



FATF is a U.S. Treasury tool aimed to dominate others **2**



Zarif slams U.S. arbitrary arrest of Press TV anchor **2**



FFIRI president Taj warns Queiroz to stay away from controversies **15**



New Persian translation of Kitab al-Kafi published **16**

Jannati advises officials not to trust Europe



See page 2

Tehran, Baku eyeing joint maritime exercises

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — In a recently signed memorandum of understanding between Iran and Azerbaijan, the two sides have stated their will to expand maritime cooperation and carrying out joint military exercises in the Caspian Sea, Iran's military chief announced in a press conference in Baku on Thursday.

General Baqeri announced that the expansion of cooperation in the military sphere was discussed and certain agree-

ments were reached during his meeting with Azeri Defense Minister Zakir Hasanov. "I think that we will be able to further develop our ties in this area in the future," Baqeri added. "The borders of the two countries are the borders of peace and friendship." Baqeri, the armed forces chief of staff, made a two-day visit to Azerbaijan on Wednesday. During his stay, he met President Ilham Aliyev and other senior Azeri officials.

China offers Iran \$3b oil field deal

China's state-run energy giant is making a new approach to clinch a \$3 billion deal for more development of an Iranian oil field, seeking to take advantage of waivers allowed under U.S. sanctions.

While U.S. sanctions, which went into effect in November, prevent companies from signing contracts to access new oil fields in Iran, Washington granted exemptions allowing Iranian oil purchases by China, India, Japan, South Korea, Turkey,

Taiwan, Italy and Greece to avoid a global oil-price spike. The Chinese company has informed the U.S. State Department about its Iran oil business, the people said. Sinopec believes it wouldn't run afoul of a U.S. ban on signing new development deals, as its proposal for further development is part of an existing contract to operate the field, according to the people. **->4**

Arab summit starts in Lebanon, many leaders absent

The Arab Economic and Social Development summit kicked off on Friday in Beirut, Lebanon, but only two of many Arab heads of state are participating in the event, which runs through Sunday.

Having previously confirmed their attendance at the Arab Economic and

Social Development summit in Beirut, many heads of state are now set to stay away. The emirs of Qatar and Kuwait will not attend, Egypt is planning to send the prime minister rather than the president, while the Palestinian Authority (PA) president has said he will be in New York. **->13**

EU Nations Set to Snub Washington's Latest Anti-Iran Push

BRUSSELS — A U.S. effort to enlist Europe in its pressure campaign against Iran faced a setback after officials said ministers from several European Union members will likely skip a summit organized by Washington on Iran and the Middle East.

The summit, which will be co-hosted by Poland and the U.S. and take place in Warsaw, was announced during Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's tour of the Middle East last week. The two governments said it would focus on terror, extremism and missile proliferation in the region and threats posed by proxy groups, activities Washington has accused Iran of engaging in or promoting.

Mr. Pompeo said the meeting would bring together dozens of countries to "focus on Middle East stability...and that includes an important element of making sure that Iran is not a destabilizing influence."

The choice of Poland, a member of the EU, to co-host the summit was seen by some European diplomats as an effort to split the EU over Iran.

The bloc is a strong supporter of the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal and is seeking to help retain economic ties with Tehran despite renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran following President Trump's decision in May to withdraw from the nuclear deal.

The U.S. withdrawal, however, has driven

many European companies to leave Iran for fear of being targeted by U.S. sanctions.

On Thursday, a senior EU official said EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini wouldn't attend the Warsaw gathering because of a prior engagement. Ms. Mogherini has spearheaded EU efforts to sustain the 2015 deal, which offered Iran relief from sanctions in exchange for steps to curb its nuclear program.

The senior EU official said the bloc remains unclear on what vision of peace and stability in the Middle East the Feb. 13-14 summit will aim to promote. There is "a lot of uncertainty about participation of many other EU member states at ministerial level," the official said. **->2**

U.S. 'deal of century' doomed to hit dead end: Palestine

The Palestinian Authority (PA) says the United States President Donald Trump's yet-to-be-unveiled proposal on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will hit a "dead end" after an Israeli TV report released what it called details of the so-called "deal of the century."

PA spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh stressed on Wednesday that any imitative short of a sovereign Palestinian state based on the pre-1967 boundaries with the entire East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital would fail.

"Rumors and leaks about the deal of the century, as well as ongoing attempts to find regional and international parties that would cooperate with this plan, are failed attempts that will reach a dead end," he said.

"Any peace plan that does not include an independent Palestinian state - with all of East Jerusalem as its capital - on the 1967 borders, is destined to fail," he added.

Citing a source who took part in a briefing in Washington on the so-called peace plan by a senior American official, Israeli Channel 13 reported that the bid provides for a Palestinian state in 85-90 percent of the West Bank, with the capital in "most of the Arab neighborhoods" of East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

The plan also endorses the Israeli grip over parts of East al-Quds (Jerusalem) and the Holy Basin, which includes the Old City and its adjacent territories, according to the report.

Moreover, the initiative stipulates various land swaps and Israel's annexation of major settlement blocs.

However, the Israeli settlements, defined as isolated, would not be evacuated and expanded, but "dried out."

The White House rejected the Channel 13 report as mere "speculations."

"As in the past, speculations regarding the

peace plan are inaccurate. We have no further reaction," it said in a statement.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Abu Rudeineh said that any proposal meant to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should have "international legitimacy."

"The address for achieving a just and lasting peace is the Palestinian leadership, which affirms that any proposals regarding the political process must be based on international legitimacy and the principle of the two-state solution," he said.

Palestinians have already rejected Trump's plan, with President Mahmoud Abbas calling it "the slap of the century."

Last month, eight European Union (EU) member states warned that Trump's initiative would not be successful if it fails to take into account internationally-agreed parameters for peace. **->13**

Iran celebrates centenary of Academy of Music



Tombak virtuoso Mohammad Esmaili (C) accepts an award for his lifetime achievements from Culture Minister Abbas Salehi (R).

A R T **TEHRAN** — A celebration to mark the centenary of the establishment of Iran's Academy of Music was held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Wednesday. The celebration was attended by the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi and a number of veteran musicians. Speaking at the ceremony, the minister called the celebration an event which bears the sweet scent of dynamism and eternity. **->16**



ARTICLE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

Trump is mocking Biden

News sources in the United States announced that Joe Biden, the U.S. former Vice-President (from 2009 to 2017), and a prominent figure in the Democratic Party will soon announce his run for the president in 2020. Biden has previously said that he's "the most qualified person in the country" for being president.

Biden mentioned these words in a controversial interview which has attracted the attention of many American analysts. However, Biden's final decision for participating in the presidential campaigns wasn't clear. Eventually, a number of Biden's followers, including his brother Frank Biden, announced his final decision to run for the general elections. Polls conducted in the United States indicate that Biden is currently more popular than other potential candidates of the Democratic Party in the upcoming elections.

Meanwhile, Biden is probably to face rivals such as Bernie Sanders, Senator from Vermont, and Elizabeth Warren, and even Hillary Clinton. During the 2016 presidential competitions, Biden was also scheduled to attend the in-party election competitions, but he changed his mind due to his son's death and Hillary Clinton's insistence on attending the presidential campaign. Biden's remarks, however, show that he's greatly interested in defeating Trump in the 2020 election.

However, we shouldn't forget that Biden can't really count on the current polls conducted among Democrat supporters! We can all remember that during the 2008 presidential elections and inside the Democratic Party, Obama had far less chance of reaching the final round of the elections than those like Hillary Clinton. But his successful speeches in states like Iowa and South Carolina led to Clinton's final defeat and Obama's victory.

Hence, the success of Biden's rival candidates in states like Iowa and New Hampshire (where American in-party elections begin with them) can completely change the equations, and that won't be to Biden's advantage.

Accordingly, Trump's position on Biden's participation in the presidential competitions are noteworthy. In a phone interview with Fox News' Jeanine Pirro, Trump called Joe Biden "weak". **->7**



ARTICLE

Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

It behooves largely Muslim lands to avoid becoming like Saudi Arabia

A fire broke out in a school building in Makkah back in 2002 from which young female students tried to escape. The Saudi "religious police" allegedly forced some if not all the teen school girls back inside the burning school because they were, in their hasty attempts to escape the fire, not wearing their headscarves and black robes.

Fights reportedly broke out between fire fighters and members of the "Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice" to keep the girls inside the school because they were not wearing the hijab or maybe black robes -- or whatever the Saudis deem appropriate garb for young females -- and 15 of the girls allegedly died in the Muslim holy city as a result. There also was, as would be expected, criticism of the "police" even in the Saudi media.

The English-language Saudi Gazette was one media outlet which criticized the "police". The newspaper reported that the "police" even stopped people who tried to assist the girls escape from the blaze, claiming that it was "sinful" to approach them.

If any incident better speaks of the cruelty of Saudi mentality, not to mention the murder of Khashoggi and lies about that crime and many other scandalous incidents, it is hard to know what it might be. This was clearly an extreme example of Islamic "rules" gone awry in practice.

But it's entirely correct to insist on modesty in dress. This is a Qu'ranic mandate and it makes a lot of good sense, but in general terms it is a call for the prevalence of modesty is all walks of life and frankly it ought to apply in ANY society, whether Muslim or not. Modesty is a great virtue, and the problem, as usual, arises in what amounts to the application of the mandate.

Far be it for a Westerner, including any American Muslim, to criticize opprobrium towards anyone engaging in truly immodest and scandalous behavior, but the situation in Saudi Arabia, where there are NO churches or synagogues (as there are and supported in Iran), **->7**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



FATF is a U.S. Treasury tool aimed to dominate others: cleric

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Tehran Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Mohammad-Ali Movahedi Kermani has warned against Iran's accession to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), saying the FATF is a wing of U.S. Treasury which aims to establish its intelligence dominance over other countries.

Addressing worshippers in Tehran on Friday, Movahedi Kermani said although the FATF claims its goal is to fight money laundering and terrorism, its true aim is to impose more sanctions against Iran and the resistance movement, ISNA reported.

The center of money laundering in the world are America and Europe, he said, adding that it was the Western countries' support of terrorism which led to the most heinous crimes committed by Daesh and other terror groups.



Iran to keep defeating Israel through intelligence supremacy: Alavi

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi on Thursday reminded the Zionist regime of the blows it has received from Iran, saying the Islamic Republic will continue to inflict defeats on Israel in the intelligence arena.

Speaking at a provincial council in the province of West Azarbaijan, Alavi said Iran is forcefully fighting off the Zionist regime of Israel, Tasnim reported.

"We have inflicted defeats on that regime in various arenas by taking intelligence measures, and this issue (defeating Israel) will continue in future," he added.

He also said the close cooperation and rapport among the Iranian intelligence organizations have thwarted the hostile plots against the country.



Nuclear negotiator: Thank you President Trump for bringing 'shame' to U.S.

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — A top Iranian nuclear negotiator said on Wednesday that U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement showed how "untrustworthy" the United States is.

"Today is the 3rd anniversary of the implementation of Iran nuclear deal which displayed how untrustworthy and unreliable the U.S. is. A president sign, the next withdraw!" Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi tweeted.

"Thank you President Trump for exhibiting this. Shame!" said Araqchi, who was a key negotiator in drawing up the nuclear agreement with the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) in July 2015.



Zaghari's husband offered visa to visit Iran, but declined: envoy

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Tehran's ambassador to the UK said on Thursday that Iran had offered Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's husband a visa to visit Iran but he did not use the opportunity.

"Pursuant to numerous requests to visit the family, we offered Ms. Zaghari's husband a visa in April 2017 to visit Iran--to see her and especially to be with his daughter. That was almost two years ago," Hamid Baeidinejad said in a tweet.

"You'd have to ask him why he did not use this opportunity to visit the family," he added.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe, 38, has been imprisoned in Iran for 2 years on charges of trying to orchestrate a soft overthrow of the Islamic Republic.



Ireland welcomes closer ties with Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Irish parliament speaker said on Thursday that his country welcomes expansion of cooperation with Iran in different fields, IRNA reported.

"Bilateral relations should improve and we in Ireland's parliament will support deepening ties with the country in all fields," Sean O'Farrell said.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Dublin Masoud Eslami.

"There are numerous opportunities to be seized in line with promoting commercial relations between the two countries," O'Farrell said.

Eslami, for his part, hailed the Irish parliament's support, saying the two countries' parliamentary ties are growing.



Activists urge Europe to boycott U.S. anti-Iran summit

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — A group of activists in the U.S. and other countries have signed a petition calling on European countries to boycott an anti-Iran summit set to be held by the U.S. in Poland next month, Press TV reported on Thursday.

The activists have started the petition on the website of the anti-war group Code Pink to ask European countries not to attend the summit announced by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

More than 3,000 people have so far signed the online petition, which urges EU countries to skip Pompeo's "bel-ligerent conference" and "instead host an alternative one with all nations of the region, including Iran."

Zarif joins 10-year challenge, slamming Bolton

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has taken on the "10 year challenge", a photo sharing fad sweeping social media, by comparing U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton's warmongering remarks 10 years ago with those of today.

"Same bull. Same bully. Same delusion," Zarif said in a tweet on Friday, sharing two pictures side by side, one picture of a 2009 anti-Iran op-ed headline by Bolton, and another picture of a recent headline about Bolton's Iran actions.

The tweet came after the White House asked the Pentagon to prepare plans for a U.S. military strike against Iran after a September mortar attack allegedly claimed by a Tehran-aligned group targeting Baghdad's diplomatic quarter, which houses the U.S. embassy, according to a report by the Wall Street Journal.

The request was made during a series of meetings led by President Trump's National Security Council, headed by Bolton.

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. have escalated since Trump walked away from the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in May and reimposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

U.S. officials have repeatedly claimed that they aim to

Time for an Israeli Strike?

By John R. Bolton
Thursday, July 2, 2009

2009

cut Iran's oil exports to zero.

Following the U.S. exit from the nuclear deal, Iran and the remaining parties launched talks to save the accord.

Trump on August 6 signed an executive order re-imposing many sanctions on Iran, three months after pulling out of

NATIONAL NEWS

Bolton Asked Pentagon for Plans to Strike Iran

Published 2 days ago on 01/16/2019

2019

the Iran nuclear deal.

He said the U.S. policy is to levy "maximum economic pressure" on the country.

The second batch of U.S. sanctions against the Islamic Republic took effect on November 4.

Iran, Japan celebrate 90 years of diplomatic ties

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran and Japan celebrated 90th anniversary of diplomatic relations in a ceremony held in Iran's embassy in Tokyo on Thursday.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono said in a message, which was read in the ceremony, that Iran and Japan should expand their friendly relations.

"The two countries gradually boosted the mutual understanding and deepened their relations during 90 years," he explained.

Japan-Iran Parliamentarians Friendship League Chairman Fumio Kishida said Japan wants to cooperate with Iran in line with expanding relations.

Kishida said that during his tenure as the foreign minister, he visited Iran for two times and discussed expansion of relations with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.



He added that he is willing to play a role in expansion of ties.

According to NHK, Iran's ambassador to Japan Morteza Rahmani Movahedi gave a speech at the event.

He said the two countries have great potential to cooperate in various areas.

The Iranian ambassador told NHK that Iran hopes to advance cooperation with Japan in trade and other economic areas, independent of the U.S.

Zarif slams U.S. arbitrary arrest of Press TV anchor Marzieh Hashemi

International Federation of Journalists voices 'serious concerns' over Hashemi's detention

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has censured the arrest of Press TV anchor Marzieh Hashemi, who has been imprisoned by the FBI on unspecified charges.

The arrest of Hashemi is a clear violation of freedom of speech, Zarif said on Wednesday in an interview with the Al-Alam news network, urging the U.S. officials to end their "political game" at once.

"The arrest is a political and unacceptable move by the U.S.," Zarif remarked.

Hashemi, an American-born journalist based in Iran, was detained on the weekend upon arrival at the international airport in St. Louis, Missouri, without any explanations, her family and friends told Press TV on Wednesday.

