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## U.S. will face 'historic remorse' if it quits nuclear deal, Rouhani warns

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday that the U.S. will suffer "historic remorse" if Donald Trump's administration quits the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The warning by Rouhani came just a week before Trump decides to either stay in the multilateral accord or leave it.

Iran has threatened to resume its nuclear activities with a speed higher prior to the conclusion of the nuclear agreement if the nuclear agreement is ditched.

"I tell the Iranian people very clearly that the necessary directives have been given to the country's executive sectors since several months ago. Necessary directives have been given to the Atomic Energy Organization **→2**

## Iran Oil Show 2018 hosting over 4,000 companies

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — More than 4,000 domestic and foreign companies are participating in the 23rd Iran International, Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2018) which kicked off on Sunday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Renowned companies from 38 countries including Azerbaijan, Austria, Spain, Germany, United Arab Emirates, Britain, Italy, Belgium, Turkey, the Czech Republic, China, Russia, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Croatia, South Korea, Poland, the Netherlands, India, Finland, Hong Kong, Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Canada, Liechtenstein, Oman, Denmark, Taiwan as well as the USA, Norway, Australia, **→4**

## Israeli warplane launches airstrike on northern Gaza

An Israeli fighter jet has targeted a position of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement in the northern part of the besieged Gaza Strip as Tel Aviv presses ahead with its acts of aggression against the impoverished Palestinian coastal sliver.

An unnamed Israeli military spokeswoman said "the aircraft struck a post belonging to Hamas adjacent to the border fence in the northern Gaza Strip last night."

She alleged that the strike was in response to kite-borne fire bombings by Gaza-based resistance fighters.

The Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, said in a statement that a border observation post was hit in the attack, and that nobody was injured.

Local sources said the Israeli F-16 fighter jet bombed a site in Beit Lahia city, causing damage to the site and fear among residents, especially children. **→3**



### ARTICLE

Hanif Ghaffari  
Political analyst

## Outcome of Netanyahu's show about JCPOA

Over the last weeks, the prime minister of the occupying regime of Quds has been hardy struggling to persuade the United States and Trump's government to walk out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). These measures are taking place while in 2015, as the nuclear deal was about to be approved in the US Congress, Netanyahu tried to prevent the final formation and implementation of the JCPOA through the AIPAC lobby. However, it seems that this time he's especially counting on Trump's presence at top of US political and executive equations. During the 2016 presidential elections, the Zionist Prime Minister clearly announced his support for Republicans and opponents of the nuclear accord, and, on the contrary, expressed his objection to the re-election of the Democrats. By emphasizing his baseless show on the JCPOA, Netanyahu is once again trying to play a direct role on the process of implementing the nuclear deal with Iran (which its case had been closed by the IAEA once and for all). **→3**

## Iranian students to get prepared for world debating championships

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

**TEHRAN** — In a collaborative effort between the cultural affairs department of University of Tehran and the university's academic center for education, culture and research, called Jihad Daneshgahi, the first round of national English-speaking debating championships will be held to prepare students to take part in international competitions.

The first English-speaking universities debating championship is a huge and essential step to lay the groundwork for the Iranian university students to partake in world debating championships, Majid Sarsangi, director of the cultural affairs department of University of Tehran said on Sunday.

"The competitions will also open up opportunities for students to extensively and intensively study, encourage teamwork, and more significantly train students to resolve disputes by negotiating rather than quarrelling," Sarsangi noted.

Issa Alizadeh, Jihad Daneshgahi's director for cultural affairs, for his part, said that the national Persian-speaking universities debating championship has been held for six years. "Two years ago we decided to plan the English-speaking debating competitions in order to facilitate students' participation in international championships."

"We are doing the spadework to also host one of the world debating championships in the near future," Alizadeh said, however, he didn't provide any further details on the countries they are planning to invite or the championships they want to host.

Mahdi Kazemi, head of the student organization of Jihad Daneshgahi, also explained that the debating championships held in Iran are similar to international competitions to some extent, but they are modified to suit Iran's cultural and religious context.

The first edition of English-speaking universities debating championship will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday here in Tehran with 8 teams from University of Tehran, universities of Shahid Beheshti, Imam Sadeg, Payam Noor of Ardebil, Shahid Madani, and Mohaghegh Ardebili.

### World Universities Debating Championship

The World Universities Debating Championship (WUDC) is the largest English-speaking debate competition worldwide.

The WUDC has been held annually since 1981. Every year the WUDC takes place in a different country and is hosted by a different university and by different debate societies. The tournament gathers students from prestigious universities around the globe, featuring over 400 teams from around 90 countries.

The tournament lasts a week filled with the best level of debate rounds in the world. The debates employ the British Parliamentary (BP) format in which four teams compete against each other on two opposite positions on a given motion, which is announced fifteen minutes before every debate. The competition is run in nine rounds under a Swiss-system where teams of a similar level face off against each other, until the best forty-eight break to the direct elimination rounds. The best English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teams enter their own elimination rounds.

## Saudi regime detains 'thousands' for months without trial: HRW

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has blasted the House of Saud regime for detaining thousands of people for excessively long periods without trial, saying the regime's justice system is deteriorating.

The New York-based rights organization said on Sunday that the detentions raised doubts about the Saudi regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS)'s modernization plan dubbed Vision 2030.

"If Saudi authorities can hold a detainee for months on end with no charges, it's clear that the Saudi criminal justice system remains broken and unjust, and it only seems to be getting worse," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at the HRW.

"It seems that MBS's 'Vision2030' plan better describes the length of detentions without charge than an aspirational time horizon for reforms."

The rights group analyzed data from a public online Saudi regime Interior Ministry database, saying 3,380 people had been held for more than six months without a conviction or their "case file under judicial review," including 2,949 for over a year and 770 for above three years.

One Saudi citizen has been held without a conviction since September 2003 and another "under investigation" since December 2006, the HRW added. **→3**

## Yemeni missile destroys Saudi regime positions in Asir

The Yemeni army and allied fighters have hit military positions in Saudi Arabia's Asir region with a ballistic missile and destroyed them, Yemen's al-Masirah television said on Sunday.

A Zalzal 2 missile was fired at the Ain al-Thwareen base in retaliation for the House of Saud regime airstrikes, which hit its target and left an unknown number of casualties, it added.

Yemeni snipers also killed two Saudi regime troops at the Haskul military base in Jizan, while army artillery units pummeled the regime's military positions in the region, the report said.

Meanwhile, the Saudi regime warplanes bombed parts of Sa'ada, Hudaydah, and Hajjah provinces in northern Yemen.

In Sa'ada, five members of a family were killed after the Saudi regime aircraft bombed a residence in the Baqim district.

Two more civilians were killed in the Saudi regime air raids in al-Jarahi district in Hudaydah, while there was no immediate word on possible casualties in Hajjah which has been bombed 10 times over the past 24 hours.

Yemeni forces have stepped up their response to the Saudi regime airstrikes with game-changer missile attacks which have become a major headache for the kingdom and its supporters. **→3**

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## Nosratollah Vahdat honored at Iranian Stage Actors Celebration

**A R T** Actor Behzad Farahani (L) helps his retired colleague Nosratollah Vahdat sit onstage at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on May 5, 2018 after he was called on to receive an award for his lifetime achievements during the 15th Iranian Stage Actors Celebration. The celebration is organized annually by the Iranian Theater Forum to honor the best actors of the year in theater.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Strong Iran is ‘unconquerable’: general

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — A senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said on Sunday that a strong Iran is “unconquerable”, IRNA reported.

Major General Yahya Rahim-Safavi, who was IRGC chief from 1997 to 2007, said Iran has defeated the U.S. on several occasions and the Americans cannot challenge the great Iranian nation.

He further said Iran has managed to foil U.S. plots to undermine the entire region, adding, “It is natural that America should be angry with Iran.”

Pointing to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s anti-Iran moves, Rahim-Safavi said, “Who believes that the Zionist regime is not behind the assassination of our nuclear scientists?”



Zarif rejects revocation of visa-free entrance for Azeri nationals

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday ruled out cancellation of visa-free entrance for Azeri nationals, saying it would be against the country’s economic benefits.

Zarif was responding to a lawmaker who urged retaliatory measures against the Republic of Azerbaijan which has cancelled visa-free entrance to Iranian nationals, ISNA reported.

The foreign minister said Iran enjoys good economic revenues from Azeri tourists who visit shrine cities, including Mashhad and Qom, inside Iran.

He added that the two religious cities were not the only cities which enjoyed the economic benefits, and that other Iranian provinces were benefiting from it too.



MPs discuss Telegram, house arrest with Judiciary

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Members of the pro-reform Hope parliamentary faction have met with Judiciary deputy chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Eje’i to discuss the ban on Telegram app and other issues, ISNA reported.

Bahram Parsaei, the parliamentary faction’s spokesman, said on Sunday that during the meeting, which was led by Mohammad-Reza Aref, Mohseni-Eje’i said the Supreme National Cyberspace Council was responsible for the ban on Telegram, which the lawmakers found “unconvincing”.

Parsaei said the issue of the house arrest against opposition leaders who claimed vote rigging in the 2009 presidential election was also raised during the meeting, about which Eje’i said the Supreme National Security Council had to decide.



Senior MP: U.S. JCPOA exit would be ‘double win’ for Iran

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Deputy Majlis Speaker Ali Motahari on Sunday shrugged off Washington’s possible move to leave the 2015 nuclear deal, called the JCPOA, saying such a step would be a “double win” for the Islamic Republic.

If the U.S. leaves the JCPOA, not only its international status would be undermined, Iran would also no longer be obliged to fulfill its undertakings under the deal, Motahari said, Tasnim reported.

He also slammed the U.S. for creating a commotion over Iran’s missile program, asking emphatically, “Does America allow us to decide on its missile program?”



U.S. court ruling against Iran is ‘mockery’ of 9/11 victims: Iran

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has strongly denounced a U.S. court ruling requiring Tehran to pay compensations to victims of the 9/11 attacks, saying the ruling was “politically-motivated”.

“Such politically-motivated judgments which are based on unfounded accusations have already been raised in the past,” Qassemi was quoted by Fars as saying.

“Not only is it a mockery of the international law system, but it is also a mockery at the expense of the American people, particularly the victims and the bereaved families of the September 11 attacks,” he added.



Russia calls nuclear deal ‘irrevocable’ document

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Russian Foreign Ministry has said the nuclear agreement is not a simple deal, calling it an “irrevocable” document which has been confirmed by the UN Security Council.

U.S. authorities’ pledge to unilaterally withdraw from the nuclear accord is a threat to international law and security and causes instability, the Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told IRNA on Sunday.

Zakharov also said the Syrian crisis started by militants who are supported by foreigners. She also praised Iran’s role in Syria as “important” and “effective”.

# Velayati dares U.S. to try leaving JCPOA



**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said on Sunday that Iran will make the U.S. “remorseful” if it ditches the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“If the U.S. pulls out of the JCPOA, Iran will definitely counter appropriately and make it [the U.S.] regret,” he pointed out. Velayati added that Iran has various options to respond if the U.S. quits the nuclear deal.

“The U.S. can give it a try. If it wants to pull out of the JCPOA or play a political game to prevent Iran from enjoying its rightful benefits, the Islamic Republic of Iran will definitely make it remorseful,” the veteran politician remarked.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also warned on Sunday that the U.S. will suffer “historic remorse” if the Trump administration quits the international

nuclear pact.

U.S. President Donald Trump is set to decide next week whether to stay in

the deal or not.

The nuclear parties including the European Union, Germany, Britain, Russia,

## Trump hired Israeli spies in ‘dirty ops’ to undermine JCPOA: Observer

Aides to U.S. President Donald Trump have reportedly hired an Israeli private intelligence agency to devise a “dirty ops” campaign against key Obama administration officials who helped negotiate the Iran nuclear deal in a scheme to discredit the agreement, the UK-based The Observer newspaper revealed in a report on Saturday.

Trump administration officials contacted private investigators in May of last year, directing them to “get dirt” on former deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes and Colin Kahl, the deputy assistant to former President Barack Obama, as part of an elaborate scheme to undermine the deal.

The extraordinary development comes days before Trump’s May 12 deadline to either scrap or continue to abide by the international pact regarding Iran’s civilian nuclear program. “These are extraordinary and appalling allegations but which also illustrate a high level of desperation by Trump and [Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu, not so much to discredit the deal but to undermine those around it,” said former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.

Officials linked to Trump’s team contacted Israeli intelligence elements days after the U.S. president visited Tel Aviv a year ago. Trump then made a pledge to Netanyahu that Iran would never have nuclear weapons – despite the fact that Tehran has always maintained that it is principally and categorically opposed to development and use

of nuclear arms.

The British newspaper further cited a source familiar with details of the “dirty tricks campaign” as saying that “the idea was that people acting for Trump would discredit those who were pivotal in selling the deal, making it easier to pull out of it.”

The Israeli investigators in the “dirty ops” mission were to look at Rhodes’ and Kahl’s personal relationships with Iran-friendly lobbyists, and to determine whether they had benefited personally or politically from the nuclear deal.

Rhodes slammed the scheme by the Trump administration as “chillingly authoritarian” in a statement to the British newspaper.

“I was not aware, though sadly am not surprised. I would say that digging up dirt on someone for carrying out their professional responsibilities in their positions as White House officials is a chillingly authoritarian thing to do,” he said.

A spokesman for the White House’s National Security Council offered “no comment” when contacted about the revelation.

Trump has repeatedly signaled his intention to scrap the nuclear deal, denouncing it as “the worst deal ever.” In a January speech, he accused his predecessor of having “curried favor” with the Iranian government so as to “push through the disastrously flawed Iran nuclear deal.”

## Tehran prosecutor: 16 female Daesh members sentenced

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Tehran Prosecutor General Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi said on Sunday that

16 female members of Daesh who had been operating in Syria have been sentenced on various charges.

They were arrested immediately after arriving in Iran, Jafari Dolatabadi added. The Daesh women have also been sentenced

return over 3 billion rials (about \$70,000) that they had received from Daesh, Jafari Dolatabadi explained. He did not give more details.

## Berlin wants U.S. stay in nuclear deal: envoy

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Iranian ambassador to Germany has said that Berlin prefers that the United States stay in the nuclear deal.

Elaborating on the official position of Berlin on the 2015 nuclear agreement, Ali Majedi told Shargh daily in an interview published on Sunday that in his many meetings with German officials in recent weeks, he has been told that they have been “concentrating on keeping America in the deal.”

“The Germans also say Iran should avoid quickly leav-

ing the JCPOA in the event of America’s withdrawal.”

He added the German government’s position is that Tehran should avoid making rush decisions and instead follow the legal process embedded in the JCPOA.

Evidence suggests that U.S. President Donald Trump is more likely to withdraw from the accord than stay in it, the ambassador said, adding, “Unless his talks with Mr. Macron and Mrs. Merkel have changed his mind.”

He further said nothing is for sure in the world of politics and the world will have to wait and see what happens

on May 12.

In a statement on January 12, Trump gave Europeans only 120 days to agree to an overhaul of the nuclear agreement and said if the text of the deal is not revised he would unilaterally withdraw the U.S. from it. The deadline falls on May 12.

Tehran has repeatedly rejected the possibility of a revision to the JCPOA, warning that Iran may exit the deal or the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if the U.S. withdraws from it.

