is the top diplomat and a key policy maker. But in the convoluted organizational chart of the Trump administration, the President's chief strategist, Steve Bannon -- another official with practically no government experience -- may well be the man directing the country's foreign policy.

Tillerson, who spent his career until now working at Exxon, reportedly wanted a man with government experience to become his top deputy. He chose Elliott Abrams, a political insider with considerable foreign policy experience. Abrams said he met with the President and everything looked set for him to take the job. Bannon was the only White House staffer opposed to his appointment, according to Abrams, so that's who he thinks blocked him.

Bannon, who has taken a key post in the National Security Council and is building his own parallel NSC, may want to keep the State Department's influence low. After all, his goals for the country and the world are a sharp departure from America's traditional role as an advocate of democracy, human rights, freedom and open markets.

The longer the State Department remains quiet, the more likely it is that its voice will not be heard on policy-making within the administration; the more it signifies that the United States will abandon its role as global advocate of liberal democracy.

One recent poll in 15 Asian and European countries shows that since Trump's election views of the United States have grown more negative. Normally, this would underscore how important it is for America to better explain itself to the world. But the so-far-silent State Department is as confused about U.S. policies as is the rest of the world. And probably just as worried.

(Source: CNN)



Proudly introduces the First class luxurious hotel apartment located in the heart of the city Tehran. The newly constructed section has an enormous segments of rooms with all the amenities, Experience the TAJ MAHAL advantage & Hospitality 24/7

TAJ MAHAL INDIAN RESTAURANT

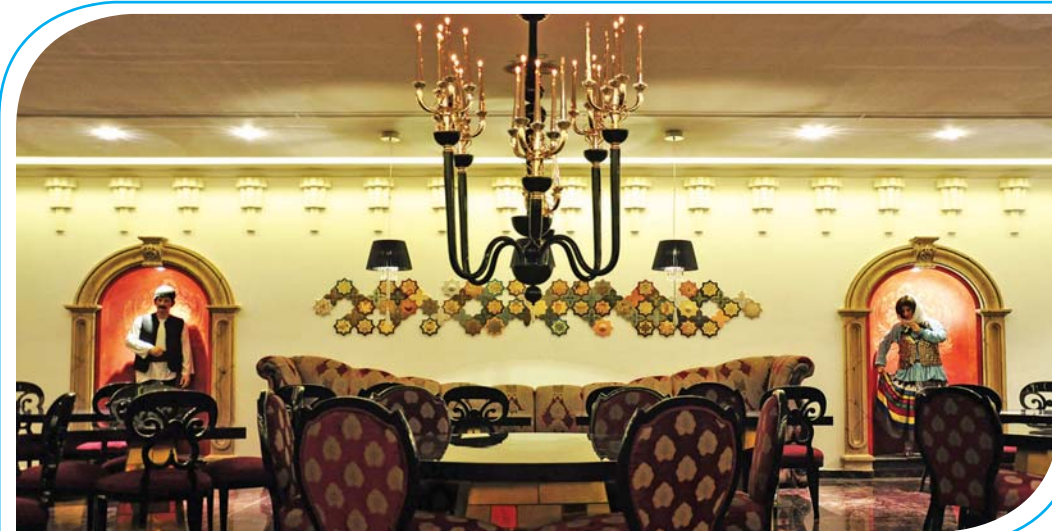


Enjoy the original taste of India !! The professional chef prepares the amazing varieties of kebabs, Tandoori nans, Biryani, veg or non-veg curries and the famous Indian desserts.

TAJ MAHAL HOTEL



Enjoy the authentic North Iranian unique culinary, Experience the home made country style recipes!!



TAJ MAHAL ANNOUNCES ITS SECOND RESTAURANT MAHI - MAHI

Address: No.29 South Sheikhabahaei Ave. Mollasadra Ave., Vanak Sq. Tehran - Iran
Http: //www.tajmahalhotel.ir E-mail: info@tajmahalhotel.ir
Tel: (+9821) 88035444(20) Fax: (+9821) 88057399 Cellphone: (+98910) 789 52 83

INTERVIEW

By Mohammad Mazhari

Tehran hosted, in recent days, a Tehran International Conference on Palestine in solidarity with the people of Palestine. In conjunction with tightening measures against Palestinians by Israel and Trump's decision to move US Embassy to Jerusalem, hundreds of foreign guests, including senior Palestinian leaders from Hamas and Jihad movements and officials of Muslim nations, came together in the two-day event to discuss solutions for Palestine issue. Tehran Times asked Elias Farhat, the former head of Lebanon's army's Staff and Command College about the event and its possible implications for the future of Intifada:

■ **What is the importance of Palestine issue for Arab and Islamic nations? Why should the world support Palestinian people?**

The Palestinian question is the central concern of the Arab and Islamic world. It is a just and fair cause about a people who were driven from their homeland by force and replaced by settlers brought from many parts of the world under questionable religious pretexts. The state of Israel was created on the Palestinian land. More important, Israel occupies Islamic and Christian holy shrines in Jerusalem which is a great insult for 1.3 billion Muslims all over the world. Supporting the Palestinian people is a moral, religious and national duty for all Arabs and Muslims.

■ **Do you think the solution of two states will be surefire and can it return the peace to middle east?**

Ever since the UN General Assembly resolution 194, 1947 and UN security council resolutions 242 and 338, the solution of two states was adopted in the diplomatic track but never implemented. This solution ignores the right of return for people who were driven out from so called 1948 Palestinian land. Nevertheless, the Oslo agreements have made the promised Palestinian state so fragile and given a green light for the Israelis to build settlements in the occupied West bank

and Gaza, thus complicating the two state solution. Recently Netanyahu presented his proposal: A Jewish state. This has blown up both the one state (restricted on the Jews) and two states solutions. It is hard to implement either of them, so, peace in the region is still far of being achieved.

■ **How do you evaluate approach of new American administration toward Palestinian people and their rights?**

President Trump during his campaign expressed his support for Israel, he talked a lot about peace in the middle east but did not clarify his ideas. After being elected he announced his decision to appoint his son-in-law Jared Kushner an adviser, and assigned



Ever since the UN General Assembly resolution 194, 1947 and UN security council resolutions 242 and 338, the solution of two states was adopted in the diplomatic track but never implemented.



him the task of making peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

When he received Israeli prime minister Netanyahu in the white house, president Trump took a crucial decision declaring that he will not abide by the two state solution and he will support any solution both sides agree upon. This indicates that Trump is not serious in looking for any solution, instead he has chosen a supporter of settlements, Friedman, as an ambassador to Israel. It is expected that he will continue supporting Israel, and will obstruct any attempt to bring just and comprehensive peace to the region which guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people. It is unlikely that we will see Trump moving towards peace in Palestine.

■ **What will be the reaction of Arabic and Islamic countries if Trump moves the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem?**

If Trump moves the US embassy to East Jerusalem, he would violate UNSC anti settlement resolution 2334 which considers Israeli settlements illegiti-

mate and calls for ceasing the building of settlements. The US embassy would hence be considered illegal because it will be built on Palestinian land. Unfortunately, some Arab countries have diplomatic ties with Israel, others have relations through secret channels, so it is difficult to see a brave position taken by Arab and Muslim countries. However, the Arab and Muslim masses will oppose and protest the compliance of their political regimes.

■ **How do you see the impact of regional struggles between some Arabic countries on Palestinian issue and weakening of Palestine position and importance in the world?**

Palestinian people were left without support of their brother Arab and Moslem countries in facing the Israeli aggression. They were forced to halt their resistance against the Israeli occupation and encouraged to negotiate their occupier. Unfortunately, this lead to lose more land, sovereignty and freedom. Iran is the only country which supported all the Palestinian people and its armed resistance. Iran political rhetoric is still loud and condemns Israeli aggressions and violations to human rights and international law. Iran and its allies and friends seize any opportunity to disclose all Israeli crimes and show them to the international public.

If Trump moves the US embassy to East Jerusalem, he would violate UNSC anti settlement resolution 2334 which considers Israeli settlements illegitimate and calls for ceasing the building of settlements.



The U.S. is playing with fire on Iran

By Scott Ritter

Last Wednesday, national security adviser Michael Flynn appeared in the White House briefing room to issue a statement. He singled out what he characterized as Iran's "destabilizing behavior across the Middle East," including "a provocative ballistic missile launch" that was, in his opinion, done "in defiance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231," which was passed July 20, 2015. UNSCR 2231 endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Program of Action (JCPOA), as the nuclear deal among Iran, the United States, Russia, China and the European Union is officially known. "As of today," Flynn darkly declared, "we are officially putting Iran on notice."

The Iranian test, which involved a Khorramshahr medium-range missile, took place three days earlier, on Jan. 29. After flying roughly 630 miles, the missile exploded in midair in what appeared to be a failed test of a re-entry vehicle. As Flynn noted in his statement, the Security Council had, in its Resolution 2231, "called upon" Iran "not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using ballistic missile technology."

Iran maintains that its missile test

was not in violation of any Security Council resolution, saying that it has no nuclear weapons program, its missiles are designed as conventional weapons only and it has a legitimate interest in self-defense, inclusive of the right to test and deploy ballistic missiles. Ali Akbar Velayati, a former foreign minister and current policy adviser to Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, dismissed Flynn's statement as "baseless ranting."

Legally, Iran has the stronger position. Although a previous U.N. resolution, UNSCR 1929, passed in 2010, directed "that Iran shall not undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles," that resolution was terminated as a result of the ground-breaking nuclear deal. It was replaced by the resolution cited by Flynn. The later resolution, UNSCR 2231, only calls upon Iran not to test missiles, a far less stringent standard that falls short of an outright prohibition on missile testing. While the Obama administration, when negotiating the JCPOA, had opposed watering down of the language, Russia, China and Europe disagreed, and the new verbiage was approved.

But neither legality nor reality seems to be a defining feature in the worldview of the Trump administration. "Iran is playing with fire," President Trump tweeted after the Iranian

Iran's overt and covert actions in opposing what it viewed as an unjust and illegal occupation of Iraq by the United States are often cited by those opposed to the theocracy in Tehran as proof of the ongoing legitimacy of the "terrorist" label.

test. "They don't appreciate how kind President Obama was to them. Not me!" Shortly after the newly inaugurated president's tweet, the Treasury Department announced new sanctions against Iran for its "continued support for terrorism and development of its ballistic missile program." After the sanctions were announced, Flynn issued a follow-on statement: "The days of turning a blind eye to Iran's hostile and belligerent actions toward the United States and the world community are over."

The charges supporting the Trump administration's justification for sanctioning Iran, however, are factually and intellectually unsustainable. While there is no arguing that Iran's behavior during the early years of the Islamic Republic's existence justified it being labeled as a sponsor of state terrorism, the same cannot be said of its policies since 2001. Iran was quick to condemn the 9/11 terror attack on the United States and played a role in supporting American actions against the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Iran's overt and covert actions in opposing what it viewed as an unjust and illegal occupation of Iraq by the United States are often cited by those opposed to the theocracy in Tehran as proof of the ongoing legitimacy of the "terrorist" label. Viewed broadly, however, the Iranian policies toward Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 are part and parcel of a coherent approach to opposing the very Sunni-based Islamic fundamentalism that motivated the 9/11 terror attacks and continue to drive al-Qaida, Islamic State and other Islamic extremist elements around the world today, a fundamentalism against which the United States wages its "global war on terror." Iran is helping lead the fight against Islamic State in both Iraq and Syria and is a

sworn enemy of al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Yemen. Seen in this context, Iran is more ally than foe, and the label "state sponsor of terror" appears trivial and inappropriate—especially when viewed beside the policies of erstwhile America allies such as Saudi Arabia, whose citizens constituted the majority of the 9/11 attackers and which is responsible for underwriting the financial and material support of Islamic extremists around the world, including Islamic State and al-Qaida.

When asked about the range of responses his administration might consider in dealing with a recalcitrant Iran, Trump replied, "Nothing is off the table," implying a military option. Any military action against Iran, however, void of just cause and proper preparation and planning, would be foolish and counterproductive to U.S. national security objectives in the Middle East and around the world. It would also be near suicidal for U.S. forces deployed in the region.

An American military strike against Iran based upon continued testing of ballistic missiles would most likely trigger a response from Tehran that would neither be limited nor readily containable. American forces in Syria and Iraq that are currently focused on defeating Islamic State could be put at genuine risk from the thousands of Iranian troops and pro-Iranian proxies operating in their vicinity. Moreover, any military action against Iran could draw both Israel and Russia into the fight (and not necessarily on the same side) while alienating European allies and creating levels of uncertainty that neither the American military nor foreign service is prepared to deal with.

Trump committed to a strong anti-Iranian stance during his campaign, promising to do away with the "bad deal" that was the JCPOA. While



more pragmatic minds seem to have convinced the new president that it would not be in America's best interests to unilaterally withdraw from the nuclear deal with Iran, the words and actions of the Trump administration seem to indicate a willingness to foment a crisis with the theocracy in Tehran. This is not sound policy.

In May of this year, Iran will hold elections for the office of president. The incumbent, Hassan Rouhani, has proved to be a moderating influence on the more conservative elements inside Iran—he was singularly responsible for Iran's willingness to negotiate a nuclear deal that many inside Iran opposed. Rouhani's re-election is not a foregone conclusion; indeed, the recent death of his long-time mentor and ally, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, has substantially weakened the position of the Iranian president in the face of strong conservative opposition to his policies, further complicating any re-election bid by the incumbent.

Iran under Rouhani has shown itself more than capable of navigating difficult diplomatic waters made even more treacherous by inconsistent and often hostile American policy. A conservative Iranian president would not necessarily be able, or willing, to do the same. If the goal of the Trump administration is to do

away with the Iranian nuclear deal, there is no more certain path to that outcome than the election of a conservative successor to President Rouhani. Such an outcome would be disastrous for Iran, the United States and the rest of the world. While the decision as to who will govern as president of Iran is ultimately one that the people of Iran, through their constitutionally mandated processes, will decide, there seems to be a lack of recognition within the Trump team as to the ramifications of the administration's words and actions when it comes to shaping events involving Iran and other countries.

The Trump administration's foray into Iran policy—courtesy of Michael Flynn's statement—seemed to have been driven by a national security adviser flying solo; Secretary of Defense James Mattis was in Asia and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was not yet confirmed. One can only hope that Trump will, in the future, rely more on the advice of such senior Cabinet officials when it comes to issues with the complexity and magnitude of Iran, and less on the inflammatory words of Flynn. Military conflict with Iran is not desirable policy. Playing with fire is one thing, getting burned another—especially when it is the United States holding the match.

Any military action against Iran, however, void of just cause and proper preparation and planning, would be foolish and counterproductive to U.S. national security objectives in the Middle East and around the world. It would also be near suicidal for U.S. forces deployed in the region.