Her son, Hossein Hashemi, said she was detained as a "material witness" to a criminal case and no charges were pressed against her, Press TV reported.

The FBI has so far refused to comment on the case.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has described the United States as a "dangerous" country for journalists.

This arrest is "a blatant violation of human rights" and proves that Washington "is not committed to any of the principles that it uses as pretexts to attack its critics," he said in a statement.

The Iranian High Council for Human Rights said in a statement on Thursday that the way Hashemi was arrested and the "violent and humiliating treatment" of her is a brazen example of arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and flagrant violation of freedom of speech.

It also called on the self-proclaimed advocates of human rights in Europe, on the United Nations, the UN Human Rights Council, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to immediately denounce the move and to make serious efforts to secure her release.

"The U.S. government is undoubtedly accountable for all

these illegal, unjustifiable and anti-human rights measures," the council concluded.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the parliament speaker, has also denounced the move as a "political game", saying if she is "not released immediately, it is not the U.S. which will end that game."

On Friday, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) voiced "serious concerns" over Hashemi's detention.

In a Twitter post, the federation wrote that the United States must give clarifications about the situation of the Press TV anchor.

Alexandra Ellerbeck, a program coordinator of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), said on Thursday that "we are concerned by the arrest of a journalist for Iranian state TV, Marzieh Hashemi, and call on the U.S. Department of Justice to immediately disclose the basis for her detention for the past five days."

Jannati advises officials not to trust Europe

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, chief of Iran's Assembly of Experts, says the Europeans are worse than the Americans in trying to deprive Iran of the benefits of the 2015 nuclear deal, aka the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), advising officials not to fall for them.

"Some imagine they could rely on the Europeans when America withdraws from the JCPOA," he said in a Thursday meeting of the assembly, censuring Europe for dragging its feet on adopting practical measures to save the 2015 multilateral nuclear agreement following the U.S.'s withdrawal.

The senior cleric said he thought the Islamic Republic will ultimately have to "set fire" to the deal, referring to Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's statement in June 2016, who said if the U.S. tore the deal, as they had threatened, the Islamic Republic would set fire to it.

"The Europeans are however dragging their feet and would do nothing in our interest," Jannati said. "The Europeans are worse than the Americans. If not, they are not any better."

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew his country from the JCPOA in defiance of objections from the

entire international community.

In response, Iran's other partners in the deal, especially Washington's own allies, stressed their commitment to the deal and vowed efforts to compensate for the U.S.'s absence and keep the deal in effort.

In turn, Iran said it would only stay in the deal if the Europeans manage to make sure Tehran will be able to collect the economic dividends of the JCPOA when the U.S. leaves and unleashes fresh economic pressure against the Islamic Republic.

Following Washington's exit, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "The European sides are obligated to provide necessary guarantees

with regard to the JCPOA, but the country's economy must not be tied to this issue."

The European Union has promised to set up the so-called special purpose vehicle (SPV), a payment mechanism aimed at facilitating business with Iran irrespective of the U.S. bans.

The 28-nation bloc, however, has come under fire for failing to speed up efforts to launch the SPV, which many analysts view as a question of sovereignty for Europe in the face of the U.S. The EU first promised to launch the SPV on November 4, 2018, the same day U.S. sanctions were reimposed.

Iranians have shattered myth of U.S. omnipotence: FM

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said the Iranian people have shattered the myth of the U.S. omnipotence.

"Iranians forced the US client to leave 40 years ago today. 3 years ago today, JCPOA entered into force, ending yrs of securitization of Iran. In spite of US machinations v. Iran for the past 40 years— & its withdrawal from JCPOA—Iranians have shattered the myth of US omnipotence," he tweeted on Wednesday.

Iran warns Netanyahu about threatening Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should stop threatening Iran.

His comments came as Netanyahu said on Wednesday that Iran should leave Syria or Israel will continue hitting Iran's positions in Syria.

Qassemi noted that Iran has advi-

sory presence in Syria upon request by Damascus.

"Iran cannot be threatened. If needed, we will teach them how to talk and take move," he said.

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is a capable country and what it says is right and precise. So, what the prime minister of this regime [the Zionist regime of Israel] says is nonsense and propaganda."

EU nations set to snub Washington's latest anti-Iran push

1 → European diplomats said in recent days that France is unlikely to send its foreign minister. Britain and Germany haven't decided who will represent them. Luxembourg's foreign minister said he would miss the event because of a prior arrangement.

One European diplomat said the bloc wouldn't be "joining an anti-Iran coalition."

The Iranian foreign ministry summoned Poland's ambassador to protest

the summit on Sunday.

The "Polish government can't wash the shame: while Iran saved Poles in WWII, it now hosts desperate anti-Iran circus," Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter.

Polish officials have been trying to play down the Iran focus of the summit. Poland's foreign minister has asked to formally raise the meeting at a regular EU foreign-affairs meeting on Monday, EU officials said.

(Source: The Wall Street Journal)

UN monitors biased toward Saudi Arabia: Yemen's Ansarullah

Yemeni officials have voiced concern over a United Nations mission's ignorance of the Saudi regime violations of the Hudaydah truce deal.

Yemen's Supreme Revolutionary Committee head Mohammed Ali al-Houthi highlighted the failure of the UN mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) to hold the Saudis accountable after one of its own vehicles was targeted in the port city of Hudaydah.

The attack, which happened earlier on Thursday, caused no casualties. The UN declined to identify the party behind the shooting. Al-Houthi believes the Saudi regime-led forces were responsible for the attack and the UN's silence may indicate the monitoring mission is not prepared to carry out its duties correctly.

Al-Houthi suggested that the silence was more probably a case of the UN's intentional bias in favor of the Saudi-led forces.

Supreme Political Council member Mohammed al-Bukhaiti also echoed al-Houthi's comments, adding that the UNMHA chief monitor Patrick Cammaert has "sought to see the Stockholm agreement fail" ever since he was appointed to the mission.

"We will not accept dialogue around increasing the number of international monitors until the problem of Patrick Cammaert is resolved," said al-Bukhaiti.

Also on Thursday, seven Yemeni army personnel were killed following two Saudi airstrikes north of Hudaydah, according to Yemen's Armed Forces spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Saree.

Saree described the attacks as a blatant violation of the truce and urged UN monitors to hold the coalition accountable for the attack.

He further highlighted that vague responses from the UN only impeded the Yemeni military's right to retaliate.

Yemen's warring parting withdrew forces from strategic port city of Hudaydah following



a peace deal signed in the Swedish capital of Stockholm on December 13.

Hudaydah, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis, has seen some of the heaviest fighting in the Saudi regime-led war, which Riyadh began in March 2015.

■ **Yemen's Ansarullah, former govt. meet for 2nd day to hammer out prisoner swap**

Elsewhere, representatives of Yemeni warring parties, the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement and the country's former Saudi-backed government, have held their second session of talks in Jordan in an attempt to thrash out the details of a major prisoner swap, a UN source says.

Last Month, the two sides signed an agreement for a partial ceasefire at the end of UN-brokered peace negotiations, mediated by Martin Griffiths, the UN special envoy for Yemen, in Rimbo, north of the Swedish capital Stockholm. According to the agreement, the Ansarullah fighters, who are in control

of the port city of Hudaydah, and former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's allied militia together with the Saudi regime-led forces — who have placed the city under a tight siege since June — must withdraw from the port and hand it over to UN observers.

The two sides further agreed to exchange prisoners of war and issued a statement of understanding on the southwestern city of Ta'izz, another flashpoint area in the war-ravaged country. As for the prisoner swap, Jordan hosted a round of talks between the warring sides, upon a request from Griffiths, the first session of which was held on Wednesday, when the two sides met separately with the mediators and submitted lists of prisoners they wanted to be released.

On Thursday, the Ansarullah and Hadi's delegation were expected to meet face-to-face in Amman to hammer out the details of the swap and the circumstances of its implementation.

The two sides reached an agreement on

prisoner swap, which could involve up to 15,000 detainees from both sides, in principle as a confidence-building measure ahead of the December negotiations in Sweden.

The second session of talks in Jordan was held a day after the UN Security Council (UNSC) unanimously approved the deployment of up to 75 monitors to oversee the truce in Hudaydah, a lifeline for the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian aid.

According to the UN, the fragile ceasefire has largely held since it came into force in December, but there have been delays in the agreed withdrawal of the Ansarullah and Hadi's forces. The limited ceasefire and withdrawal, if implemented, could offer a potential breakthrough in a nearly four-year Saudi-led war that has brought Yemen to the brink of starvation and created the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Leading a coalition of its allies, the House of Saud regime invaded Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall Hadi, who had resigned amid popular discontent and fled to Riyadh, and to eliminate the Ansarullah movement, who have been running state affairs and defending Yemeni people against the Saudi regime brutal campaign during the nearly past four years.

The massive aggression, which has failed to achieve any of its goals, has reportedly killed over 56,000 people. It has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories.

The UN officials have already said that a record 22.2 million Yemenis are in dire need of food, including 8.4 million threatened by severe hunger. According to the world body, Yemen is suffering from the most severe famine in more than 100 years.

With the war drawn into a deadlock, Saudi Arabia is virtually mired in a quagmire, having faced repeated military backlashes in Yemen and reprisal attacks inside its own territories.

(Source: Press TV)

Israeli regime responsible for many conflicts in Middle East: Hezbollah

A high-ranking member of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement has accused Tel Aviv of being behind most crises in the Middle East region.

"The Israeli occupation [regime] is the biggest problem in our region. It intervenes in world's issues... [while] the United States and Europe help it to normalize relations with some Arab countries, so that the regime is accepted internationally and regionally in particular," Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem said in an interview with Arabic-language al-Manar television network.

He added, "Israel is the main problem in the region as it is behind many existing crises. This region will continue to suffer from successive and cumulative crises as long as the Israeli occupation [regime] exists and acts in such an aggressive manner under American supervision."

"We must always bear in mind that Israel is a great danger; and that Arab and Muslim countries should reach an understanding with each other and work out appropriate means of cooperation. I am warning those countries seeking normalization of ties with the Israeli enemy that your bids will destroy your nations. Protect the independence of your countries against Israel rather than facilitating such a scheme!" Qassem pointed out.

The senior Hezbollah official then noted that the United States has failed miserably in Syria, describing the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's tour of the Middle East as an attempt by the White House to raise the morale of its frustrated regional allies.

He then scoffed at the recent visit by the U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale to Beirut, stating that the solution to Lebanon's government formation deadlock is "domestic."

"Hale knows very well that he is not in a position to dictate things on Lebanon and its officials. He who does not see daily Israeli violations against Lebanon as an aggression is not eligible to give advice about citizenship and Lebanon's future," Qassem underlined.

"Hence, he is advised to know that the future of Lebanon is in the hands of its nation, and Lebanon's interests are not expected to be in line with the failed U.S.-Israeli plan, which has ruined the region," he said.

(Source: Press TV)

Impeachment calls grow after report said Trump told ex-lawyer to lie to Congress

The United States President Donald Trump directed his former personal lawyer Michael Cohen to lie to Congress about negotiations over a real estate project in Moscow, BuzzFeed news reported on Thursday, an allegation that Democrats have vowed to investigate.

Citing two unnamed law enforcement officials, BuzzFeed reported that Trump directed Cohen to lie to Congress by claiming negotiations over the project ended earlier than they actually did. The report also said that Cohen regularly briefed Trump and his family on the Moscow Trump Tower project - even as Trump said he had no business dealings with Russia. The Associated Press has not been able to independently verify the report.

The White House was not immediately available for comment. Trump has previously denied reports that he directed Cohen to break the law.

Rudy Giuliani, Trump's current lawyer, told CNN that if "you believe Cohen, I can get you a great deal on the Brooklyn Bridge", suggesting that Cohen is lying.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff tweeted on Thursday that the allegation that Trump asked Cohen to lie "to curtail the investigation and cover up his business dealings with Russia is among the most serious to date".

"We will do what's necessary to find out if it's true," Schiff, a Democrat, added.

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Jerrold Nadler, said directing a subordinate to lie to Congress is a federal crime.

"The @HouseJudiciary Committee's job is to get to the bottom of it, and we will do that work," Nadler tweeted.

An adviser to Cohen, Lanny Davis, declined to comment on the substance of the article, saying that he and Cohen wouldn't answer questions out of respect for special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe. Mueller is investigating Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election and contacts with the Trump campaign.

According to BuzzFeed, Mueller learned that Trump directed Cohen to lie through multiple witness interviews, internal emails and text messages and other documents.

Cohen pleaded guilty in November to lying to Congress in 2017 to cover up that he was negotiating the real estate deal in Moscow on Trump's behalf during the heat of his presidential campaign. The charge was brought by Mueller and was the result of his cooperation with that probe.

Cohen was recently sentenced to three years in prison after pleading guilty to tax crimes, bank fraud and campaign violations. He is scheduled to testify before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on February 7.

The report comes as House Democrats have promised a thorough look into Trump's ties to Russia. Though House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has discouraged any talk of impeachment in the early days of her new majority, some senior Democrats said that if the BuzzFeed report is true, Trump's actions could rise to that level.

"If the @BuzzFeed story is true, President Trump must resign or be impeached," tweeted Texas Democrat Joaquin Castro, a member of the House intelligence panel.

Congressman David Cicilline, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, tweeted that if Trump directed Cohen to lie, "that is obstruction of justice. Period. Full stop".

William Barr, Trump's nominee for attorney general, said at his Senate confirmation hearing Tuesday that a president or anyone else who directs a witness to lie is illegally obstructing an investigation. That statement attracted attention, given Barr's expansive views of presidential powers and his belief that presidents can't be scrutinized by prosecutors for acts the Constitution allows them to take.

(Source: agencies)

Sudan police fire live rounds outside home of slain protester

Sudanese police fired live ammunition at mourners outside the home of a protester who died early on Friday from a gunshot wound sustained the night before.

About 2,000 mourners gathered in the Burri neighborhood where the man, Moawia Bashir Khalil, 60, was shot on Thursday. According to local reports, Khalil was killed inside his home for helping unarmed protesters hide from security forces.

The procession turned into a spontaneous anti-government demonstration, the latest in a series of protests against the leadership of President Omar al-Bashir. The capital, Khartoum, has witnessed weeks of pitched battles between police and demonstrators over the state of the economy and other issues. "We are not scared, we will not stop" the protesters shouted, as they took to the streets of Khartoum's eastern district of Burri, the hub of an anti-government rally late on Thursday.

Video footage showed men and women, many wearing masks, shouting slogans against the government as a thick plume of smoke - resulting from burning tyres and rubbish - billowed behind them.

A child and a doctor were also killed by gunfire in Burri on Thursday, said the Sudan Doctors' Committee (SDC), a group linked to the opposition.

Before police opened fire on Friday, some mourners pelted officers nearby with rocks and overturned and destroyed a police truck, witness video showed.

The mourners blocked the main street in Burri with boulders and chanted "there is no God but God!" and "Martyr! Martyr!" Several were wailing and crying and some were carrying Sudanese flags.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

After Friday's shooting outside Khalil's home, thousands attended his funeral at a cemetery across from a police officers' club. Clashes with police had calmed by the time protesters transported the body to Burri Mosque.

Demonstrations also spread to other cities and towns, including the Red Sea city of Port Sudan, the provincial capital of Gadaref and in the agricultural hub of Atbara, where the first protest broke out in December after a government decision to raise bread prices.

The protests have since escalated into broader demonstrations against al-Bashir's three decades of iron-fisted rule that have triggered deadly clashes with security forces.

Officials say at least 24 people have died, but human rights groups have put the death toll much higher.

Last week, Amnesty International said more than 40 people had been killed and more than 1,000 arrested.

Human Rights Watch said the dead included children and medical staff. Before the protests, AFP reported that one of their journalists saw security personnel, many in plain clothes, stationed across the downtown area of Khartoum and along the expected route of Thursday's march.

Several army vehicles, mounted with machine guns, were stationed outside the palace.