## Ex-Israeli general: U.S. pullout from nuclear deal would help Iran

Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad, the former research chief at Military Intelligence, has said a U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement with the big powers would mainly help Iran.

Gilad, also the former director of the political-security division at the defense ministry, told Haaretz that he believed that an American commitment to the deal remained the least bad option.

On last Monday’s presentation by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Iran’s nuclear program, Gilad said the material obtained by the Mossad did not prove that the Iranians were violating the nuclear agreement.

He added, “Even after Netanyahu’s impressive news conference, I don’t see other countries, other than the United States, taking a stance in favor of abandoning the agreement. Russia is a strategic partner of Iran in Syria. China trades with Iran and the Europeans aren’t budging from their position” supporting the agreement.



“An American announcement that it’s withdrawing from the agreement would let Iran drive a wedge between the world powers and gradually loosen international oversight over its nuclear program. If the Americans abandon the agreement, they have to prepare for alternatives, and I don’t see this being done.”

## U.S. will face ‘historic remorse’ if it quits nuclear deal, Rouhani warns

**1 →** and I talked to this organization’s senior officials a few days ago,” Rouhani told a gathering of people in Sabzevar in northeast Iran.

Ali Akbar Salehi, Iran’s nuclear chief who is a nuclear physicist, has said his agency will resume enriching uranium to the purity level of 20 percent in a matter of few days if the agreement is ditched.

Rouhani also said necessary decisions have been made in case certain sanctions that had been removed under the nuclear accord are snapped back.

“The economic sector has also received the necessary orders.”

Under the nuclear accord Iran is obliged to scale back its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of nuclear-related sanctions.

Since the nuclear deal went into effect in January 2016, the International Atomic Energy Agency has issued 10 reports each time confirming that Iran has been honoring its commitments.

“We have been committed to our obligations [under the JCPOA] in spite of the U.S. impediments.

“Since 15 months ago, Trump has started to say that the deal is the worst deal ever which is harmful to the U.S. but beneficial to Iran... but we negotiated with logic and reached an agreement which was approved by the UN (Security Council),” Rouhani explained.

■ **‘We will build as many weapons as the country needs’**

Rouhani also said that Iran will build as many weapons and missiles as the country needs.

## Iraqi VP: U.S. exit from nuclear deal would threaten intl. peace

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iraqi Vice President Nouri al-Maliki has said that a U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal would pose threat against the international peace and security.

In an interview with IRNA published on Sunday, al-Maliki said implementation of the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, is beneficial to the entire world.

“The JCPOA is a victory for the entire humanity, the region and all the peace-seeking people in the world,” noted al-Maliki, who was Iraq’s prime minister from 2006 to 2014.

He also said that it is better for the U.S. to remain in the nuclear deal.

Quitting an agreement which has been approved by the UN Security Council will be a violation of international law, the senior Iraqi politician remarked.

U.S. President Donald Trump is to decide on May 12 whether to stay in the multilateral agreement or not.



Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the U.S., UK, France, Russia, and China - Germany and the European Union struck the nuclear deal in July 2015. The deal took effect in January 2016.

The UN Security Council turned the JCPOA into international law by endorsing a resolution in July 2015.

The West, led by the Trump administration, has been creating a commotion over Iran’s missile program which Tehran has been insisting is purely deterrent.

“It is not related to anybody that what decision the Iranian nation has taken for their defense,” Rouhani asserted.

To convince Trump to stay in the nuclear deal, the three European countries party to the nuclear deal (France, Britain, and Germany) have backed negotiations with Iran over its missile program.

However Rouhani said, “We will not hold negotiations on our defense capabilities.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani said Iran is not after war in the region and seeks “peace, stability and security”.

He added, “We do not seek war and tension, however, we defend determinedly against any plot.”

# Turkey to retaliate if U.S. halts weapons sales

Turkey will retaliate if the United States enacts a proposed law that would halt weapons sales to the country, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Sunday.

Lawmakers in the United States House of Representatives released details on Friday of a \$717 billion annual defense policy bill, including a measure to temporarily halt weapons sales to Turkey. In an interview with broadcaster CNN Turk, Cavusoglu said the measures in the bill were wrong, illogical and not fitting between the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies.

"If the United States imposes sanctions on us or takes such a step, Turkey will absolutely retaliate," Cavusoglu said. "What needs to be done is the U.S. needs to let go of this."

The proposed U.S. National Defense Authorization Act, which is several steps from becoming law, would ask the Defense Department to provide Congress with a report on the relationship between the United States and Turkey, and would block the sale of major defense equipment until the report was complete. Turkey plans to buy more than



100 of Lockheed Martin's F-35 Joint Strike Fighter jets, and is also in talks with Washington over the purchase of Patriot missiles.

Turkey signed an agreement with Russia in December to buy S-400 surface-to-air missile batteries as part of Ankara's plans to boost its defense capabilities amid threats from

Kurdish and militants at home and conflicts across its borders in Syria and Iraq.

The move to buy S-400s, which are incompatible with the NATO systems, has unnerved NATO member countries, which are already wary of Moscow's military presence in the Middle East, prompting NATO officials to

warn Turkey of unspecified consequences.

Cavusoglu dismissed the warnings, saying Turkey's relations and agreements with Russia were not an alternative to its ties with the West and accused the United States of trying to control Turkey's actions.

"Turkey is not a country under your orders, it is an independent country... Speaking to such a country from above, dictating what it can and cannot buy, is not a correct approach and does not fit our alliance," he said.

Relations between Ankara and Washington have been strained over a host of issues in recent months, including the U.S. policy in Syria and a number of legal cases against Turkish and the U.S. nationals being held in the two countries.

Last month, the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Cavusoglu that the United States was seriously concerned over Ankara's decision to buy the Russian S-400 missile batteries. Cavusoglu said he would visit the United States next week to meet Pompeo, but added a specific date had not been set yet.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Blast at mosque in eastern Afghanistan kills 13

An explosion at a mosque in the eastern Afghan province of Khost on Sunday killed at least 13 people and wounded 31 and the casualty total may rise, a local police official said.

Basir Bina, spokesman for the provincial police, said people were gathered after afternoon prayers in the mosque, which was also being used as a voter registration center for parliamentary elections due in October.

He said the blast appeared to have been caused by explosives left in the mosque rather than by a suicide bomber.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the explosion, which adds to a series of attacks on preparations for elections seen as a key test of government credibility.

Last month, around 60 people were killed in a suicide



attack on a voter center in the capital Kabul, which was claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/

Daesh) terrorist group while the Taliban has also warned people not to take part in the elections.

Sunday's blast came as fighting has spread across Afghanistan, with government officials saying that a district in the northern province of Badakhshan which was seized by Taliban fighters last week had been retaken.

However Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denied the reports that Kohistan district had been retaken, saying in a statement that security forces had been driven back.

In a separate incident in the northern province of Faryab, seven people were killed when the car they were travelling in hit a roadside bomb early on Sunday morning, Mohammad Karim Yuresh, spokesman for Faryab police, said.

(Source: AP)

## Israeli warplane launches airstrike on northern Gaza

➔ Meanwhile, Israeli soldiers shot and killed two Palestinians who tried to cross into Israel from the Gaza Strip on Sunday, the military said. "Troops fired towards three suspects who attempted to infiltrate into Israel from the southern Gaza Strip and to damage security infrastructure in the area of the security fence," the military said in a statement. "Two suspects were killed."

Palestinian health officials said the two men had been killed by Israeli gunfire near the town of Khan Younis.

The spokesman for the Gaza Ministry of Health, Ashraf al-Qidra, said in a statement on April 14 that Israeli tanks had targeted a group of civilians in al-Awdah refugee camp east of Rafah city, located 30 kilometers south of Gaza City, leaving four Palestinian men dead and several others injured. He identified three of those killed as Aayed Saleh al-Hamaydeh, Amjad Hosni al-Qatros and Hisham Mohammed Abdelal.

On April 11, Israeli battle tanks targeted several positions of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military alleged in a statement that the shelling came after Palestinians allegedly detonated a bomb near an Israeli construction vehicle adjacent to the border fence between the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, which caused neither injury nor damage. The Israeli military frequently bombs the Gaza Strip, with civilians being the main target of such attacks. Israel has also launched several wars on the Palestinian coastal sliver, the last of which began in early July 2014. The military aggression, which ended on August 26,

2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians. Over 11,100 others were also wounded in the war. The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

The Israeli regime denies about 1.8 million people in Gaza their basic rights, such as freedom of movement, jobs with proper wages as well as adequate healthcare and education.

(Source: agencies)

## Yemeni missile destroys Saudi regime positions in Asir

➔ On Thursday, the New York Times reported that about a dozen commandos with the United States Army Special Forces, known as the Green Berets, had been deployed to Saudi Arabia's southern border regions with the aim of countering Yemeni missiles.

The deployment came following reports that Patriot interceptors supplied by the U.S. to Saudi Arabia were increasingly failing against missiles fired by Ansarullah (Houthi) movement fighters. The secretive U.S. mission, according to the report, is aimed at helping the Saudi regime forces locate Yemeni missile launch sites and destroy the missile supplies of the Ansarullah movement. The House of Saud regime has been bombing Yemen since 2015 and punishing it with a crippling blockade on Yemeni ports, airports and borders crossings, which has restricted food, aid and vital supplies from entering the impoverished country.

### ■ Fissures in Saudi regime-led coalition

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was the first country to join the Saudi regime war against Yemen but fissures have emerged in their alliance recently as each side has been trying

to carve out a zone of influence in the territories they seize.

On Friday, a delegation of Saudi regime officials visited Yemen's Socotra Island in the Indian Ocean after the UAE deployed troops and tanks there against the will of a regime supported by Riyadh.

The deployment came amid widening divisions between forces loyal to the UAE and those supporting former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. Both camps are based in southern Yemen and mostly in Aden where they have clashed several times. Hadi's loyalists have accused Emirati forces of providing support to those seeking a separation of Yemen's southern territories from the north of the country.

In Socotra, reports have said the UAE was seeking to illegally exploit the island's pristine natural resources and turn it into a permanent military outpost-cum-holiday resort.

Socotra, located near Somalia in the Gulf of Aden, is protected by the United Nations cultural agency UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), meaning that even the Yemeni government is unable to interfere in the

natural habitats and places of natural beauty.

Reports have suggested that the UAE has been actively cementing its presence in Socotra since the very beginning of the Saudi regime-led war on Yemen.

Videos posted on social media purportedly show residents of Socotra angrily reacting to the new Emirati deployment.

On Saturday, the foreign ministry of Yemen's Supreme Political Council - the de facto administration based in the capital Sana'a - denounced the UAE's troop deployment to Socotra.

"The island's occupation betrays the goal and nature of the occupation by the Saudi-led Arab coalition's forces," said a source at the ministry who asked not to be named.

"The invading countries are trying to impose their control on the southern Yemen areas and islands," he added.

Last year, UAE-backed separatists began confronting Hadi's loyalists in Aden which is key to controlling the nearby Bab el-Mandeb Strait through which an estimated 12.5 to 20 percent of global trade passes every year.

(Source: Press TV)

## Saudi regime detains 'thousands' for months without trial: HRW

➔ "We've reverted to a Saudi version of Kafka when authorities detain citizens for over a decade without charge because they are 'under investigation'," Whitson said.

"This effectively means that Saudi authorities can detain and jail anyone they want by claiming they are investigating them, however endless the investigation," she added.

Whitson also urged the Saudi regime's attorney general to promptly charge or release

all the defendants held arbitrarily.

She further challenged the crown prince's pledge to bring major social and economic changes to Saudi Arabia amid a recent dramatic increase in incarceration without trial.

"Mohammad bin Salman's promises to modernize and strengthen the rule of law mean very little when the authorities can lock away thousands of people for years and throw away the key," she said. Under the Saudi regime law,

a person may be detained without charge for a maximum of five days, renewable up to six months by a public prosecution order. After six months, the detainee should "be directly transferred to the competent court, or be released."

Bin Salman was appointed the first in line to the Saudi regime throne by his father, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, last June. Since then, he has engaged in a string of radical economic and social projects in a bid to portray himself

as "reformist." But those projects have been widely seen more about consolidating his personal power and less about bringing about real change to the Saudi regime.

Hundreds of influential Saudi businessmen and members of the royal family were rounded up in November 2017 in an alleged "anti-corruption campaign" spearheaded by bin Salman.

(Source: Reuters)

## Hezbollah, allies poised for win in Lebanese polls

### Lebanese vote in first general election in nine years

Lebanon went to the polls on Sunday to elect MPs (Member of Parliament) for the first time in nine years, with voter turnout over 20 percent by early afternoon.

Sunday's vote sees 583 candidates compete for the 128 seats in parliament through 77 rival lists, spread across 15 districts. Under the terms of a new electoral law that introduced proportional representation, voters will be casting two votes; one for a list of candidates and one for a single preferred candidate.

Lebanon's parliamentary elections were delayed three times since 2009 due to the crisis in neighboring Syria as well as disagreement over the country's new electoral law.

In an interview with BBC Arabic TV on Saturday, President Michel Aoun underlined the importance of national unity and expressed hope that the new government would be formed soon. "I hope that a new government will be formed quickly and according to the constitution. But if national unity is not preserved, the majority will take over, and the rest will become the opposition," he said.

### ■ Hariri's Future alliance vs. Hezbollah and others

The current Lebanese parliament contains more than 20 different political parties. Its biggest party is the Future Movement (Tayyar Al-Mustaqbal), led by Prime Minister Saad Hariri. The next parties are President Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (Tayyar al-Watan/ al-Horr/Aounist party/at-Tayyar awne), Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri's Amal Movement (Hope Movement/Harakat Amal) and the Hezbollah resistance movement.

An anti-Hezbollah alliance led by Hariri and supported by the House of Saud regime won a majority in the Lebanese parliament in 2009, but it has since disintegrated.

Hariri stunned Lebanon and the world in November 2017 by announcing his resignation in a live television broadcast from Saudi Arabia. He accused the regional Iran and Hezbollah of sowing strife among Arab states, an allegation rejected by both sides.

Senior sources close to Hariri and top Lebanese officials

said Riyadh had coerced the Lebanese premier into stepping down and put him under house arrest.

Hariri, however, managed to get out of the kingdom amid international pressure on Riyadh and rescinded his resignation after returning home.

A recent document pointed to Saudi Arabia's "plot" to assert enormous influence on Lebanon's elections.

Analysts expect more than half the seats of the new Lebanese parliament to be won by Hezbollah and its allies. The resistance movement has played a critical role in the Syrian military's counter-terrorism operations over the past few years.

Under a power-sharing agreement that ended the 1975-1990 civil war in Lebanon, prime minister must be a Sunni Muslim, president a Maronite Christian and parliament speaker a Shia Muslim.

The current cabinet was announced in December 2016 after Aoun's election as president that ended a 29-month-long political stalemate in the Middle Eastern country.

(Source: staff & agencies)

## Anger in France, Britain over Trump's gun law speech

The United States President Donald Trump caused anger in France and Britain by suggesting looser gun laws could have helped prevent deadly attacks in Paris in 2015 and linking knife crime in London to a handgun ban.

In a speech to the National Rifle Association (NRA) on Friday, Trump mimicked the shooting of victims in the Paris rampage and said if civilians had been armed "it would have been a whole different story."

The French government issued its strongest criticism of Trump since he took office and one minister urged the leader to apologies, at a time when President Emmanuel Macron has been reinforcing bilateral ties following a state visit.