An American military strike against Iran based upon continued testing of ballistic missiles would most likely trigger a response from Tehran that would neither be limited nor readily containable.

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

New Apt in Farmanieh
100 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., wonderful, fabulous furn, Pkg, lobby
new brand, *Suitable for Diplomats, \$ 2500*
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Amazing Apt in Fereshteh
185 sq.m, 9th floor, furn, bright living room, balcony, pool & gym, car wash, 2 Pkg
Shooting, **\$ 4500**
Mr.Nader: 09128440157

Amazing Apt in Zafaraniyeh
400 sq.m, 4Bdrs., 8th floor, big balcony, nice lobby, luxury furn,
\$10.0000 Negotiable
Ms.Sara 09128103207

Apt in Nice Tower in Shahrak-Gharb
110 sq.m, 1 Bdr., top floors, luxury furn, excellent view, lobby, Pkg, good access **\$ 2000**
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Aqdasiyeh
120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., nice view
Pkg, good access
Suitable for Residency of Ambassadors
Ms.Sara 09128103207

Villa

Amazing Villa in Darous
Triplex, 410 Sq.m, built up in 1250 Sq.m land, 4 Bdrs., green garden, 3 pkg lot, **\$7000**
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Super Luxury Villa in Farmanieh
800 Built up in 1200 Land, Duplex, completely renovated, 7 Bdrs., 2 level, green garden, outdoor pool, high security, equipment kitchen,
Suitable for Residency of Ambassadors
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Amazing Villa in Kamranieh
duplex, 750 sq.m, 8 Bdrs., renovated, full furn, ceramic floor, driver room, balcony, 4Pkg, \$
15.000, Suitable for foreign Embassies
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Duplex Villa in Niavaran
450 sq.m Built up in 650 sq.m Land, One Extra Apt, Jacuzzi, Pkg, indoor pool, Spj, *Suitable for Residency of Ambassadors \$ 7000*
Ms.Diba: 09128103206



Holder of
ISO 9001:2008
ISO 10004:2012
ISO 10002:2014
From Oxford Cert Universal

Ask Us Your Required Short Term / Long Term Furnished & Unfurnished Apartments.

آپارتمان های کوتاه مدت و بلند مدت مبلیه و غیر مبلیه مورد نیاز خود را از ما بخواهید.

Building

Whole building in Jordan
each floor 126 sq.m, duplex store, open space, full glass, smart AC, furn/unfurn, storage, 900 sq.m Pkg
each floor available for Sale & Rent
Ms.Sara 09128103207

Whole Building in Farmanieh
60 Apts., Size of each apt between 190-230 sq.m, 3 room, Lobby, conference room, Spj, 37 Pkg, *Suitable for Residency of Ambassadors, Reasonable Price*
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

whole building in Jordan
9-Storey, each unit 127 Sq.m, fully furn, 30 Bdrs., 15 Pkg lot, renovated, stone floor, *Suitable for foreign Companies, \$35000*
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

whole building in Zafar-Jordan
4 floors, 30 rooms, security, furnished, meeting room
Lobby, Pkg, *Suitable for Residency for Big Companies*
Negotiable Price
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Ideal Offers

Affordable Apt. in Elahieh
250 Sq.m, 3 Bdrs, balcony, back yard, fully furn, ceramic floor, only **\$2500**
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Luxury Apt. in Jordan
150 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., 3rd floor, Full furn, nice & cozy, Pkg **\$ 1800**
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Elahieh
180 sq.m, 3 Bdrs flat, full furn, Spj & Pkg, good access, only **\$3000**
Ms.Sara 09128103207

Apt in Jordan
120 Sq.m, 2 Bdrs., renovated Pkg, full furn, wood floor, pool only **\$ 1200**
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Luxury Apt in Zafaraniyeh
250 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., luxury furn, Nice & cozy, Pkg
Suitable for Diplomat, \$ 3300
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Modern Apt. in Jordan
5th floor, 2 Bdrs., 120 Sq.m, fully furn, lobby, **\$1800**
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Nice Attention To Embassies, International & Local Companies & Shopping Centers

The professional section of administrative license offices, Commercial Properties and Shopping Centers. From 100 Sq.m to 20,000 Sq.m (For Sale & Rent)

قابل توجه سفارتخانه ها، کمپانی های خارجی، داخلی و مراکز خرید
اجاره و فروش تخصصی ملک های سند اداری و تجاری، از ۱۰۰ مترمربع تا ۲۰۰۰۰ مترمربع

For Sale

محمودیه
۵۵۰ متر، ۱۰۰۰ متر لابی
خوش نقشه، ط ۱۱
دید شمالی و جنوبی
نادرینا: ۰۹۱۲۸۴۴۰۱۵۲

باغ فردوس
۱۴۵ متر، ۳ خوابه
لابی شیک، دید و نقشه عالی
۲ پارکینگ، ۳ سال ساخت
فربد: ۰۹۱۲۸۴۸۴۲۱۶

فرشته
۲۸۵ متر، ۴ خوابه، تکواحدی
کف سنگ، فول فرنیس، لوکیشن عالی
فول امکانات، متریاال درجه ۱
نادرینا: ۰۹۱۲۸۴۴۰۱۵۲

زعفرانیه
۳۲۰ متر، ۴ خوابه، تکواحدی
۲ مستر روم، نقشه و دید عالی
۳ سال ساخت
فربد: ۰۹۱۲۸۴۸۴۲۱۶

زعفرانیه
۴۳۰ متر، ۴ خوابه، تکواحدی
لابی، استخر، ۳ پارکینگ،
دسترسی عالی
فربد: ۰۹۱۲۸۴۸۴۲۱۶

Office

Office in Mirdamad
5th floor, 110 Sq.m, 4 Bdrs, fully furn,
12 tel lines, \$2800
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Office in Jordan
110 Sq.m, 3 rooms, completely renovated, guest Pkg, nice lobby, clean, high security, reasonable price, *Suitable for Foreign Companies*
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Modern Office in Zafaraniyeh
Near Palladium
1100 sq.m, 3rd floor, 4 Bdrs, fully furnish, *Suitable for Foreign Companies \$5000*
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Modern Office in Argentine
2nd floor, 3rd floor each floor 500 Sq.m with 3 offices, open office, nice balcony, lobby, 5 Pkg, Open Space, *Suitable for International Companies & Airlines, Negotiable price*
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Administrative license Office
In Jordan
85 Sq.m, high security, Good Access furnished, 10 Tel Lines, **\$1700**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Luxury Office in Vanak
Duplex, 1200 sq.m built up, lobby, Pkg, *Suitable for Foreign Companies*
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Office in Mirdamad
5th floor, 110 Sq.m, 4 Bdrs, fully furn, 12 tel lines, \$2800
Mr. Nader: 09128440157

Amazing Office in Valiasr
150 sq.m, excellent view, good access, 24 security, Pkg, lobby **Reasonable Price**
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Administrative license building in Vozara/Argentine
500 Sq.m, open office, nice balcony, lobby, Pkg lot, high security, *Full of Foreign Companies*
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Shopping center leasing&managment

Project Development Leasing and Releasing Management and consultancy

راه اندازی مراکز خرید
اجاره و فروش
مدیریت و بهره برداری مراکز خرید

فروش و اجاره تعداد محدودی از
بهترین مراکز خرید کشور

Manager

09122841274 - Mr.Tayyar

parsdiplomatic@gmail.com
info@parsdiplomatic.com

Best Consultation, Best Services, Best Result

Hot Line: 28141

Section Manager "Tina 09128103205"
Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

مالکین محترم

ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آپارتمان، ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسپارید.

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

مالکین محترم املاک مبلیه و غیرمبلیه، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم.

مالکین محترم

ویلاهای شما را جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر و مدیران شرکت های بین المللی در مناطق شمالی تهران نیازمندیم.

Gum disease and your overall health

What you should know about periodontal disease

By Shawn Watson

Often taken for granted, the monotonous task of brushing and flossing our teeth daily has never been more important in order to avoid periodontal disease known as gum disease and the risk it places on our overall health. It has been estimated that 75 percent of Americans have some form of gum disease, which has been linked to serious health complications and causes various dental problems that like periodontal disease, are often preventable.

What is gum disease?

Periodontal disease, also called gum disease, is mainly caused by bacteria from plaque and tartar build up. Other factors that have the potential to cause gum disease may include:

- Tobacco use
- Clenching or grinding your teeth
- Certain medications
- Genetics

Types of periodontal disease (gum disease) include:

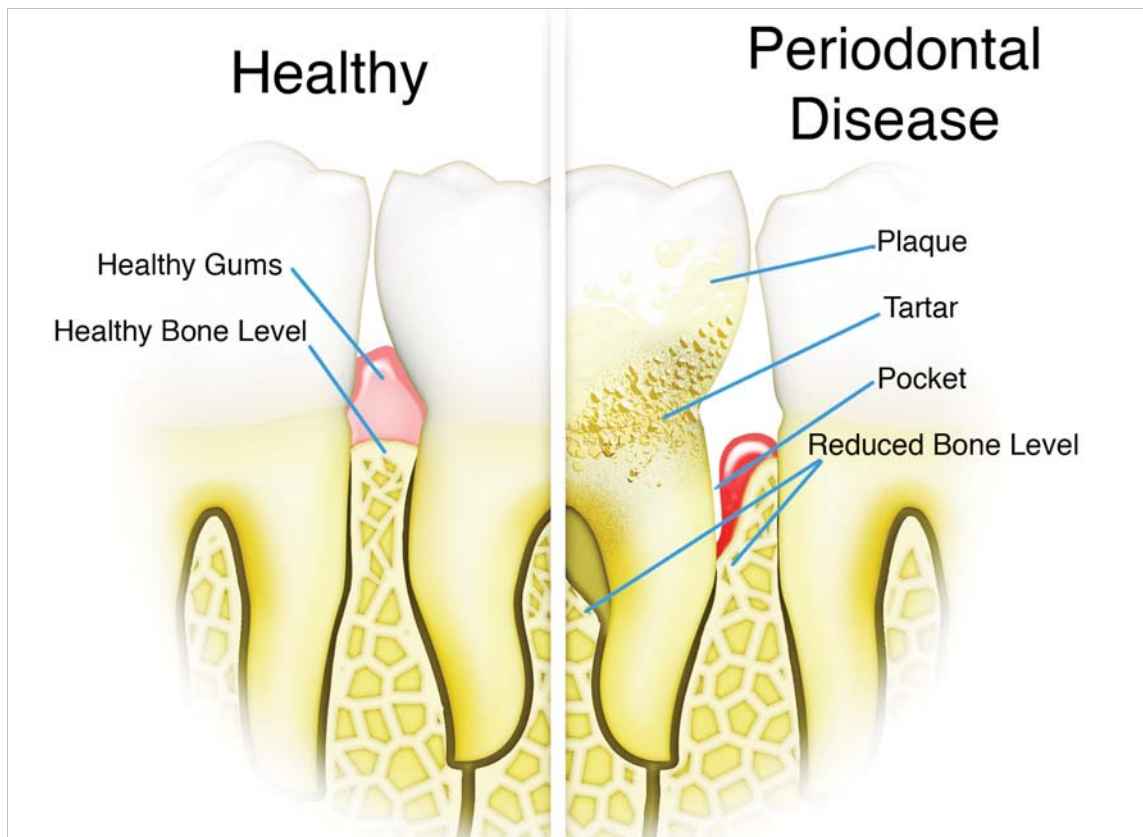
- Gingivitis—The beginning stage of gum disease and is often undetected. This stage of the disease is reversible.
- Periodontal disease—Untreated gingivitis may lead to this next stage of gum disease. With many levels of periodontal disease, the common outcome is chronic inflammatory response, a condition when the body breaks down the bone and tissue in the infected area of the mouth, ultimately resulting in tooth and bone loss.

Signs of gum disease include:

- Red, bleeding, and/or swollen gums
- Bad breath
- Mobility of the teeth
- Tooth sensitivity caused by receding gums
- Abscessed teeth
- Tooth loss

Recent studies suggest periodontal or gum disease may contribute to or be warning signs of potentially life-threatening conditions such as:

- Heart disease and stroke—Studies suggest gingivitis may increase the risk of heart disease and stroke because of the high levels of bacteria found in infected areas of the mouth. As the level of periodontal disease increases, the risk of cardiovascular disease may increase with it. Other studies have suggested that the inflammation in the gums may create a chronic inflammation response in other parts of the body which has also been implicated in increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Diabetes—People with diabetes often have some form of gum disease, likely caused by high blood glucose, according to the U.S. Centers Disease Control and Prevention. People with diabetes need to take extra care to ensure proper brushing and flossing techniques are used to prevent the advancement of the gum disease. Regular check-ups and cleanings with your dental hygienist should be followed.



Proper brushing and flossing is the easiest way to reduce and prevent gum disease, but regular cleanings with your dental hygienist or dentist are necessary to remove calculus and treat advanced gum disease.

- Chronic kidney disease—A study, conducted by Case Western Reserve University, suggests that people without any natural teeth, known as edentulous, are more likely to have chronic kidney disease (CDK), than people with natural teeth. CDK affects blood pressure potentially causing heart disease, contributed to kidney failure, and affects bone health.
- Preterm birth—Babies that are born premature (before 37 weeks of gestation), may face numerous health complications. Research indicates that women with periodontal disease are three to five times more likely to have a baby born preterm compared to women without any form of gum disease. Women are more susceptible to gingivitis when pregnant and should follow their regular brushing habits, and continue with dental cleanings and examinations.

Treatments for gum disease

Depending on the type of periodontal disease, some of

the available treatment options are:

- Removal of plaque and calculus by way of scaling done by your dental hygienist or dentist.
- Medications such as chlorhexidine gluconate, a mouth rinse prescribed by your dentist or hygienist to help kill the bacteria in your mouth, along with frequent cleanings.
- Surgery may be necessary in certain cases to stop, halt, or minimize the progression of periodontal disease. Surgery is also used to replace bone that was lost in advanced stages of the disease.

Preventing gum disease

Proper brushing and flossing is the easiest way to reduce and prevent gum disease, but regular cleanings with your dental hygienist or dentist are necessary to remove calculus and treat advanced gum disease. If you are concerned that you may have gum disease, contact your dentist.

(Source: verywell.com)

1 in 4 drug overdoses in the U.S. is related to heroin

By Allan Adamson

New figures released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday highlight the severity of America's opioid epidemic and the dangers of the rising use of heroin in the country.

More than 50,000 overdose-related deaths

The number of overdose-related deaths in the U.S. in 2010 was 38,329. The figure climbed to 52,404 in 2015. Drug abuse in essence is more lethal than firearms, which killed a total of 36,252 in 2015.