The Sudanese Professionals Association - a trade union representing doctors, teachers and engineers among others - has stepped into the vacuum created by the arrest of many opposition leaders. Mohammed Yousef, a spokesman for the association, said demonstrators were prepared to continue to press their grievances while remaining patient and wise.

Despite the crackdown, the movement has grown to become the biggest threat to Bashir's rule since he took power in 1989. The protesters accuse Bashir's government



of mismanagement of key sectors of the economy and of pouring funds into a military response Sudan can ill afford.

Sudan has suffered from a chronic shortage of foreign currency since South Sudan broke away in 2011, taking with it the lion's share of oil revenues.

That triggered soaring inflation and saw the cost of food and medicines more than double, with frequent shortages in major cities, including Khartoum.

Al-Bashir has blamed the protests on foreign "agents" and said the unrest would not lead to a change in government, challenging his opponents to seek power through the ballot box.

He has ordered the police to use "less force" against protesters, but deadly violence during the demonstrations continues.

(Source: agencies)

Bahraini court gives prison sentences to three more anti-regime activists, revokes their citizenship

A court in Bahrain has handed down prison sentences to three anti-regime protesters and stripped them of their citizenship as the ruling House of Khalifah regime does not shy away from its heavy clampdown on political dissidents and pro-democracy activists in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom.

The court sentenced the first two defendants to ten years in jail each, while the third received a seven-year prison sentence after the trio was found guilty of "joining a terrorist group and traveling to Iraq in 2017 to receive military training."

The three convicts were later stripped of their Bahraini citizenship.

Meanwhile, a female dissident has

launched an open-ended hunger strike at a detention center in Bahrain to protest her dire situation and mistreatment by prison authorities.

Her son-in-law and London-based Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, who is the founder of the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), said high-profile activist Hajer Mansoor Hassan could no longer tolerate inhumane conditions and degrading treatment, which include being denied phone calls, at the Women's Detention Center in Isa Town.

Earlier this month, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention described Hassan's imprisonment and that of two other members of Alwadaei's family as unlawful.

The body of independent human rights experts stated that Alwadaei's relatives were "deprived of their liberty, interrogated and prosecuted for their family ties with him and that these were acts of reprisals."

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the House of Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from the House of Saud regime

and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

Scores of people have lost their lives and hundreds of others sustained injuries or got arrested as a result of the House of Khalifah regime's crackdown.

On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini monarch King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3, 2017.

(Source: Press TV)

Young activist dies in Saudi prison

A young activist who had been detained in a Saudi regime jail since March 2011 has died in prison.

Nayef Ahmed al-Omran, an activist from the Shia-populated region of Qatif in Eastern Province, was buried on Friday morning amid media blackout enforced by the Saudi regime.

There were no further details available on how he passed away. According to Saudi activists, Nayef had been imprisoned since March 17, 2011 and was subjected to torture.

The activists said the number of deaths among the detain-

ees in Saudi prisons has increased over the past two years.

Eastern Province has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011. Protesters have been demanding reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the oil-rich region. The protests have been met with a heavy-handed crackdown by the regime. Regime forces have increased security measures across the province.

Over the past years, Riyadh has also redefined its an-

ti-terrorism laws to target activism.

In January 2016, Saudi regime authorities executed Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, who was an outspoken critic of the policies of the Riyadh regime. Nimr had been arrested in Qatif in 2012.

Earlier this month, Saudi forces stormed a small village in Qatif, killing five people and injuring an unspecified number of others.

(Source: Press TV)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	165595.0
IFX	1983.55

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,815 rials
GBP	54,056rials
AED	11,439 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$52.99/b
Brent	\$61.90/b
OPEC Basket	\$59.52/b
Gold	\$1,283.25 /oz
Silver	\$15.46/oz
Platinum	\$812.45/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



‘Auto part manufacturers to receive \$950m of facilities’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** - “Iranian ministry of industry is to grant 40 trillion rials (about \$952.3 million) of facilities to supply working capital for the auto part manufacturing units,” Iranian Industry Minister Reza Rahmani announced, IRNA reported on Thursday.
“Supplying the working capital of production units is among the top priorities of the administration and the policy will be applied in the next Iranian year (starting March 21, 2019) as well,” he said.
“The government pays a specific attention to manufacturing auto parts, which provides more than 400,000 jobs,” he said, “the government’s main targets are protecting production and creating jobs.”

China offers Iran \$3b oil field deal

1 → Late last year, after the U.S. allowed China to keep purchasing as much as 360,000 barrels of Iranian oil a day, Sinopec proposed a \$3 billion investment plan in the Yadavaran oil field it operates in western Iran, according to people familiar with the proposal. The deal—if agreed—would double production at the field to 180,000 barrels a day within six months, the people said.
A spokeswoman for Iran’s oil ministry said she wasn’t aware of the new offer. Sinopec and the State Department didn’t return requests for comment.

(Source: Wall Street Journal)

Recession is the number one fear for CEOs in 2019, survey says

As the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos approaches, a new survey of over 800 CEOs has revealed that global business leaders see recession as their number one external concern for 2019.
Threats to global trade and political instability ranked second and third, respectively, according to the survey Thursday by the research group The Conference Board.
The recession risk was touted as the number one concern in Japan, China and Latin America but was only placed third by American executives. In the U.S. threats to cybersecurity was listed as the source of greatest unease with new competitors second.
Trade barriers between the U.S. and China have created fears that a full-blown trade war could derail economies around the world. However, among the C-suite executives questioned in China, trade troubles ranked second while in the United States it came as low as fourth.
The picture for internal business concerns was much clearer among CEOs around the world, with all regions ranking the attraction and retention of talent as their number one concern.

“As global competition increases while the pool of available workers decreases, it comes as no surprise that executives cited talent as a top issue in 2019 that’s keeping them up at night,” said Rebecca Ray, a report author and the executive vice president of human capital at The Conference Board.

There was also a strong consensus among CEOs that disruptive new technologies could upset their existing business models and markets.

China’s bosses stood out in the internal concerns category, by revealing fear over how to align compensation with business performance as wage pressures in the country increase.

In addition to gauging concerns for 2019, the survey also asked CEOs and other C-Suite executives about what they think the organization of the future will look like and how their own will perform.

American CEOs expressed the highest confidence level in their culture of any region globally while Chinese counterparts were most confident about their leaders and talent.

Next week, business and political leaders descend on Davos in Switzerland to attend the annual World Economic Forum.

A WEF report this week, called the Global Risks Report 2019, suggested that an increased risk of political confrontations between major powers will prevent business and governments from tackling pressing problems such as climate change or cyberattacks.

WEF surveyed around 1,000 experts and decision-makers with 90 percent saying they expected further economic confrontation between major powers. Almost the same percentage said they expected further weakening of multilateral trading rules.

(Source: CNBC)

Over 27m tons of iron ore produced in 9 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran produced 27,031 million tons of iron ore during the nine-month period ended on December 21, 2018, IRNA reported citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).
IMIDRO data also put the amount of raw iron ore extracted during the mentioned time at 48,759 million tons.
Furthermore, the country’s non-oil trade data shows that Iran has exported \$537.1 million of iron ore concentrate and

iron ore pellet in the mentioned nine-month period.

The country exported \$1.072 billion of iron ore in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2018), which indicates 31.1 percent rise from its previous year’s figure, according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

China was the main buyer of Iran’s iron ore in the past year, importing \$1.043 billion of the product from Iran, which is 97 percent of the total exports.

NIMA supplies €6.2b for imports of goods, services

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) has supplied €6.276 billion of foreign currency for imports of goods and services since early August, IRIB reported on Thursday.

The system has earned €7.141 billion of foreign currency from exports during the mentioned time span.

NIMA, which seeks to boost transparency, create competitiveness among exchange shops and a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required



foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to domestic forex market. It was inaugurated to allow exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

U.S. likely to extend waivers on Iran’s oil sanctions: analysts

The United States is likely to extend waivers from sanctions on Iranian oil imports in May but will reduce the number of countries receiving them to placate top buyers China and India and to decrease the chance of higher oil prices, analysts said.

Washington surprised oil markets after granting waivers to eight Iranian oil buyers when the sanctions on oil imports started in November. Benchmark Brent crude futures fell 22 percent that month and the waivers influenced the Organization of the

Petroleum Exporting Countries’ (OPEC) decision to agree in December to supply cuts starting in 2019.

Reducing the number of waivers will limit oil exports from Iran, the fourth-largest producer in OPEC, but the United States is unlikely to meet its earlier target of driving Iranian oil exports to zero.

China, India, Japan, South Korea and Turkey are likely to be given waivers after they expire in May that could cap Iran’s crude oil exports at about 1.1 million barrels per day,



Iraq, India, Russia and Afghanistan stood at the next places after China in the past year. Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich

countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world’s largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron.

3000 new small-scale solar plants to be constructed in rural areas

ENERGY **TEHRAN** – Deputy Energy Minister Mohammad Sadeghzadeh said 3000 new small-scale solar plants are going to be constructed in the country’s underprivileged and rural areas by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019), IRNA reported.

Sadeghzadeh, who is the Head of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) noted that 2000 small-scale solar plants are currently operating in the country’s rural areas and with ne new plants constructed the

number will reach 5000 by yearend
According to the official, the electricity generated from the renewable sources will reach 1000 megawatts by March 2019.

“The country’s renewable output stood at 500MW last year [March 2017-March 2018]”, he said.

He further noted that the government has allocated 18.6 trillion rials (near \$442.8 million) for developing renewable power plants across the country and the number will grow even more in the upcoming years.

U.S.-based analysts at Eurasia Group said on Thursday. That would remove Italy, Greece and Taiwan from the current waivers list.

“Other geopolitical priorities will moderate the administration’s desire to halt Iranian exports, particularly with Iran’s top two purchasers, China and India,” the analysts said.

Asia’s Iranian crude imports fell to their lowest in more than five years in November when U.S. sanctions took effect.

China and India continued to import Iranian oil from November while Turkey

resumed imports in December.

South Korea is expected to receive condensate from Iran this month after a four-month halt while Japan’s shipments are still pending banks’ approval to process payment to Iran.

However, the United States is unlikely to completely removed Iranian oil from the market because the loss of that supply would probably result in a politically unpalatable increase in oil prices.

(Source: Reuters)

EU outlines trade goal with U.S. in bid to bolster truce

The European Union unveiled a blueprint for a free-trade deal with the U.S. that would cut tariffs on a wide range of industrial goods including cars in a bid to heal commercial ties.

European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom asked EU governments on Friday in Brussels for the go-ahead to start negotiations on lowering trans-Atlantic commercial barriers, prodding U.S. President Donald Trump to reverse his protectionist stance.

Her draft mandate includes the politically sensitive -- and economically important --

question of autos even though the U.S. has signaled resistance to having them covered by market-opening talks. Washington is investigating whether foreign vehicles pose a national-security threat and should face higher American duties.

“We believe that a balanced and mutually beneficial agreement with the U.S. can be reached,” Malmstrom said in the Belgian capital. “We are prepared to put our vehicle tariffs on the negotiating tables as part of a broader agreement if the U.S. agrees

to work together toward zero tariffs for all industrial goods.”

Europe is determined to show progress in enacting a political accord reached at the White House six months ago to “work together toward zero tariffs, zero non-tariff barriers, and zero subsidies on non-auto industrial goods.”

The July 25 pact between Trump and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker put on hold the threat of U.S. tariffs on EU cars and auto parts that would be

based on the same national-security grounds invoked for controversial American levies on foreign steel and aluminum.

The metal duties as high as 25 percent prompted tit-for-tat retaliation by the EU, which has vowed a similar reaction to any U.S. automotive duties. A 25 percent U.S. tariff on foreign cars would add 10,000 euros (\$11,394) to the sticker price of European vehicles imported into the country, according to the the commission, the EU’s executive arm.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Tesla to cut workforce by 7 percent while it ramps up Model 3 production

Tesla Inc (TSLA.O) said on Friday it was cutting several thousands of jobs, as the electric car maker looks to trim costs and be consistently profitable while it ramps up the production of its crucial Model 3 sedan.

Tesla shares fell 4.1 percent to \$333 in premarket trading

“Tesla will need to make these cuts while increasing the Model 3 production rate and making many manufacturing engineering improvements in the coming months,” Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk said in an email to employees that was published on the company’s blog.

“There isn’t any other way,” he said.

The company said it would reduce full-

time employee headcount by about 7 percent and retain only the most critical temps and contractors.

Earlier this month, Tesla cut U.S. prices for all its vehicles to offset lower green tax credits, and fell short on quarterly deliveries of its mass-market Model 3 sedan.

Musk said the company is on target to report a GAAP profit in its fourth quarter, but less than the previous three-month period.

“This quarter, as with Q3, shipment of higher priced Model 3 variants (this time to Europe and Asia) will hopefully allow us, with great difficulty, effort and some luck, to target a tiny profit,” Musk said.

(Source: Reuters)

Huawei could be banned from 5G in Germany



“We see no rational reason to exclude Huawei from building the 5G infrastructure in any country in the world,” the statement said.
Also on Thursday, the University of Oxford said it would no longer accept new donations and sponsorships to fund research from Huawei.

“The decision has been taken in the light of public concerns raised in recent months surrounding UK partnerships with Huawei. We hope these matters can be resolved shortly,” Oxford said in a statement according to Reuters.

Oxford University was not immediately available for comment when contacted by CNBC.

German ban could spread across Europe

Bans from providing 5G equipment to the U.S., U.K. or Germany could be a big blow for Huawei, which is the world’s largest

supplier of telecoms network equipment. Huawei’s business has so far proved resilient, with more than \$100 billion in revenues expected in 2018.

The U.K. has been weighing a ban on Huawei 5G equipment with Britain’s defense minister reportedly citing “grave concerns” over security. Meanwhile U.K. telecom firm BT has said Huawei will not be eligible to provide 5G infrastructure on its networks.

U.S. intelligence officials have advised consumers not to buy Huawei phones over concerns they could be used for spying.

James Chappell, co-founder and chief innovation officer at digital security firm Digital Shadows, told CNBC via email Friday that it was possible security concerns around Huawei may extend beyond Germany into other parts of Europe.

“Germany is one of the first EU countries to take this particular action beyond the ‘Five Eyes’ relationship,” he said.

‘Five Eyes’ alliance groups Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States together as countries that share a broad range of intelligence.

“Given 5G’s role in national critical infrastructure such as utilities and transport, it’s understandable that geopolitical considerations are being bought into the discussion,” Chappell said. “Germany is a member of NATO, and it is known to share intelligence with other NATO members which include the United States... I think it more likely that other NATO members in Europe respond (before EU member states).”

(Source: CNBC)

Oil climbs 1 percent on OPEC output cut, hopes for easing China-U.S. trade tensions

Oil prices rose 1 percent on Friday after a report from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) showed its production fell sharply last month, easing fears about prolonged oversupply.

International Brent crude oil futures were up 62 cents, or 1.01 percent, at \$61.80 per barrel at 0753 GMT. Brent has risen about 2 percent this week, its third straight week of gains.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$52.65 per barrel, up 58 cents, or 1.11 percent, from their last settlement.

A report by the Wall Street Journal on Thursday saying that Washington was considering lifting some or all tariffs imposed on Chinese imports also buoyed financial markets, including oil, analysts said.

"Trade-related optimism boosted Asian markets," said Jasper Lawler, head of research at London Capital Group, in a note.

In oil, OPEC along with some other producers including Russia, cut oil output sharply in December before a new accord to limit supply took effect on Jan. 1, it said on Thursday, suggesting that producers have made a strong start to averting a glut in 2019 as a slowing economy curbs demand.

OPEC said in its monthly report that its



oil output fell by 751,000 barrels per day (bpd) in December to 31.58 million bpd, the biggest month-on-month drop in almost two years.

Some focus is shifting to whether the United States tightens sanctions against OPEC-member Iran when waivers it granted

the Middle Eastern nation's eight biggest crude customers last November expire.

China, India, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Italy, Greece and Taiwan received exemptions from Washington that allow them to import oil from Iran until April or May.