"France expresses its firm disapproval of President Trump's comments about the Paris attacks on Nov. 13, 2015 and demands that the memory of the victims be respected," the foreign office said in a statement.

"France is proud to be a country where acquiring and carrying firearms is strictly regulated."

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said he hoped Trump "would come back on his words and express regret".

"His comments are shocking and not worthy of the president of the world's greatest superpower," Le Maire told BFM television on Sunday.

Other French politicians, including the mayor of Paris, took issue with Trump's comments, after he acted out the scene of the massacre by Islamist assailants at Paris' Bataclan concert hall, where 90 of the 130 victims of the attacks died.

"They took their time and gunned them down one by one. Boom! Come over here. Boom! Come over here. Boom!" Trump said, using his hands in a gun gesture.

Francois Hollande, who was French president at the time, said on Twitter Trump's remarks were "shameful" and "obscene".

### ■ 'Knives, knives, knives, knives'

Trauma surgeons in London, meanwhile, said Trump had missed the point when, in the same speech, he linked knife crime there to an absence of guns.

Comments by Trump have caused upset before in Britain. Relations with Prime Minister Theresa May cooled last year after she criticized him for retweeting anti-Islam videos by a British far-right group.

Trump, who is due to visit Britain on July 13, told NRA members that a "once very prestigious" London hospital, which he did not name, had become overwhelmed with knife attack victims.

"They don't have guns. They have knives and instead there's blood all over the floors of this hospital," he said. "They say it's as bad as a military war zone hospital. Knives, knives, knives, knives," he said, making stabbing gestures.

London suffered a spike in knife crime early this year, and saw more murders during February and March than New York.

Last month, trauma surgeon Martin Griffiths told the BBC some of his colleagues had likened the Royal London Hospital in east London where he works to the former British military base Camp Bastion in Afghanistan.

But on Saturday he indicated Trump had drawn the wrong conclusion from his remarks.

Griffiths posted his comment next to an animation of a stick figure with the phrase "The Point" flying over its head and also linked to a statement on the hospital's website by fellow trauma surgeon Karim Brohi.

"There is more we can all do to combat this violence, but to suggest guns are part of the solution is ridiculous. Gunshot wounds are at least twice as lethal as knife injuries and more difficult to repair," Brohi said in the statement on Saturday.

Britain's government effectively banned handgun ownership in England, Scotland and Wales after a school shooting in 1996.

(Source: Reuters)

## Outcome of Netanyahu's show about JCPOA

➔ Last week and during a dramatic show, Netanyahu showed some "documents". He argued that according to these documents, Iran has secretly retained the military aspect of its nuclear program, which is against the JCPOA context. However, Netanyahu's claims were not welcomed even inside the occupied territories! Many Zionist politicians have explicitly called Netanyahu's action a baseless show, which is contrary to the interests of the occupying regime of Quds. Neither did the IAEA consider Netanyahu's claims a new story, and consequently, the Zionists' Prime Minister's show ended up in no results.

In separate telephone calls with his Australian, Indian and British counterparts, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talked about documents allegedly indicative of Iran's secret nuclear activities. These claims were raised at a time when Donald Trump has not yet made a final decision on the nuclear deal. Many US sources have emphasized that the US president, on the one hand, has a tendency to cancel the nuclear deal, but on the other hand, he is worried about its international costs. Beyond that, the President of the United States has not yet been able to persuade his European allies of a perfect and coordinated play on his ground (in terms of complete withdrawal from the JCPOA). Though some European authorities such as the French President Emanuel Macron, Theresa May the British prime minister, and even the German Chancellor Angela Merkel have in part, acted in the interests of the United States, and spoke of reforming (changing) the JCPOA, but the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA has not been welcomed even by these officials.

On the other hand, Trump is seriously worried about the reaction of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the withdrawal of the United States from the nuclear deal. This concern is increasing day by day. Our country's authorities have explicitly stated that Tehran's response to Washington's withdrawal will be regrettable for the United States. In any case, Netanyahu's recent show and his confrontation to the nuclear deal with Iran was nothing unexpected or even unpredictable. Such measures have been repeatedly taken by the Prime Minister of the occupying regime of Quds. And in the future, we will see more of his political and media campaign against our country. However, the global response to Netanyahu's actions once again showed that the Zionist regime is stepping down towards isolation and collapse in the international system in such a way that even the traditional Tel Aviv allies were not ready to welcome Netanyahu's ridiculous show, and they kept silent about it.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	92849.9
IFX	1047.8

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,210 rials
EUR	51,990 rials
GBP	59,650 rials
AED	11,490 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	69.72/b
Brent	74.87/b
OPEC Basket	70.66/b
Gold	\$1,315.95 /oz
Silver	\$16.56/oz
Platinum	\$916.50/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Belgrade to host Iran-Serbia Joint Economic Committee meeting on June 20

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The fifteenth meeting of Iran-Serbia Joint Economic Committee will be held in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, on June 20 and 21, a director in Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

Behrouz Olfat, director of Europe and America Department at TPO, said the meeting will be attended by Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari and Serbian Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications Minister Rasim Ljajic, portal of TPO reported.

Croatia has new plans for expanding economic ties with Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Croatia has new plans on agenda for development of its economic ties with Iran, Croatian Deputy Prime Minister Martina Dalic announced in a meeting with Mohammad Baqer Nobakht, the head of Management and Planning Organization of Iran, in Tehran on Sunday, IRIB news reported.



Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia Martina Dalic (L) and Head of Management and Planning Organization of Iran Mohammad Baqer Nobakht met in Tehran on Sunday

Referring to the recent visits paid by Iranian senior officials to Croatia, Dalic, who is also the Minister of Economy, Small and Medium Entrepreneurship and Crafts of Croatia, hoped that the existing impediments, including banking and financial ones, on the way to boost mutual economic ties with Iran would be removed in near future.

“Croatia is fond of enhancing ties in sectors such as energy, foodstuff, medicine, construction and engineering affairs with Iran,” she said, “We seeks to make Croatian banks active for conducting banking transactions with their Iranian counterparts.”

As reported, Iran-Croatia business forum will be held at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCCIMA) on Monday in the presence of both countries’ top officials and entrepreneurs. Iranian and Croatian businessmen have the opportunity to hold face-to-face meetings on the sidelines of the forum.

Total risks losing gas field stake to CNPC if it quits Iran

Total SA, the only Western energy major investing in Iran, will lose its stake in the South Pars natural gas field to its Chinese partner if the Paris-based company withdraws from the country, the head of National Iranian Oil Co. said.

Total has spent \$90 million to help develop the offshore field and won’t be compensated before production begins, Ali Kardor, managing director of state-run NIOC, said Sunday at a news conference in Tehran. Kardor didn’t specify whether Total would receive any compensation if it pulled out of the project in Iran’s section of the world’s biggest gas deposit.

Total committed in July to develop phase 11 of the giant South Pars field, pledging \$1 billion in investment.

Total has a 50.1 percent stake in the 20-year South Pars project, with China National Petroleum Corp. holding 30 percent and Iran’s Petropars, 19.9 percent. If Total withdraws, Iran will transfer the company’s full stake to CNPC, based on the contract, Kardor said.

Iran has the world’s largest gas reserves, estimated by BP Plc at 1,183 trillion cubic feet (33 trillion cubic meters), and is the third-biggest oil producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Total had been working at South Pars until international sanctions forced it to withdraw in 2009. Production from the project would be 2 billion cubic feet a day of gas, Kardor said in July. (Source: Bloomberg)

Iran Oil Show 2018 hosting over 4,000 companies

**1 →** Brazil, Malaysia and Singapore are showcasing their latest products and achievements in oil and gas industry in the four-day event, Shana news agency reported.

The inaugural ceremony of the exhibition was attended by Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) Secretary General Yury Sentyurin, Croatian Deputy Prime Minister Martina Dalic, and a number of Iranian parliament members, ambassadors of other countries in Iran, directors of Iranian oil, gas and petrochemical industries, and representatives of some renowned international companies.

**■ Iran is not after higher oil prices: Zanganeh**

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the exhibition, Iranian oil minister said Iran doesn’t want oil prices to run too high, ISNA reported.

The official noted that oil prices should be at a level that supports the market stability, because volatility in the market results in instability for investment.

Mentioning Iran’s historical role in the world’s energy market, Zanganeh said, “Iran has always tried to protect the market from



getting affected by politics. Politicizing the energy market and imposing restrictions are neither in the interests of the producers nor the consumers.”

“The West might be able to hinder our development, but they cannot stop us and we

PMO starts imposing revised tariffs on port, maritime activities

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) started imposing recently-revised tariffs on port and maritime activities on Saturday, ISNA reported.

The main objective behind revising the mentioned tariffs is to promote Iran’s sea trade and transit status. The new tariffs reduce the price for exporters and importers in many fields.

In a press conference last month, PMO Managing Director Mohammad Rastad said that tariffs play some important role in pricing of maritime and port services, adding that reducing tariffs is done with the aim of promoting status of ports and increasing the services.

PMO has a key status in setting the price of port services and the organization has specified some short and long-term plans in this due and moves in line with the specified objectives, the official said, adding that in this regard, some specific tariffs have been defined and categorized in a three-year plan.



He mentioned promoting the performance of ports and quality of port equipment to attract large shipping lines, elevating the status of exporters and also reducing the end prices of imported commodities as some objectives behind reduction of tariffs.

New tariffs are simpler and clearer to meet the satisfaction of those operators who complained about complicated tariffs, the managing director noted, adding different affecting factors such as foreign currency exchange rate has been considered in specifying these tariffs.

Gold can get to 5 year highs if it can clear one technical hurdle: Bank of America

Gold just ended its third straight week in the red, as investors rediscovered their love for a different safe-haven asset: the U.S. dollar.

The dollar index ended Friday at \$92.61 on Friday, its highest level of the year. The index has climbed by more than 1 percent in the past week. Meanwhile, gold prices are down 0.8 percent for the week, ending Friday at \$1,314.80 an ounce.

However, the yellow metal will find favor again, according to Bank of America Merrill Lynch technical strategist Paul Ciana, and a breakout could push it to recapture highs not seen in half a decade.

“Gold prices have been forming a six-year long base,” Ciana told CNBC’s “Futures Now” this week. “In the technical world we like to say, the bigger the base, the higher in



space. That’s what gold is doing.”

Gold prices need to break through the resistance level at \$1,350 to \$1,375, which would then confirm the six-year technical base and set up a larger rally, he said. Prices moved as high as \$1,369 in mid-April, but have failed to crack \$1,370 so far this year.

Bank of England to keep rates steady after market U-turn

The Bank of England looks set to keep interest rates on ice this week, capping a sharp swing in the outlook for the British central bank, which might now struggle to convince investors that it will raise borrowing costs at all this year.

Unexpectedly weak economic data and cautious remarks from Governor Mark Carney have dashed what looked like near-certain expectations of a rate increase until a few weeks ago.

Since he joined the BoE in 2013, Carney has signaled several times that rates were likely to rise, only for economic data to go the wrong way.

With the prospects for Britain’s economy unclear and the terms of Britain’s departure from the European Union far from settled, Carney is likely to want to hedge his bets on Thursday.

The biggest challenge will be to keep the prospect of a further rate rise this

year credible in the eyes of investors, who feel wrong-footed by a slowdown in the economy that may well prove temporary and by the BoE’s shifting guidance.

Sterling fell to its lowest since January against the U.S. dollar on Friday as markets priced diverging prospects for growth and interest rates on the two sides of the Atlantic.

“Resetting communication after sitting out a rate hike will be an uphill task for the Monetary Policy Committee,” Barclays economists Fabrice Montagne and Sreekala Kochugovindan said in a note to clients.

“It will have to make a convincing case that softness in Q1 ... is transitory,” they said. “Markets will likely be reluctant to adhere to the MPC’s rhetoric given the abrupt change in course witnessed shortly ahead of the May meeting.”

(Source: Reuters)

Official calls for supporting industrious laborers efficiently

Despite playing more effective role in the national production, industrious workers and laborers are not supported duly.

CEO of Social Security Investment Company dubbed ‘SHASTA as Persian acronym’ Eng. Lotfi announced the above statement in the presence of industrious laborers of IRANL Oil Company and said, “in spite of the fact that industrious laborers and workers has the key and

important role in economic prosperity of the country, they get the partial share of benefit in the country.”

In this regard, Minister of Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare Ali Rabiei has made his utmost effort to settle financial problems of workers, he said, adding, “it is hoped that the ministry will take giant stride in compensating the shortfalls.”

More than 284 companies are

630 enterprises to be privatized by March 2019

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The shares of 630 Iranian enterprises are planned to be transferred to the private sector by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019).

The list of the enterprises to be privatized this year was approved by the Divestiture Board of Iran’s Privatization Organization (IPO) on Saturday, Tasnim news agency reported.

Implementation of privatization plan aimed at more productivity, investment making, job creation, promotion of trade balance, more competition in domestic economy, and reducing financial and management burden on the government has been under the spotlight in Iran over the past decade.

The law on implementation of the general policies of the Article 44 of Iran’s Constitution on privatizing state-owned companies was declared in 2006 in a bid to downsize the government

Further in his remarks, Zanganeh noted that a \$6-billion package has been defined to encourage domestic companies’ contribution in maintaining and increasing the country’s oil production.

“The package will be soon approved and holding tender for certain projects was started late last year” the minister said.

According to the official, the funding will be supplied from the domestic markets and over 50,000 job opportunities will be created in oil-rich areas.

“In this package, the tender candidate companies are provided with a list of domestic products and they are obligated to prioritize using Iranian products,” Zanganeh said.

Elsewhere in his remarks the oil minister mentioned IPC contracts, saying, “In the IPC contracts, several actions were taken to support Iranian companies. Firstly, in each contract, an Iranian company should be partnered with the foreign company. We have also emphasized maximizing the use of domestic productions. In three signed IPC contracts, more than 70 percent of the work, in terms of value, is executed by Iranian companies.”



and promote the private sector’s role in the national economy.

The government envisioned a large privatization program in the Fifth Five-Year National Development Plan (2010-2015), aiming to privatize about 20 percent of the state-owned firms each year. Under the present interpretation of the Article 44, some state-owned companies have been privatized to reduce their financial burden on the country’s budget and also increase their productivity.

“As soon as this \$1,350 to \$1,375 area goes, which I do think it will later this year mostly when the dollar rally kind of tempers itself and neutralizes, that puts gold on the path to \$1,450 so plenty of room there,” said Ciana.

Gold prices have not traded at \$1,450 an ounce since May 2013. The precious metal has been in a years-long downward trend, holding below \$1,400 since September 2013.

A rally in gold is part of the “bigger picture” of what’s happening inside the commodity markets, Ciana continued. He sees a secular commodity bull market in formation.

“If we look at the CRB index, our monthly chart, which is essentially the rising tide of commodity markets, they just broke out ending April,” Ciana explained. “They’ve closed just above \$200, confirming an ascending triangle base.” (Source: CNBC)

IMF says Egypt must deepen reforms to catch window of global growth

Egypt will have to deepen its IMF-backed reforms and better encourage private sector growth if it wants to cash in on a wave of global expansion that may soon come to an end, a fund official in Cairo said on Saturday.

Halfway into a three-year \$12 billion IMF loan program it signed in late-2016 tied to tough austerity measures, Egypt is hoping painful reforms like tax hikes and subsidy cuts will now lure back foreign investors and kick-start an economy that crashed after its 2011 Arab Spring uprising.