Heroin accounts for 25 percent of drug overdoses

The latest numbers also showed that in 2015, one in four drug overdoses was related

to heroin, marking a dramatic increase from the numbers in 1999 when only 6 percent of all overdoses were related to the drug.

Deaths related to opioids, which include heroin, comprised majority of the overall cases of overdose representing 60 percent of overdose deaths. In 2010, the percentage was only about 50 percent.

"Rates of drug overdose deaths continued to increase. In 2015, the age-adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths (16.3 per 100,000) was more than 2.5 times the rate in 1999 (6.1). Increases were seen for both males (from 8.2 in 1999 to 20.8 in 2015) and females (from 3.9 in 1999 to 11.8 in 2015)," CDC said in its report.

Holly Hedegaard, from the National Center for Health Statistics, who is also one of the authors of the study, said that this is

the first time that the number of overdose deaths in the U.S. exceeded 50,000.

Rising number of heroin users in the U.S.

The U.S. has seen a significant increase in the number of heroin users, which can be attributed to the spike in heroin-related deaths in the country. Figures from the United Nations World Drug Report 2016 showed that there were about 1 million heroin users in the U.S. in 2014, or nearly three times higher than the number in 2003.

Causes of the heroin usage trend

Many theories attempt to determine the cause of the heroin use spike in the U.S. but what appears to be the best explanation for the rising use of the drug is the crackdown on prescription drugs which include OxyContin

and Vicodin, whose painkilling effects are comparable to heroin.

Opioid painkillers are legal prescription drugs while heroin is an illegal drug. As doctors slowed down the prescription of the legal drugs, users apparently opted to use heroin to avoid withdrawal.

Dangers of heroin abuse

Heroin is a powerful opioid that can cause "pretty quick highs." Unfortunately, abuse poses dangers that can cause serious health problems or even death.

Overdosing on heroin can slow or even stop breathing, which can reduce the amount of oxygen that reaches the brain, a condition known as hypoxia, whose possible effects include coma and permanent brain damage.

(Source: Tech Times)

Nine simple tricks to boost your confidence at work

By Bernard Marr

Ever heard the advice to "fake it 'til you make it"? Turns out, in some cases, it's based in scientific fact.

When it comes to feeling more confident at work. Science has shown that things like how you dress, how you hold yourself, the music you listen to, and even the hobbies you engage in outside the office can have a measurable effect on how confident you feel.

Want to feel more confident at work — almost instantly? Try some of these simple tricks to boost your confidence at work, or anywhere you happen to be:

Stand up straight

Social psychology professor Amy Cuddy studies how positioning our bodies affects our mood and psychology, and simply sitting or standing up straighter can boost your testosterone levels and lower cortisol levels. The combination boosts self-confidence almost immediately.

Smile

Smiling makes you appear confident and composed to others, but it also can help relieve feelings of stress so that you actually feel happier and more relaxed. And those things help you project confidence.

Smell good

Interestingly, multiple studies have shown that wearing a scent you like can help you feel more confident. One study showed that, for men, the more you like a scent, the more confident you'll feel, so it's worth shopping around for your favorite. In another study, an impressive 90 percent of women who wore a scent felt more confident than women who went fragrance-free.

Rock out

There's a reason that many professional athletes include "power" songs in their warm up routines; new research suggests that listening to music can make you feel more powerful — and that can translate into feeling more confident. When putting together your confidence playlist, go for songs with strong bass lines for the most impact.

Perform rituals

Speaking of athletes, have you noticed that many have a very specific ritual they follow before performing? This isn't an accident. Research shows that performing rituals can boost your self-confidence and even trick you into performing better. Michael Phelps' coach has revealed that they have a very specific ritual he follows, because it tricks his brain into ignoring the pressure of a race; to him, it's just another swim every time he gets in the pool.

Dress for success

How you dress may have as much an effect on how you perceive yourself as how others perceive you. In one interesting study, volunteers who wore lab coats made half as many mistakes on a test as those who wore street clothes. This doesn't mean you should go out and buy a lab coat. Rather, consider how you think a confident, successful person would look — and dress accordingly.

Most of us have some kind of to-do list we keep and refer to in our lives, but do you ever make a note of your accomplishments? Just taking a few minutes every day to make a record of good things you've done can be a powerful way to boost your self-confidence. It can be as big as getting an awesome performance review at work, or as small as doing the dishes every night before bed — the size of the accomplishment doesn't matter in this case.

Exercise

Seems like breaking a sweat is good for just about whatever ails you — and your confidence is no exception. Several studies have shown that working out can boost your confidence, regardless of how hard you exercise. So just taking a walk when you need to feel more confident might do the trick.

Play an instrument

If you played an instrument as a kid, it might be time to dig it out of the closet and start practicing again. One study suggests that learning to play the piano in particular boosted people's self-confidence. But lots of research supports that learning and practicing an instrument of any kind has positive effects for your brain.

(Source: Bloomberg)

FIRST CHOICE REAL ESTATE

Mr. Ghanizadeh
Nobody does it better

آژانس املاک انتخاب اول در خدمت شماست

TEL: 22041212 - 09121081212

APARTMENT - VILLA - OFFICE

PROPERTY@FIRSTCHOICECO.COM

WWW.FIRSTCHOICECO.COM

Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME

Real Estate

Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group

(021) 88888865

CHINESE RESTAURANT GOLDEN DRAGON

SINCE 1968

(+9821) 22230292 - 22219036

Add: Shariati Ave., Pol-e-Roomi, Top of Qeytarieh, Tehran

IraniaHOME Real Estate

SH.LAVASANI

09123103526

Tel: 88888007 Fax: 88675936

www.iraniahome.com

Email: info@iraniahome.com

مالکین محترم: ویلا و آپارتمان مبیل شما را جهت اجاره به دیپلماتها نیازمندیم

villa - Elahie

1000 SQM land - 1000 SQM

built up Quite fantastic

full facilities - access to all

ready to move in

Fair price Ahrabi 09192571076

Advertising Dept:

times1979@gmail.com

TEHRANTIMES

Iran's Leading International Daily

www.tehrantimes.com

+9821 430 51 450

CAMRY GLX

Model 2013

Very Chic, Ready for Annual Rent to Foreign Companies without Driver

(NADER)

09121944548

ISF-EHSANI Real Estate

IRAN-SARAYE-FERESHTEH

1- 250 sq.m super luxury, classic plan, beautiful view, natural light, high security

2- 300 sq.m luxury furnished, full facilities, high security, beautiful entrance

3- 500 sq.m villa, green yard, open pool, big trace, triplex, very good plan

Elahieh 0912-4388634

Tel: (021) 22022920 Fax: (021) 26201855

www.maskanfereshteh.com maskanfereshteh@gmail.com

Add.: No. 18, Hoojat Bldg., Sharifmanesh Intersection, Fereshteh, Elahieh

Cycling tourism to get off the ground in Iran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — With the aim of improving services to tourists visiting Iran, a professional course will be held for the first time for cycling tour guides in the country.

The Cycling Federation and the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization will co-host a 5-month course especially for male trainees in the next Iranian calendar year, which begins on March 21, ISNA reported on Friday.



Cyclists revel in a countryside path in northern Iran in an undated photo

Stunning scenery, hospitable people, abundant historical sites, regional cuisine, and affordable accommodation are amongst incentives for bike traveling in Iran.

Some professionals say the best times to cycle Iran are spring and autumn to avoid extremes in temperature.

Cycle touring is very popular in Western and Central Europe, and many operators have sprung up to take advantage of positive market conditions.

Sets of needlework on show at CHTHO

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A needlework collection crafted by veteran artisan Marzieh Dizangian is on display at the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) in Tehran.



A jacket richly ornamented with needlework

Organized under the auspices of the CHTHO exports department, the showcase comes to an end on March 1.

ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic city of Ayutthaya

The historic city of Ayutthaya in Thailand, founded in 1350, was the second capital of the Siamese Kingdom.

It flourished from the 14th to the 18th centuries, during which time it grew to be one of the world's largest and most cosmopolitan urban areas and a center of global diplomacy and commerce.

Ayutthaya was strategically located on an island surrounded by three rivers connecting the city to the sea. This site was chosen because it was located above the tidal bore of the Gulf of Siam as it existed at that time, thus preventing attack of the city by the sea-going warships of other nations. The location also helped to protect the city from seasonal flooding.



The city was attacked and razed by the Burmese army in 1767 who burned the city to the ground and forced the inhabitants to abandon the city. The city was never rebuilt in the same location and remains known today as an extensive archaeological site.

Once an important center of global diplomacy and commerce, Ayutthaya is now an archaeological ruin, characterized by the remains of tall prang (reliquary towers) and Buddhist monasteries of monumental proportions, which give an idea of the city's past size and the splendor of its architecture.

Well-known from contemporary sources and maps, Ayutthaya was laid out according to a systematic and rigid city planning grid, consisting of roads, canals, and moats around all the principal structures. (Source: UNESCO)

7 myths about cycling Iran

By Eric Schambion & Amaya Williams

Iran is one of the most misunderstood countries on the planet. Almost everyone who has the opportunity to visit Iran, falls in love with its warm and generous people. The country certainly has its challenges, but there are many misconceptions about life inside the Islamic Republic.

■ Myth #1: It's almost impossible to escape Iran's busy highways. You'll be pedaling cross country with an endless parade of thundering trucks and speeding cars piloted by kamikaze drivers.

With today's technology it is possible to break away from the big highways. Using open source street maps and the excellent Maps.me offline maps app, we were able to chart routes avoiding some of Iran's busiest and most treacherous roads.

Iran has a comprehensive network of secondary roads, most of which are paved. If you ask locals for route advice, they will undoubtedly steer you towards the main highway. They'll likely tell you that the less travelled road is 'dangerous' or doesn't offer any services. Ignore this nonsense. Even the tiniest village will have a shop selling basic supplies at reasonable prices. Off the main routes you won't find hotels but don't let that deter you. In Iran, some kind soul will inevitably invite you home for the night.

■ Myth #2: Iranians don't like Westerners—particularly Brits and Americans

Nothing could be further from the truth. Iranians are incredibly welcoming, unfailingly hospitable and insanely curious about the West. As a foreign visitor you will be showered with endless (and undeserved) kindness. Locals will pull over to offer you gifts of fruit and sweets. Shopkeepers and restaurant owners will refuse payment (but always attempt to pay at least three times, before accepting the gift). Iranian families will invite you home to spend the night, prepare a special feast in your honor and send you off with goodies to keep you fueled during your next leg of cycling. We've cycled in 102 countries. Iran ranks #1 for hospitality.

■ Myth #3: Most of Iran is featureless desert. The landscape is dull and uninspiring.

Apart from the low-lying coastal regions, much of Iran sits on a high plateau surrounded by craggy peaks. The Zagros Mountains run the length of the country and boast several summits over 3,000 meters. Most of our time cycling Iran was spent above 1,200 meters, surrounded by rugged hills and beautifully barren landscapes.

■ Myth #4: Iran's climate is hot and dry most of the year.

Iran is a big country—three times the size of France and four times the size of California. Naturally there are considerable differences in climate from one region to the next. We toured Iran from mid-February to mid-March.

Arriving via the ferry from Dubai to Bander Abbas on Iran's southern coast, the weather was mild and pleasant. A few weeks later, as we pedaled north of Shiraz, a chill set in and by the time we arrive at the border with Turkey on 19 March, we were caught in a snowstorm.

The best times to cycle Iran are spring and autumn



Beautiful ribbon of road through Iran's Zagros Mountains

when you can avoid extremes in temperature. Women in particular, will find summer cycling challenging as they are forced to cover up and comply with Iran's version of the Islamic dress code.

■ Myth #5: Iran is an expensive country to visit

Of course how much you spend depends on how you like to travel. For us, Iran was one of the least expensive countries we've ever visited. During our 30 day stay we spent just \$200.

Fruits and vegetables are very cheap (and tasty) in Iran. We mostly self-catered and could easily get by on \$3-\$4 per day. A kilo of tomatoes costs around 40 cents, enough bread to fill the stomachs of two hungry about 50 cents, 400 grams of feta cheese \$1, delicious cream puffs and cakes from around 30 cents. A simple meal in a basic restaurant will cost around \$2.

Avoiding hotels is extremely easy in Iran... This spontaneous hospitality is always appreciated, but can become draining unless you delight in being the center of attention.

Camping in city parks and petrol stations are easy options in Iran... Camping in city parks and petrol

Iranian families will invite you home to spend the night, prepare a special feast in your honor and send you off with goodies to keep you fueled during your next leg of cycling. We've cycled in 102 countries. Iran ranks #1 for hospitality.

Delegation of Russian tour operators, reporters to visit Iran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — A group of key tour operators from Russia accompanied by correspondents from the country's REN TV, a private federal TV channel, are about to pay a visit to Iran, the website of Iran Embassy in Russia reported on Monday.

Coming upon the invitation of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, the delegation plans to meet tourism

officials during its week-long visit.

The cities of Tehran and Isfahan as well as the Persian Gulf islands of Qeshm and Kish are amongst destinations for the group, the website said without giving any further details.

Iran-Russia interactions in the tourism sector has led to a sharp rise in terms of a bilateral arrivals over the past two years, Tehran's ambassador to Moscow Mehdi Sanaei said during an interview with Russian radio

broadcaster Vesti FM in Dec. 2016.

The two countries are set to sign an agreement in the near future on removing visa requirements for travelers using certain package tours.

"Iran and Russia are due to abolish tourist visa requirements under certain conditions but they have not signed and implemented [an agreement] yet," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi announced last November.



© MIZAN/Amin Rahman

Flight bookings to the U.S. have slumped by 6.5 percent worldwide since Trump travel ban

Donald Trump's travel ban resulted in a worldwide 6.5 percent drop in the number of airline bookings for travelers headed to the United States.

According to data provided by software apps which track flight searches and bookings on the internet, the number of travelers searching for deals to U.S. destinations declined in the week after Trump's controversial executive order on January 27.

Hopper, an app which uses data to

predict and analyze airfare, says that its research indicates that searches for flights to the U.S. between January 26 and February 1 by internet users from 122 different countries dropped 17 percent compared to the first three weeks in January.

After the ban was temporarily lifted on February 3, the demand picked up slightly, but overall there were 10 percent fewer searches for flights to the U.S. as of February 10, the Montreal-

based company said.

Hopper even produced a detailed, country-by-country study showing the number of flight searches to the U.S.

Notably, flight searches to the U.S. by Russian internet users saw a significantly above average increase by 88 percent, according to Hopper.

ForwardKeys, a travel research company based in Spain, says overall flight bookings to the U.S. dropped by 6.5 percent overall since the travel ban

was announced.

That figure compares statistics from January 28 to February 4 of both this year and last year.

Tourists from the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia have been less inclined to book a ticket to the U.S., while there has been a slight increase in tourism from Eastern Europe and Central and South America, according to ForwardKeys.