Political risk advisory Eurasia Group said

China, India, Japan, South Korea and Turkey are likely to receive extended waivers, while those for Italy, Greece and Taiwan would likely be removed, capping Iran's crude oil exports at about 1.1 million bpd.

"The combination of production cuts by OPEC+ (especially the Saudis) and tightening sanctions on Iranian oil exports have brought the market close to balance," U.S. investment bank Jefferies said on Friday.

Tempering support for prices, however, is weakening demand. OPEC cut its forecast for average daily demand for its crude in 2019 to 30.83 million bpd, down 910,000 bpd from the 2018 average.

Further undermining OPEC's efforts to tighten oil markets has been a surge in crude output from the United States, which increased by more than 2 million bpd in the last year to an unprecedented 11.9 million bpd.

"Though OPEC reports are likely to bolster market sentiment for stronger oil prices in the near-term, we remain cautious in the longer run amidst persistent economic weakness and incremental U.S. shale production," Benjamin Lu of Singapore-based brokerage Phillip Futures said in a note.

(Source: Reuters)

Libyan oil terminals reopen as weather improves: source



Libya reopened all of its oil terminals Thursday after they were shut for almost a week due to bad weather, a source close to the matter told S&P Global Platts.

But inclement weather along with ongoing security issues at the country's largest oil field Sharara mean that the OPEC member's crude production remains much below the coveted 1 million bpd mark.

The North African country's crude exports have fallen recently as rough weather shut in loadings at its key oil terminals.

But the source said that crude exports had resumed this morning after the reopening of the ports.

Some sources said that Libyan production would have also been slightly affected due to the closing of the ports as these terminals have limited storage capacity. State-owned National Oil Corporation declined to comment on current production levels.

In early December, Libyan key oil ports were also closed for almost a week shutting in almost 150,000 bpd of production.

Libya's crude oil exports and production have also been down as its largest oil field

Sharara remains shut-in since early-December due to security issues.

Output at the Sharara field has been shut in since December 8 after armed groups, along with the help of local people, occupied the site. They were protesting about the economic conditions and frequent power outages the south of the country has been facing.

Forces loyal to Libya National Army led by General Khalifa Haftar are on their way to secure the Sharara field.

The 75,000 bpd El Feel field however remains operational despite NOC saying last month that the Sharara outage would also affect production at nearby fields.

Trading sources said Libyan crude oil loadings have been experiencing delays of around four to 10 days in the past few weeks.

Weather has been a factor throughout the last couple of trading cycles for a number of the eastern-loading crude grades, including flagship crude Es Sider.

Despite this, medium sweet gasoil-rich Es Sider has been a grade of choice for many Mediterranean refineries in recent sessions, due to improving distillate margins.

(Source: Platts)

Novak says Russia can't cut oil production quickly



Due to weather and geological conditions in the cold Russian winter, Russia cannot cut its oil production too quickly, Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Thursday, reiterating Moscow's commitment to stick to the new OPEC+ deal and to gradually reduce production.

Russia will try to cut its oil production faster, Novak noted.

A few days ago, Khalid al-Falih, the energy minister of Saudi Arabia—the OPEC kingpin and key Russian ally in all OPEC/non-OPEC production policy deals since early 2017—said that Russia was moving with the cuts "slower than I'd like."

"Russia has started, slower than I'd like, but they've started, and I am sure as they did as in 2017 they'll catch up and be a positive contributor to re-balancing the market," al-Falih told CNBC on Sunday.

The new OPEC+ deal, under which Russia will be cutting 228,000 bpd, is for a six-month period starting January 1, 2019 with an option to review in April.

Russian oil companies will reduce their production by that amount during the first quarter of 2019, Novak said after

the agreement was reached in December.

Novak has said that Russia is planning to reduce its oil production by 50,000 bpd to 60,000 bpd in January as part of the new OPEC+ deal, and will not be cutting its 228,000-bpd share outright at the start of the agreement. Russia has already drafted a timetable for how much oil production it would reduce each month until it reaches its share of the OPEC/non-OPEC production cut, Novak said, reaffirming Moscow's position that its reduction would be gradual, just like in the previous agreement between OPEC and the Russia-led non-OPEC partners.

Last Friday, Novak said that Russia had already cut production by some 30,000 bpd compared with October—the baseline for the cuts—and still aimed to reach a cut of 50,000 bpd by the end of this month.

Today, Novak told Russian news agency RIA Novosti that he would be meeting with al-Falih at the World Economic Forum in Davos next week to discuss joint projects, cooperation, and the implementation of the OPEC+ deal.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Before start of new oil pact, OPEC made progress averting glut

OPEC cut oil output sharply in December before a new accord to limit supply took effect, it said on Thursday, suggesting that producers have made a strong start to averting a glut in 2019 as a slowing economy curbs demand.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said in a monthly report that its oil output fell by 751,000 barrels per day (bpd) in December to 31.58 million bpd, the biggest month-on-month drop in almost two years.

Worried by a drop in oil prices and rising supplies, OPEC and allies including Russia agreed in December to return to production cuts in 2019. They pledged to lower output by 1.2 million bpd, of which OPEC's share is 800,000 bpd.

OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo told Reuters that producers were seeking to avoid a build-up in the industrialized world's oil inventories above the five-year average.

They were above that mark in November, figures in OPEC's report showed.

"We are not yet out of the winter woods," he said. "The oil industry cannot afford to relapse into another downturn," he said in reference to a 2014-2016 oil market slump.

The supply reduction in December means that if OPEC fully implements the new Jan. 1 cut, it will avoid a surplus that could weaken prices. Oil slid from \$86 a barrel in October to less than \$50 in December on concerns over excess supply.

OPEC expects 2019 global oil demand



growth to slow to 1.29 million bpd from 1.5 million in 2018, though it was more upbeat about the economic backdrop than last month and cited better sentiment in the oil market, where crude is back above \$60.

"While the economic risk remains skewed to the downside, the likelihood of a moderation in monetary tightening is expected to slow the decelerating economic growth trend in 2019," OPEC said in the report.

Barkindo added that he remains optimistic that "healthy demand" would hold this year.

The supply cut was a policy U-turn after the producer alliance known as OPEC+ agreed in June 2018 to boost supply amid pressure

from U.S. President Donald Trump to lower prices and cover an expected shortfall in Iranian exports.

OPEC changed course after the slide in prices starting in October. A previous OPEC+ supply curb starting in January 2017 - when OPEC production fell by 890,000 bpd according to OPEC figures - got rid of the 2014-2016 glut.

The group confirmed on its website that it plans to meet over April 17-18 in Vienna to review the supply cut agreement. OPEC sources said another meeting could follow in June.

The biggest drop in OPEC supply last month came from Saudi Arabia and amounted

to 468,000 bpd, the report showed.

Saudi supply in November had hit a record above 11 million bpd after President Trump demanded more oil be pumped.

The kingdom told OPEC that it lowered supply to 10.64 million bpd in December and has said it plans to go even further in January by delivering a larger cut than required under the OPEC+ deal.

The second-largest was an involuntary cut by Libya, where unrest led to the shutdown of the country's biggest oilfield.

Iran registered the third-largest decline in output, also involuntary, as U.S. sanctions that started in November discouraged companies from buying its oil.

Iran, Libya and Venezuela are exempt from the 2019 supply pact and are expected by some analysts to post further falls, giving a tailwind to the voluntary effort by the others.

OPEC said in the report that 2019 demand for its crude would decline to 30.83 million bpd, a drop of 910,000 bpd from 2018, as rivals pump more and the slowing economy curbs demand.

Delivering the 800,000 bpd cut from December's level should mean the group would be pumping slightly less than the expected demand for its crude this year and so avoid a surplus. Last month's report had pointed to a surplus.

The figures for OPEC production and demand for its crude were lowered by about 600,000 bpd to reflect Qatar's exit from the group, which now has 14 members.

(Source: Reuters)

OPEC, allies finalize next meeting for Apr 17-18 in Vienna: official

OPEC has finalized a date of its next full ministerial meeting, April 17 in Vienna, with Russia and nine other non-OPEC allies joining the talks the following day.

The OPEC gathering will be billed as an extraordinary meeting, an official with the organization told S&P Global Platts, adding that a regular meeting could still be held in its usual month of June.

The OPEC/non-OPEC coalition is expected to discuss whether to extend its 1.2 million bpd output cut agreement, which is set to expire at the end of June.

The extraordinary meeting is being called so that OPEC can more proactively respond to the market in deciding on the future of its supply agreement.

Sanctions waivers the U.S. granted to eight countries to continue buying Iranian oil also expire in May, with the Trump administration yet to tip its hand on whether they will be extended, adding to OPEC's motivation in moving up the meeting date.

The coalition is still finalizing the date of its monitoring committee meeting, but it will likely be March 17-18 in Baku, Azerbaijan, the official said.

The committee, composed of ministers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Venezuela and Algeria from OPEC and Russia and Oman from the non-OPEC nations, is tasked with assessing market conditions and tracking the group's compliance with production quotas. Azerbaijan, a non-OPEC producer who is part of the coalition, would join the monitoring committee proceedings as host.

OPEC pumped 32.43 million bpd of crude in December, according to the latest Platts survey of OPEC production, but the 11 members with quotas under the output cut deal would need to cut another 950,000 bpd to be in compliance. The deal exempts Iran, Libya and Venezuela.

(Source: Platts)

China to quadruple LNG imports, will U.S. exporters benefit?

China, the world's top importer of natural gas and second-largest buyer of liquefied natural gas (LNG), just announced plans to increase its intake capacity of the seaborne fuel four-fold over the next two decades.

Burgeoning demand for natural gas in the People's Republic is driven by a number of factors, not least of which is the country's still impressive economic growth. But popular demand for better air quality has spurred an aggressive national 'fuel-switching' policy, which favors cleaner burning gas over 'king coal' in China's power sector. Roughly 7 percent of China's energy comes from natural gas (up from 0.5 percent in 2010). That's low. Compare that to 55 percent for dirty coal.

Coal's dominance of the power sector means that Chinese urban areas suffer from chronic air quality issues, ranging from 'moderate' danger in Beijing to "hazardous" in cities like Shanghai, according to official measurements. China's latest five-year plan requires cities to meet 'good' or 'excellent' air quality standards by 2020. Renewable energy is rightly being incorporated into the fule-mix to achieve this goal, but solar and wind alone are not sufficient to meet rising energy demand.

That means using more natural gas.

The initiative is having a noticeable impact on China's energy sector: as of November, Chinese LNG imports are up by a whopping 43 percent year-over-year. Total gas imports have grown by nearly one-third in the same period.

To accommodate this growing influx of seaborne gas, China is expanding its LNG intake and distribution infrastructure. According to a Ministry of Transport proposal, plans are in the works to quadruple the country's import capacity within the next two decades from 19 terminals at 2,860 billion cubic feet (bcf) per year to 34 terminals at over 11,000 bcf per year.

Some of that gas will need to come from the United States, especially as low American prices reach a competitive level with supplies out of leading Qatar and Australia. This can be also a major factor in offsetting the looming trade deficit between the U.S. and China - something the Trump Administration is fighting for.

But American liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports to China have been hit hard by the ongoing trade spat, dropping significantly following China's September 2018 imposition of tariffs of U.S. LNG cargoes. During the last six months of 2018, only six LNG vessels went from the United States to China, down from 25 during the same period in 2017. The falloff in Chinese gas purchases is not just hurting U.S. energy companies today, but future projects as well: with an uncertain future vis-à-vis China, the final investment decision (FID) of a number of U.S. Gulf Coast LNG export projects could now be in question.

It wasn't always like this. In the early days of the U.S. - China trade war, many experts believed that oil and gas were commodities immune from retaliatory tariff hikes. The mutual benefit of America's surplus energy supplies - a product of the Shale Revolution - and China's staggering energy needs - a natural consequence of rapid economic development - seemed to transcend diplomatic relations.

Indeed, as late as July of 2018 (half a year after Trump first declared 'global safeguard tariffs' targeting elements of China's economy), China remained the largest importer of U.S. oil exports - buying just under 400,000 barrels per day. But by August, China imported zero. American LNG sales began to taper off at around the same time, dropping to under 2 percent of China's liquid gas purchases by November, despite accounting for almost 10 percent of China's needs in Q1 2018. It is estimated that China imported 90 bcf of U.S. LNG over the course of last year - a significantly lower figure than the 141 bcf projected prior to July's tariff hikes.

Losing China would be a massive blow to the future of the U.S. LNG exports, as the gas market there is the fastest growing in the world. We still export more LNG to Mexico and South Korea, but these markets have a limited absorption capacity for the U.S. commodity.

And so U.S. companies are doing what they can to muscle their way back into China's market. America's premier LNG exporter - Cheniere Energy Inc. (NYSE:LNG) - already has two agreements inked to sell gas to China's National Petroleum Corp. (NYSE:SNP) over a 25 year period. The two liquefied natural gas (LNG) sale and purchase agreements (SPA) were secured with CNPC subsidiary PetroChina International (NYSE:PTR) for 1.2 million metric tons/year (mmt/y) - a value of \$11 billion. America's other LNG exporter - Dominion Energy (NYSE:D) out of Cove Point, MD - will likely be looking to secure its own contracts with high-demand Chinese buyers.

It stands to reason that the economic, strategic, and environmental interests benefiting from increased bilateral LNG trade will prevail over the current diplomatic row. China needs gas and the U.S. wants to sell it; a classic win-win scenario. Who knows, perhaps the so-called 'bridge fuel' to renewables could also be a bridge to improved future relations.

(Source: Forbes)

Congo’s presidential election result looks to be an enormous fraud

Democracy must have felt quite tangible to the 18.3 million people in Congo who voted Dec. 30 despite huge obstacles, including problems with voting lists, polling places, coercion and malfunctions in the electronic voting machines. The election was to yield the first peaceful transfer of power since independence six decades ago, but what followed was, by all appearances, an enormous fraud perpetrated by outgoing president Joseph Kabila. This is an insult to the electorate, and the only valid response can be a full accounting of the ballots — and honoring the result.

Kabila, leaving office after nearly 18 years, had handpicked his former interior minister Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary as his successor, hoping he would be a useful marionette. But Shadary polled poorly and came in third. The count was delayed, during which time Kabila and his cronies clearly attempted to sort out what to do next. Then the election commission announced that the winner of the presidential vote was opposition candidate Felix Tshisekedi. The head of the commission, Corneille Nangaa, declared Tshisekedi the winner with 38.57 percent of the vote, just ahead of another opposition candidate, Martin Fayulu, with 34.8 percent, and Shadary with 23.8 percent.

Strong evidence has emerged that these numbers were fixed. The Financial Times reported Jan. 15 that it had examined two sets of voting data that showed Fayulu was “the clear winner.”

The newspaper said the data represented 86 percent of the total votes cast and Fayulu was the victor with 59.4 percent, while Tshisekedi received 19?percent. Separately, the paper said it conducted an analysis of voting results collected by the Catholic Church, which deployed 40,000 observers. This data covered 43 percent of the votes cast and showed Fayulu won with 62.8 percent. The paper said the first data set was drawn from the original electronic tallies across the country, as transmitted before the results were announced.

Adding to suspicion about the outcome have been odd statements by Tshisekedi about some kind of power-sharing arrangement with Kabila. It sounds an awful lot like a backroom deal to subvert the will of millions of voters. Kabila, who dragged his feet on the election for nearly two years after his term ended and who ruled the resource-rich land as a personal kleptocracy, seems intent on staying in power behind the scenes and has hinted he may attempt a return. Nothing could be worse for Congo, scene of two wars that took millions of lives and now of a festering outbreak of Ebola.

Fayulu has gone to the Constitutional Court to seek justice. The court must order a transparent, verifiable recount, and the results must be honored in full. Congo’s voters have been admirably patient, and we hope they refrain from destructive violence in this delicate period. They did their part for democracy; now they must reap the true rewards of an honest tally.