Speaking to government officials as part of an IMF visit to review Egypt’s reform program, First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton praised the country’s progress but said “broadening and deepening the reform agenda” is crucial to take advantage of ripe global conditions.

“But now the time has come to take advantage of the hard-won macroeconomic

stability and push on to create jobs and raise living standards through sustainable growth,” Lipton said in a prepared statement provided to Reuters.

He described strong global growth, projected at 3.9 percent for 2018 and 2019, and low interest rates likely to rise as “a good window of opportunity for Egypt to undertake reforms...that may not be open for too long.”

Cairo’s tough reforms have included a currency float that halved the value of its pound, deep cuts to fuel and electricity subsidies and a new value-added tax.

Those measures helped push inflation in the import-dependent country to as high as 33 percent last year, but price rises have since cooled, with headline inflation easing to 13.3 percent in March, its lowest rate since May 2016, clearing the way for further subsidy cuts and lower interest rates.

(Source: Reuters)





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## Checkmate of Persian Gulf Sultanate in Iran's energy Peninsula

Gas Production Capacity from  
South Pars Gas Field Stands at 800m bpd

Gas production capacity extracted from South Pars Gas Field (SPGF) stands at 800 million barrels per day (bpd).

South Pars or Northern Dome, which one of them is considered deservedly as the good name for Iran-Qatar joint gas field in the depth of the Persian Gulf?

South Pars Gas Field is located on a land area as large as 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which belongs to the Islamic Republic of Iran while the rest belongs to neighboring Qatar. With these interpretations, it is obvious that large portion of the field belongs to Qatar, the issue of which is a trump card at the hand of Qatar in terms of geographical and geopolitical dimensions.

Persian Gulf sultanates and sheikhs took advantage of salient advantages of this gas field and created a wide gap with its gas rival i.e. Iran in terms of extraction of more gas volume. From the beginning, Qatari side took advantage of high capabilities and potentials of international contractors and managed to get the lion's share of gas from the field.

Islamic Republic of Iran lagged behind and could not increase its gas volume extracted from the gas field as compared to Qatari side.

Under such circumstances, Iran's lucrative energy peninsula failed to compete with Qatar in this regard since Qatari side hired and employed competent international contractors to develop the region in its favor.

Such illogical and unwise behavior cost dearly for Iranian gas industry.

As total gas extracted from South Pars Gas Field exceeded 2,000 billion cubic meters/day, Islamic Republic of Iran managed to extract only 1,000 billion cubic meters/day over the past years.

Total natural gas extraction volume from South Pars Gas Field since 2002 up to the end of 2015 stood at 879 billion cubic meter gas/day. Considering the production of over 130 billion



cubic meter of gas since the beginning of 2016, the total aggregated Iran's gas volume hit more than 1,000 billion cubic meter per day.

With commissioning 11 new phases over the past four years (from 2013 to 2016), Iran managed to produce more than 285 million cubic meter gas per day and with the production of 155 billion cubic meter gas in 2016, Iran managed to register a new record in this respect.

Lackluster performance of Iranian managers and directors coupled with international sanctions imposed against Iran in the past years caused Iran's share of South Pars Gas Field to reduce considerably. After a long hiatus, the 11th government dubbed "hope and prudence" rolled up its sleeves vehemently in order to regain the lost prestige of Iran in this gas field. After a short

period, the Oil Ministry under its wise management could create fundamental changes in the macro development plans and consequently, the country managed to increase its gas output in South Pars Gas Field.

In the meantime, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh was duty bound to compensate \$25 billion worth of investment waste in 35 months. Accordingly, he prioritized the projects and required investment was made on phases one after another.

After prioritizing the projects, effective steps were taken to prevent gas and condensates from entering into the Persian Gulf sultanates.

For this purpose, Phase 12 of South Pars Gas Field was inaugurated, followed by the inauguration of phases 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21, so that all

phases were put into operation in the last Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 21, 2018).

As a result of operation of the first offshore platform in Phase 14, two gas sweetening in the phases from 13 to 22 and 24 and also a new production line, preliminaries were provided for surpassing Qatar in this field in 2018, so that a new record was registered in the production of sweet gas of Iran in south Pars Gas Field.

In the meantime, it is expected that gas extraction capacity of the country from this gas field will hit 800 million cubic meter per day with the continuation of remained phases including Phases 13, 14 and also Phases 22 and 24.

#### ■ Share of Iranian Contractors from South Pars Gas Field Projects at \$30b

The country owes the development of most projects and phases in south Pars Gas Field to the round the clock activities and performance of domestic manufacturers and contractors.

Start of 2nd Phase of Prioritizing in Neighboring Gas Fields

It is obvious that gas is not merely considered as a commercial tool, rather, gas is used as important achievement in determination of type of diplomacy and foreign and domestic policies,

like a powerful leverage.

For this purpose, Pars Oil and Gas Company has focused on providing suitable ground for the construction operation of phases in this field.

Accordingly, under the 6th Development Plan, it was stipulated that South Pars Gas Field should produce 770 million cubic meter gas per day in the production and operation sector, 850,000 barrels of gas condensate, 4,500 tons of sulfur, and annual production of 10 million tons of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as well as eight million tons of ethane. With due observance to this statistics, if objective of increased production is materialized, it can compensate the shortfalls as observed in the previous years.

Regardless of the cases mentioned in above, if Pars Oil and Gas Company could materialize its promises given, we should wait hearing the good news of northern Pars gas field, Farza, Belal, Golshan and Ferdowsi gas fields.

Currently, all the aforementioned gas fields have concluded IPC (Iran Petroleum Contract) with the foreign companies.

Author: Somayyeh Mahdavi



## Macro Roadmap of South Pars Development Projects to Support Iranian Products

Large general contracting companies have been established in the country in the recent years in line with developing projects in South Pars Gas Field. These companies have also managed to develop considerably in these years. Gradually, the installations, that were under construction by these contracting companies as project, have been turned into the production and operating refineries. However, these companies have gained numerous achievements in the course of these years in a way that most of these companies have expressed their readiness to play an important role in the international tenders. In oil and gas projects such as development projects in South Pars Gas Field, selection of goods suppliers and manufacturers is of paramount importance in terms of the necessity of observing stringent standards and also observing scheduled manufacturing program.

In general, quality of parts and equipment used in South Pars Gas Field should be taken into serious consideration. However, upstream documents [including policies of resistance economy, notifications issued by the Cabinet of Ministers and supportive policies of the Oil Ministry in supporting domestic products with high and sufficient capability] are identified for the development of projects in south Pars Gas Field, based on which, competent and highly qualified companies are shortlisted in the list of authorized manufacturers of parts and equipment. Under such circumstances contractors and contracting companies are obliged to participate these competent companies in the tenders.

These competent and highly qualified companies should prioritize Iranian products rather than foreign

ones and then, they should embark on providing required equipment.

Consequently, partnership share of Iranian companies for the development of projects in South Pars Gas Field has hit from 30 percent in phases 2 and 3 to more than 60 percent



in the recent phases 13, 14, 22 and 24 while the Iranian value of share in total projects exceeds \$30 billion.

#### 1. Necessary Standards and Requirements for Using High Quality of Iranian Equipment

Oil, gas and petrochemical projects are of the most complex and sensitive projects in the world. Due to this complexity, components, parts, equipment and various processes should be designed and manufactured in tandem with each other. Since mega oil and gas projects such as development of South Pars Gas Field is known as multi-discipline projects and Pars Oil and Gas Company is obliged to use world's latest and



modern and advanced standards.

#### 2. Employment Opportunities Created in Phase 11 of South Pars Gas Field

A contract for the development of Phase 11 has been inked with the international consortium in a way that Petropars Company is one of the members of consortia in this project. also, in selection of subcontractors and suppliers of goods and services, it has been projected in such a way that maximum domestic capability and potential should be used, so that the necessity of maximal use and capacity of Iranian manufacturers has been mentioned in this contract. For this purpose, all capabilities and potentials of domestic contractors with the capability of fulfilling various parts of this project has been reevaluated and suitable condition has been provided that these competent and qualified companies should be participated in the international tenders.

With due observance to the said issue, delegation of projects to competent Iranian contractors will play an important role in generation of employment.

#### 3. POGC Work Procedure (Agenda) to Support Iranian Products in Current Year

Due to the sublime message of supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution and naming the current year after "Supporting Iranian Products" and his special emphasis on the National Production as one of the basic and fundamental pivot in settling economic woes and problems and considering the notification of the respected Board of Ministers, it has been planned that all required parts and equipment should be provided by the competent domestic manufacturers ONLY.

Generally speaking, priority will be given to the domestic manufacturers and suppliers of parts and equipment. Hence, Pars Oil and Gas Company is ready to play an important role in creation of employment especially in the current year named after "Supporting Iranian Products".

#### 4. Compensating Backwardness of from Partner of Gas Field

Joint South Pars Gas Field is the largest gas field in the world which is located in the borderline between Qatar and Iran in the Persian Gulf. South Pars Gas Field is shared jointly between Iran and Qatar in the Persian Gulf. South

Pars Gas Field is located on a land area as large as 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 km of which belongs to Iran while the rest belongs to neighboring Qatar. As a matter of fact, a large portion of land area belongs to Qatar. On the other hand, Qatar started development of South Pars Gas Field using potential and capability of international contracting companies sooner than Iran.

"the writer somayeh mahdavi"



## Aghajari Oil &amp; Gas Operation Co. CEO:

## Supporting Iranian Products to Achieve Self-Sufficiency and Developing Labor Market



Aghajari Oil & Gas Operation Company is one of the five operator companies affiliated to the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) which is tasked with producing, processing and transferring oil and gas from total eight tanks of Aghajari, Kerenj, Parsi, Perenj, Ramshir, Rag Seif, Marun and Pazanan. Totally, Aghajari Oil & Gas Operation Company, as an industrial and production company, supplies 25 percent of produced by NISOC and also one billion feet/cubic meter gas per day.

This prestigious company has taken effective measures in line with the materialization of objectives of resistance economy and supporting domestic producers.

To learn more about the details, Eng. Ebrahim Piramoun CEO of Aghajari Oil & Gas Operation Company made the above remark on the occasion of 23rd Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition which comes as follows:

In the beginning, he expounded on the activities and performance of the company coupled with its salient achievements gained and said, "as one of the companies tasked with producing oil and gas, Aghajari Oil & Gas Operation Company tries to take giant stride in line with supporting domestic productions as emphasized by the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the beginning of the current year."

Supporting domestic producers and manufac-

turers has several advantages, the most important of which can be referred to the economic saving as a result of optimal use of domestic potentials and capabilities, localization of various technologies in the production field through test and reverse engineering, expansion of new employment opportunities due to the preparation of demand for existing products and new services and consequently, reduced unemployment rate and prevention of capital flight from the country, etc., he opined.

#### ■ Supplying Goods and Services from Provincial Domestic Resources, Costing 1,500bn Rials

In line with materializing resistance economy and supporting production of goods and services, this company has provided over 1,500 billion rials of goods and services required during about 4,000 requests from provincial internal resources, the issue of which has left very positive impact for the prosperity and economic boom of domestic resources to reduce costs, etc.

Provision of this amount of goods and services from provincial internal resources has been taken after in line with economic self-sufficiency and supporting domestic producers of Khuzestan Province by this company in cooperation and coordination with all financial, goods supply contract and legal affairs department as well as other relevant units.

Also, in line with supporting economic enter-

prises of the region, the company has provided more than 226 billion rials worth of various services from city internal resources.

Hereunder are the factors that have been effective in materialization of objectives of this issue: identification of resources for supplying goods and services with expert and field studies from the economic enterprises as provider of goods and services by the financial, goods supply and contract and legal affairs sectors, timely provision of credit for supplying goods and services based on the accurate planning by the management of financial affairs, increasing speed of providing goods and services from inside the province and on time attraction of necessary credit in this regard as well as activation of economic enterprises in timely supply of goods and services.

#### ■ Successful Operation for Repair and Maintenance Services and Commissioning Expander Turbine for the First Time in Country

Also, in line with supporting economic enterprises of the region, more than 226 billion rials worth of various services was provided from city internal resources.

For the first time in the country, the company managed to repair, commission and manufacture turbo expander rails for expansionary turbine due to the specific material using high potential and capability of domestic engineers along with the cooperation of private sector companies.

These devices are of sensitive parts and equipment available in the oil and gas industries that were imported into the country due to the sanctions imposed on Iran, he said, adding, "considering the materialization of objectives of resistance economy, the company managed to manufacture these sensitive products inside the country and cut its dependency to foreign products."

#### ■ Repair and Renovation of Compressor Crankshaft for First Time in NISOC

With the efforts of experts in charge of repair and maintenance services, renovation of compressor crankshaft using domestic potential and capability was put into operation, he maintained.

After conducting widespread feasibility studies and around the clock services, industrial staff, personnel and engineers managed to repair and renovate compressor which has a key role in increasing production volume of gas and gas condensates.

#### ■ Saving \$74b on Purchasing Costs by Company in Last Year

At the unsparing effort of all industrious staff and personnel, the company managed to save 74 billion rials worth of money for the first time in the country.

Aghajari Oil and Gas Production Company (AOGPC), based in the city of Omidieh, cover 25,000 square kilometers of land in three provinces: Khuzestan, Kohgiluyeh Boyer Ahmad

and Bushehr. As an offshoot of NISOC, AOGPC is steering oil and gas production, processing and transfer from eight oil fields – Aghajari, Karanj, Paranj, Parsi, Ramshir, Pazanan, Rag Seif and part of Maroun.

#### ■ Activities

This company produces more than 575,000 b/d of light and heavy crude oil, portion of which is used for feeding Isfahan and Abadan refineries. The rest is delivered to Kharg terminal for exports. AOGPC also produces 794 mcf/d of natural gas, 181,000 b/d of condensate and 152,000 b/d of naphtha. The gas is mainly used for injection into reservoirs, the condensate feeds Bandar Imam Petrochemical Company and the naphtha is sent to Bou Ali Petrochemical Company.

NISOC is testing its enhanced recovery projects in AOGPC and its first experience was gas injection to Pazanan. The second project was miscible injection of gas into Ramshir field in 2002. Then, the world's largest gas injection project was conducted in Aghajari field with the injection of 56 mcm/d of gas produced from phases 6, 7 and 8 of South Pars gas field. This project will raise Aghajari field's output by 50,000 b/d to reach 200,000 b/d.

Having under and upper ground pipelines and also export oil pump station, Aghajari is one of the most important companies among the other subsidiaries of NIOC.



## Masjed Soleiman Oil and Gas Operation Co., Leader in Production and Safety &amp; Pioneer in Presenting Public Utility Services



Masjed Soleiman Oil and Gas Operation Company is one of five operating companies affiliated to the National Iranian South Oilfield Company (NISOC). According to the notified and obligatory program, the company undertakes the production of oil and gas tanks located in north Khuzestan Province and a part of provinces of Lorestan and Ilam with the production capacity of 169,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) in the geographical range as large as 27,000 square meters. Due to the existence of large dams such as Shahid Abbaspour, Masjed Soleiman, Gotvand Oliya, Dez, Balaroud and rage rivers such as Karun, Dez, Balaroud, Karkheh and Kashkan as well as the necessity of continuous inspection of processing installations, production activity of this prestigious oil company has been faced with critical problems and shortfalls.