(Source: Daily Mail)

In Focus: Zanzan, a heaven for Persian rugs and relevant businesses

HERITAGE d e s k A man carries bundles of newly dyed threads at a traditional workshop in the northwestern city of Zanzan, February 23, 2017.

There are scattered abundant of weaving workshops and relevant businesses across the city.

Zanzan carpets are renowned for their rich, bright and exotic colors, enough to liven up any room. Lavish yet harmonious assemblage of natural colors contribute to their global reputation.

Researchers teach bees to play their own version of golf

Bees aren't known for being brainy. While complex hive architecture and their movement-based "language" are impressive feats, these are generally attributed to biological aspects of a large community of bees driven by instinct and little else. Individual bees, after all, are insects, and tend to demonstrate little, if any, autonomous thought outside the group hierarchy.

A new study, however, may challenge this conventional notion.

Researchers trained various bees to play a golf-like game in which an individual bee would push a ball into a specific area in order to get a tasty sugar-water reward. But while training bees to do something is nothing new, this study was far removed from any instinctive behaviors or situations that would occur in the wild. And despite this limitation, the bees took to their new task in unexpected ways, indicating that individual bees could be much smarter than previously thought.

■ Multiple methods

According to the study, published in the journal *Science*, the researchers taught the bees to push a small ball into a defined area using multiple methods. The first method demonstrated the "game" with a previously-trained bee, or with a plastic model of a bee controlled by the researchers. Another method was a



"ghost demonstration," in which researchers moved the ball to the proper location using a magnet. The final method gave the bees no demonstration at all.

Every single bee that was able to

view another bee move the ball was able to successfully figure out the solution, whereas about 80 percent of the bees who viewed the "ghost demonstration" were able to beat the game. Only two

The fact that the bees were able to figure out the game in these circumstances is impressive enough, but researchers were more interested to see how the bees adapted new ways to beat the game more quickly.

bees were able to figure out the puzzle with no prior demonstration.

The fact that the bees were able to figure out the game in these circumstances is impressive enough, but researchers were more interested to see how the bees adapted new ways to beat the game more quickly.

■ Cognitive flexibility

"It wasn't monkey see, monkey do. They improved on the strategy that they saw," study co-author Clint Perry told NPR. "This all shows an unprecedented level of cognitive flexibility, especially for a miniature brain."

During one test, for instance, three balls were put into play, but only the one farthest away from the goal was actually movable during the demonstration phase. As a result, the trained bee only used the farthest ball to get the reward. But when the untrained bees were put into the ring with three untethered balls, the new bees immediately used the balls closest to the goal to get the reward even faster than the trained bees.

Other bees took initiative as well. Some took shorter routes than the ones that were demonstrated to them. Others sped up the process by dragging the balls backwards instead of pushing them forward.

(Source: *The CSM*)

Corals may get temporary reprieve from bleaching

The world's coral reefs, which have been hit hard by an unprecedented bleaching event that began in mid-2014, may see a bit of reprieve this year, according to an official at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Mark Eakin, head of NOAA's Coral Reef Watch program, said the "longest, most widespread bleaching event ever" has continued into 2017. However, climate models show the absence of a global atmospheric circulation pattern or ENSO — those include El Niños and La Niñas — which would bolster high ocean temperatures key to coral bleaching. Without an ENSO event, fewer corals are expected to die.

The "good news is as far as we can tell, the worst of this global event is over," he said. The "unfortunate part is we're not finished yet."

The world's corals may not be out of the woods yet. Eakin said it also appears ocean conditions may have entered what could be a "new regime" in which persistent coral bleaching — when corals expel the algae that are key to their survival from inside their tissue and turn white — is the new normal.

■ Bleaching going on

The "strange part is we finished with the El Niño; we

even finished with the La Niña, but now we're continuing to see this bleaching going on even when we're back in neutral ENSO conditions," he said. "And it even looks like for the Pacific, for the coming months, we're going to be showing El Niño-like threats to coral reefs."

Eakin said the "unusual situation" seems to be driven by the fact that the oceans are still full of warm water, which has accumulated over the past years, the warmest on record. That warming is being driven primarily by human-caused climate change.

"We're really entered into a new regime where the waters are just warmer, and we may have hit this threshold for corals to bleach that's just the new baseline," he said. "We may be moving into a new period where bleaching is going to be very different than what we have seen in the past."

All of the coral reefs in the world were stressed by the warm ocean conditions of the last few years. More than 40 percent of reefs worldwide experienced bleaching or death.

■ Pacific Ocean

In 2014, reefs in Guam, Hawaii and the Marshall Islands were hit. The next year, Hawaii was hit again, and



the bleaching spread across the Red Sea, into the central Pacific Ocean and into Australia.

In 2016, Eakin said, the event came to full force. Scientists famously declared wide swaths of the Great Barrier Reef dead, while places like Kiribati saw 80 to 95 percent mortality of their corals.

In addition, 72 percent of coral reefs in the United States experienced bleaching or death.

"We were hoping 2016 would be the end of this event; unfortunately, that's not the case," he said.

(Source: *Scientific American*)

400-million-year-old gigantic extinct monster worm discovered in Canadian museum

A previously undiscovered species of an extinct primordial giant worm with terrifying snapping jaws has been identified by an international team of scientists.

Researchers from the University of Bristol, Lund University in Sweden and the Royal Ontario Museum studied an ancient fossil, which has been stored at the museum since the mid-1990s, and discovered the remains of a giant extinct bristle worm (the marine relatives of earthworms and leeches).

The new species is unique among fossil worms and possessed the largest jaws ever recorded in this type of creature,

reaching over one centimeter in length and easily visible to the naked eye. Typically, such fossil jaws are only a few millimeters in size and need to be studied using microscopes.

■ Living species

Despite being only known from the jaws, comparison with living species suggests that this animal achieved a body length in excess of a meter.

This is comparable to that of 'giant euniceid' species, colloquially referred to as 'Bobbit worms' which are fearsome and opportunistic ambush predators, using their powerful jaws to capture prey such as

fish and cephalopods (squids and octopuses) and dragging them into their burrows.

Lead author Mats Eriksson from Lund University said: "Gigantism in animals is an alluring and ecologically important trait, usually associated with advantages and competitive dominance.

"It is, however, a poorly understood phenomenon among marine worms and has never before been demonstrated in a fossil species.

■ Polychaete gigantism

The 'new species demonstrates a unique case of polychaete gigantism in the Palaeozoic, some 400 million years ago.'

(Source: *EurekAlert*)

AYANDEH Bank Awarded with Iran National Financial Management Crystal Statue

AYANDEH Bank managed to win Crystal Statue in 17th Iran National Financial Management Award according to the financial indexes defined in this respect, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For this purpose, a Plaque of Honor and Crystal Statue was awarded to AYANDEH Bank on Saturday Feb. 25 at OIC Summit Hall in the presence of state officials, elites and activists in the field of financial management.

It is worth mentioning that Iran National Financial

Management Award is considered as an honorary and prestigious document for an organization and is achievable document with managing and monitoring strategic principles effectively in the spectrum of financial sciences.

Iran National Financial Management Award has been organized since 2010 which paves suitable ways for companies to improve and promote level of their financial and economic management systems.

Iran National Financial Management Award is

held every year with the aim of supporting financial management objectives, encouraging companies for self-assessing and identifying their weaknesses and strength, creating suitable and professional competition environment for Iranian companies and economic enterprises, defining financial and economic management of organizations effectively in line with materializing predefined objectives and appreciating top companies in financial and economic fields, etc.

optimal services.

This round of Conference was held in the presence of more than 200 economic enterprises in the sectors of bank, insurance, petrochemical, production, etc.

After the evaluation of Jury Board, SINA Bank was awarded with a Plaque of Honor and statue of the Conference.

As selected by the Iranian Parliament Research Center, the bank managed to win the topmost rank of this prestigious Conference due to observing necessary standards in terms of financial performance transparency, the report ended.

Iran National Financial Management Award has been organized since 2010 which paves suitable ways for compa-

nies to improve and promote level of their financial and economic management systems.

Iran National Financial Management Award is held every year with the aim of supporting financial management objectives, encouraging companies for self-assessing and identifying their weaknesses and strength, creating suitable and professional competition environment for Iranian companies and economic enterprises, defining financial and economic management of organizations effectively in line with materializing predefined objectives and appreciating top companies in financial and economic fields, etc.



SINA Bank was appreciated in the 7th round of Iran National Financial Management Award and 10th Accountants and Financial Managers Conference, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

This prestigious ceremony was attended by Dr. Mohammad-Ali Najafi President's Economic Advisor, Dr. Abbas Akhoundi Minister of Roads and Urban Development, activists in the field of economy, production and services.

It should be noted that the bank's excellent performance and activities were praised in terms of observing necessary standards in the sectors of financial management, financial and economic transparency and also presenting the

Is it a bus or a boat? The coolest bus we have ever seen!

Is it a boat, or a bus? Looking at the new Hafencity Riverbus in Hamburg, reveals it's actually a bit of both. The amphibious capability makes it ideally suited to the port city on the Elbe. Most of Hamburg's tourist attractions are located either on, or adjacent to the waterfront.

While driving on land it's like any other bus.

After the owner saw something similar in Singapore 18 years ago, he had to do serious pioneering work and a lot of paperwork to finally get the amphibious bus to Germany.

The development took a total of four years, since in Germany amphibious cars are not part of the traffic law.

Underneath the actual passenger cabin sits a MAN truck chassis, the body and the waterproof hull come from Hungary. It'll drive just as every other bus on the road, but once hitting the water the bus will be equipped with two water jets in the aft of the truck. This ensures excellent maneuverability in Germany's most busy port.

Maintenance work on the unusual vehicle is carried out by clever engineers at MAN Truck & Bus Deutschland GmbH. The manager is a skilled mariner and when it comes to this half-bus-half-boat his heart beats a bit faster. Because it's still a one-off, the workshop staff needs an extremely high level of technical knowledge to get spare parts in time. Fortunately this is what German engineers are known for, and even sometimes have to get a piece of metal and a milling machine to create a new one from scratch.

Because the river bus is so successful, in its first two months of operation it took over 6,000 guests through the city. The status as a one-off may be change in near future as there are five to seven amphibious buses in the pipeline.

(Source: *NTD.TV*)



More than half of all Internet traffic is now encrypted

Half of all internet traffic is now encrypted and better protected from eavesdropping, censorship and hackers, privacy activists have said.

Statistics released by Mozilla, the creators of the Firefox web browser, revealed that the average volume of encrypted traffic passed the average volume of unencrypted traffic earlier this month.

The shift comes as more websites switch from HTTP to HTTPS — the protocol over which data is sent between browsers and a website, and the letters that come at the beginning of a web address. Without HTTPS, it becomes easier for hackers and other malicious actors to see or intercept the information web users are reading or publishing.

The encryption of more than half of all web traffic is an important milestone in making the web better protected from eavesdropping and hackers.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), a non-profit organization that has led the push for tech companies to implement the secure HTTPS protocol, praised the milestone but said more work still needs to be done.

Major websites, including Facebook, Google and Wikipedia, have all adopted HTTPS, but many smaller sites face difficulties implementing it. EFF has developed several tools to make it easier for website owners to implement the protocol by default.

"Unfortunately, you can only use HTTPS on websites that support it—and about half of all web traffic is still with sites that don't," EFF researcher Gennie Gebhart said in a blogpost. "However, when sites partially support HTTPS, users can step in with the HTTPS Everywhere browser extension.

(Source: *Newsweek*)

Thorny skate will not be added to endangered species list

The thorny skate's population may have declined, but not by enough to justify listing it under the Endangered Species Act, the federal government has ruled.

Environmental groups had argued that the bottom-dwelling fish's population loss in the northwest Atlantic Ocean was considerable enough to afford it protections set aside for endangered animals. But the National Marine Fisheries Service disagrees.

Documents published in the Federal Register on Friday state that the fisheries service has concluded the thorny skate is "not currently in danger of extinction" in all or a significant piece of its range. The service said the fish is also not likely to become in danger of extinction soon.

The agency agreed with the petitioners that surveys of the skate have declined over time. Recent catch surveys show less than 5 percent of the peak they reached in the 1970s, the report stated.

However, the skates "remain numerous throughout the greater portion of their range, numbering in the hundreds of millions," the report stated.

The thorny skate ranges from Greenland to South Carolina. Animal Welfare Institute and Defenders of Wildlife called on the federal government to offer the fish Endangered Species Act listing, which could've led to habitat protection or new fishing restrictions.

The skates live in the Gulf of Maine, a key commercial fishing area, and the call to protect them generated some resistance from fishing groups.

Tara Zuardo, an attorney for Animal Welfare Institute, said Saturday that the group is disappointed by the government's ruling, and disagrees that the skate is not being subjected to overfishing.

(Source: *AP*)

Hijab-wearing woman quits White House job after Trump’s Muslim ban

A hijab-wearing woman quit her job merely eight days into the Donald Trump administration, due to the Muslim ban imposed by the 70-year-old American president.

Rumana Ahmed, a Bangladeshi immigrant whose family moved to the U.S. in 1978, penned a long piece in The Atlantic to talk about the tenuous eight days she worked for the Trump administration.

Ahmed, in her 30s, had joined the White House in 2011 and later moved to the National Security Council under the Barack Obama administration.

She wrote glowingly about the previous administration, writing that she always felt “welcomed and included”, but the incoming administration’s continuous vilification of the Muslims and the eventual travel ban on Muslims from seven countries firmed her mind to leave her West Wing job.

The George Washington University graduate said she initially felt like sticking on to her job under the new era to provide a “nuanced” understanding of Islam but after the controversial Muslim ban, she knew “she could no longer stay and work for an administration that saw me and people like me not as fellow citizens, but as a threat”.

She also chronicled about her penultimate day at the White House: “The evening before I left, bidding farewell to some of my colleagues, many of whom have also since left, I notified Trump’s senior NSC communications adviser, Michael Anton, of my departure, since we shared an office. His initial surprise, asking whether I was leaving government entirely, was followed by silence—almost in caution, not asking why. I told him anyway.”

(Source: wionews.com)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Persian halva

“Halva is a favorite dessert throughout the Middle East. Many varieties are made with tahini or semolina flour. This Persian version uses a simple mixture of flour, butter, and sugar with the sweet perfume of rosewater. Cut into wedges and serve with tea or coffee.”



Ingredients:

- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup rose water
- 3 saffron threads
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Directions:

Bring sugar and water to a boil in a saucepan; cook, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes. Stir rose water and saffron into the sugar

mixture; cover saucepan and remove from heat.

Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat; stir flour into the melted butter until mixture is a smooth paste. Continue to cook, stirring often, until paste turns golden, about 5 to 10 more minutes.