(Source: The Washington Post)

May’s crushing loss is proof Brexit has failed

Two options remain: Leave with no deal, or no Brexit at all.

“Defeat” is too small a word for the rebuke Britain’s Parliament handed Prime Minister Theresa May on Jan.15, 2019. Her Brexit deal, laboriously negotiated over many months, was voted down Tuesday by a massive 230 votes — a far bigger margin than expected, and the worst loss of any British government in modern times.

Yet if this brutal rejection has caused May to think again, she didn’t let on. She promised talks, meetings and yet more conferring with the European Union. It’s as though she thinks she can extract some ornamental changes to the bargain and get the House of Commons to come around to her way of thinking. In this, she is almost certainly wrong.

Parliament rejected the deal with good reason: Leaving on May’s terms would have made the country poorer for a generation. It would’ve inhibited its independence, clobbered its businesses, and battered its public finances, while solving no problems and settling no questions. No amount of semantic reshuffling can salvage it.

May’s next immediate challenge is to prevail in a confidence vote moved by the Labour opposition. The chances are she will — for now. The Tories who defected on Tuesday will probably prefer to retain her as leader and avoid a general election for the time being. But a reckoning is coming. With 72 days to go before Brexit, the country is stockpiling food and medicine. Businesses are facing escalating costs and worsening uncertainty. Immigrants are in limbo. Troops are on standby. On all sides, stasis prevails even as the sense of crisis intensifies.

There’s no longer any realistic hope of coming to an agreement that both Europe and the UK Parliament will accept, and of making plans to implement it, before the March 29 deadline. A chaotic Brexit is the default outcome. To avoid it, Britain must now withdraw its Article 50 notice to quit, or ask for an extension.

The better course would be to revoke Article 50 altogether, which the UK can do unilaterally. To be sure, this would be a grave step, and one that May has promised not to take — because it would in effect overturn the choice that British voters made in 2016. It would be a declaration that the Brexit project has failed — but, after last week’s vote, to admit this would simply be to recognize reality. Britain has been unable to design an exit and its government is paralyzed.

In either case, extension or revocation, a second referendum should follow. This one, unlike the first, would be conducted in the light of information about what Brexit actually entails. If voters again chose to quit, despite all they’ve learned since 2016, there’d be no more excuses. The clock is running, and all May has to offer is more dithering. It can’t go on — and on March 29, one way or another, the indecision has to stop.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Four years into Salman’s reign, Saudi Arabia more unpredictable than ever

By Bruce Riedel

Four years ago this month, Prince Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud ascended to the throne of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His reign has changed the kingdom profoundly: It is more repressive than ever, more unpredictable than ever and likely less stable than at any time in a half century. The kingdom is in the midst of important and challenging transformations.

Salman was governor of Riyadh province for a half century before his half-brother, King Abdullah, made him crown prince. As the chief of the capital, Salman oversaw its transformation from a remote desert town to a modern city and the centerpiece of the country. He did so with the careful cultivation of the Wahhabi clerical establishment. He also was the policeman of the royal family, most of whose members lived in his jurisdiction.

For a half century before his ascension to the throne the line of succession in the kingdom was predictable and clear: The sons of Ibn Saud would inherit the throne as they aged. The question of succession is the Achilles heel of absolute monarchies.

Salman has twice changed the line of succession without any explanation. Two crown princes have been dismissed to open the door for the king’s son, Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Former Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef is under house arrest, quarantined from his own family. Apparently the king and crown prince regard Mohammed bin Nayef as a potential rival for the loyalty of the royal family.

The fate of the former crown prince is emblematic of the repression of the Saudi system under the Salmans. The kingdom has never been a human rights beacon, especially not for women. But in the last four years it has become a brutal, repressive dictatorship. Women’s rights activists have been detained, tortured and abused by the crown prince’s henchmen. Hundreds of Saudi business leaders, including royal family members, were detained and shaken down



Salman traveled extensively in the first three years of his reign, including lengthy trips to East Asia and annual vacations in Morocco. In 2018, he didn’t travel at all. His health may explain why he is not making official trips but does not explain why he didn’t make his usual month-long vacation. Perhaps the king feels the uncertainty in the kingdom over his son’s succession does not allow for him to be out of the country.

for money and property in 2017; dozens are still in jail. Most famously, journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered, apparently at the crown prince’s direction in Istanbul, although the king has defended his son.

Salman traveled extensively in the first

three years of his reign, including lengthy trips to East Asia and annual vacations in Morocco. In 2018, he didn’t travel at all. His health may explain why he is not making official trips but does not explain why he didn’t make his usual month-long

The old regime and the yellow revolution France’s protest movement has become a crisis of legitimacy for Emmanuel Macron — and the country’s constitutional order

By Robert Zaretsky

French President Emmanuel Macron is desperately seeking a consistent and credible answer to a question that refuses to stand still. When the gilets jaunes (yellow vests) movement started this past November, Macron’s government treated it as a one-off protest that could be ignored.

By December, the president decided that the continued weekly demonstrations were a threat to his policy goals. Macron’s response was to deliver a national address in which he announced an altered agenda, including economic concessions such as annulling the gas tax increase and raising the minimum wage.

The compromises weren’t enough to end the protests. This weekend, for the ninth consecutive Saturday, the protest movement took center stage, mobilizing over 80,000 demonstrators across the country.

The principal stages were Paris and Bourges, the latter chosen for its symbolic significance as roughly the geographical center of France.

Though the demonstrations were mostly peaceful, there were once again eruptions of the nearly ritualistic acts of violence on the part of some protesters, and the equally ritualistic reaction of police and security forces.

It’s increasingly clear that the protest movement isn’t simply a political challenge but a fundamental crisis of legitimacy for Macron and France’s Fifth Republic.

The protesters now imply that their objections are aimed not at the government’s decisions but at the style of democracy represented by the constitutional order. And, worryingly, the persistence of the demonstrations reflects a persistence of public support.

While there has been a decline in enthusiasm, most French still back the gilets jaunes. In a study released last week by the French Institute of Public Opinion, those who either support or sympathize—two very different categories—fell from 71 percent in early November to 57 percent in early January.

The overarching goal of these remaining supporters was summed up by the signs recently carried by gilets jaunes protesters in the French Alps: “End the dictatorship.”

Macron, to his credit, has not shirked the fundamental challenge posed by the gilets jaunes.

In his December speech, he addressed it head-on by promising to hold what he called a “great national debate” about French politics, which is scheduled to begin today. Whether anyone yet knows what to expect of that debate — much less whether it will work — is another question.

If all of this has you thinking of an earlier event in French history, you are not alone. Two hundred and thirty years after it first erupted, the French Revolution hovers over current events in France.

Macron’s decision to call upon his citizens to prepare for a national conversation recalls Louis XVI’s decision to call upon his subjects to, well, prepare for a national conversation. In the king’s case, this led to the cahiers de doléances, or lists of grievances, which locally chosen representatives wrote up and sent to Versailles before the convening of the Estates General in 1789. Given the world-altering events that



The protesters now imply that their objections are aimed not at the government’s decisions but at the style of democracy represented by the constitutional order.

followed later that year, the seismic rumble of the cahiers de doléances is often overlooked.

Yet it was an unprecedented exercise, not just in 18th century France but throughout Europe, in uncensored and unbound popular expression.

In the present instance, though, town and city leaders, not Macron, issued the call for the writing of such grievances. Of the more than 5,000 city halls that established a process for such lists since early December, many are located in the now notorious “peripheral” regions of the country—the very same regions from which most of the gilets jaunes, and their supporters, hail.

Strikingly, just as their 18th century ancestors railed against the tax burdens they bore, their descendants express the same anxiety and anger over taxes. As one paper concluded, there is a widespread, deep discontent with taxation. Before it was rolled back by Macron, the gas tax increase was universally detested; protesters have since glommed onto the regressive value-added tax. While a number of the grievance lists include concern over immigration, others voicing fear over increasing geographical and political isolation are even more numerous.

But it’s on the subject of the state that past and present merge most fully. In something of a paradox, the grievances lambaste what they perceive as the levying of unjust taxes while also insisting the state impose greater economic and social justice. As the historian Simon Schama once observed, most of 18th century France “wanted more, not less, government in the countryside.”

This now seems to be the case for rural and exurban France in the 21st century, particularly with its insistence on the state enforcing a certain idea of equality. In this re-

vacation. Perhaps the king feels the uncertainty in the kingdom over his son’s succession does not allow for him to be out of the country. The crown prince is scheduled to visit Pakistan next month.

Salman also shook up his Cabinet recently. The most interesting change is in the Saudi Arabian National Guard, the Praetorian Guard force that protects the monarchy from internal threats. Traditionally this was the sinecure of Salman’s predecessor, Abdullah, who was the guard commander for decades. He gave the post to his eldest son, Prince Mitab. Mitab was removed in November 2017 when he was detained in the Ritz-Carlton shakedown.

The king has now made Prince Abdullah bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, 32, the new minister of Saudi Arabian National Guard Affairs. He was previously deputy governor of Mecca. The prince has no military experience or training, yet neither does the crown prince, who is also minister of defense.

The crown prince’s signature policy initiative is the disastrous war in Yemen. The war has devastated the Arab world’s poorest country and created the world’s worst humanitarian catastrophe. The Saudis have spent a fortune to defeat the Houthis.

A fragile UN-brokered truce in the port city of Hudaydah is the first tangible step in years to bring the war to an end. The international community urgently needs to support the UN process and create a robust on-the-ground presence in Yemen to supervise prisoner exchanges, the removal of blockades and the institution of a comprehensive cease-fire.

The kingdom is facing considerable challenges as it tries to diversify its economy, expand the social space, reduce gender discrimination and make a generational change in leadership. The Khashoggi murder has made all of this much harder and added more uncertainty. The king needs to end the Yemen war and ease the repression internally to have a chance at surmounting the challenges.

(Source: Al Monitor)

gard, the movement’s most significant demand is for the establishment of a citizen-initiated referendum.

Predictably, this proposed mechanism for direct democracy, which would allow any proposition to be brought to a national vote upon receiving 700,000 signatures, is keeping not just the government but also leaders of all the traditional parties awake at night.

Macron’s proposed alternative to shoring up the state’s legitimacy is his national debate, the contours of which he revealed in a letter published on Monday. His aim, in essence, is to let a thousand debates flourish — as long as they adhere to the rules established by the government. Certain topics are off-limits — for example, abortion rights and same-sex marriage — and will be subsumed under fiscal and environmental, economic and democratic concerns. The letter foresees hundreds of debates, ranging from town hall meetings to regional conferences, sprouting over the next two months.

Many of them will include representatives from the government, including Macron, who will kick off this unprecedented experiment Tuesday night by meeting in Normandy with 600 local mayors.

Inevitably, perhaps, the debate has itself been the object of fierce debate. First, there was a controversy concerning Chantal Jouanno, a former minister in Nicolas Sarkozy’s government who had been placed in charge of the commission tasked with preparing for the debate.

When Jouanno’s generous salary was made public — nearly 14,700 euros (about \$16,800) per month — the gilets jaunes websites and Facebook pages lit up in outrage, prompting her to step down as the debate’s architect. Oddly, though, Jouanno did not step down as head of the commission and will continue to receive the same salary until Macron decides otherwise.

Second, Macron’s letter has already ignited political fireworks in Paris. In an effort to save what remains of his economic reforms, the letter makes no mention of the wildly popular demand, supported by nearly 80 percent of the French, to restore the wealth tax that Macron had ditched upon becoming president.

That the issue is not even on the table risks having the entire table either overturned or ignored by one of the two sides in this debate. More insidiously, Macron also raised the subject of immigration, suggesting that the idea of quotas be studied. Many on the left and center were not just shocked by Macron’s suggestion but also surprised, because Macron has long defended the importance of immigration.

This meta-debate has thus acted as a kind of solvent, clarifying the ideological fault lines running through Macron’s composite government. Prime Minister Édouard Philippe, who along with Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire and the budget director Gérard Darmanin quit the conservative Republicans party to join Macron, suspects that such a debate will open a veritable Pandora’s box that they will never be able to close. According to one government source, Le Maire and Darmanin worry that “they will not escape the debate without getting out their checkbook.”

(Source: Foreign Policy)

It behooves largely Muslim lands to avoid becoming like Saudi Arabia

1 → and where the application of what are called “Islamic” laws are so extreme that one has to question whether the Saudis have any claim whatsoever to consider themselves true advocates and champions of Islam. Frankly, the Saudis have no such valid claim and frankly Makkah and Medina ought to be “independent” of the Saudis, perhaps in the same way the Vatican for Catholics has been essentially independent of the country, Italy, where it is located.

In fact, the Saudis have done little but give the last and most complete monotheistic religion a bad name in the opinion of many across the world, whether Muslim or not, and it is utterly shameful that the U.S. has anything to do with that country.

If the U.S. were itself a solidly virtuous society with a virtuous international polity, it would demand the end of a “Saudi” Arabia. It is difficult, anyway to call American society and its warmongering and hostility to others of different cultures “moral” even while most American citizens are good people, at least in their private lives.

What is really scandalous is Mike Pompeo speaking in Cairo this month and claiming that America is a “force for good” in the Middle East. How can a force that has been responsible for millions of deaths and tremendous destruction be a “force for good”? Washington has become a sump of licentiousness, corruption, greed and overreach even while many there in government, and the American people in general, are no worse than any other people where ignorance, not



necessarily bad intentions, often prevails.

Meanwhile, some in the Trump Administration, including figures like John Bolton and the “evangelicals” Pompeo and Vice President Pence, and some members of Congress, seem to have latched on to some kind of sick mania to attack, one way or another, Iran, at the ultimate behest of the most corrupt and literally most immoral society on the planet -- the one dominated by far-right wing Zionists, or Israel, where real Judaism has been largely forgotten.

The question is whether Trump himself has

the wisdom and courage to avoid further attacks on Iran, and especially any kind of military attack. Last September, for example, Bolton allegedly asked the Pentagon to draw military plans to bomb Iran, still claiming that Iran intends to build nuclear weapons. This request by Bolton was apparently looked upon with horror by Pentagon brass, which is obviously a good and welcome reaction, suggesting that there are at least some sane minds in Washington.

It would appear, anyway, that there exists some kind of horrific horserace underway

between people like Bolton and Pompeo (and maybe Trump), and potential developments in the U.S. that would definitively forestall further U.S. aggressions against the Islamic Republic. One potential “development” in this race is some kind of economic or monetary collapse that forces the U.S. to rearrange its priorities both domestic and foreign. Many Americans are literally praying something like this will happen to obviate the likelihood of the U.S. further damaging its standing and reputation globally.

There are so many huge shifts in global geopolitics underway now that the U.S., so far, has failed to get ahead of them, and the deployment of brute force, or threats of it, is no answer to the shifts. The growing understanding of Central Asian nations, including Iran, that they exist increasingly in a more interconnected and integrated region is one thing that illuminates U.S. failures so far to adjust to new realities by dropping bizarre and preposterous demands, and not just on Iran, but also on the biggest U.S. rivals, Russia and China.

It’s possible that the U.S. has set itself up for more failure, especially in the Middle East, even if there is no dominating internal “development” like economic or monetary collapse, and especially if the U.S. resorts to more militancy. Meanwhile, it behooves Iran’s leaders to permit Iran’s people a louder voice in Iranian affairs of state and in the formulation of domestic mandates. Above all, Iran ought not to be or become like Saudi Arabia is as a Muslim country.

Marzieh Hashemi: U.S. Government dreads truth-tellers



TEHRAN (FNA) — Freedom of the press in the United States is legally protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment is generally understood to prevent the government from interfering with the distribution of information and opinions.

Tell that to those FBI authorities who detained and imprisoned Marzieh Hashemi earlier this week, a U.S. citizen who works as an anchor and reporter for Iran’s state-run Press TV. She was arrested at St. Louis Lambert International Airport trying to board a flight, and is being held without charges, reportedly as a “material witness”.