#### ■ Materialization of All Predictions and 3% Production beyond Commitments

Chief Executive of Masjed Soleiman Oil & Gas Operation Company expounded on the activities and performance of the company and said, "Masjed Soleiman Oil and Gas Operation Company is duty bound to produce oil and gas from fields and tanks under its management."

Accordingly, despite all bottlenecks, shortfalls and problems in the operational area, this prestigious company managed to live up to all of its commitments in the field of producing oil and gas.

At the unsparing efforts of all staff and personnel of the company, "we could produce oil three percent (3%) beyond our commitments and in this regard, the company is forerunner and leader among the companies affiliated to the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC)."

#### ■ Renovation of Operational Units, Guaranteeing Continuity of Production, Preserving Natural Resources and Environment

As the oldest producer of oil and gas in the Middle East, one of the major concerns of the company is the possession of worn-out industrial and processing units. Under such circumstances, working with old parts and equipment has always followed with the occurrence of events such as fire

and physical and corporal damages as well as environmental pollutions.

CEO of the company Eng. Gholnasser Nasser announced the above statement and added, "process of modernization and renovation of installations of the company started swiftly with the cooperation of management of the NISOC."

For this purpose, new oil processing units were installed at the company including desalinating and injecting gas, etc.

#### ■ Environment and Preserving Environment, Permanent Commitment of Oil Industry

Elsewhere in his remarks, Nasser pointed to the issue of environment as one of the perpetual and sustainable commitment in the oil industry and said, "the company took giant steps to preserve environment, the most important of which are as follows: repair and maintenance services of oil transfer pipelines, construction of safety and firefighting stations in Haftkal and Haft Shahidan, purchasing cars for extinguishing fire, promoting and developing HSE (Health, Safety and Environment) in line with observing the principle of resistance economy, purchasing monitoring system for the contamination of water of rivers and lakes, purchasing MOS and MOT devices in order to reducing oil pollutants, etc."

#### ■ Purchasing Iranian Products and Supporting Domestic Production, Priority of Company

As mentioned in above, the oil industry is one of strategic and sensitive industries which is tasked with supplying a major portion of currency requirements of the country, he said, adding, "in general, the oil industry has special complexity as well."

Under such circumstances, the products and equipment needed in this industry should have high quality and should win the international certificate, he maintained.

In general, the products and equipment needed in the oil industry should be of high quality and be able to pass the industry's mandatory standards in the best form possible.

Although foreign products have high quality superficially, performance of domestically manufactured products indicate



that domestic engineers and top designers of the country have managed to produce oil products qualitatively which can be competed with the similar foreign ones, he said, adding, "with due observance to the said issue, the management of the company replaced use of domestic products instead of foreign ones in line with materializing objectives of the current year's motto i.e. supporting domestic products as emphasized and reiterated by the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution."

In this regard, the company spent the amount of 180,000,000,000 rials in the past Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018) for purchasing required goods and services, he emphasized.

#### ■ Gaining Public Satisfaction with Offering Public Utility Services



In the field of offering public utility services and social responsibilities of the company, he said, "the Oil Ministry faced several financial problems in the 11th government dubbed 'hope and prudence' in completion of construction of semi-finished projects in such a way that the ministry was unable to pay salary of its employees and personnel in some months."

Under the wise management of the oil minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, the ministry managed to overcome difficulties in this respect, he said, adding, "in addition, the oil ministry managed to offer quality services as free in underprivileged and disadvantaged villages of the country."

#### ■ Promotion and Expansion of Sports and Sports Activities

The senior official of the company expounded on the performance and activity of his company in the field of sports and sport activities and said, "sports and sport activities should be taken into consideration in line with increasing spirit of joy and freshness among staff and personnel of any organization and company."

In this regard, the company has taken giant strides and managed to accelerate sports among its employees and personnel."

For example, football team of Masjed Soleiman managed to book a berth in Iran's Pro League (IPL) in the next season after weeks of best performance in League division one of the country.

Moreover, golf team of the company is undisputed champion of the company and last year, the golf team of Masjed Soleiman stood at the first place in the nationwide.

In conclusion, Nasser CEO of Masjed Soleiman Oil and Gas Operation Company said, "relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, the company will make its utmost effort in the current year in order to materialize most objectives of the company both in national and international levels."

An Interview with Eng. Bijan Aalipour, CEO of NISOC:

# Sustainable Production and Environmental Protection, Main Priority of NISOC



'Sustainable Production' and 'Protection of Environment' has been prioritized by the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) in the current year named after 'Supporting Domestic and Home-Made Products'.

Bijan Aalipour Chief Executive of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) announced the above statement and said, "a large portion of achievements of the company has been materialized in the current Iranian calendar year in 1397 (started March 21, 2018)."

Despite all ups and downs and difficulties faced the company in the past Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018), the company managed to overcome its difficulties successfully in a way the company witnessed inauguration of ten key and important projects in the ending month of the last Iranian calendar year in 1396, one of which is the launch of first phase of 220,000-barrel desalination unit in Ahvaz, Bibihakimeh Desalination Unit No. 1, Gachsaran Desalination Unit No. 3, Haftkal and Naft Sefid Desalination Unit, etc.

Moreover, the company managed to minimize corrosion of parts and equipment as well as reducing seepage and leakage of oil and gas pipelines, he maintained.

He pointed to the eruption of Well No. 147 of Ragsefid in the ending three months of the last Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018) and said, "unfortunately, the incident occurred in the ending months of the past year unwantedly in order to challenge and compare the specialty and potential of engineers between NISOC and the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC)."

In this regard, the blaze was controlled and suffocated successfully by the expert engineers of the company in a way that none of activities of the company ceased as a result of this blaze, he maintained.

He seized this opportunity to express his special thanks to the oil minister, industrious engineers and laborers of the company who managed to cope with the issue successfully.

He also referred to the renovation and launch of turbo pump as one of the salient activities of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) in the past year, and said, "renovation of Turbo Pump No. 7 of booster of Ahvaz, which had been de-commissioned from the production line for more than 40 years, was done successfully in a short period."

The Turbo Pump enjoys the capability of daily transfer of 700,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd), he maintained.

He put the volume of oil forwarded by the company to Kharg at about 2,200,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) and said, "of course, this amount of oil has been calculated with receiving and sending crude oil from West Karun Oilfields and Gharb (West) Oil and Gas Company."

He went on to say that almost all refineries of the country except Kermanshah Oil Refinery are fed from the company. In this regard, Tehran, Tabriz, Abadan, Isfahan and Shiraz refineries receive the required oil from the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) through oil vessels and tankers.

He also referred to the key role of IOPTC (Iranian Oil Pipelines and Telecommunication Company) and said, "for example, Abadan Oil Refinery requests three types of oil from us."

He put the average oil production of the company in the past Iranian calendar year

in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018) at about 98 percent, the issue of which indicates success of operation made by the company in the same period."

Sustainability of production and assurance of continuation of production process will be followed up strictly in the current Iranian calendar year, he said, adding, "moreover, the company will take giant stride in line with reducing environmental pollution."

Continuation of supporting domestic production in the short, mid and long term will be prioritized in the current year, he opined.

Turning to the environmental programs defined by the company in the current year, he said, "reducing gas burning will be followed up strictly by the company within the framework of gas sales projects to the private sector."

Of the other measures that will be taken in this regard, he pointed to the replacement of new parts and equipment with the old ones, he said, adding, "shortage of water resources was one of the pressing and major problems facing the country in the recent years."

To cope with water shortage problem facing the country, the company has devised necessary measures, one of which is the launch of first industrial wastewater unit in order to reuse the water, he opined.

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) accounts for 80 percent share of oil production in the country in a way that



the company plays a leading and major role in producing crude oil.

Strengthening domestic programs in line with 'supporting Iranian and home-made products' plays an important role in economic development of the country, the issue of which will generate new employments for job-seeking people of the country, Aalipour maintained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, CEO of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) pointed to the naming the current year as "Supporting Iranian and Home-Made Products" by supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution and said, "like many other oil and gas companies in the country, the NISOC has also devised necessary programs in this regard, one of which is the continuation of a comprehensive program for domestic manufacturing of products and secondly, imposition of sanctions against foreign products especially on the products that foreign countries have violated pertinent rules and regulations."

It should be noted that National Iranian South Oilfields Company and its affiliated companies are considered as one of the largest consumers of oil product, he said, adding, "undoubtedly, 80 percent of products have been manufactured in the country."

Unfortunately, after the passage of one century of oil industry, a major portion of basic equipment and machinery of the oil industry is heavily dependent on the foreign countries, the most important of which is various types of turbines, compressors, drilling masts, pumps and instrumentation and precision tools,

To cut dependency to foreign products,



the company set up a new structure entitled "Engineering of Manufacturing Goods" Department.

In the same direction, domestic manufacturing of relevant parts and equipment started at the company, he said, adding, "in this period, about 10,000 parts and equipment have been manufactured in the country by the local expert engineers while construction and manufacturing of about 4,000 other parts and equipment is underway."

In response to a question on domestic manufacturing of these types of products

been specified. These groups of commodities include wellhead parts and equipment, wellhead pumps, drilling drills (rocking, coring, etc.), control and safety (relief) valves, side equipment, various types of current and flow pipes, casing and tubing, rotary and rotational machine (turbine, pump and compressor), anti-explosive electromotor, alloy and cryogenic steels, measurement tools in drilling and smart pig.

With due observance to the said issue, National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) has been tasked with manufacturing some of these products, he said, adding, "in the wake of setting up a strategic Working Group under the management of Deputy Research and Technology Affairs of the Ministry of Oil and membership of the Chief Executive of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company and selection of the company as a certain company, this company is responsible for presenting requirements, submitting technical documents and evaluation of manufacturers in the level of the Ministry of Oil in the groups of commodity of drilling drills (ROCK BIT & PDC), wellhead equipment (W/H & X-MASS), Sucker-Rod Pumping (SRP), dry turbine and masts. The feasibility study and technical specifications as well as manufacturing process of these important parts and equipment have been followed up strictly by the managers and experts of this company meticulously and enjoy relative good progress."

He referred to the construction of first gas-powered turbine manufactured jointly by the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) and a knowledge-based company named "Middle East Machine Turbine Mfg. Company" and said, "fortunately, this turbine was installed at Marun Oil & Gas Company successfully."

Of the other parts and equipment manufactured by the NISOC, he pointed to the construction of pumps entitled "B.B.3", so that mass production of this part i.e. "B.B.3" was launched in the last Iranian calendar

year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018).

The first Iranian Rock Drill, used for drilling rocks, was manufactured by the company in cooperation with Academic Center for Education, Research and Cultural Activities, he said, adding, "manufacturing the drill was a giant step in the field of cutting dependency to importing such drill from overseas."

Imposition of sanctions by the US and Western countries prompted and forced Iranian parts manufacturers to roll up their sleeves vehemently in order to manufacture products inside the country, no need to import these products from overseas."

"We have the honor of cooperation with potential Iranian companies in manufacturing desalination packages in the country successfully."

Most parts and equipment such as various types of rotor and hot and cold blades of various types of gas turbines, safety valves (wellhead), various types of pipes and wellhead facilities are of the parts and equipment manufactured by the company in cooperation with other companies.

In response to a question on the most important problem facing domestic manufacturers in the field of manufacturing the monopolized parts and equipment of oil industry, he said, "the very parts manufacturers should respond to this question but in my opinion, the most important challenge in this respect is to make huge investment for the mass production. Unlike case manufacturing, mass production requires consumption market and guaranteeing the purchase of product."

What strategy can you define in this respect? Correction of rules and regulations governing the tenders, so that equal behavior should not be considered equally with the manufacturer or supplier of goods. The other strategy that should be taken into serious consideration here is to take the marketing especially in the international relationships both by manufacturers and government.



# A Glance at Achievements of NISOC Gained in Last Year



As the largest crude oil production company, National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) has special status in supplying energy and economic turnover of the country. This prestigious oil production company has taken giant strides in the past Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018) in line with materializing objectives of sustainable development. In the current year named after "Supporting Iranian Products" by the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the company will make its utmost effort in line with realizing objectives of resistance economy in the best form possible.

Existence of hundreds of active project in this company, moreover creating new employment opportunities and booming economic status of oil-rich provinces, plays an important role in materialization of sublime objectives of the Establishment in the field of progress and excellence of the country as well as attaining the predefined objectives.

A brief review on the salient achievements and successes of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) in the last Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018), which was named after "Resistance Economy, Production and Job Creation", indicates the determination and perseverance of the management and staff of this prestigious company to increase and continue production and attaining the predefined objectives as notified by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). Some of the most important successes and achievements gained by the company in the past Iranian calendar year include as follows: continuation of crude oil production about three million oil barrels per day (bpd), continuation of production of about three million crude oil per day (bpd), which is regarded as the most important and salient achievement of the company in the past year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018), etc. The National Iranian South

Oilfields Company (NISOC) accounts for about 83 percent of oil and 16 percent of gas share of the company. In other words, the company produces about 83 and 16 percent of oil and gas shares of the country respectively.

Moreover, the company also undertakes provision of feed of refineries and large petrochemical units. Increasing production of stabilization of oil production with commissioning eight large desalination units in the current year including construction operation of the first phase of Ahvaz Desalination Unit, construction of Bibihakimeh No. 1 Desalination Unit, construction operation of Gachsaran No. 3 Desalination Unit, construction of Haftkal / Naftsefid Desalination Unit, Marun 1 Desalination Unit, construction operation of Ragsefid 1 Desalination Unit, construction operation of Ahvaz 2 of Bangestan Desalination Unit, etc.

Moreover producing stability of production and promoting quality of produced crude oil, commissioning these projects will cause the possibility of clearance of old installations without tolerance of reduced load for conducting basic repair and maintenance services.

Commissioning the first phase of Desalination Unit (Ahvaz concentrated 220,000 barrels of oil) and also Ahvaz Desalination Unit is considered as the largest desalination complex in the country.

The first phase of desalination unit with the production capacity of 110,000 barrels of oil was commissioned in Feb. 2018. With the commissioning of this unit, necessary capacity is provided for the continuity of oil production with high quality from Ahvaz Asmari oilfield.

Bibihakimeh Desalination Unit was launched in the current Iranian calendar year in 1397 (started March 21, 2018) with the aim of provision of required facilities for processing oil. Considering the oil production of these fields, more capacity

is needed than the existing capacity for processing oil. Therefore, for maintaining and retaining the production ceiling, a desalination unit was constructed with the production capacity of 55,000 barrels of oil in the vicinity of Bibihakimeh No. 1 Desalination Unit. Due to the reduced thickness of oil column of tank, produced wells are moving towards the salinity, so that produced flow rate will be stabilized with the construction of desalination facilities. Moreover, drilling new oil wells will not be required. Commissioning optimization project for processing oil in



Haftkal Oilfield was put into operation with the aim of renovating and modernizing the old operation unit of Haftkal Oilfield which is regarded as the second oil processing unit after Masjed Soleiman oilfield.

Preventing associated gas from burning, as the national assets of the country and also reducing pollution and observing

environmental aspects, is the other salient specification of this project with the aim of preserving the oilfield and retaining production capacity, promoting quality of produced oil observing requirements of international standards.