Slowly whisk sugar mixture into paste until smooth. Remove saucepan from heat and spread halva evenly onto a plate or platter. Make a pattern on the top of halva using the back of a spoon or a knife. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until set, at least 1 hour.

LEARN ENGLISH

Playing Chess

Daddy: Bobby! Come here, look what I got you!

Bobby: What is that?

Daddy: A “**chess**” board! Daddy is going to teach you how to play!

Bobby: Cool!

Daddy: Ok, each player gets 16 pieces. You can be the white ones and I’ll play with the black pieces. Now in the front, you “**set up**” the “**pawns**”. Those are the least “**valuable**” pieces and can only move one space forward. When you are about to “**capture**” another piece, it can move one space “**diagonally**”.

Bobby: What about all these other pieces?

Daddy: See this one that looks like a tower? It’s called the “**rook**”. The one with the tall hat is called the “**bishop**”. See this little horsey? This is called the “**knight**”, it’s a very important piece so it’s best to not let your “**opponent**” capture it.

Bobby: And these two? They are husband and wife?

Daddy: That’s right! That’s the “**queen**” and that’s the “**king**”. If the other player captures your king, he will say ““**Check Mate**”” and the game is “**over**”! Doesn’t this sound fun?

Bobby: Nah! This is boring! I’m gonna go play Killer Zombies on my PlayStation!

Key vocabulary

chess: a game in which each player moves 16 pieces across a board and tries to capture the opponent’s king

set up: make ready for use

pawn: the weakest piece in chess; a person or group without much power

valuable: very useful or helpful

capture: to take

diagonally: on a diagonal, forward and to the left or right

rook: a piece in chess that can only move along straight lines

bishop: a piece in chess that can only move diagonally

knight: a useful piece in chess

opponent: someone who you try to defeat in a competition, game, fight, or argument

queen: a very powerful piece in chess

king: the final and most important piece in chess

boring: not interesting

Check Mate: describes situation in which king cannot move

Over: if an event or period of time is over, it has finished

(Source: irlanguage.com)

First women-only factory opens in Iran

WOMEN TEHRAN — The first **d e s k** women-only factory in Iran was officially inaugurated on Sunday in the city of Sari, northern Mazandaran province.

All the investment and launching procedures have been implemented by women and the entire workforce are female, IRNA quoted Maryam Nasiri-Khalili, the managing director of the company as saying.

The all-women founders of the fruit chips factory, Ofogh Taban Caspian, have invested 3 billion rials (about \$80,000) in the project, she added.

A number of 176 women work directly or indirectly for the factory, which is producing around 400

kilograms of chips every day.

Some 30 employees and laborers are working in the staff division and the production lines, including processing and packaging units, Nasiri-Khalili said.

Some women are working in the related farms and they are occupied with harvesting fruits and agricultural works, she explained.

According to statistics released by Mazandaran governor general’s office, around 600 manufacturing and service companies are run by women across the province.

Moreover, some 3,000 manufacturing and industrial companies having 80,000 laborers are active in Mazandaran.



The Martyrdom of Hazrat Fatima (SA)



So they don’t know where I’m laid.”
“And, husband dear, you wash me
And wrap me in my shroud.
With your two strong arms embrace me
And lay me in the ground.”
“Once I’m there do not forsake me.
Sit by my lonely tomb.
As my soul, like any mortal’s,
Is fearful of its doom.”
“God’s will, you cannot alter.
I entrust my children unto thee.
This, maybe, will console you;
Of this world, I will be free.
She asked for her new garments
And camphor her father had given;
The scent of Paradise that Gabriel brought
As a gift to him from heaven.
As her strength subsided,
And she knew her time was nigh,

She made her ablution
And towards the Qiblah lay, to die.
She addressed her companion, Asma
On her lips, a secret smile
“I am fatigued and want to rest.
Call me in a while.”
After an hour, when Asma called her,
Silence was the reply.
She knew her desert flower
Had wilted and had died.
As the news spread through the city,
Wailing women gathered near.
And men, impatient to carry the body,
Of Ali’s Zahra dear.
Abu Dharr called to the people,
“Please, in vain don’t you wait!
Today her body won’t be buried,
As it is very late.”
Then quietly, in the moonlight,
With the chosen by his side,
Silently, they bore the coffin
Of Ali’s holy bride.
And as Ali lowered her body
To its final place of rest
Two arms just like the Prophet’s
Gathered her to its breast.
Inconsolable, grieving,
Ali’s courageous heart then broke.
And he gathered his motherless children,
All tearful, beneath his cloak.
At the break of dawn, his house grew silent.
As promised, he didn’t disclose
Nor answer any questions
Of where he buried his Arabian rose.

By Arsalan Rizvi – Islamic Insights

Isfahan hosts congress on women’s status in sustainable development

WOMEN TEHRAN — The **d e s k** national congress on women’s status in entrepreneurship and sustainable development was held in the city of Isfahan on Monday.

The congress aims at introducing entrepreneur women as the successful models in the arena of life and work and exchange of experience among

successful entrepreneur women in the national level, IRNA reported.

The congress also follows the aim of developing entrepreneurship among women in order to achieve sustainable social and economic development, utilizing women’s capabilities in different fields and creating information networks among entrepreneur women in the country, region

and the world, the report said.

Women’s all-out participation is essential for increasing women’s participation in decision-making posts, Zahra Akhavan-Nasab, vice president of Isfahan chamber of commerce said.

Women are forerunners in implementing resistance economy, Akhavan-Nasab said adding women can

play a pivotal role in managing family’s economy.

Currently more than 11 percent of Iranian women are active in economy. About 44 percent of women are active in productive fields and 56 percent in service sector.

Women make up about 65 percent of Iranian university students.

Australia must do more to protect indigenous women: UN

Australia is failing to protect its female indigenous people from violence, which is aggravated by high levels of inequity, the United Nations said on Monday.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians rank near the bottom of every social and economic indicator, which exacerbates tension in communities of the world’s longest continuous civilization.

“They are 34 times more likely to be hospitalized as a result of domestic/family violence and up to 3.7 times more likely than other women to be victims of sexual violence,” Dubravka Simonović, UN special rapporteur on violence against women, told a news conference in Canberra.

Simonović, who said the figures were likely to underestimate the extent of the problem, said aboriginal women were often caught in a cycle of violence, beginning in childhood.

Indigenous children are about seven times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be subjected to abuse or neglect and about 10 times more likely to be in out-of-home care, the United Nations said.

With a troubled upbringing, a disproportionately high number of indigenous woman end up in prison, a figure exacerbated by government policies, most notably incarceration for unpaid fines, which Simonović said affected indigenous people more than the non-indigenous people.

The issue of the incarnation of



indigenous women hit the headlines after the 2014 death of a women known only by her surname - Dhu - after she was arrested for unpaid fines shortly after a domestic violence incident.

Despite complaining of pain, Dhu was denied adequate medical attention, a coroner in Western Australia state ruled late last year.

Reducing the imprisonment of indigenous people is one of seven government objectives to improve the lives of aboriginal people, as well as increasing life expectancy and employment.

Critics of government policy say there is not enough funding to eradicate inequity.

“We need more funding for programs, especially providing culturally sensitive environments,” said Angela Spinney, a research fellow at Swinburne University of Technology.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran’s Mother Teresa

Ashraf Qandehari-Bahadorzadeh was a humanitarian and the co-founder of the Kahrizak nursing home, south of Tehran. She devoted her life to helping those in need and was praised and honored for her charity works. She joined the founding committee of Kahrizak in 1972 and helped building the charity complex as we know it today.

In her interviews she has described Kahrizak at the time of taking on its responsibility as “...a wreckage with two small rooms and full of stink. Patients were in the worst possible condition. There wasn’t any healthy water and you could see the lack of amenities. Also the stack of trash worsened the situation.”

She couldn’t bring herself to leave the place in that state, so she talked to Dr. Mohammad Reza Hakimzadeh (the late founder of Kahrizak) and decided to help improve the place. Now Kahrizak has been developed into a town in south of Tehran and has a campus covering 420,000 sq.m. with 130,000 sq.m of built-up area. 500 male and 1100 female patients reside in 22 separate units. About two thirds of the patients are elderly and one third are physically disabled. The patients are so satisfied and well provided that “They don’t like to go back home,” as Qandehari stated.

She was also the founder of The Ladies Charitable Society consisting



of 3000 members today, who were among the first to rush to the rescue in Roudbar earthquake. They took in about 650 orphans. Later they did the same with Bam’s earthquake survivors. Now, they support 500 disadvantaged women and children.

In 2014, Qandehari received an honorary award from Mohammad-Hassan Aboutorabi-Fard, the then first deputy speaker of Majlis (the Iranian parliament).

Qandehari’s some other contributions and activities include performing voluntary service in Kahrizak, holding art courses for disadvantaged women, writing books on managing the charity groups and their activities and doing many international activities on Entrepreneurship.

Qandehari-Bahadorzadeh passed away on February 23, 2017 at the age of 91. May she rest in peace!

Iran means business

1→ The Iranian macro business environment case is defined by a "diversified economy, superbly educated workforce, a consuming population with appetite for brands, urban dwelling, and an entrepreneurial community", according to Managing Partner of Arjan Capital, Andreas Schweitzer. A very comprehensive overview of all opportunities in each sector in Iran was supported by Dr. Afshaneh Shafei, head of the Department for Industry and Mines Studies, Institute for Trade Studies and Research, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Mines.

The debate at the conference, effectively, demonstrated the Islamic Republic has done a great job opening itself to foreign business and explaining the opportunity set to the world. Numerous trade delegations have now visited Iran, observing that the reality is very different from what the international press has traditionally reported.

I have also witnessed the sea change in Iran to welcoming foreign business. From personal experience, as managing director of AlphaBet Capital Advisors, going to Iran many times on corporate business development initiatives, I know how important it is to visit Iran first-hand – to believe you really must see and get involved. Back as early as 2015 when I undertook my first trip, I was asked by many curious Western colleagues what it is like in Iran, as if I had been to the moon. The question that continuously cropped up was what I thought to be the most shocking there I observed on the ground. Perhaps it was the dilapidated infrastructure, oppressive religious and military themes everywhere, poor range of quality consumer goods I had encountered. To their disappointment and surprise, I had to relay that there, indeed, was not much of a dramatic difference to report for it simply was if I had entered a part of Europe – although it has been a charming adventure there really were more similarities than differences! And, given its size and proximity to Dubai, where I am based, it was an obvious case to get involved for investment. Also in agreement was the Switzerland-Iran Chamber of Commerce President, Philippe Welti. He summarised the Iranian opportunity well stating, "Iran is strategically well positioned to become the centre-point in the region serving as a hub to its neighbouring countries accessing over 450 million consumers."

Investors can be reassured that the climate for working with foreign business is supported by the right mechanisms. According to Masood Kamali Ardakani, "Iran has put in place supportive government policies and regulation, including FIPPA (Foreign Investment Protection and Promotion Act), to facilitate entry into Iran by foreign businesses." There are many advantages of investing through FIPPA, with the following, to name a few: no discrimination between domestic and foreign investors; all foreign investors being allowed to invest in all fields; foreign investors being able to hold 100% of the shares in an Iranian entity; the option for a free transfer of foreign capital and profits abroad. Importantly, the legislation also protects foreign investors against nationalisation and expropriation, which is obviously a main concern by foreign parties evaluating this market.

Additionally, Iran has created seven free trade zones and 19 special economic zones – introducing in these zones certain tax incentives, among other things.

To effectively assist international investors and corporates, an Investment Service Centre (www.investiniran.ir/en/investmentguide/sevicecenter) has been set up as a help desk for queries.

All in all, the symposium audience needed no further convincing on the potential of Iran as an important market – the opportunity potential was clearly understood. Given the growing enthusiasm to do business with Iran, it remains a slightly mysterious and little understood market for the international business community. The panel discussions high-



lighted below are the main perceived risks to mitigate.

■ Political risks

Planning with certainty has become more difficult for corporates given the seemingly unpredictable nature of the Trump Administration. However, according to Philippe Welti, "it does not really matter what Trump says; what matters is the reaction it causes in the international business community." The common opinion is Europe has a vested interest to maintain the nuclear agreement and any risk of snapback is, therefore, unlikely. This fact was well defined by Professor H. Mirmohammad Sadeghi, a famous law expert and the president of ICCIMA Education & Research Institute in his inaugural speech as the symposium VIP speaker.

Head of Business Development at Boland Payeh Holding, Behzad Aminfard, highlighted the "importance of understanding the priorities of government in order to be successful in Iran." The symposium audience voiced the importance for the Iranian government to be both vocal and consistent in planning & policy to the international business community so corporates have more certainty to support their entry into Iran.

■ Due diligence

Any transaction with Iran requires good preparation. Co-owner of 2FX Treasury, Kees Lakerveld outlined the steps international corporates should be taking prior to engaging with a counterparty in Iran such as (1) KYC (know your customer) and (2) transaction due diligence. There are Third Party Service Providers that can specifically assist in the screening process.

Afridi & Angell Partner, Shahram Safai, also noted that "doing due diligence on counterparties in Iran is not as hard as some businesses have been made to believe. There are websites in Iran to verify corporate filings and shareholders." Most of these KYC checks are not specific to Iran. Internationally, parties are required to do many of these checks on any counterparty they do business with.

Transaction due diligence includes checking that there is no industry risk, no dual use (commercial and military use), and it needs to adhere to the rule that no more than 10% of the content derives from the U.S.

"The most important thing for parties is to document their due diligence in case their books get checked in the future," said Kees Lakerveld.

■ Transparency at a corporate level

Many companies maintain several sets of accounts, which does not provide much comfort to international investors – there is still a significant information gap. Huge strides are being made with adoption of international accounting standards. However, Iranian corporates require further education on what is requested by the international business community in terms of information and transparency in order to enter the Iranian market. This will vary from sector to sector. With it being less of an issue in some – for example, Van Campen Liem Associate, Saman Sadeghi, highlighted "the technology sector has proven much easier in obtaining the relevant information from

the entrepreneurs and is, subsequently, attracting significant foreign investment interest."

■ The banking system

Kees Lakerveld, explained that "successful market entry into Iran requires a banking strategy. Ideally the corporates would like to be able to use their current bank but that is not possible in the majority of cases. The problem is not sending money out of Iran; the issue is on the receiving end. Not all banks are currently ready to do business with Iran and receiving funds that come from Iran, directly or indirectly." However, banks with little or no U.S. exposure currently seem to be most open to doing business with Iran. "In practice, you need to be either an existing client of the bank or commercially interesting enough for a bank to be willing to take what they perceive as high risks of doing business with Iran," said Kees Lakerveld.