Hashemi lives in Tehran most of the time, but her son says she comes to the U.S. annually to visit family. She was in St. Louis filming a Black Lives Matter documentary, and had also visited her relatives around New Orleans recently. She has reportedly been transferred to Washington D.C. Broadly the reason for her arrest and detention is unclear, and uncommitted on. Iran has issued a statement condemning her illegal arrest. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif has also called it a “political game”.

Sadly, Hashemi’s case is a reminder how independent media in the U.S. is facing challenges that threaten the freedom of the press two years after President Donald J. Trump’s inauguration. She is still behind bars for unspecified reasons and the U.S. officials have so far refused to provide any reasons for her apprehension either to her or her family.

Hashemi, who has been living in Iran for years and is a Muslim convert, has told her daughter that she was handcuffed and shackled and was being treated like a criminal. The journalist also said that she had her hijab forcibly removed, and was photographed without her headscarf upon arrival at the prison. She has only been allowed to wear a T-shirt, and is currently using another one to cover her head.

Furthermore, she has been offered only pork as meal - which is forbidden under Islamic law - and denied any halal food after refusing to consume the meat. Hashemi told her daughter that the only food she has had over the past two days has been a packet of crackers. Hashemi’s family members and media activists have launched a social media campaign with the hashtags #FreeMarziehHashemi and #Pray4MarziehHashemi in support of the detained journalist.

Threats to independent journalists and media have increased during the Trump administration which has brought a record number of whistle-blower prosecutions. President Trump’s verbal attacks on the media have worsened a hostile climate to the press. Journalists’ ability to report is being undermined by attacks, arrests, border stops, searches of devices, prosecution of whistle-blowers and restrictions on the release of public information. And last but not the least, Hashemi’s arrest comes after U.S. falls two places on the RSF World Press Freedom Index.

According to the new Index, President Trump’s attacks on the media, via his Twitter account and in press conferences and arbitrary arrests, are exacerbating an already hostile environment for journalists in the U.S. By openly and aggressively accusing journalists and media outlets of lying and producing “fake news”, the current U.S. administration is undermining the First Amendment and creating a culture of intimidation and hostility where journalists find themselves less safe, detained and even imprisoned.

Mind you, such threats to the media pre-date Trump. Many were present under the Obama administration, which used the Espionage Act 1917 to bring a record number of whistle-blower prosecutions. The U.S. government is also using the national security act to silence journalists working outside the framework of mainstream media. These threats include a failure by law enforcement officials to recognize the rights of journalists to report freely on events of public interest. Journalists have been arrested and even assaulted by law enforcement officials at a local and state level, while covering protests. Hashemi has gone through same sort of treatment over the past few days.

This should be a wakeup call to everyone - specially the international media community - to the very real threats to freedom of the press in the U.S. The alarming rise in threats to press freedom in the U.S. over recent years must be challenged. Not only do these threats leave impact on freedom of expression in the U.S., but they have repercussions around the world. Indeed, a free press is a vital part of democracy. The rights of American and non-American journalists must be protected so that they can continue to report freely on matters of public interest and hold the U.S. government to account.

The pressures that journalist Hashemi is facing in the U.S. prison are reflective of the toxic atmosphere toward journalism being stoked by the U.S. government, which dreads truth-tellers. Trump himself is dangerous for press freedom. So it’s not just Hashemi. Many other independent and freelance journalists are also feeling the effects of a relentless attack on the role of the press all across the U.S. At any rate, Hashemi’s imprisonment is clearly an attempt to discredit and silence the independent media, and to divert attention from the U.S. government’s mismanagement at home and wrongdoing across the globe. To that end, it doesn’t make any difference if you are an American, European, Arab or Iranian independent, freelance journalist. You — and your kids - are still on Washington’s list of the WANTED!

Trump is mocking Biden

1 → He also claimed that he’s not worried about a potential challenge from the former vice president in the 2020 presidential race; “You know, a lot of people say Biden’s doing OK, but he was always a 1-percenter. He was a 1 percent guy. He ran two or three times, he never got above 1%, and then, Obama came along and took him off the trash heap, and he became the vice president. He’s weak. So, we’ll see what happens with him.”

Trump’s words came on the same day that Biden had

told some top Democrats that he was definitely running for president. “If I’m walking, I’m running,” said Biden.

Trump’s literature on Biden’s presence in the U.S. presidential race, reflects the U.S. President’s dissatisfaction and anger with the country’s former Vice President and his candidacy. Obviously, Trump preferred figures such as Hillary Clinton, Elizabeth Warren to be his potential rivals in the next general elections.

However, Trump knows well that Biden can challenge

his position at the White House by maneuvering again on issues such as public medical health insurance plan. On the other hand, Trump attempts to turn the game into an emotional rivalry through using ugly words against Biden, and this is very much like Trump’s populist personality and approach. However, Biden now has his main focus on Democrats’ inner-party race, and he doesn’t consider direct competition with Trump until he has won his victory in the competition.

Al Shabaab; Nairobi attack, Africa, most breeding ground for Terrorism

NAIROBI — Wednesday 16th January 2019 a group of militant attacked on a shopping complex horribly in Nairobi and left more than a dozen of citizens dead.

Nairobi is the capital and the largest city of Kenya. The name comes from the Maasai phrase Enkare Nairobi, which translates to “cool water”, a reference to the Nairobi River which flows through the city.

Fifteen people have died in the Al Shabaab terrorist attack on an upmarket hotel complex in Nairobi, as fresh explosions and gunfire rang out in the siege which stretched into its second day.

Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, more commonly known as al-Shabaab, is a jihadist fundamentalist group based in East Africa. Who pledged allegiance to the militant Islamist organization Al-Qaeda, In February 2012.

Security forces worked sleeplessly at night to secure the DusitD2 compound, which includes a 101-room hotel, spa, restaurant and office buildings, after an attack claimed by Al-Shabaab Islamists on Tuesday afternoon.

One suicide bomber blew himself up at the hotel while gunmen sprayed fire before engaging security forces and holing themselves up at the premises as civilians fled or barricaded themselves in their offices awaiting rescue.



It’s highly ironically that these militants in different part of the world carries out their atrocities in the name Islam, painting the image of Islam as evil while, every original sometime has a duplicate. The pure Islam never teaches sure barbarism for Islam is absolutely peace. The Islam of Prophet Muhammad (P B U H & P), is the Islam of

humanity which gives honour to every creatures in respect of it ideology.

A police source said..., that fifteen people died and among was a foreigner an American citizen, a State Department official said. The source confirmed the toll but warned “there are areas not yet accessed but that’s what we know so far.”

It is time for U.S. and Russia to fulfill their Nuclear Disarmament duties

TEHRAN (FNA) — The future of bilateral nuclear deals between the U.S. and Russia is in jeopardy, as both nations once again trade accusations that the other has violated existing deals, following a meeting in Geneva on the matter.

U.S. officials once again declared Russia to be “in material breach” of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, based on the theoretical range of a Russian missile. Russia has denied the missile has a long enough range to be covered by INF, and has never tested it at such ranges. Russia fired back, saying that the U.S. compliance with New START has problems, and that the U.S. has refused to allow Russia to verify the conversion of some B-52H bombers and Trident II ballistic missile launchers for conventional weapons use.

On that note:

- For obvious reasons, the U.S. and Russia aren’t eager to offer one another the level of access needed to verify compliance with the letter of these treaties. Since this mistrust seems to be getting worse, not better, attempts to negotiate an extension of New START, or any other nuclear deals, will be in serious doubt.

- A hard-earned lesson of the Cold War is that arms control reduces the risk of nuclear war by limiting dangerous deployments and, even more important, by creating channels of communication and understanding. But President Donald Trump and his National Security Advisor John Bolton appear to have forgotten, or never learned, that lesson.

- Quite the opposite, Trump has announced an intent to withdraw from the INF Treaty. Secretary of State Mike

Pompeo subsequently has stated that the U.S. will suspend implementation of the Treaty.

- Agreed to in 1987 by the United States and the Soviet Union, the INF Treaty prohibits the two countries from deploying both nuclear and conventional missiles with ranges between 310 and 3420 miles. The main reason cited for withdrawal is that Russia has allegedly tested and deployed ground-launched cruise missiles the treaty prohibits. Russia denies that the missiles violate the Treaty and has made its own accusations, foremost that U.S. ballistic missile defense launchers installed in Eastern Europe could be used to house treaty-prohibited cruise missiles.

- Although the Treaty is of vital importance for global stability, on December 21, the U.S. opposed a Russia-sponsored UN General Assembly resolution calling for preservation of the Treaty and for the two countries to consult on compliance with its obligations.

- The INF Treaty remains a key element of the arms control framework limiting nuclear weapons and arms racing. Often forward deployed and intermingled with other forces, the missiles the Treaty prohibits are among the weapons most likely to lead to miscalculation or misadventure in a crisis.

- The Treaty highlights, “the ethical imperative” to achieve a nuclear weapons free world. The Treaty is designed to stimulate, support, and advance humanity’s quest for the security of a nuclear free world. Obviously, more work is needed, rather than only criticizing that the Treaty does not do everything at once.

With tensions growing among nuclear-armed countries

in potential flashpoints from Ukraine to the South China Sea, it is long past time to rebuild the capacity of the U.S. government to negotiate with its nuclear-armed adversaries. The best course would be to use the dispute over the INF Treaty as a moment to renew the negotiating frameworks and institutions in order to avoid catastrophe in these dangerous times.

The problem is that Trump has expressed general hostility to any international obligation that might limit U.S. use of force or military capabilities. He sees negotiations as a zero-sum game to be won or lost. He doesn’t seem capable of imagining international agreements that benefit all parties and make the world a safer place.

In the prevailing environment, the UN must act and leave space for future diplomacy. Indeed, there is a legitimate question as to whether it is legal under international law for the U.S. to withdraw from an UN-ratified treaty. Despite Trump’s dangerous moves and hostility, the U.S. and Russia can and should negotiate agreements like the INF Treaty to address the riskiest elements of their nuclear confrontation. The time to start building a climate for negotiations is now.

Indeed, it is time the U.S. and Russia began to fulfill their disarmament duties by either joining the Ban Treaty and addressing its limitations of verification and other technical issues or move forward in the process of negotiating a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention. Sitting on their hands and offering no better way forward is inadequate and unacceptable as it is an issue of global security concern.

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt in Valiasr - Elahieh
2nd floor, 320 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
furn, elevator, storage
parking spot
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Ajudaniye
almost new, 160 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
modern furn, equipped kitchen
spj, gym, lobby, lobby man
gathering room, roof garden
parking spot
\$2300
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Fereshteh
brand new, 3rd floor, 70 sq.m
1 Bdr., fully furn, equipped
kitchen, elevator, storage parking spot
\$850
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Zafaraniyh
350 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., furn
spj, parking spot
\$4000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Darband
brand new, 80 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
storage, parking spot
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Velenjak
5th floor, 172 sq.m, 3 Bdrs. fully
furn, equipped kitchen renovated
good light
indoor storage, parking spot
Price negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa

Triplex Villa in Niavaran
800 sq.m land, 550 sq.m built up
sauna, outdoor pool
parking spot
Price Negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Super Luxury Villa
in Shahrak Qarb
brand new, 800 sq.m land
700 sq.m built up, 4master
bedrooms, super luxury furn
spj, massage room, beautiful roof
garden, play ground for kids, city
view, parking spot
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Villa in Ajudaniye
2 floors, 315 sq.m & 300 sq.m
furn, equipped kitchen swimming
pool, sauna
parking spot, gym, **\$4000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Zafaraniyh
triplex, 1000 sq.m land
1300 sq.m built up, 3 Bdrs.
4 master bedrooms, spj
completely renovated
CCTV camera, parking spot
\$12000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Triplex Villa in Velenjak
1250 sq.m land, 1000 sq.m built
up, unfurn, terrace
outdoor swimming pool
renovated, parking spot
Price negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156



Holder of
ISO 9001:2008
ISO 10004:2012
ISO 10002:2014

From Oxford Cert Universal

Best Consultation
Best Services, Best Result

Intl. Department Manager "Tina 09128103205"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

Hot Line: 28141
info@parsdiplomatic.com
www.parsdiplomatic.com

Building & Office

Whole Building
in Argentina Square
brand new, 6 floors, 6 apts
each floor 250 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
elevator, parking spots
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Office in Saadat Abad
administrative office license
4 apts, 750 sq.m, parking spots
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Nice Office in Mirdamad
3rd floor, 90 sq.m, 1 Bdr.
Storage, parking spot
\$700
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Zafaraniyh
brand new, 5 floors, each
floor 310 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
indoor sauna, indoor Jacuzzi
2 parking spots for each apt
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in Zafar
3 floors, each apt 200 sq.m
clean & nice, elevator
parking spots, storage
\$3800 totally
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole building in Jordan
administrative office license
5 floors, 1700 sq.m totally
almost new, elevator
43 parking spots
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Ideal Offers

Apt in Jordan
3rd floor, 110 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
furn, balcony, storage
parking spot, **\$1000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Mirdamad
6th floor, 86 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., fully
furn, elevator, parking spot
\$800
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Zafaraniyh
4th floor, 220 sq.m
3 Bdr., fully furn, spj
parking spot, **\$1600**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Evin
90 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., nice & clean furn,
equipped kitchen
parking spot, **\$900**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Farmanieh
2nd floor, 81 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
fully furn, parking spot
\$900
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Qolhak
1st floor, 90 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
fully furn, equipped kitchen
parking spot, **\$900**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Jordan
brand new, 1st floor 150 sq.m
3 Bdr, furn, spj, roof garden
parking spot, **\$2500**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

مالکین محترم

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

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

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

مالکین محترم

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

SHANON
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
+989121907875
Tel : 88745542

<p>Farmanieh (\$2200) 3bdrs Gheitarieh (\$1600) 2bdrs Both with S/p, S, J, & F.F</p>	<p>Jordan Villa (\$3500) 5bdrs Elahieh Villa (\$6000) 7bdrs with yard, S/p, S/q, & pkgs</p>
<p>Elahieh Apts (\$1700) 140sq.m, 2bdrs (\$2200) 250sq.m, 3bdrs</p>	<p>Zaferaniyh bldg 3storey, each fl 800sq.m enough pkg lots (\$12000)</p>

Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME
Real Estate
Member of DELTA Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865

maharaja
Indian Restaurant

FIRST INDIAN RESTAURANT
IN IRAN

PRIVATE PARKING LOT

Jahan Hotel (Exelsior) – Rahimzade Alley – Taleqani
Crossroads – Valiasr St. Tell: 66476855



FARDA
Legal Institute

Registration

- Brand
- Trademark
- Companies' Affairs
- Company Registration

Local and
International Call
+98 – 912 937 9869

International
Call and WhatsApp
+98 – 912 3756792

Number one Real Estate in Iran

www.DELTA HOME.ir

TEL:88 88 88 65 FAX: 88 88 93 35

HOME
Real Estate

<p>Fereshteh 120 sqm, 2 bdrs, FF, SP, parking \$1600 USD Davood: (+98) 9123488513</p>	<p>Zafaraniyh, Villa, Best location 500sqm land, 1200 sqm building, duplex, 5bdrs, indoor pool, Luxury Price negotiable Davood: (+98) 9123488513</p>	<p>Elahieh 200sqm, 3 bdrs, nicely FF, best tower Nice view, Lobby, balcony \$2500 USD Davood: (+98) 9123488513</p>
<p>Elahieh 240 Sqm, 3 bdrs, 3 baths, brand new Full facilities (spa, gym, coffee room,...) 24hrs lobbyman & seprate guard, mountain view € 4300 USD Adrian: (+98) 921 71 76 740</p>	<p>Zaferaniyh, Velenjak 350 Sqm, 3 Master bdrs, 7th floor, brand new Full facilities (spa, gym, roof garden,...) Green view, balcony \$ 7000 USD Adrian: (+98) 921 71 76 740</p>	<p>Niavaran 250 Sqm, 3 bdrs, 2.5 baths, brand new Full facilities (spa, gym, roof garden, small private cinema,...) \$3600 USD Adrian: (+98) 921 71 76 740</p>
<p>Elahieh 260sqm, 7th floor, 3 bdrs, SPJ, lobby, ,Guard Garden, amazing view \$3500 USD Linda: (+98) 9351721171</p>	<p>Elahieh 205sqm, 3 bdrs, 4th floor, SPJ, sauna Gym, coffee shop, roof garden, Lobby \$3000 USD Linda: (+98) 9351721171</p>	<p>Farmanieh, villa 900sqm, 2500 sqm yard, 5 bdrs \$8000 USD Kaveh: (+98) 9128944169</p>
<p>Jordan, Office 1100 sqm, Flat, \$10000 USD Kaveh: (+98) 9128944169</p>	<p>Argantin, Guest house A whole building of 4 floors, totally 16 rooms plus one small suit, FF Price negotiable Farshid: (+98) 9125540877</p>	<p>Must to see Elahieh 290sqm, 3 bdrs, 3 baths ,gym, brand new, green view Furn or unfurn Farshid: (+98) 9125540877</p>
<p>Guest House 1- Jordan, 5 fl, 5 Units, 14 bdrs ,FF 2- Gandi, 5 fl, 19 Units, 38 bdrs, FF 3- Jordan, 5 fl, 20 Units, 55 bdrs, FF Farshid: (+98) 9125540877</p>	<p>Elahieh, Velenjak, Penthouse ,Super Luxury, 450 sqm, 550 sqm Full facilities, Negotiable Hojati: (+98) 9309701169</p>	<p>Zaferaniyh Office, 350 sqm, Negotiable Hojati: (+98) 9309701169</p>
<p>Shahrak-e- Gharb, Villa 600sqm building, 800 sqm land, 5bdrs, SPJ Negotiable Hojati: (+98) 9309701169</p>	<p>Jordan 275sqm, 4 bdrs, full facilities \$2000 USD Erik: (+98) 9372371391</p>	<p>Argantin 115sqm, 2 bdrs \$1000 USD Erik: (+98) 9372371391</p>

National campaign to fight cancer launched in Iran

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — A national campaign to combat cancer, aiming to increase hope among the patients as well as public awareness about the disease, has been initiated in Iran, ISNA news agency reported on Thursday.