Launching Haftkal and Naftsefid Desalination Unit with the daily production capacity of 45,000 barrels of oil (bpd) in the vicinity of Haftkal new desalination unit is of the other important project of the company which was launched in the past Iranian calendar year in 1396 (ended March 20, 2018).

This unit has been put into operation with the aim of processing saline oil as well as stabilization of flow rate produced. Installation of thermal furnaces and also installation of electrical desalination was launched with the aim of optimizing and increasing production capacity of desalination units from 1 to 4 of Ahvaz.

In the same direction, upgrading, improving and developing production capacity of Bandar Imam Khomeini Petrochemical Company was launched with the aim of increasing production capacity and precision of measurement system of this station. This station measures the liquefied gas forwarded from the National Iranian South Oilfield company to Bandar Imam Khomeini Petrochemical Complex. This station was improved and rehabilitated with carrying out construction, mechanical,

ation and manufacturing dented drills for drilling was manufactured in the country for the first time in cooperation with the Academic Center for Education, Research and Cultural Activities, the product of which is considered as highly consumed and strategic product in the oil industry. Localization of multistage processing pumps (BB3) for the first time in the country was launched by the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC). All stages ranging from the compilation of technical knowhow, casting and manufacturing these types of pumps are done inside the country in a way that the prototype of this pump was tested successfully, observing requirements of API 610 standard. Multistage centrifugal pumps have mostly been used in the oil industry, so that these types of pumps were manufactured in the country with the aim of preventing capital flight, generating new employment opportunities and supporting domestic industries.

Given the above issue, 42 million feet/cubic meter as well as 42million feet/cubic meter gad were delegated to two domestic investment companies. It should be noted that this plan has been defined in line with the implementation of Paragraphs 8 and 15 of the general policies of the resistance economy, Article 52 of Consumption Pattern Reform Plan and also Article 48 of 5<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan.

The first software for interpretation of Production Logging tool (PLT) was indigenized for the first time by the expert engineers of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) and was unveiled in the current year.

Organizing the 9<sup>th</sup> Specialized Oil Exhibition of Khuzestan was held at the initiative of NISOC and Khuzestan International Exhibition Company in Nov. 2017. In this prestigious exhibition, 270 exhibitors showcased their latest achievements in the oil and gas industry to the public view. For this purpose, a number of four oil equipment were indigenized in the country including solar gas compressor (C16) with 22500 torque round per minute, sucking bar pump (SRP) as long as 7 meters, etc.

The company inked five research contracts with the scientific and research centers of the country in the following fields: improving the processing methods in regions with surface outcrop of Gachsaran Formation, determine the direction and calculation of subsurface layers' gradient using VSP information, application of nano compounds for increasing output and efficiency for reducing consumption and costs, study of effect of tank discharge and other factors affecting kurtosis of wall tubes in Marun and Koupal oilfields as well as provision of solution to remove challenges, determination of origin and prediction of process of expansion of sulfide hydrogen in Asmari Tank of Marun oilfield as well as provision of appropriate solutions for its removal, etc.

These contracts were inked between the representatives of Tehran University, IT Park of Tehran University and Oil Industry Research Institute. Inauguration of 96-bed hospital of Gachsaran was the other salient measures taken by the National Iranian South Oilfields Company.

This equipped hospital was delivered to Kohgiluyeh and Boyerahmad University of Medical Sciences for public use.

It should be noted that NISOC managed to win Plaque of Honor and Golden Trophy in 3<sup>rd</sup> Social Responsibility of the Oil Ministry Seminar in the sector of evaluation of performance of social responsibility.

Moreover, the company was introduced as top and exemplary organization in the field of development of electronic government dubbed "e-government".

**Public Relations Dept.  
of the National Iranian  
South Oilfields Co.**



electrical and instrumentation activities. Renovating and rehabilitating and modernizing booster turbo pump number 7 of Ahvaz and rebuilding Ahvaz Booster No. 7 Turbo Pump in the operational area of Karun Oil and Gas Operation Company are of the salient projects of the National Iranian south Oilfield Company (NISOC) which were launched with the aim of increasing crude oil transfer capacity.

Installation of air compressor and also producing nitrogen and liquefied gas was launched in this factory with the aim of increasing production capacity of this industrial and production plant. It should be noted that Liquefied Gas Plant (900 LNG) is located in the operational area of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Operation company with the daily nominal production capacity of 1.359 billion feet/cubic meter. Recently Oil Well No. 147 of Ragsefid Oilfield caught fire and the industrious personnel and engineers of this prestigious company managed to control the blaze in short period i.e. 58 days, the issue of which is considered as an unprecedented record in all-time history of oil industry.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoS) was inked between NISOC and Ansaldo Energie Company of Italy for the daily collection of 720 million feet/cubic meter of the associated gases of the NISOC. However, the plan form preventing associated gases from burning was launched in this respect.

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## Footprint of Iranian Companies in Successful Development of Oilfields



The contract for the development of North Yaran Oilfield can be termed as one of the unique and unprecedented contracts in the country. To highlight the equality of this contract, knowing this issue seems enough that this contract is the first Buyback contract inked with an Iranian company, so that such a contract has not been concluded after that.

As the main Iranian contractor, Persia Oil and Gas Development Company, affiliated to TADBIR Energy Group, has been tasked with the development of this oilfield i.e. North Yaran Oilfield.

On the other hand, geographical situation of this oilfield had led to know this oilfield as Iran Oil Venice.

For his part, Arash Bagherzadeh the project commissioner of development of North Yaran Oilfield at Oil Engineering and Development Company (MATN) has emphasized to it and said, "positioning of the oilfield among Hoor al-Azim waters has made this project with difficulty environmentally and technically."

This oilfield i.e. North Yaran Oilfield has been defined among Iran Onshore Fields but in some cases, construction operation should be conducted in waters with 4- to 5-meter depth."

Significance and importance of this project will be doubled if we know that the concluded contract had been determined less than the ceiling.

According to Seyyed Abbas Hosseini, supervisor of this project at Persia Oil and Gas Development Company said, "as a matter of fact, ceiling of contract of this project had been approved at \$665 million by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)."

But with the talks that MATN Company conducted with Persian Oil and Gas Development Company, the contract was concluded with the amount of \$585 million, the issue of which brings about saving of \$80 million for the country."

But this currency saving is not terminated to this point. According to Bagherzadeh, in very close cooperation between employer of the project

and Persia Oil and Gas Development Company, other \$65 million in addition to \$80 million was saved and finally, the contract was completed with \$525 million and this issue should be taken into serious consideration.

On the other hand, Ali Amiri project manager of Persia Oil and Gas Industry Development Company said, "unlike foreign contractor, Iranian contractors did not embark on receiving 'bounce' award for the activities of the company."

According to him, although necessary license had been received for interim drying of some part of Hoor al-Azim in the initial contract, this company prevented from doing such activity due to the environmental issues and employer's request in the 11<sup>th</sup> government dubbed 'hope and prudence'.

Also, production of two wells was taken into consideration for the early production program, so that their produced oil was dispatched to Azadegan Oilfield as a result of special pipeline but at the time of implementation of pipeline, three other wells were added to this pipeline with the agreement of contractor. All the above-mentioned factors along with 72% share of Iranian manufacturers led to the brilliance of competent Iranian engineers and experts as well as differentiation of this project from other oil projects in Iran.

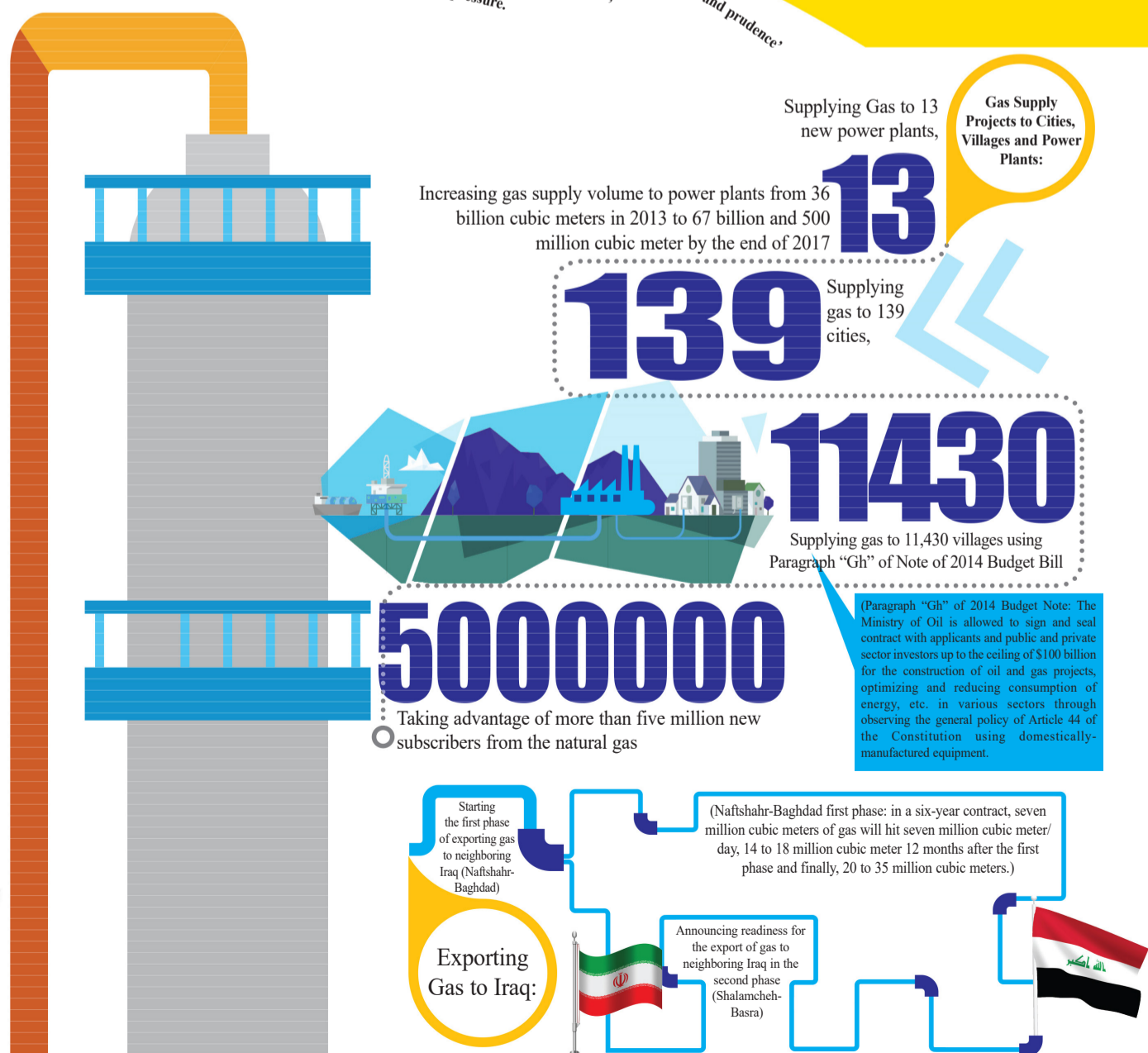
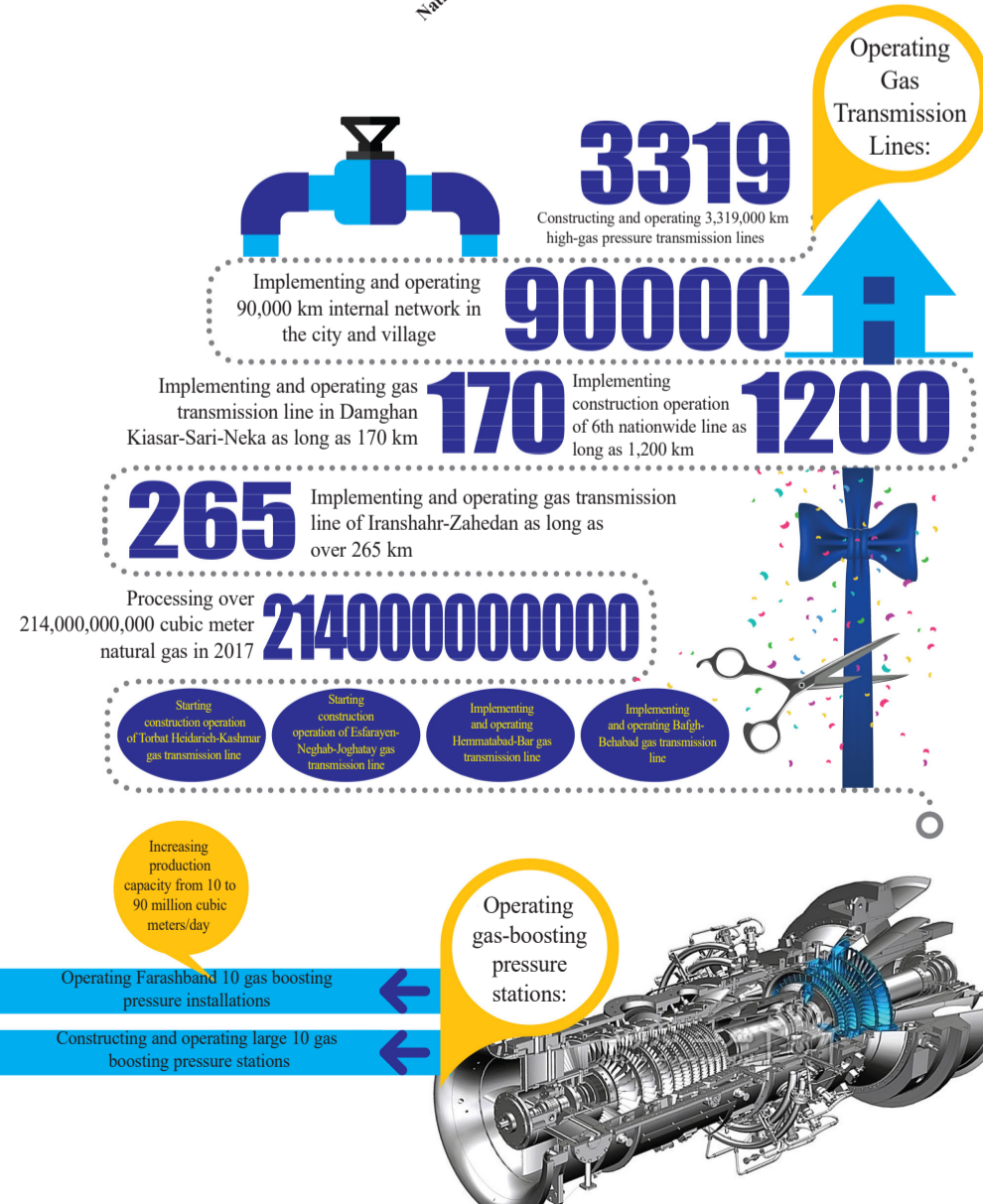


## Highlights and Achievements of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) (Since 2013)



National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)  
Public Relations Dept.

National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) along with other subsidiary companies to the Oil Ministry has accelerated its development programs since the beginning of the 11th government dubbed 'hope and prudence', and has thus far obtained valuable achievements in the sectors of supplying gas to the cities and villages, construction and operation of gas transmission lines, launch of the first phase of export of gas to neighboring Iraq as well as construction of stations for boosting gas pressure.