Philip Sidney Partner, Joost Mellis, further detailed "there is a wall of fear and no 'front running ambitions' with the people in charge at the banks. Political risks play a role, legacy of mega penalties and those with large U.S. exposure are nervous about putting their current or future business in the U.S. at risk. It's not just the Iranian banks that have their set of problems. Many of the banks internationally too are grappling with their own business issues, which makes them reluctant to take on more risk. Some banks have been pulling out of emerging markets in general to focus on their home market."

The Iranians have been very eager to learn about compliance. Great progress has been made on the side of Iranian banks to establish an international compliance framework. They will next have to convey the improvements to the system in order to allay international banks so that they feel comfortable that their KYCs are now being done on their clients to the international standards expected, reducing the perceived risks in the mind of the international banks. The Iranian banks should continue face-to-face meetings, not just in Tehran but also abroad. Cross-border discussions between compliance departments would naturally be the next phase.

Regarding the settlement of currencies, the USD may still not be used for any transaction with Iran. Of all alternative currencies, the Euro was highlighted as the clear favored currency as the clearing happens through one centralized clearing system, Target2.

■ Legal issues and negotiating agreements

Only a year ago, the law firms were the main culprits in warning investors of all the risks. Arguably, they may have gone overboard at the time and scared off a number of investors. Issues that used to centre on the agenda a year ago, such as snapback, no longer feature prominently in discussions. Kees Lakerveld clarified "that even if there was a snapback it wouldn't have a retroactive effect."

The firms presenting were positively focused on how to structure the business and discussed practicalities regarding agreements with counterparts in order to get the business closed.

Andreas Schweitzer highlighted: "ne-

gotiating agreements in Iran requires a lot of patience." Shahram Safai, shared some tips on the matter: "keep contracts short, focus on debt and equity only (not many people in Iran are familiar with warrants), take a team approach in negotiations, arbitration clauses are enforceable through the Iranian Courts, expect to have to explain every clause including the general clauses that are standard in international business agreements, sign agreements outside of Iran and importantly agreements in English are accepted."

■ Sovereign guarantees

Some international investors look for additional guarantees. By way of an example, in one of the renewable sector workshops of the symposium, a participant highlighted that international project owners would like the payments by SUNA (the Renewable Energy Organisation of Iran) to have a sovereign guarantee (in case of non-payment by SUNA), as this would greatly facilitate financing from the credit agencies in their home countries.

■ Next steps

After having opened the doors to the international business community and having explained the real Iran of today that "Iran Means Business", it is now time for Iranian private companies, as Khaghani referred to on the basis of "Economic-B2B Diplomacy" to actively travel and meet their counterparties in their respective home countries in order to help close the gap in information, understanding and expectations.

■ Future for Iran-Netherlands business

Head of Productivity and Organizational Improvement Research Department, Institute for Trade Studies and Research (ITSR), Ministry of Industry, Trade and Mines, Masood Kamali Ardakani, said that "Iran's population of 80 million and 400+ million, including its neighbouring markets (versus 17 million in the Netherlands) is a promising market for Dutch companies."

Currently, approximately half of exports to Iran are related to the medical and pharmaceutical industries. Holland has a lot more to offer and in terms of know-how and technology is not limited only to the oil & gas sector, agriculture and water. There are countless other areas to be explored and acted upon by Dutch companies. Iran is keen to cooperate with The Netherlands in areas such as port infrastructure, renewable energy, construction of greenhouses, water technologies, agro food industries pharmaceuticals and tourism as The Netherlands is considered one of the top destinations in Europe. And not to forget downstream petroleum and energy industries that Mahmood Khaghani explained as the chairman of the symposium and during roundtable discussions the advantages of ECO-Caspian Energy Grid for converting regional gas to power and exporting electricity to regional markets, the EU and beyond.

The Netherlands' gross national product and its high purchasing power, make it an overall attractive market for high quality Iranian goods. At present, half of the exports of Iranian products to Holland are relatively low value edible fruits and nuts. Iran has much more to offer to Holland in terms of higher value goods. The speakers highlighted the importance of bilateral agreements – as of yet, a bilateral agreement between The Netherlands and Iran does not yet exist.

In keeping with the positive spirit of the symposium an appropriate Dutch proverb to conclude with: 'waar een wil is, is een weg' (translated as 'where there is a will, there is a way'), which I have been told, is identical to the Iranian's own proverb: 'Khashtan, Tavanestan ast = When there is a will, There is a way.'

Rebecca Meijlink, managing director of AlphaBet Capital Advisors, in association with Mahmood Khaghani, Advisor to the Education & Research Institute, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines & Agriculture, (Amsterdam, 24th, February 2017).

Putin hails Syria talks in Astana as foundation for Geneva

Russia says the latest rounds of Syria peace talks in Kazakhstan created a "mechanism" to control the truce holding across the state, and helped revive the United Nations-backed negotiations underway in Geneva, Switzerland.



The Astana talks focused on bolstering the Syria-wide ceasefire between militants and the Syrian government that has been in place since December 30, 2016.

Commenting on the diplomatic process in Astana on Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said "a mechanism to control the ceasefire has been created, which is the most important thing."

"This is the foundation that has allowed the Geneva negotiations to resume," he added.

Meanwhile, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov on Monday called for the formation of a joint opposition delegation to the Geneva talks, Ria Novosti reported.

He said representatives of Syria's Kurdish population should also participate in the negotiations.

The Damascus delegation to the Geneva talks is headed by Syrian Ambassador to the United Nations Bashar al-Ja'afari.

However, the opposition side is deeply fractured, with several groups based in different countries attending the talks, a situation which has complicated the ongoing crisis resolution talks in Geneva.

On Sunday, UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan De Mistura held separate talks on core topics with representatives from the Cairo and Moscow platforms of the opposition in Geneva.

De Mistura is scheduled to meet with delegates of the Riyadh-based High Negotiations Committee (HNC) in the Swiss city.

HNC negotiator Mohammed Alloush said on Monday that his team would hold talks with Russian Foreign Ministry officials in Geneva on "the promises they did not keep."

(Source: TASS)

Russian frigate heads to Mediterranean on Syria mission

The Russian frigate Admiral Grigorovich left the port of Sevastopol in Crimea on Monday for the Mediterranean where it will join the country's naval forces deployed near the Syrian coast, a naval official said.

A witness saw the ship leaving its moorings in the naval port of Sevastopol.

"It (the frigate) will be operating as part of the permanent Russian Navy force in the Mediterranean," the Interfax news agency quoted the navy's Captain Vyacheslav Truhachev, a spokesman for the Black Sea fleet, as saying.

The frigate armed with Kalibr (Caliber) cruise missiles was deployed to the Mediterranean Sea last November as part of Russia's naval task force to Syria where it launched missile strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) targets.

The Admiral Grigorovich is the first in the class of six frigates commissioned by the Russian navy in 2010 for its Black Sea Fleet.

(Source: RT)



Abbas: No state should relocate Israel embassy

1→ United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres blasted the ratification of the bill, emphasizing that it would "have far-reaching legal consequences for Israel." A chorus of outcry also followed from elsewhere, including the German government.

Abbas touched on the land grab law, saying, "Israel has recently announced its intent to create more occupation units over our land. It has adopted a law, which legitimates the theft of occupied Palestinian land, in particular private lands."

"This is a dangerous precedent, which we reject. The international community rejects it as well. This is a situation that does not allow our people to establish their own state. This is an act, which leads to hatred and violence."

He asserted that Tel Aviv was thus moving towards the creation of an "apartheid solution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinian leader's appeal to the UNHCR came as the Trump administration has mullied quitting the rights body over its purported bias against Israel, Politico reported on Saturday.

(Source: agencies)

Trump to sign new travel order on Wednesday

2→ Concerning refugees, America has always set an annual restriction on the number of refugees it will accept. Since 1980, the United States has accepted less than 2 million refugees in total, almost half of whom were children accompanying their refugee parents. Also, the Obama administration alone deported 2.5 million people, although not limited to refugees.

World leaders reacted to Trump's travel ban in a condemning way. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said, "Iran will take legal, political and reciprocal measures accordingly," speaking in response to the visa ban that also

targets Iranian nationals.

"The U.S. decision to restrict travel for Muslims to the U.S., even if for a temporary period of three months, is an obvious insult to the Islamic world and in particular to the great nation of Iran," the Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

Many have protested Trump's decision to ban citizens from Muslim countries to enter the U.S. Massive crowds gathered at airports all across the U.S. shortly after the ban was issued, to protest it and to show solidarity towards those affected.

Asghar Farhadi, the Iranian director who won his second Oscar for Best Foreign Film at the 89th Academy Awards this Sunday, chose not to attend the Oscars in protest to the travel ban.

Instead, two Iranian-American engineers and NASA scientists attended the gala on his behalf. "My absence is out of respect for the people of my country, and those of the other six nations who have been disrespected by the inhumane law that bans entry of immigrants to the U.S.," Anousheh Ansari, the first female space tourist, read out of a statement from Farhadi on stage.

Yepes: It's wide open in South America

We asked him to be honest and he duly obliged. "Yes, you suffer. In fact, you suffer a bit more as a fan," he said with a chuckle. It has been quite some time since Mario Yepes, who hung up his boots just over a year ago, last pulled on the Colombia shirt, yet the long-time Cafeteros captain continues to keep close tabs on his former team-mates. "I've still got a lot of friends in the national-team squad, so I stay in the loop. I'm always wishing them the best and sending them positive energy."



Yepes ran the full gamut of emotions during his 16-year international career, from the heartbreak of three near misses in FIFA World Cup™ qualifying to the joy of being involved in the Cafeteros' two biggest achievements: their triumph at the 2001 Copa America and their fifth-place finish at the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil™. Who better than him, then, to analyse the situation in which Colombia find themselves on the road to Russia 2018?

"It's not going to be easy," the erstwhile defender told FIFA.com about the prospects for Jose Pekerman's charges, who currently lie sixth – outside the qualification spots – with six matchdays to go in the South American preliminary competition. "But, then again, it's not going to be easy for any of the other countries in contention either. It's wide open, in the sense that any of us could still qualify, and very tight, because there aren't many points in it, which is good from Colombia's perspective."

Indeed, just two points separate the sixth-placed Colombians from Ecuador in third. "On the next matchday some of the teams around us face off, which gives us the opportunity to climb back into the qualification spots," said Yepes, looking ahead to the enticing fixtures on 23 March, when table-topping Brazil are away to second-placed Uruguay, fifth-placed Argentina host Chile, the side directly above them, and Ecuador visit seventh-placed Paraguay.

Colombia will be looking to capitalise by beating Bolivia in Barranquilla and then follow that up by coming back from the always challenging trip to Quito with a good result. Yepes is convinced that a revitalised Radamel Falcao, who has been back to something approaching his brilliant best in recent months, could play a big role in this effort: "Falcao's good form definitely could be key. We're all hoping that he is firing on all cylinders, but that doesn't just go for him. Hopefully all the lads will be, because those two games are going to be very important."

■ On the other side

Yepes spoke with candour, yet calmly – with the selfsame coolness that he used to channel when thwarting opposition attackers and which he is now tasked with displaying on the touchline. The 41-year-old started doing his coaching badges back when he was at AC Milan and his role at the helm of Deportivo Cali, the club where he cut his teeth as a player, allows him to reduce his footballing withdrawal symptoms to the bare minimum. "However hard you work, it's never going to be the same," he nevertheless admits.

"You're close to the pitch, to the dressing room, to the things you experienced before, but it's never going to be the same as playing," he went on earnestly. "You'll never stop missing it and thinking back to your playing career, but life is made up of different stages and no one can stop the march of time," he added, breaking into a laugh.

More laughter followed when we asked him to name his biggest influences as a burgeoning coach: "I was lucky enough to work and learn from a great many coaches. In some cases I learnt what to do, and in others I learnt what not to."

What is clear, though, is that Yepes is now able to put himself in his old bosses' shoes: "Now that I'm on this side of the equation, I probably do understand them better, although by the latter stages of my playing career I'd already begun to understand the decisions taken by each of my coaches."

For example, the pivotal call made by Reinaldo Rueda when Yepes was a fresh-faced youngster: "Honestly, at the time I didn't take it very well. I wanted to keep playing up front!" That's right: the man nicknamed the Marshal (El Mariscal) because of his dominance in his own box and organisational skills actually started out at the other end of the pitch, as a goalscorer, before Rueda moved him into defence. "I think he saw things more clearly than I did back then, and based on that I had the career I did..." reflected the former centre-back, before signing off playfully: "Anyway, we don't know what would've happened if I'd carried on as a forward. No one will ever know."

(Source: FIFA)

'The lion is born a lion': Zlatan Ibrahimovic reveals he wants to finish his career at the top

Manchester United's Zlatan Ibrahimovic has hinted that he has no desire to leave Manchester United for one huge last payday in China, declaring that he is "an animal," feels "like a lion" and wants to quit football at the top.

In a memorable interview of great theatricality which had echoes of Eric Cantona's 'seagulls follow the trawler' philosophy of 1995, the Swede provided his strongest hint yet that he wants another season at Old Trafford, though in keeping with the aura around himself which he likes to build, the 35-year-old fell short of admitting the fact.

United's League Cup Final match-winner declared before leaving Wembley that he would not trade on his reputation – "being Ibrahimovic" – by taking another big contract on the basis of his reputation. "I will not be like other players, playing because they make a great career and name and they are still playing because they are who they are," he said. "I will play as long as I can bring results. I will stop on top. I will not play one game by 'being Ibrahimovic' and for what I did before. If I don't perform, if I don't bring results, I will not play."

Asked if there was another club or manager he would like to play for, the Swede said: "no." He insisted that qualification for next season's Champions League was not a pre-requisite for him being at Old Trafford next season.

"No, it's not about that. I came here and the club wasn't in the Champions League. So it had nothing to do with the Champions League. So somebody made up a story that if they don't qualify for the Champions League I will not extend. It has nothing to do with that."

Asked how he will decide where he is next season, he said: "Let's see what happens. I mean the moment, how I feel, the situation. We have another two months of the season to go, because according to many I could not do what I've been doing."

Ibrahimovic's answers imply that he and his agent Mino Raiola do actually have a say over whether the player remains at United for the 2017/18 season under his '1+1' contract (one season, with a one-season extension option). Neither United nor Raiola have ever disclosed whether this is the case. Most of the contracts United now sign with players bestow that decision upon the club alone, though Michael Owen, for example, had it written into his deal that he could decide to extend if United agree to do so, when signing in 2009. He stayed until 2013.

By keeping his intentions under wraps, the Swede is preserving the aura around himself but also potentially giving himself better bargaining power when he sits down with United to discuss his future. Usually, the extension option does not include potential to renegotiate salary but his own deal might allow him to do so.

His self-confidence was evident in his discussion of himself as "a lion" which will be remembered long after he has gone.