The national campaign is intended to increase public awareness about the fact that cancer is preventable and encourage public participation under the theme “cancer is preventable and treatable with self-care and hope”, Alireza Raeisi, deputy health minister has said.

The campaign also seeks to challenge the erroneous, commonly held belief that cancer is not treatable and also foster policy makers' cooperation in health sector in controlling risk factors for developing cancer, Raeisi highlighted.

The public in general, especially teenagers, the youth, cancer patients and their families as well as policy makers are the audience of the campaign, he added.

The deputy health minister went on to say that Health Ministry, Education Ministry, Science Ministry, Culture Ministry, Sports Ministry, universities of medical sciences, municipalities, scientific associations, NGOs and charities, along with athletes and actors



are participating in the campaign.

Unveiling the “national plan for controlling cancer”, preparing annual reports on cancer prevalence in the country, implementing schemes to control risk factors for non-communicable diseases including cancer, executing plans for early-diagnosis of cancer and setting up center for early detections of cancer are among the objectives of the campaign, Raeisi concluded.

In early January, head of the Iranian Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Soci-

ety, Hassan Abolqasemi, announced that currently, there is an estimated 900,000 cancer cases in Iran and 110,000 new cases are diagnosed each year.

He also said that gastric, breast, lung and brain cancers are the most common cancers in the country.

Deputy Health Minister Reza Malekzadeh said in April 2018 that “population-based cancer registry of the Islamic Republic of Iran” shows a cancer incidence rate of 158 per 100,000 of the population and 143

per 100,000 of the population (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) in 30 provinces of Iran annually.

The database indicates that the rate for all cancers (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) for men and women combined was 182 per 100,000 in 2012 which means that the rate of cancer in Iran is well below the world average, he highlighted.

Payam Azadeh, the scientific secretary of the third International Clinical Oncology Congress, said in December 2018 that treatment of cancer cost Iran 30 trillion rials (nearly \$715 million) last year (March 2017-March 2018).

According to World Health Organization cancer is the second leading cause of death globally, and is responsible for an estimated 9.6 million deaths in 2018. Globally, about 1 in 6 deaths is due to cancer.

Around one third of deaths from cancer are due to the 5 leading behavioral and dietary risks: high body mass index, low fruit and vegetable intake, lack of physical activity, tobacco use, and alcohol use.

The economic impact of cancer is significant and is increasing. The total annual economic cost of cancer in 2010 was estimated at approximately \$1.16 trillion.

Diabetes-detection dogs help patients avoid serious blood sugar crashes

Dogs trained to sniff out life-threatening blood sugar crashes in people with type 1 diabetes have been shown to effectively spot the condition, which can render patients unconscious, in the first large-scale trial of its type.

The University of Bristol research found medical detection dogs were able to spot 83 per cent of more than 4,000 episodes of hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar) and hyperglycaemia (high blood sugar), minimising the risk of harmful health complications.

They can be particularly effective in monitoring patients who might have unexpectedly low glucose levels at night or for young people who are less able to keep track of their blood sugar with a conventional device.

This was the case for Archie, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes just after his first birthday and, after years of night-time hypoglycaemic attacks, was paired with two-year-old Labrador Domino, by charity Medical Detection Dogs (MDD).

“Before Domino we were in a void, we never knew where to turn, we were unsettled,” Archie’s mum Jayne said. “He

has brought sunshine into our lives – he is the last piece of the jigsaw. Now we are sleeping more, relaxing and feeling like a whole family.”

While Archie has a carer at school to check his blood sugar, Domino takes over the role at night and is his constant companion when the family are out, providing more than 1,300 alerts since arriving in 2015.

“He is my best buddy and he helps me feel safe,” Archie says. “If I’m not well he’ll tell mummy and daddy and I won’t have to go to hospital. I can eat, go to bed and feel safe and happy.” The Bristol study found the dogs “vastly improved” their owners’ quality of life by giving them peace of mind over their condition as well as other psychological benefits.

“Our study provides the first large-scale evaluation of using medical detection dogs to detect hypoglycaemia,” said lead author Dr Nicola Rooney from the university’s Bristol Veterinary School.

Some patients with type 1 diabetes are now eligible for wearable blood sugar monitors which provide a constant

reading of glucose levels, but while no system is perfect Dr Rooney said the dogs sometimes outperformed these devices.

“Both can be important aspects of a diabetes care package,” she told The Independent. “Reports and records suggest that in some instances the dog is ahead of devices – dogs can alert parents in a different room, and they have added benefits of not being invasive and fulfilling social functions as well.

“Some owners have anecdotally reported that the buzzing of a machine alert merely reminds them that they had something wrong with them.

“In contrast, being able to interact with a dog who is alerting them to a glucose rise or drop promotes some happiness in what is otherwise a recurring and burdensome event.”

Where blood sugar falls outside of an acceptable range, the medical detection dogs are trained to alert their owners through nuzzling or licking so they can take an insulin injection to reduce blood sugar or eat something to boost it.

(Source: The Independent)

Iran, Cuba to share vaccine production knowledge

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Iran and Cuba agreed on exchanging the technical know-how of vaccine production, IRNA news agency reported on Friday.

The two sides signed memorandums of understanding within the framework of the 17th session of Cuban-Iranian Inter-Governmental Commission, which opened on Tuesday, the report added.

Exchanging the technical knowledge of manufacturing pneumococcal vaccine was among the other agreements signed in the field of health.

Pneumococcal vaccines are vaccines against the bacteria Streptococcus pneumoniae. Their use can prevent some cases of pneumonia, meningitis, and sepsis.

Mohsen Asadi Lari, deputy health minister for international affairs, headed the Iranian delegation in the two-day event. Asadi Lari also met with high ranking Cuban officials including Minister of Public Health José Ángel Portal.

Other agreements in the fields of public health, investment, energy, agriculture and sports were signed as well.

Renters have higher levels of harmful stress markers than home owners, study finds

People living in rented flats have measurably higher levels of stress chemicals in their blood than homeowners or those living in a detached property, a study suggests.

Researchers looking at the health impacts of insecure or low quality housing suggest that renting privately could be harmful to the health and argue this should be considered when developing housing policies. To test the possible health effects, researchers from Essex University looked at a biological marker known as C-reactive protein (CRP) which is found at elevated levels in the blood in response to stress, injury and infection.

Tests for elevated CRP levels are used to diagnose those at risk of heart disease, or chronic inflammatory conditions such as IBS or arthritis.

“Higher CRP, indicating worse health, is found among those living in the private rented sector,” said Dr Amy Clair, of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, author of the study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

“This finding supports arguments for greater consideration of the negative effects of the current private rented market in the UK, characterized by greater insecurity, higher cost and lower quality than is typically found in other tenures.”

The study used blood samples and housing interviews with 9,593 adults aged over 21 and found one in five (22 per cent) had elevated levels of CRP – above the threshold of three milligrams per liter associated with heart disease.

(Source: uudis.eu)

TASHRIFAT INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE AGENCY

**SATISFACTION
GUARANTEED**

APARTMENT

Jordan

4 Bdrs,fully
furn,260sq.m,spj,\$3000

Elahiyeh Chenaran

Fantastic 4 Bdrs,500 Sq.m, for
those seeking the best

Darous

2Bdrs,fully furn,3rd fl.,brand
new,100 sqm,lobby
1600

Zaferaniyeh-Yekta,

Apartment-villa
French-style
3Bdrs,fully furn 360 sq.m.sp,
EURO 5000

Valiasre-Bagheferdos

3 Bdrs,fully furn,brand
new,5th fl., 150 sq.m ,indoor
spj,\$1900

Mirdamad-Naft

3 Bdrs,fully furn,5th fl.,200
sq.m, \$ 2000

Close to Paladium Shopping
center

3Bdrs,180 sq.m,fully
furn,lobby,sp,garden,\$2000

VILLA

Elahiyeh

Triplex-800 sq.m built up,1000
sq.m land,Semi-furn,7

Bdrs,spj,\$9000

Zaferaniyeh

Duplex, 4 Bdrs,unfurn,350
sq.m,spj,\$8000

Niavaran

2000 sq.m land,green
garden,500 sq.m built up
area,indoor spj,4Bdrs,fully
furn,triplex,\$15000

Darous

1000 sq.m land,400 sq.m built
up area, flat.4 Bdrs,spj.\$7000

Jordan

850 sq.m land,500 sq.m
built up,5 Bdrs,spj,furn/
unfurn,duplex,\$7000



Mr. Shahin

Nobody does it better

09121081212

Since: 1987

مالکین محترم املاک مسکونی و اداری شما را

جهت اجاره به خارجی نیازمندیم

Tel: 22723121

tehranfirstchoice@gmail.com

**We give service with a
difference...We care!**

✓ **Long & Short term rentals**

✓ **Purchase Properties**

**FURNISHED - UNFURNISHED
Villa-Apartment-Office-
Building**

OFFICE

From 50 to 8000 sq.m available

With all facilities in different
areas

Jordan

100 sq.m,3
rooms,parking,brand new
3rd fl.,\$1700

Valiasre

150 sq.m brand new, all
facilities,5th fl.,\$2300

Vozara

250 sq.m,all facilities
8th fl.,,\$4000

Mirdamad-Naft

120 sq.m,6th fl., \$1700

vanak

shariati

pasdaran

shahrak gharb

saadatabad

4000-3000-5000-4000-1000
sq.m,full,reasonable price

FOR: EMBASSY/COMPANY

Farmaniyeh,

4-storey building,1000 sq.m,
all facilities,\$10000

Zaferaniyeh

Triplex villa,800 sq.m,built
up,1000 sq.m land,12
rooms,\$8500

Niavaran

Triplex villa,2000 sq.m
land,600 sq.m built up ,spj,all
facilities,\$15000

Darous

Duplex villa,600 sq.m built
up,1000 sq.m land ,all
facilities,\$8000

Other areas:

Farmaniyeh

Aghdasiyeh

Shahrak Gharb

Shariati-Pasdaran

Valiasre

Tajrish

Jordan

Vanak

Arjantin

Zafar...

nice cases ready to move in.

Iran, EU discuss boosting cooperation in research programs

TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran and European Union (EU) discussed expansion of cooperation in research programs, ISNA reported on Thursday.

Iranian Science, Research and Technology Minister Mansour Gholami and EU Science and Innovation Commissioner Carlos Moedas discussed the issue during a meeting on January 17 in Brussels, Belgium.

Gholami led a delegation of high-ranking university professors and academics to the meeting, during which he highlighted Iran as a pioneer in the field of science and technology in the region.

He pointed to recent cooperation between Iran and EU in past three years, saying that Iran is aware of Europe programs in field of research and education and is eager to cooperate in those projects.

Iran boasts 4.3 million university students and 43 science and technology parks, he said.

During the event, Moedas said that Europe is ready to cooperate with countries all around the world in the field of research and innovation.

The first Iran-Europe cooperation conference was held in 2016 in Vienna. Brussels hosted the second Iran-Europe cooperation conference in June 2018 with the theme of New Horizon. The vent focused on different issues like economic development, startup improvement and internationalization of knowledge-based companies.

Chinese students' brains being scanned to make sure they are concentrating in controversial trial

A controversial trial has used a hi-tech headband to monitor the brains of schoolchildren in class to ensure they are concentrating.

Massachusetts-based start-up BrainCo. says its Focus 1 headbands can help teachers identify pupils who need extra assistance.

It partnered with a Chinese school for the recent trial using schoolchildren between 10-17, and says it is also working with schools in the US, Mexico, Spain, and Brazil.

Teachers monitored pupils' attention using an app which received information from the headbands.

Lights on the front of the devices also show different colors for varying concentration levels, flagging to staff if students are not paying attention.

'With BrainCo's brainwave-detecting headbands and software platform, educators can track student engagement and class attention levels as they're happening,' the firm behind the headband boasts.

How the headband works

The headbands use electroencephalography (EEG) sensors to detect brain activity when the wearer is engaged in a task.

Typically, the brain's high-frequency beta waves are increased when we are focused, and the low-frequency alpha and theta waves are more excited when we are relaxed.

The patterns vary from person to person, so Focus determines each user's maximum attention level via a series of mental tasks.

A high numerical score for the EEG signal suggests that a student is paying attention; a low score is interpreted as a distracted or unfocused student.

However, neuroscientists have questioned the devices' effectiveness and the technology has also raised privacy concerns.

The headbands use electroencephalography (EEG) sensors to detect brain activity when the wearer is engaged in a task.

The devices were worn by 10,000 schoolchildren aged between 10 and 17 during a recent 21 day trial in China, according to New Scientist. Students also played a smartphone game aimed at improving their concentration for 25 minutes at home each day.

BrainCo. founder and chief executive Bicheng Han told New Scientist the trial led to improved grades among participants, who also needed to spend less time on homework.

Japan robot hotel fires most of its 'annoying' robotic staff

A hotel in Japan has laid off more than half of its robotic staff following complaints from some guests about the practical limitations of the machines.

Among the 243 robots employed by the Henn-na Hotel, which roughly translates as "Weird Hotel" were a velociraptor receptionist, an automated gardener and a one-armed claw that handles left luggage.



The facility which made headlines in 2015 when it opened in Nagasaki Prefecture, also made use of more experimental machines, such as bedside table-sized butler capable of arranging a wake up call or announcing the weather forecast.

Glitches with this robot saw it wake up guests who were snoring loudly after mistaking the noise for a voice command, The Wall Street Journal reported.

The Hen-na hotel describes the concept as "excitement meets comfort" thanks to "state-of-the-art" technologies.

"One of the definitions of the Japanese word 'Henn' is 'to change, which represents our commitment for evolution in striving for the extraordinary sensation and comfort that lies beyond the ordinary," the hotel's website states.

"Staying at Henn na Hotel is filled with unexpected and delightful surprises. The unique experience will take our guests one step into the future."