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### Oil & Gas

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Manufacturing steel pipes in Luleh Gostar Esfarayen Company

Transferring the technical knowledge and cooperation with Vallourec Oil and Gas France

Mutual cooperation in supplying and threading of CRA pipes

Industrial Development and  
Renovation Organization of Iran

Energy sector mega-projects of  
2018-2019

Oil, gas and energy industry is one of the target industries of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO). In recent years, IDRO has increased its presence in the oil and gas projects of Iran. The completion of South Pars Phases 17 and 18, and the 80% Progress of Phase 14 till the end of 2018 first quarter are all indications of IDRO's prominent and strategic role in the oil, gas and energy industrial sector. IDRO continues to pursue its development endeavors in the field of energy through 2 major strategies:

- Investing in the development of Process Units (oil and gas refineries and petrochemical plants) and localizing the energy sector equipment and machinery.
- Undertaking large-scale industrial projects in the form of EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) or E&P (Exploration & Production).

### Petrochemical

Ethylene Oxide production

Ready for attracting investors

Acrylonitrile production

Establishing the Project Executive Company with Parsian Oil & Gas Group cooperation

Obtaining foreign-owned technical knowledge for production of the product

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) for undertaking Susangerd Oil Field development studies

Establishment of IDRO OIL to execute the E&P project

Signing a consultancy contract with HotEng of Austria for conducting Susangerd Oil Field studies

### Upstream Oil & Gas

# Foreign policy failure: America has not learned from its wars

It's time for the Washington foreign-policy establishment to consider the seemingly unthinkable: perpetual foreign-military operations and occupations do not enhance American national security and economic prosperity.

Overwhelming evidence — currently on painful display in Syria, Afghanistan and Yemen — reveals the stark reality that these operations drain the American nation of critical resources, produces a slow-bleed of U.S. troops, and deteriorates our ability to respond to potentially existential battles in the future. Changes must be urgently made if we are to reverse this negative condition.

After the catalyzing and emotionally power-

ful attacks that struck America on 9/11, a succession of U.S. presidents and senior officials have settled into the belief that the only way to handle difficult international problems is to use lethal military force.

This tendency has become so deeply ingrained that even the consideration of using nonlethal means to address tough problems is almost reflexively dismissed as appeasement.

Instead, the troops have remained and numerous officials in the White House and Pentagon have been searching for other jobs the troops can accomplish. Rather than strategy driving troop deployments, Washington fiercely resists bringing any troops home, al-

most irrespective of the lack of need; once a mission has begun, the mission itself becomes the objective. The operation in Yemen is a case in point.

#### ■ America's vital interests

Yet despite this obvious failure and absence of any American vital national interests at play, the Pentagon has lobbied hard to ensure the mission continues without restriction and select members of Congress have blocked efforts to end America's involvement. A bipartisan ground of senators tried to force a vote to end support of the mission last month, but the measure was defeated 55-44. Today, the war continues without purpose or resolution.

Yet America's military involvement there has no set of metrics it seeks to accomplish and thus no criteria the accomplishment of which could ever signal an end to the mission.

The unsuccessful mission in Afghanistan costs American taxpayers about \$45 billion a year. Last year, fifteen Americans were killed in Afghanistan and many more wounded. In 2019, the United States is expected to spend \$16 billion on the mission in Syria; to date, four Americans have been killed in Syria. Those two missions alone will cost taxpayers more than \$60 billion and some unknown number of American lives.

It is time to take a hard, critical, and

unemotional look at U.S. foreign policy in the post-9/11 era and admit that the routine and near-permanent use of lethal military power abroad has not made us safer, continues to squander billions that could be better used in other ways, and needlessly sacrifices the lives of our service members.

For the sake of our national security and economic prosperity, we must stop the reflexive use of lethal military power abroad in an attempt to solve problems and rediscover that sometimes other instruments of national power are better suited to achieve positive outcomes for the nation.

(Source: nationalinterest.org)

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# Stoke relegated as West Brom Houdini act continues

**LONDON (Reuters)** — Stoke City’s 10-year stay in the Premier League ended on Saturday following a 2-1 home defeat by Crystal Palace in a dramatic penultimate round of matches.

Yet never-say-die West Bromwich Albion kept their hopes alive of pulling off one of the great escapes with a last-gasp 1-0 win over top-four aristocrats Tottenham Hotspur.

West Brom took their wholly unlikely unbeaten run under caretaker manager Darren Moore to five matches with a stoppage-time winner from Jake Livermore.

Then the Baggies enjoyed yet another incredible reprieve when a Southampton victory at Everton in the late game, which would have confirmed their relegation, was prevented by a 96th minute equalizer for the home side in a 1-1 draw.

Though Southampton were left fuming that the goal had been scored after the allotted four minutes of added time, the point still moved the Saints out of the drop zone on goal difference ahead of Swansea City, who lost 1-0 at Bournemouth.

It leaves the battle for survival in the final week even more fascinating, with Swansea hosting Southampton in a critical match on Tuesday.

West Brom jumped on to 31 points, leapfrogging doomed Stoke on 30, with both sides having one game left in the final week while Southampton and Swansea are both on 33 with two games left.

At the other end of the table, Tottenham’s defeat left them fourth on 71 points and gave Chelsea new hope that they might steal the fourth Champions league spot if they can move onto 69 points by beating Liverpool at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

Burnley fans were left celebrating too as Everton’s draw ensured the seventh-placed Clarets will be playing in the Europa League next season, the first time they have been in European competition



since the 1966-67 Inter-Cities Fairs Cup.

The day began with Stoke’s faint hopes were briefly revived in the early kickoff as Xherdan Shaqiri’s deflected free kick just before halftime put them ahead against Palace.

Yet Roy Hodgson’s resurgent side, dominant after the break as Stoke were gripped by nervy caution, equalized after a sharp counter-attack through James McArthur before a Ryan Shawcross mistake let in Patrick van Aanholt for the 86th-minute winner.

Despite overseeing a 13-match winless streak, Stoke’s worst run in a top-tier season for 34 years, manager Paul Lambert saluted the effort of his players.

“This club has to bounce right back up,” he said. “The club is too big not to. It will regroup and it’s got the right infrastructure in place to do it.”

Albion’s revival is beggaring belief, even if their chances of the most miraculous survival are still minimal.

Their relegation after weeks of defying

the prophets of doom seemed assured as the game against Spurs went into added time but Livermore forced the ball over the line from close range in a manic finish.


Less than three hours later, it seemed their heroics could be all in vain as Nathan Redmond’s header for Southampton at Goodison put the Saints, who later had Maya Yoshida sent off, in sight of the three points that would condemn Albion.

Yet though referee Jon Moss had added on only four minutes, there were just over 95 minutes on the clock when Tom Davies’ strike deflected in off Wesley Hoedt.

“I am the one up here but it is we as a football club — the supporters, staff and officials — and through hard work and commitment that the results are coming,” said Albion’s folk hero Moore.

Both Bournemouth, who beat Swansea with a Ryan Fraser goal, and Crystal Palace ensured their safety for another season and West Ham United look set to join them after a deserved 2-0 victory at Leicester City.

First Announcement



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One-Stage

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**Brief discription of subject:**  
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender **upon following terms and conditions:**

**A) Competence of tenderers:**  
The tenderers should not have legal restrictive to participation governmental to tenders , also they should provide statute or business license related to subject of the tender.

**B) Preparation of tender documents:**  
**Purchasing of documents:**  
In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to account number 4001114004020491 in central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran under the title of “centralized income funds” of National Iranian Drilling Company and providing the original deposit receipt.

**Receiving of documents:**  
Tenderers must be obtain the tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication till May 20,2018 in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN  
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date and participates in tenderwill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

**C) Delivery of bids envelopes:**  
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including (A) Tender bank guarantee, (B) stamped and signed of tender documents, (C) The priced signed and stamped of the same Technical-Commercial sheets muximum till June 18,2018 to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN.  
Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

**D) The envelopes will be opened at **June 19,2018 On 10:15 am****

**E) Tender Guarantee:**  
**Type of guarantee:**  
Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activites licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.  
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to the account number 4001114006376636 under the title of “centralized guarantee funds” of National Iranian Drilling Company to the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:**  
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.  
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# Iran’s Sareh Javanmardi achieves double

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Sareh Javanmardi from Iran claimed a gold medal at the 2018 World Shooting Para Sport Championships.

The crowd began clapping in unison as the remaining two shooters fired their final shots. Amid the intense atmosphere, Sareh Javanmardi was telling herself that she would win – and she did.

Javanmardi defended her title in the P2 (women’s 10m air pistol SH1), as day three of the 2018 World Shooting Para Sport Championships finished on Sunday in Cheongju, South Korea. It was one of two individual medal events held on this day.

“In the last shot series, it was so stressful,” Javanmardi told Paralympic.org. “But I was sure that I would be the gold medallist. And I think in these situations it is the god that helps the people and me.”

Through the finals, Javanmardi was chasing Ukraine’s silver medal finisher Iryna Liakhu. Olivera Nakovska-Bikova, from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, won bronze.

It did not help that Javanmardi received a one-point deduction for a penalty. That left her fighting from behind, and only until the penultimate shot series was she able to hit a near-perfect 10.8 to take the lead.

“This was the first time in 10 years that I am a shooter [to get a penalty] and at first yes, it was a serious fall for me, but I tried to manage everything,” Javanmardi said. “This was the first time, and the last time that I ever do such a thing again.”

Javanmardi repeated her success from the last World Championships in 2014 held in Suhl, Germany. There, she secured a slot for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games – where she won the P2 Paralympic title. Sunday’s victory brought back old feelings.

“Of course this is not the first time that I have had such a great and very pleasant feeling,” she said. “This medal is for a Paralympic slot [for Tokyo 2020].”



## Persepolis coach Ivankovic optimistic over Al Jazira match



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic feels his side are in a good position for the match against Al Jazira in the AFC Champions League.

The UAE’s Al Jazira will host 2017 semi-finalist Persepolis in the first leg of the Round of 16 at Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium on Monday.

“We can’t be arrogant but we can be confident. Al Jazira are a strong team and want to win the first leg but we are well-prepared for the match. We’ve only missed Jalal Hosseini for this match,”

Ivankovic said in the pre-match news conference.

“Al Jazira’s domestic form has been poor in the recent games but it doesn’t mean they are a weak team. I watched their match against Al Wahda and despite suffering a 3-0 defeat they showed a good performance. We expect a difficult match against Al Jazira,” the Croat added.

“Persepolis have progressed a lot in the past years and we have to meet the expectations of our fans,” Ivankovic stated.



five matches.

Persepolis wrapped up their second successive Iranian Pro League title some time ago and have been in fine form on the continent too, beating Al Sadd three weeks ago to finish top of Group C having won four of their six games.

Indeed, the Tehran side have not conceded on the continent since a Matchday Two defeat to Al Sadd and boast the meaneast defence in the competition. Captain and key defender Jalal Hosseini, though, is suspended for the Monday’s clash.

(Source: the-AFC)

## Preview - Round of 16: Al Jazira v Persepolis

Abu Dhabi: Al Jazira will play their first AFC Champions League knockout stage match since 2014 when they host 2017 semi-finalists Persepolis in the first leg of the Round of 16 at Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium on Monday.

The Emirati side ended a 15-game winless run in the continental competition in February and went on to finish runners-up in Group A with strikers Ali Mabkhout and Romarinho netting eight of their nine goals between them.

Al Jazira’s domestic form has been poor of late as they ended their UAE Pro League season with a 4-1 defeat to Al Wahda. Since beating Al Gharafa in the group stage in early April, the Abu Dhabi side have lost four of the past



# Football unites to support managerial great Ferguson

United said in a statement on Saturday that Ferguson’s surgery had gone “extremely well”, but the 76-year-old would need a period of intensive care to aid his recovery.

Ferguson won a total of 49 trophies during his illustrious managerial career, which also included spells at St Mirren and Aberdeen. The Scotsman led United to an impressive 38 trophies during his nearly 27-year reign at the club.

Real Madrid forward and five-times Ballon d’Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo kickstarted his career at United under Ferguson from 2003 to 2009.

“My thoughts and prayers are with you, my dear friend. Be strong, Boss!” the Portugal captain said on social media as he shared a picture of him and Ferguson during their time together at Old Trafford.

Beckham was part of the famous “Fergie’s Fledglings” group, along with Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and brothers Gary and Phil Neville, that led United to numerous trophies from the mid-1990s, including the



historic 1999 treble.

“Keep fighting Boss. Sending prayers and love to (Ferguson’s wife) Cathy and the whole family,” Beckham said on Instagram with a picture of him signing his United youth

contract as Ferguson stood by his side.

Many current and former United players, including Michael Carrick, Rio Ferdinand, Diego Forlan and David de Gea also offered messages of support as did United’s Premier

League rivals Manchester City, Arsenal, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool.

“The thoughts of everyone at LFC are with Sir Alex Ferguson and his family... a great rival but also a great friend who supported this club during its most difficult time, it is hoped that Sir Alex will make a full recovery,” Liverpool said in a statement.

Ferguson and his family also received well wishes from clubs all around the world.

Italian sides AC Milan and Inter Milan, Spanish champions Barcelona and Scottish champions Celtic were among a host of clubs to support the Scotsman.

Soccer greats, managers, fans, politicians and news outlets sent messages of support as did athletes and governing bodies from other sports, including the National Basketball Association (NBA).

“Sir Alex I’m praying you get through this, you’ve won everything in life any player or manager dreams of, I as a friend am stunned...,” England great Paul Gascoigne said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Marquez wins in Spain and takes MotoGP lead

**JEREZ, Spain (Reuters)** — Marc Marquez won his home Spanish Grand Prix and took the overall MotoGP lead on Sunday after the reigning champion’s main rivals collided spectacularly.

The Honda rider was in a race of his own for the last eight laps after the Ducati pairing of Andrea Dovizioso, the previous championship leader, and Jorge Lorenzo collided with Honda’s Dani Pedrosa while fighting for second place.

Pedrosa, who had wrist surgery less than a month ago, was thrown high over his bike after trying to go past the two Ducatis on the inside.

Lorenzo came across into the corner as Dovizioso went

wide, colliding with Pedrosa and sending the two Ducatis into the gravel. All three riders walked away from the crash.

French Tech3 Yamaha rider Johann Zarco was gifted the runner-up slot, 5.241 seconds behind, and is now Marquez’s closest rival in the championship.

Four times world champion Marquez, who started the race from fifth place, now has 70 points after four races to Zarco’s 58. Dovizioso dropped to fifth overall with 46. Italian Andrea Iannone finished third for Suzuki.

“I was convinced before the race that I was able to win,” said Marquez, who had a big wobble when he ran over gravel left on the track by an earlier off.

“Ok, we started on the second row but anyway today I was clever. I pushed...here the race is very long and you must manage many things.”

Compatriot Valentino Rossi was fifth at the Jerez circuit in southern Spain in a race that saw him reach a career milestone by completing the circumference of the planet in race kilometers.

Rossi has now covered 40,075km in competition over 23 seasons, starting at the 1996 Malaysian Grand Prix.

Britain’s Cal Crutchlow started on pole position for the LCR Honda team but failed to finish, crashing out at turn one after nine laps and while in fourth place.

## Iran one of Asia’s strongest teams: Park Hang Seo

Vietnam coach Park Hang Seo says they have been drawn in a difficult group in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Vietnam have been pitted against Iran, Iraq and Yemen in Group D.

“We’ve been grouped with one of the strongest teams in Asia – Iran,” Park Hang Seo said.