When it was put to him that he looks like a 25-year-old, he said: "I look good. I know I look good." It was when Ander Herrera's comments, that the striker has the physique of a 28 or 29-year-old old, was put to him that he said: "OK. I feel fresh. I feel good. I feel like an animal."

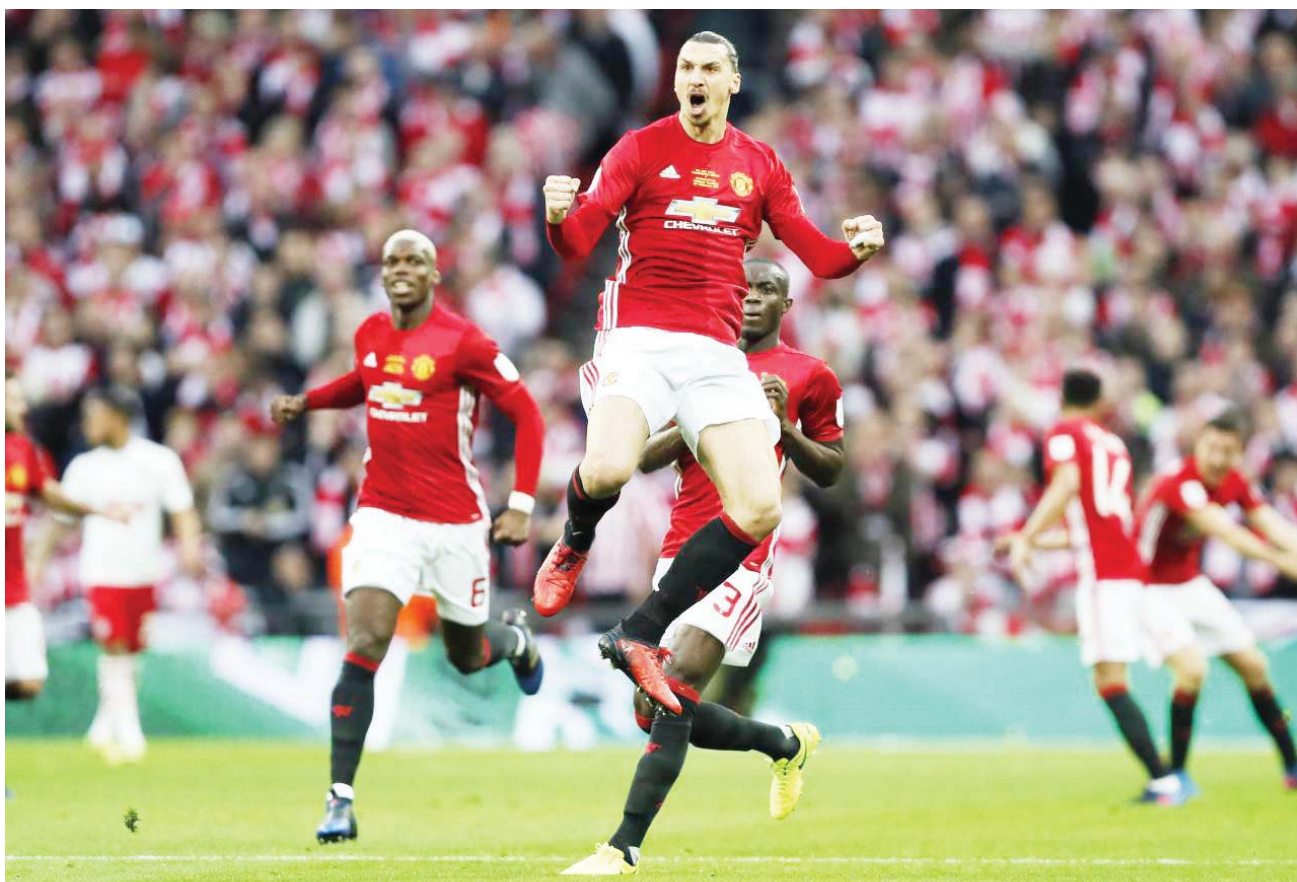
He returned to this theme later, declaring: "I'm an animal. I feel like a lion. I'm from the old school where they work hard and get what they get from doing the hard work not like the new school where it is easy to get what you want."

■ **Why was he like a lion? he was asked.**

"I am a lion. I don't want to be a lion," he replied

■ **Did he mean he had the hunger of a lion?**

"The lion is born a lion."



■ What does that mean?

"It means I'm a lion!"

Ibrahimovic's prime motivation seems to be settling what he sees as a perceived wrong: the supposed declaration by football analysts that he would never flourish in England.

"I am still doing what I have been doing every year but some people won't accept it or admit it because I don't do it in their home ground," he said. "I have come to their home ground and now I am doing exactly the same thing what I have been doing all the years."

"I was not worried about age because I know what I am able to do. It is because I am here in England. After all these years 'he didn't come and show himself here' but I came. And I came when people thought it was impossible for me to do what I am able to do. It feels good. I am enjoying it."

Full transcript of a remarkable interview

■ **You look like you are 25, the way you are playing?**

I look good. I know I look good.

Ander Herrera said you have the body of a 28/29 year old

OK. I feel fresh. I feel good. I feel like an animal.

■ **Is this the most satisfying chapter of all in your career, as people had written off your chances in England?**

It is special. Not about age. I was not worried about age because I know what I am able to do. It is because I am here in England. After all these years 'he didn't come and show himself here' but I came. And I came when people thought it was impossible for me to do what I am able to do. It feels good. I am enjoying it.

■ **Did you come to England because people thought you couldn't do it?**

The important thing is what I believed. What I predicted. That is exactly what I am doing.

■ **Jose Mourinho said he wants Man United fans to camp outside your house to persuade you to extend!**

I think in your career you have moments. I did not come to England before because it was not the moment. I came when I thought it was the moment and the moment was there. If we speak about the coach, England, the Premier League, the club has to thank him because he called me and asked me to come here, otherwise I would not have been here. Even my two kids wanted to see me play at United.

■ So will you stay?

Let's see what happens.

■ **Did you say your kids wanted to see you play at Manchester United?**

Yes. Because I had my mind somewhere else. Before everything was coming on top of the table, then Jose called. I have a special relationship with him. When he called it was basically, 'tell me what number I should wear'.

■ **Did you ask your kids: 'What should I do?'**

My mind was not here. Then my kids started to bump my head and Jose called, then I am here.

■ **Will you ask your kids if you should stay here and extend!?**

They are satisfied with what I am doing. But this time I am the boss, not them.

■ **Who were you going to sign for before they and Mourinho intervened?**

Somewhere else obviously. But things can change very fast.

■ **How will you decide where you will be next season?**

Let's see what happens. I mean the moment, how I feel, the situation. We have another two months of the season to go, because according to many I could not do what I've been doing.

■ **You keep referencing what was said historically - people are now saying what you are doing is amazing?**

But what should they say? They have something else to say? I'm enjoying it.

■ **Is there another country or manager you still want to play for?**

No.

■ **Do the club need to qualify for the Champions League for you to stay?**

No, it's not about that. I came here and the club wasn't in the Champions League. So I had nothing to do with the Champions League. So somebody made up a story that if they don't qualify for the Champions League I will not extend. It has nothing to do with that.

■ **Would you be confident though of repeating what you've done this season next season?**

Do I need to do it? In my head I'm never satisfied - I always want more. I'm hungry to domore. That is my mentality. I'm not satisfied with what I'm doing - I always want more. This is my 32nd trophy. I've been in five different countries, I've been in the best clubs in the world and I'm repeating every year, what I am doing. This is

another chapter in my career.

■ **Would it be going down hill if you left United and played elsewhere?**

For me or the club?!

You!

No, no. I will stop on top. I will not play one game by being Ibrahimovic and for what I did before. If I don't perform, if I don't bring results, I will not play. I will not be like other players, playing because they make a great career and name and they are still playing because they are who they are. I will play as long as I can bring results.

■ **Is one of big things you've lifted the standards in the dressing room?**

I'm just trying to be myself. What I bring, I bring a package. I bring my experience from the other clubs I've been in, I bring what I have achieved, I bring for the one [person] that I am, people always say I'm difficult to handle and that I have a different character, but still won wherever I went. So who is the problem? The people who speaks or me?

■ **How many goals can you get this season- you've got 26. 40 maybe?**

I'm objective. I will let you know when I am finished.

■ **You've still got a lot of games left, though?**

I will let you know when I am finished.

■ **Is your fitness a natural fitness?**

I'm an animal. I feel like a lion.

■ **Is it the martial arts training you do?**

No, no, no – I feel in good shape. I train hard. People who know me from the locker room know that I train very hard. I have an objective every season I go into. And to reach that objective I need to train hard and I need to suffer when I train that is how I achieve what I achieve. I'm from the old school where they work hard and get what they get from doing the hard work not like the new school where it is easy to get what you want.

■ **Why are you like a lion?**

I am a lion. I don't want to be a lion.

■ **Do you mean you've the hunger of a lion?**

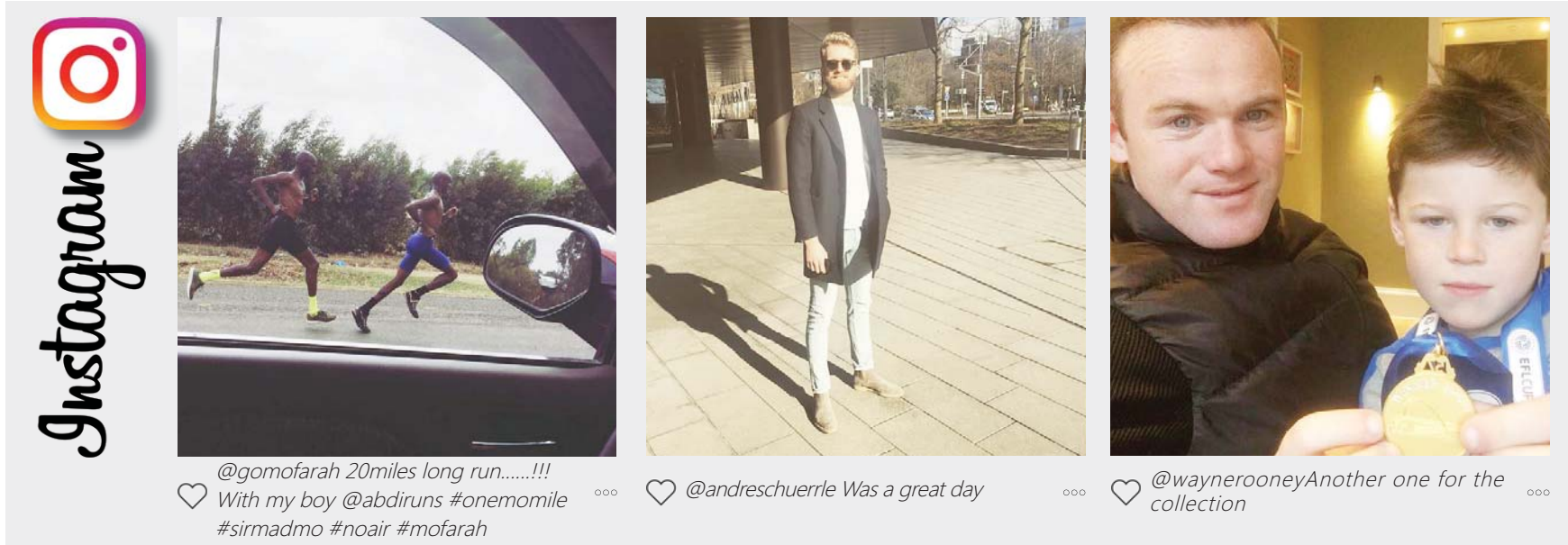
The lion is born a lion.

What does that mean?

It means I'm a lion! I never talk so much with journalists. I never stopped so long even for the French people.

■ **You say you've got 32 medals what do you do with them - or this one?**

It is in the museum. I have a house only for the medals!



@gomofarah 20miles long run.....!!!
With my boy @abdiruns #onemomile
#sirmadmo #noair #mofarah

@andreschuerle Was a great day

@waynerooneyAnother one for the collection

Iran to play friendly with Iraq behind closed doors

S P O R T S Iran national football team have been schedule to play a friendly game with Iraq on March 17 at Tehran's Azadi Stadium behind the closed doors.

Iraq Football Federation had previously requested a friendly against Iran but Team Melli's Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz rejected the offer. Now with less than a month to the game against Qatar, Queiroz has accepted the offer but the match will be played behind the closed doors.

Iran will return to action on the road to 2018 World Cup with a trip to Doha against Qatar on March 12 before facing China five days later.

Iran currently are top of Group A in the Asia's 2018 World Cup qualifying with 11 points from five games.

Iraq are in Group B of the Asia's World Cup qualifying along with Saudi Arabia, Japan, Australia, UAE and Thailand. They will meet Australia on March 3 in Tehran before taking on Saudi Arabia in Jeddah.

Only the top two teams in the six-nation group will earn automatic berths in the World Cup in Russia, while the third seed needs to go through the playoffs.



Iran's Esteghlal defeat Al Taawoun in AFC Champions League

S P O R T S Iran's Esteghlal defeated debutants Al Taawoun from Saudi Arabia in Group A of the 2017 AFC Champions League on Monday.

The Iranian side, who went down 2-1 to the United Arab Emirates' Al Ahli in their opening game of the tournament last week, earned a 3-0 victory over Al Taawoun at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

Kaveh Rezaei opened the scoring for the Blues just 50 seconds into the match.

Mohsen Karimi extended Esteghlal's lead in the 70th

minute and Brazilian defender Padovani made it 3-0 in the 90th minute.

Esteghlal Khuzestan also edged past Al Jazira of the UAE 1-0 at Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium.

Cameroonian striker Aloyce Nang scored the winning goal in the 2nd minute of the match.

The Iranian debutants had defeated Saudi Arabia's Al Fateh in Group B last week.

Esteghlal Khuzestan went top of the group with six points.



ACL 2017 MD2 - Group D: Al Wahda v Persepolis preview



Al Wahda will host Persepolis in Group D of the 2017 AFC Champions League at Al Nahyan Stadium on Tuesday with both teams looking to secure their first win of the tournament.

Rim Chang-woo's first-half strike saw Al Wahda go into the interval all square with Al Rayyan on Matchday One only to finish the game on the wrong end of a 2-1 scoreline. The Emiratis' last home game in

the competition, though, was a 2-0 victory over Tuesday's visitors back in 2011.

Persepolis were just eight minutes away from opening their campaign with a win after Mohsen Mosalman opened the scoring against Al Hilal before their Saudi Arabian opponents levelled through Brazilian Carlos Eduardo in the final 10 minutes.

(Source: the-afc)

ACL 2017 MD2 - Group C: Zobahan v Al Ahli preview



Zobahan of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli will square off in Group C of the 2017 AFC Champions League on Tuesday with both aiming to build on impressive opening-day performances.

Seyed Hosseini's Zobahan claimed a creditable 1-1 draw from their trip to Al Ain and were unlucky not to gain all three points after Honduran forward

Jerry Bengston gave the Iranian side a second-half lead.

Al Ahli, though, did enjoy a winning start as goals from Salman Muwashar and Omar Al Soma wrapped up a 2-0 victory over Bunyodkor to leave the 2012 runners-up as the only team in Group C on maximum points ahead of the fixture at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

(Source: the-afc)

Nepal starts its first-ever AFC Futsal Coaching Course

The All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) started its first-ever Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Futsal Coaching Course (Level 1) at the ANFA Complex on Sunday.

Nineteen coaches holding the AFC 'C' Football Coaching Certificate attended the six-day course which was conducted by AFC Instructor Hossein Shams assisted by Darshan Bhaktaraj.

The course was designed to create futsal coaches for the development of the growing game. The participants were made up-to-date with the latest changes and improvements in futsal coaching, covering the practical and theoretical aspects of the game.

ANFA Executive Committee member and Futsal Committee Chairman Ramesh Rayamahji, who opened the course, said: "Futsal is a very popular format of football in Nepal. We have about 100 futsal pitches in Kathmandu alone and more than one million people who are directly or indirectly involved in the game. This



is the first step in developing the game systematically in the country."

ANFA Futsal Committee Vice Chairman Lok Bahadur Shahi said: "This course has established ANFA's committee as the recognised body for futsal activities in Nepal, because previously though there were various

tournaments organised in Kathmandu, they were not organised by a recognised unit.

"Our next step will be to organise refereeing courses and finally, we will go for a nation-wide league. All these programmes will help us form a good national team."

ANFA Acting General Secretary Sanjib Mishra said the importance of the game in cultivating young talent should be acknowledged. A case in point is former Nepal football national team players such as Nabin Lama and Shyam Nepali who began their careers in futsal.

Shams exhibited case studies from Vietnam on the rise of the game in the country, saying: "I remember futsal in Vietnam started in 2006, and now they are one of the top teams in Asia. In the recently held World Cup qualifiers, Vietnam defeated powerhouses like Japan. I believe Nepal can achieve that but in order to get there, organising a professional league is key."

(Source: the-afc)

Iranians awarded three more medals in 2017 Asian Canoe Slalom Championships

Iranian male and female rowers have continued to demonstrate commendable athletic skills and strength at the 2017 Asian Canoe Slalom Championships in Thailand, and received three more medals to raise the country's total medal count to seven at the continental event.

Roxanna Razeghiyan got a bronze in the senior women's single kayak competitions at the Kundanprakarhchon Dam in the central Thai city of Nakhon Nayok on Sunday.

Homayoun Mohammadpour and Mehdi Karimi also finished third at the end of senior men's double canoe

contests, and clinched a bronze medal.

Additionally, Amir Rezanejad and Mohammad Mehdi Konarang landed in the third spot and pocketed a bronze medal in the men's under-18 canoe double heats.

On Saturday and the second day of the competitions, junior Iranian sportswomen Donya Mohammadi and Faezeh Ronasi participated in the women's under-18 canoe double contests, and did their best to gain the top position.

Additionally, Roxanna Razeghiyan ranked third in the senior women's single canoe event and settled for the bronze.

The Iranian outfit, comprised of Danial Khosravi, Mahan Edrisi and Reza Khalili, contested against opponents in the men's under-18 single kayak team competitions, and finished runner-ups to collect the silver.

Furthermore, Amir Mohammad Fattahpour, Mehdi Karimi and Homayoun Mohammadpour took part in the senior men's single canoe team event, and could clinch a bronze medal for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The 2017 Asian Canoe Slalom Championships kicked off in Nakhon



Nayok, Thailand, on February 24, and wrapped up on February 26, 2017.

(Source: PressTV)

Iran's Zahra Nemati best Para archer of the Year

Iran's Zahra Nemati and USA's Andre Shelby were named women's and men's Para archers of 2016 by World Archery at a gala held in Las Vegas, USA, as part of the annual Vegas Shoot on 10 February.

Nemati made her Olympic debut in Rio weeks before the Paralympics. She won her second individual Paralympic title in the women's individual recurve open in the Brazilian city. She also took silver in the mixed team recurve open with Ebrahim Ranjbarkivaj.



The 31-year-old took up archery after suffering a spinal cord injury in 2003. She has focused on inspiring women in sports and life, Paralympic.org wrote.

"To know that I can touch other people, that is important," Nemati said.

The World Archery Awards have been in existence since 2014 for athletes, officials and volunteers who displayed exceptional performance and have made a contribution to the sport.

In 2016, the volunteer of the year award was presented to the sport volunteers of Rio for their hard work and dedication throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Shelby made his Paralympic debut in Rio, where he won the men's individual compound open event after beating Italy's Alberto Simonelli in the final. Australia's Jonathon Milne collected bronze.

"These honors mean a lot to me, not only for myself but for the entire community," said Shelby, a Navy veteran who was paralyzed from the chest down in a motorcycle accident in 2004.

"And that is important; we are all here supporting one another."

Shelby hopes to coach one day and pave the way for others with an impairment.

"Archery is a lot about self-discipline," he said. "I think that stems from being in the military. The archery gives you a lot of discipline towards training and it is repetition over and over and over. I think that gives you an edge in the long run."

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Four-nation futsal tournament likely for December in Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran would most likely host a four-nation futsal tournament this winter, with national men's teams from Argentina, Russia and Portugal heading to the country in December.

Head of the futsal committee in the Islamic Republic of Iran Football Federation (IRIFF), Abbas Torabian, said the participating teams in the expected competition are among the worlds' top ten contingents.



"Preparatory talks have just started and will continue until they yield positive and favorable results. Our main goal to stage the tournament annually and each of the countries would host it on a rotational basis," Torabian added.

The Iranian official further noted that the four-nation futsal tournament will be staged at the Azadi Sport Complex in western Tehran if everything goes according to plan.

According to the latest monthly classification published by the Asociación Mundial de Futsal (AMF), which is the governing body of futsal, the Iranian squad has preserved its position as Asia's best and stayed put in the sixth place of the world's overall standings. Team Melli Futsal earned 1,608 points.

Kazakhstan maintained the 9th slot in the latest AMF rankings with 1,451 points. The Central Asians are followed by Thais and the Japanese, who have claimed the 15th and 16th places respectively with 1,360 and 1,359 points.

Brazil is the top-ranked futsal team in the world with 1,916 points. Spaniards notched up 1,889 points to sit in the second position, while third-placed Russians kept their position with 1,763 points. Argentina collected 1,706 points to stand fourth.

(Source: PressTV)

“Salesman” wins Farhadi, Iran second Oscar in storm of Hollywood criticism of Trump

By: Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN — The Iranian drama “The Salesman” won the Oscar for best foreign-language film at the 89th Academy Awards at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California on Sunday amid a storm of condemnation of President Donald Trump by Hollywood figures.

Director Asghar Farhadi did not attend the gala in protest over Trump’s travel ban. Iranian-American engineer Anousheh Ansari, who was the first female space tourist, and Firouz Naderi, a former director of NASA’s Solar System Exploration program, represented Farhadi at the Oscar ceremony.

“My absence is out of respect for the people of my country, and those of the other six nations who have been disrespected by the inhumane law that bans entry of immigrants to the U.S.,” Ansari read out a statement from Farhadi at the podium, the Guardian reported.

Following Trump’s executive order suspending travel from seven Muslim-majority countries, including Iran, Farhadi said that he would not attend the Oscar ceremony although he did not face a ban to enter the U.S.

In a statement published by media worldwide, Farhadi said, “I hereby express my condemnation of the unjust conditions forced upon some of my compatriots and the citizens of the other six countries who are trying to legally enter the United States of America, and hope that the current situation will not give rise to further divisions between nations.”

Prior to Farhadi’s decision not to attend the Oscar ceremony, “The Salesman” star Taraneh Alidoosti said that she would boycott the gala in protest of Trump’s travel ban.

Iranian-American scientific figures represent Farhadi at Oscars

In an email interview with the New York Times, which followed her announcement of boycotting the Oscar ceremony, Alidoosti said, “I’m sure the United States has also benefited many times from Iranian immigrants and people who have worked there and served that country.”

Farhadi’s decision to select Iranian-American senior scientific figures to represent him at the Oscars was a clever idea, since by this choice,



Firouz Naderi (L) and Anousheh Ansari, who accepted the Best Foreign Language Film award on behalf of director Asghar Farhadi, poses in the press room during the 89th Annual Academy Awards at Hollywood & Highland Center on February 26, 2017 in Hollywood, California. (Getty Images/Kevork Djansezian)

he confirmed Alidoosti’s remarks. In addition, the decision reminded the U.S. government of the key roles immigrants are playing in the country.

“The Salesman” file

A Memento production, “The Salesman” is about Emad and Rana who move into a new flat in the center of Tehran. An incident linked to the previous tenant dramatically changes the young couple’s life.

Officials laud Asghar Farhadi for Oscar win

A R T TEHRAN — Messages of congratulations have streamed in from all over the world after Asghar Farhadi’s “The Salesman” won the Oscar for Best Foreign-Language Film at the 89th Academy Awards.

Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri offered his message to Farhadi, in the remarks he made on the sidelines of the Conference on the National Day of Protecting the Rights of Consumers on Monday.

“I express my congratulations to Farhadi and his cast and crew who won an Oscar for the second time. I also admire their appropriate decision in protecting their people against the inhumane act and did not attend the ceremony in the United States,” Jahangiri said.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi-Amiri sent his message to Farhadi in a separate dispatch.

“In the tumultuous, dark and insecure world of today, altruism and peace act as a guiding light that brings together liberal individuals and alerts their consciences. And you are able to echo the message of the peace-seeking spirits of Iranians with your expressive language of art far beyond the borders,” the minister said addressing director Farhadi.



Director Asghar Farhadi poses for a picture at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood, California on January 7, 2017. (Getty Images/Greg Doherty)

“No doubt the cinema of Iran, which has had a significant share in promoting culture and reinforcing national security, can promote the art of this land in the world with the repetition of its international success, and bring hope and joy back to Iranian citizens,” the message adds.

“Proud of cast and crew of ‘The Salesman’ for Oscar and stance against

#MuslimBan. Iranians have represented culture and civilization for millennia,” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif posted on his Twitter early Monday.

Also in his message, the Cinema Organization of Iran Director, Hojatollah Ayyubi, expressed his happiness over the great achievement.

“A powerful ambassador and an

expressive language of Iranian culture and civilization, on the verge of spring and the arrival of Noruz, the cinema of Iran has been a messenger of happiness for the people of the Sun land. And the song of happiness is once again heard all across the city. This great historical success produced a wave of joy and happiness in the hearts of those who are living with love in every corner of the world. Happy winning the second Oscar to the people of Iran and to you who deserve this glory, Be happy forever,” reads the message of Ayyubi.

In his message, Farabi Cinema Foundation Managing Director Alireza Tabesh also lauded Farhadi for his foresight, nobility, courtesy, and the international and national perspectives, which have made him see and respect humankind far beyond color and race.

“Dear Asghar Farhadi, we ask God for your eternity, and wish you honor and glory. You endure and produce, so that humanity will remain,” reads part of the message by Tabesh.

In addition, the U.S Department of State has expressed congratulations to Farhadi, the cast and crew of “The Salesman” and the people of Iran on its Twitter page written in Persian.



Producer Jordon Horowitz holds up the card for the Best Picture winner Moonlight. (Reuters/Lucy Nicholson)

ceremony were mild or made general pleas for tolerance rather than directly attacking Trump.

Iranian director Asghar Farhadi was an exception. His drama “The Salesman” was named best foreign language film but Farhadi, boycotted Sunday’s ceremony because of the Trump’s travel ban.

In a speech delivered on his behalf by Iranian-American space expert Anousheh Ansari, Farhadi said his absence was due to “an inhumane law that bans entry into the U.S... Dividing the world into the ‘us’ and ‘our enemies’ categories creates fear, a deceitful justification for aggression and war.”

Iranian journalist publishes travelogue of Cuba

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian journalist Mansur d e s k Zabetian’s travelogue of Cuba has been recently published by Mosallas Publications in Tehran.

The diary entitled “Sebastian” also contains photos of Cubans’ daily life taken by Zabetian during his trip to the cities of Havana, Trinidad and Vinales last spring.

Zabetian has previously written the travelogues “Mark Va Polo” and “Mark Du Polo” about his journey to several countries. “Sebastian” is scheduled to be unveiled during a ceremony at Hanuz Bookstore in Tehran on Friday.

Morteza Arab-Khazaeli wins Vista Contemporary Art Prize

A R T TEHRAN —Young Iranian artist Morteza Arab-Khazaeli has won the first annual Vista Contemporary Art Prize, which was established by the Vista Gallery to praise the best artistic idea.

He received his prize during a ceremony at Tehran’s Qasr Garden Museum on Monday. The director of the gallery, Parisa Pahlavan, and a large number of artists attended the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, Pahlavan said, “The appearance of the new generation and the development of the new media have driven us into a new world with a new visual atmosphere, all of which encouraged us to establish an award for new ideas in the world of contemporary art.”



Young Iranian artist Morteza Arab-Khazaeli speaks after accepting the Vista Contemporary Art Prize at Tehran’s Qasr Garden Museum on February 27, 2017. (Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

She added that most of the designs were centering on paintings, installations, photos and video art projects.

The head of the jury, Behnam Kamrani, thanked the organizers and said, “When a gallery pays due attention to new ideas and establishes awards, it must be admired.

“The gallery owners, companies and private collectors must think of contemporary art and this movement can be a symbol for the public sector,” he added.

Veteran cartoonist Kambiz Derambakhsh was also honored for his lifetime achievements.

The ceremony was ended with the handing of a check worth 300 million rials (about \$8,000) to the winner to accomplish his new project in the gallery.

NEWS IN BRIEF



“Goodbye Tsugumi” published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — Japanese writer Banana d e s k Yoshimoto’s novel “Goodbye Tsugumi” has recently been published in Persian by Nafir Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Zahra Neychin, the book is the story of a complicated friendship between two female cousins, Maria and Tsugumi.



Tehran meeting to discuss impact of Islam on Eastern art

CULTURE TEHRAN — A number of Iranian d e s k scholars will come together during a meeting at the Iranian Academy of Arts in Tehran on March 1 to discuss the impact of Islam on Eastern art.

Scholars Heshmatollah Motedayyeh, Mehrdad Amiraqai, Mohammadreza Riazzi and Qasem Motallebi are scheduled to deliver speeches at the meeting.