“Iraq and Yemen can be very tricky teams to face but our players have experience playing West Asian teams,” the South Korean added. Yemen Head Coach Abraham Mebratu Gebrelasse also rated Iran as one of the best Asian teams.

“Looking at the draw, there is no easy group but when it comes to our group, Iran is one of the best together with Iraq who has plenty of experience playing internationals and Olympic matches – hence those two teams are very strong,” Gebrelasse said.

(Source: AFC)

## Zoran Kastratovic named Iran handball coach

**TASNIM** — Zoran Kastratovic has been named as new head coach of Iran national handball team on Sunday.

The 56-year-old coach has replaced Slovenian coach Borut Macek in Team Melli.

Kastratovic is a Montenegrin-Macedonian handball coach. His wife is Macedonian well-known handball player Indra Kastratovic.

He has already coached Macedonian team RK Vardar and El Jaish of Qatar. Kastratovic will lead Iran national handball team in the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

## Iran into World Team Table Tennis Championships 1st division

Iran’s men’s table tennis team qualified for the first division of the World Team Table Tennis Championships.

The Iranian team defeated Ukraine 3-1 and qualified for the final match.

In group stage, Iran defeated Puerto Rico 3-0 (3-0,3-0,3-0), lost to Kazakhstan 2-3 (3-0,1-3,3-0,2-3,1-3), edged past USA 3-2 (2-3,3-0,0-3,3-1,3-0), defeated Spain 3-0 (3-1,3-2,3-2), and finally beat Luxemburg 3-0 (3-1,3-0,3-1) in its last match.

In the quarter-final, Iran defeated the Netherlands 3-0 and won Ukraine 3-1 in semi-final.

Iran and Hungary advanced to the first division as top two teams.

The Men’s team tournament of the 2018 World Team Table Tennis Championships got underway on April 29 and will run until May 6, 2018 in Halmstad, Sweden.

(Source: ITTF)

## Reaching agreement with Iran impossible: Carlos Queiroz



**Persian League** — Carlos Queiroz says that to reach an agreement with Iran Football Federation is impossible in the current situation. Queiroz had been offered a contract extension in March to remain as head coach of Team Melli beyond the World Cup finals in Russia.

Queiroz, who qualified the country for the World Cup in Brazil in 2014 and will lead the nation again in Russia this year, has been offered an extension until the end of the Asian Cup finals, but he says it’s impossible to extend the contract in the current situation.

“Yes, I’ve been offered an extension,” Queiroz told reporters on Saturday in the national team’s training.

“But at the current situation I don’t think we can reach an agreement. This is an issue between coach and the President (Mehdi Taj),” he added.

The former Real Madrid and Portugal head coach, who also served as an assistant to Alex Ferguson at Manchester United, took the helm of the Iran team in April 2011.

## ACL: Jumpei Iida chosen to referee Zob Ahan v Esteghlal

**IRNA** — Japanese referee Jumpei Iida has been chosen to officiate Iranian Zob Ahan and Esteghlal match in the AFC Champions League Round of 16 first-leg.

Zob Ahan will host Esteghlal on Tuesday in Isfahan’s Fool-adshahr Stadium.

Jumpei Iida has officiated matches in numerous international tournaments including EAFF Championship and AFC Cup.

Locally he has officiated regularly in the J. League. In 2012, he officiated in the English FA Cup and Professional Development League. He broke the world record for the fastest red card decision in a professional league match on 15 April 2009, when he sent off Tokyo Verdy midfielder Tomo Sugawara 9 seconds into the match between Tokyo Verdy and Sagan Tosu.

Iida also officiated the historic 2013-14 pre-season friendly between Melbourne Victory and Liverpool in front of over 95 thousand spectators at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, finishing in a 2-0 win to Liverpool.

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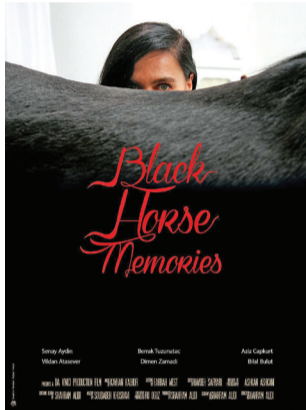
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## Tehran symposium awards Iran’s best set and costume designs

**A R T** TEHRAN – Iran’s best set and costumes designs of the year in the cinema and theater were awarded during the 2nd Tehran International Symposium on Set and Costume Design during a ceremony at the Iranian Artists Forum on Saturday.



A poster for Shahram Alidi’s “Black Horse Memories” that won the award for best set design in the feature film category at the Tehran International Symposium on Set and Costume Design

In the short film section, Kamyab Amin-Ashayeri received the award for best set designer for his collaboration in “The Sleepwalkers” directed by Puya Nabi. Masud Hatami won the award for best costume designer for “Survival” directed by himself. “A Girl in the Room” by Karaim Lakzadeh was presented with the award for Best Interaction between Director and Set and Costume Designers.

## Tehran gallery showcases “The Passion of Trees”

**A R T** TEHRAN – Tehran’s Mojdeh Gallery is hanging photos by U.S.-based Iranian photographer Ali Shokri in an exhibition named “The Passion of Trees”.



Actor Reza Banafshehkhah looks at a photo in the exhibit “The Passion of Trees” by Ali Shokri at Mojdeh Gallery on May 5, 2018. (Honaronline/Siamak Zomorrodi)

The collection has also been put into a book published in 2017 by Matador, part of Troubador, an independent UK publisher. “The Passion of Trees” is a collection of photographs taken in Iran over the past 13 years by Shokri of leafless trees. Shokri regards trees as the symbol of life in his homeland Iran and believes that the pain and sorrow felt by the people are the consequences they pay for the destruction of nature and the trees. “To me, each tree, like a human being, has a tale to tell. When a tree dies, a whole story is interrupted, a destiny is altered for the worse. I feel as if the trees, bundled in the back of trucks, are cursing us with their broken hands, wounded faces and severed roots,” the photographer has said in his earlier comments. The exhibit will be running until Friday at the gallery located at No. 27, 18th Alley off North Allameh Blvd. in the Saadatabad neighborhood.

## Sylvester Stallone lining up “Rambo V”

**LONDON (Screen Daily)** — Sylvester Stallone is attached to reprise his role as former Green Beret John Rambo in Rambo V, which Millennium Media will bring to Cannes this week. Production on the fifth instalment in the 36-year franchise that famously launched with “First Blood” in 1982 is scheduled for a September 1 start and will encompass London, Bulgaria, and the Canary Islands. Millennium Media is financing “Rambo V” and handles worldwide sales rights. Avi Lerner and Kevin King serve as producers and Matt Cirulnick wrote the screenplay. A director will be announced shortly. Stallone’s return to action in the long-running series finds him living in a ranch in Arizona, deeply troubled and wrestling with PTSD as he picks up casual work wherever he can.

# “Damascus Time” Abu Omar al-Shishani visits Iran

**A R T** TEHRAN – The Lebanese actor Joseph Salameh who is starring as Abu Omar al-Shishani in Iranian director Ebrahim Hatamikia’s Daesh drama “Damascus Time” is in Tehran to attend several special screenings of the movie.

Hadi Hejazifar, another leading actor from the movie, and Hatamikia will also accompany Salameh during the screenings, which have been arranged at Kurosh Cineplex for tonight. He was introduced to Iranians in a trailer of the movie, in which he, as the Georgian Chechen commander of Daesh, utters the sentence, “chituri Irani” (“how are the Iranians”) in Persian with an Arabic accent. “Damascus Time” is about an Iranian pilot and his son as copilot who are seized by the Daesh forces in Syria when are in the country to deliver a cargo of humanitarian relief supplies to people in a war-torn region. In an interview published by the Persian service of FNA earlier in April, Salameh, 33, said that he did extensive research on Al-Shishani to collect information to help him make the character credible. Hejazifar and Babak Hamidian are the sole Iranian actors of the cast, which is composed of a number of Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi actors. The movie, which was shot on location in Iran and Syria, was made at the Owj Arts and Media Organization, a Tehran-based institution producing revolutionary works in art and cinema.



Lebanese actor Joseph Salameh plays the role of the Daesh commander Abu Omar al-Shishani in Iranian director Ebrahim Hatamikia’s drama “Damascus Time”.

## “Oliver Twist” star Hutan Shakiba tops at Iranian Stage Actors Celebration



Hutan Shakiba acts in a scene from “Oliver Twist” by Hossein Parsai. (Film Net News/Amir Haqbar)

**A R T** TEHRAN – Hutan Shakiba, the star of Iranian musical adaptation of “Oliver Twist” was honored with the special award of the 15th Iranian Stage Actors Celebration on Saturday. Shakiba was not present at the celebration held at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall. The celebration is organized annually by the Iranian Theater Forum to honor best actors of the year in theater. Child actor Mohammad Shakeri was also presented with an award for his role in “Oliver Twist”, a play directed by Hossein Parsai based on “Oliver!”, a 1968 British

musical drama film directed by Carol Reed. The awards for the top three actors went to Farzin Mohaddes for his role in “The Night of Long Knives” by writer/director Ali Shams, Behnam Sharafi for his role in “The Blue Pink” by Sanaz Bayan and Reza Behbudi for playing a role in “An Incident with a Paginator” by Hassan Majuni. The awards for top three actresses were presented to Elham Shabani for “Blood Glucose” by director Lili Aaj, Ava Sharifi for “Waiting for Adolf” by Alireza Kushk-Jalali and Golchehreh Sajjadih for “Autumn Sonata” by Jalal Tehrani.

## Andrew Lloyd Webber weighs in on Tony Awards favorite

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Andrew Lloyd Webber has written some of the most successful stage musicals of all time. So, when he weighs in on the year’s Tony contenders, announced earlier this week, it’s time to listen. “I’m very interested that ‘The Band’s Visit’ has been celebrated,” commented the composer of the best-musical winners “Cats”, “The Phantom of the Opera” and “Sunset Boulevard.” “The Band’s Visit”, from composer David Yazbek, is based on a film about an Egyptian police band lost in a small town. The musical this week was among year’s top Tony nominees. “I found it very exciting,” Lloyd Webber said Thursday. “I loved the score. I hope that does well.” The six-time Tony winner said he’s seen all the shows on Broadway: “It’s an intriguing season.” Lloyd Webber himself is part of the latest Tonys mix. He and actress Chita Rivera each will receive 2018 awards for Lifetime Achievement. Lloyd Webber was at the Hollywood Pantages theater this week to promote the Los Angeles premiere of his Broadway and London hit “School of Rock — The Musical”, based on the 2003 movie that starred Jack Black as a down-and-out musician who stumbles into a gig as a prep-school teacher. Hitmeister reveals what’s delaying his next stage project as well as a film of his smash tuner ‘Sunset Boulevard.’ (May 3) Lloyd Webber said he originally only planned to produce the project, but found the show’s pop-rock sensibility so appealing that he ended up as the show’s composer. The contemporary style is different from the classic Broadway bombast of Lloyd Webber’s “Evita”, “Phantom” and “Boulevard.” But, Lloyd Webber reminded,



his Broadway debut was the rock-opera smash “Jesus Christ Superstar”. “I think it’s that so many of my musicals have hung around for such a long time, that people maybe forget,” he said. “But I enjoy writing in many different ways and styles.” As for his next show, Lloyd Webber seemed eager to discuss it — but just can’t. He said its fate is currently in the hands of higher powers — in this case, rights holders. It’s the same story with one of his passion projects: a film version of his musical adaptation of the 1950 film-noir classic “Sunset Boulevard.” Paramount first announced it was in the works, way back in 2005. “The situation with ‘Boulevard’ is that I don’t control it,” Lloyd Webber said. “Glenn Close desperately wants to make it, as I do. But we haven’t had a green-light from the studio.” Lloyd Webber, who turned 70 in March, has written a recently published autobiography that ends with “Phantom” and covers the first part of his life.

## Tehran book fair reviews publishing market in China



**A R T** TEHRAN — The 31st Tehran International Book Fair hosted a session on Sunday reviewing the publishing market in China. The session was attended by Alex Goh, the Oversea Business Manager at Sinolingua, a member of the China International Publishing Group (CIPG). Sinolingua is the first publisher in China to specialize in Chinese language instruction and learning materials for foreigners. The publisher specializes in producing books, audio-video products and multimedia software for the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language. Speaking at the session, Alex Goh said that 60 percent of China’s publishing is carried out

by Sinolingua, which was founded in 1986. Over 200,000 new titles of books have been published in 2017, over 50 percent of which belong to books for children, he said. He also said that there has been an increase in book sales sold in online bookshops, most of which include children books and books on social sciences. He also noted that audio books have an increasing number of fans in China. According to Goh, the Beijing International Book Fair will open a dedicated Children’s Book Fair, to run concurrently with BIBF from August 22 to 26, 2018. The Tehran International Book Fair, which is currently underway at Imam Khomeini Mosalla, will run until May 12.

## Alcoholics Anonymous founding document sells for \$2.4M

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — The founding document of Alcoholics Anonymous, known to adherents as the “Big Book”, sold at auction Saturday for \$2.4 million to billionaire and Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay. The auction house Profiles in History announced the sale of the manuscript with handwritten notes from the group’s founding fathers. Irsay told The Associated Press he plans to build a special display for the manuscript and display it for several months a year at Alcoholics Anonymous’ headquarters in New York. He says he attempted to buy the manuscript when it was up for auction several years ago, and he is thrilled at the opportunity to share it publicly. Irsay said he considers himself a steward for the manuscript, which he said he may also send out on tour so it can be seen by more people. “I’ve held it. I’ve looked through it. It is absolutely mind-blowing,” he said. “It was just a miracle to see this thing live.” Irsay, who was clearly excited about obtaining the manuscript during a telephone interview, said he considered remaining anonymous about purchasing the manuscript, but wanted to go public to try to relieve the stigma of alcoholism and addiction. “The only way we stay sober is to give it away,” Irsay said. “I think it’ll help a lot of people,” he said. “That’s the reason I’m doing it.” He said he attended his first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting 25 years ago, and marvels at the reach of the organization and what its founders built. It is the third time the 161-page typed document has been sold. It sold in 2007 for \$850,000 and for \$1.6 million in 2004. Saturday’s auction was delayed by a dispute with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. The manuscript includes notes and



In this Jan. 1, 2017 file photo, Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay speaks before former general manager Bill Polian is inducted into the team’s Ring of Honor during half time of an NFL football game in Indianapolis. (AP Photo/Darron Cummings, File) scribbles from one of AA’s founders, William Wilson, more commonly known as “Bill W.” Wilson’s widow Lois owned the papers after his death in 1971, and she passed them on to her friend Barry Leach. Alcoholics Anonymous said Leach signed and notarized a letter in 1979 saying the manuscript would belong to the organization after his death. He died in 1985, but the manuscript did not make its way to Alcoholics Anonymous, which did not know about the notarized letter at the time. Its ownership history in the ensuing years is not entirely clear until 2004, when Sotheby’s auctioned it for \$1.6 million. Then it sold to Roberts in 2007. A website devoted to the auction describes the manuscript as a “Bible to millions” that has sold 30 million copies since 1939, been translated into 43 languages and has been ranked by the Library of Congress as a top non-fiction book that shaped America. “We are thrilled this most historic manuscript has sold and hope it will be exhibited for the world to see the manuscript that has saved the lives of millions of people,” Profiles in History founder Joe Maddalena said.