When The Independent visited in 2017, there were no humans to be seen working in the hotel.

(Source: independent.co.uk)

Digital transformation, knowledge economy realize smart city: officials

TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The importance of digital transformation and economic development in establishment of smart city was discussed during a meeting attended by officials on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

The head of Information Technology Organization of Iran (ITO), Rasoul Saraeian, the director of Asian Smart Cities Committee of Asian Mayors Forum, Mehdi Bina, and the chairman of Iran's IoT Academy, Farzad Ebrahimi, attended the event.

Technology provides high quality services for citizens: Saraeian

Almost all countries around the world deal with issues like water shortage, economic problems and unemployment. Hence, wealth creation is one of the main challenges in the world, Rasoul Saraeian said during the meeting.

He called digital economy as a technological solution, which have a great share from world economy, he said.

Technology provides a way for citizens to receive high quality services with reasonable price, he said.

Providing services have a great share



of today economy after industry and agriculture, he said.

He said that Iran should pave the way for digital economy and provide market for digital businesses.

Economic development leads to digital economy: Bina

The economy development is one of the most important issues in digital economy, Mehdi Bina said.

Iran, Sweden to expand academic ties



Sharif University of Technology President Mahmoud Fotouhi (R) and Swedish Ambassador to Tehran Helena Sangeland pose for a photo.

TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran and Sweden signed an agreement to boost academic cooperation and expand relations between universities.

Swedish Ambassador to Tehran Helena Sangeland and Sharif University of Technology President Mahmoud Fotouhi signed the agreement during a meeting in Tehran on Thursday.

Sangeland accompanied with some Swedish embassy's officials paid visits

to different sections of Sharif University of Technology.

The two sides discussed the expansion of academic and industrial cooperation between the Iranian university and Swedish academic centers as well as holding joint workshops in the future.

During the meeting, the Swedish side announced that the embassy can facilitate the relationship between Iranian and Swedish universities.

By listening for quakes on Mars, NASA lander will probe Red Planet's interior

NASA has sent orbiters to study the atmosphere of Mars and rovers to study its surface. Now, the agency plans to look inside the planet. The \$814 million InSight lander, due to launch next month, carries three instruments designed to peer through Mars's rusty shell, including a seismometer that will detect "marsquakes." "We've got a black hole that starts 5 meters below the surface and goes all the way down to the center," says Bruce Banerdt, InSight's principal investigator and a geophysicist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California. He and his colleagues hope that by measuring the thickness and composition of the planet's crust, mantle, and core, InSight will provide clues to how Mars lost its magnetic field and whether it once hosted plate tectonics.

The mission came close to cancellation after a leak was found in the seismometer's vacuum. Ultimately, the launch was delayed for 2 years to find a fix. "We are a much better mission compared to the one we had 2 years ago," says Philippe Lognonné, a planetary seismologist at Paris Diderot University who leads the seismology instrument.

InSight marks NASA's return to planetary seismology after 4 decades. Apollo astronauts deployed five seismometers that detected moonquakes—tremors that helped identify the moon's core. The two Viking landers on Mars both carried seismometers, though one failed and the other sent no reliable signals. Ambitious efforts since then to put multiple seismic stations on Mars have sputtered. But the geophysicists kept pushing. Banerdt says. "I've been getting up at meetings and berating people for not getting behind this for decades," he says. "Sometimes I think they selected my mission just to shut me up."

Developed by JPL with Lockheed Martin and European partners, InSight is built on the same platform as 2008's Phoenix lander. Like its predecessor, it will use parachutes and retrorockets to reach the surface. The target landing site is a smooth plain of lava near the equator—perhaps "the most geologically boring site on the planet," Banerdt says. That's for a reason: InSight could probably do its job from anywhere on Mars, so the team picked a site with few landing hazards and, thanks to its tropical location, plenty of sunlight for the probe's solar panels. After the craft touches down in late November, its robotic arm will deploy



the volleyball-size seismometer and a heat probe, driving a rod 5 meters into the surface with thousands of strokes of a tungsten hammer.

The heat probe will measure how much heat is escaping from the planet, and how quickly—a clue to its history. From chemical analysis of the chunks of Mars that arrive on Earth as meteorites, researchers have a sense of the martian mantle's composition. Combining this with the heat gradient and interior dimensions divined by InSight, they can estimate how much of Mars's internal heat comes from radioactive elements in the planet's interior. The remainder is primordial energy leftover from Mars's formation. Based on the rates at which those two heat sources ebb, researchers can estimate when volcanoes were most vigorous on Mars. "The evolution of a planet is driven completely by how heat moves out to space," says Steven Hauck, a planetary scientist at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Tiny Doppler shifts in radio broadcasts sent from Earth to receivers on InSight will reveal other details of the martian interior. The signals will track how the planet wobbles in its rotation, which reflects the internal tug of its core and mantle. Just as raw eggs, with their liquid interiors, spin differently than cooked ones, Mars's wobbles should hint at the core's size, density, and whether it is partially molten, says Véronique Dehant, a geophysicist at the Royal Observatory of Belgium in Brussels. That information could, in

'Major industries can expand markets through startups'



TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Major industries like steel and petrochemistry can expand their markets through startups and knowledge-based companies, an official with vice presidency for science and technology said, ISNA reported on Thursday.

Payman Salehi said that innovation is a key to development of major industries and the vice presidency is ready to provide infrastructures for their marketing.

Knowledge like knowledge-based businesses is the most important part of development. The business, which is based on knowledge, is developed with more consumption, he said.

Bina said that small and medium firms have a crucial role in knowledge-based business and enjoy about 70 percent of market in developed counties, he explained.

"The country and city's characteristics can be a great help to clarify our priorities in technology," he said.

Legal impediments should be removed and the international experiences should be highlighted in order to have economic development, he explained.

International presence matters

Digital transformation should begin from private sector, Farzad Ebrahimi said.

Iran enjoys young talented human resources, which leads to a great potential for educational tourism, he said.

Iran is a great market for digital business and have a good entrepreneurship ecosystem for young generation, he said.

He also highlight the importance of international interaction in the form of joint workshops or attending exhibitions.

He made the remarks during the 3rd National Conference for Localization of DRI Catalysts and Process, which was held from January 16 to 19 in the Persian Gulf island of Kish.

Innovative ideas can boost market for major industries, however, they need investors and accelerators, he said.

"We do our best to support startups to take part at the major industries and do not stop them with legal impediments," he added.

turn, shed light on its composition and whether it is crystallizing from the inside out as it cools, like Earth's core, or from the outside in. Ultimately, the results will improve models of how the planet lost the magnetic field that its core once generated, says George Helffrich, a geophysicist at the Tokyo Institute of Technology's Earth-Life Science Institute. "Mars's core could represent what Earth's will look like in the future."

A third set of clues will come from marsquakes. Because Mars lacks the tectonic plates that grind together on Earth, its tremors are likely to be 100 times less frequent than earthquakes. "We might see five to 10" over InSight's 2-year mission, Banerdt says. "Or we might see 1000." In his dreams, the lander will see dozens of marsquakes with a magnitude more than five—a bounty that could help InSight identify their sources, even though it will be a single seismic station.

Typically, three stations are needed to triangulate an earthquake's source from so-called body waves, which dive through the planet. But the InSight team has devised a workaround for Mars by relying on waves that vibrate along the surface. On Earth, features such as the oceans quickly dampen such waves. But on Mars, surface waves from big quakes should race around the planet multiple times. By detecting surface waves from three different global paths, the researchers hope to pinpoint each tremor's source, which will enable them to make sense of how the body waves it produces change speed or reflect off structures in the interior.

If all goes as hoped, the resulting seismic x-rays of Mars will reveal the dimensions of its crust, mantle, and core and any layering within them. A thick crust would mean that Mars melted thoroughly at its start, allowing larger amounts of less dense minerals to rise and collect at the surface. Banerdt says a thick crust, resistant to fracturing into plates, would also suggest that Mars never had plate tectonics.

If InSight survives until 2021, a second seismic station could join it and corroborate its readings: an instrument mounted on the landing platform for Europe's ExoMars rover. But even by itself, InSight is a boon, says Yosio Nakamura, a planetary seismologist at the University of Texas in Austin, who started his career working on Apollo. "A single station is much, much better than no station at all."

(Source: sciencemag.org)

How crowdfunding is helping homeless people turn their lives around

Two years ago, tech entrepreneur Alex Stephany got to know a homeless man at his local tube station. He would buy him cups of coffee and thermal socks when the weather got cold.

All of a sudden, the man disappeared for several weeks. He eventually returned to that station, but looked years older. It turns out that he had suffered a heart attack and just come out of hospital.

Despite the kind gestures from Alex and other members of the public, the man was in a grave position and his future looked bleak. With a background in business and technology, Alex wanted to find a way to help the homeless rebuild their lives.

"I began to ask myself what it would take to make a lasting difference to this man's life. He had never had a job, and was illiterate,"

he says. "For me, the answer lay in empowering him with the skills and training and to sustainably support himself. Of course, that would cost far more than coffees or socks - but what if everyone chipped in?"

"The idea of crowdfunding employment training for homeless people was born. Over more than nine months that followed, I developed the model working with homeless

people and charities."

Solving homelessness

In October 2017, Alex launched Beam - an online platform that crowdfunds employment training for homeless people. It helps everyone become part of a long-term solution to homelessness epidemic, which affects over 320,000 people in the UK.

(Source: forbes.com)

Saturn’s rings formed after dinosaurs went extinct, researchers discover

Scientists have discovered Saturn’s rings are far younger than once thought, having formed as little as 10 million years ago. This is far, far later than the when Saturn itself first formed — around 4.2 billion years ago — and means the planet’s iconic feature probably only appeared after the dinosaurs went extinct around 65 million years ago.

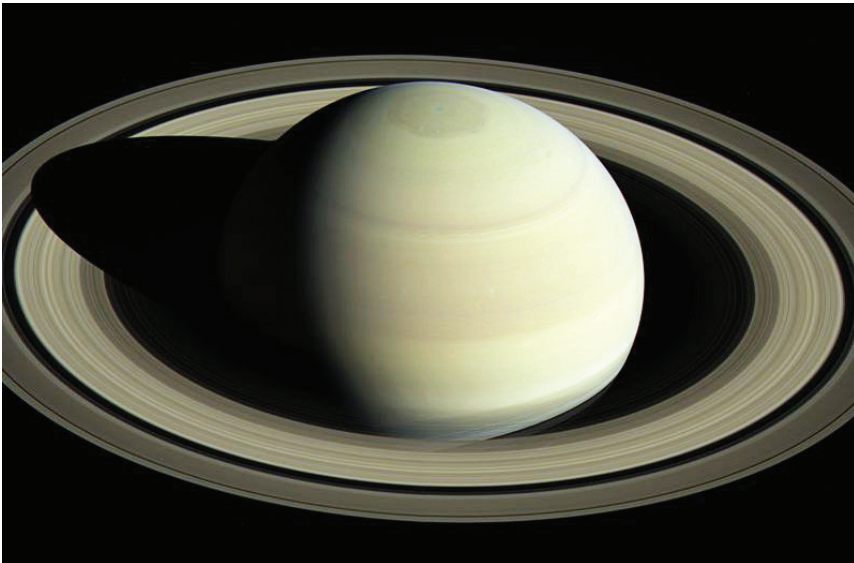
How Saturn ended up with rings is a long-standing mystery. They are composed almost entirely of water-ice and a small amount of rocky material. Scientists think they formed less than 100 million years ago when asteroids, comets and small moons got caught by the planet’s gravitational pull and repeatedly collided, eventually being smashed into tiny bits.

A recent study published in the journal *Icarus* suggested that Saturn’s rings are a short-lived feature and they will be completely gone in around 300 million years. Researchers found the rings are losing mass at the maximum rate predicted, with the ice particles being dragged into the main body of the planet by gravity.

■ Saturn and its rings

In a new study published in *Science*, a team of researchers led by Luciano Iess, from Italy’s Sapienza University of Rome, have now used data from NASA’s Cassini mission to produce new measurements of the gravitational field around Saturn and its rings. They used data from Cassini’s “Grand Finale,” where the spacecraft plunged through the planet’s rings before burning up in the atmosphere below.

Before the Cassini mission, it was impos-



sible to distinguish the gravitational effect of the rings from the main body of the planet. This mean the mass of the rings — which is linked to their age — could not be established.

The “relationship between the mass and age of the rings is subtle,” Iess told *Newsweek*. He said there is a flux of “contaminant particles” present around Saturn that is sprayed onto the rings at a constant rate. By measuring the mass, they were able to estimate the total amount of deposited particles—and how long it took them to accumulate: 10 to 100

A recent study suggests that Saturn’s rings are a short-lived feature and they will be completely gone in around 300 million years.

million years.

Researchers say the findings do not provide any details about how the rings formed. A “catastrophic event like a collision looks to me the most obvious explanation, but there may be problems with that too,” Iess said. “I believe that the origin of the rings has to be put in the broader context of the dynamics of the Saturnian system.”

■ Startling truth

Thomas Stallard, from the UK’s University of Leicester, who was not involved in the study, told *Newsweek* the results were “striking” as it “once again confirms a startling truth that Saturn’s rings have not existed in the Solar System since the planet formed, but are relatively young.”

He continued: “Although we don’t yet know why, something catastrophic happened, perhaps in the age of the dinosaurs, that resulted in Saturn having a ring system completely unlike Jupiter and the ice giants Uranus and Neptune. But these rings, which are so iconic, are being eroded away. While, on human timescales, it seems that Saturn will always have its rings, across the lifetime of the Solar System, these rings are set to quickly fade into obscurity.”

James O’Donoghue, from NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, said that the idea the rings formed around the time that the dinosaurs went extinct “is a profound result to end the Cassini mission ... the more we learn about Saturn’s rings, the more fragile and transient they seem to be.”

(Source: *Newsweek*)

Earth’s tilt may exacerbate a melting Antarctic, new research suggests

As levels of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide rise and warm the globe, Antarctica’s ice will become more vulnerable to cycles on an astronomical scale, particularly the tilt of our planet as it spins around its axis.

New research finds that over 30 million years of history, Antarctica’s ice sheets responded most strongly to the angle of Earth’s tilt on its axis when the ice extends into the oceans, interacting with currents that can bring warm water lapping at their margins and leading to increased melting. The effect of the tilt peaked when carbon dioxide levels were similar to what scientists predict for the next century, if humans don’t get emissions under control.

As carbon dioxide levels push past 400 parts per million, the climate will become more sensitive to the Earth’s tilt, or obliquity, researchers reported Jan. 14 in the journal *Nature Geoscience*.

“Really critical is the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere,” said study co-author Stephen Meyers, a paleoclimatologist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

A scenario of high carbon dioxide and high tilt angle could be particularly devastating to the miles-thick ice covering Antarctica.

■ The ocean bottom

To reconstruct a history of how Antarctica’s ice has responded to this tilt, Meyers and his co-authors used a few sources of information on the Earth’s climate past. One source was calcium carbonate from the ocean bottom, left behind by single-celled organisms called benthic foraminifera. These organisms excrete a calcium carbonate shell around themselves, locking in a global, continuous record of the chemistry of the oceans and atmosphere.

Sediment records from right around



Antarctica provided another source of climate history — a specialty of study co-author and paleoclimatologist Richard Levy of GNS Science and Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. These sediments, drilled from the ocean bottom in long, columnar cores, also hold a record of the past. A glacier, for example, dumps a distinctive mixture of mud, sand and gravel where it sits. These cores provide a very detailed picture of where the ice sheets once were, Meyers said, but there are gaps in the record.

From about 34 million years ago to about 25 million years ago, carbon dioxide was very high (600 to 800 ppm) and most of Antarctica’s ice was land-based, not in contact with the sea.

The continent’s ice advance and retreat were relatively insensitive to the planet’s tilt at this time, the researchers found.

Between about 24.5 million and about 14 million years ago, atmospheric carbon dioxide dropped to between 400 and 600 ppm.

At times of high tilt, the polar regions warm and the temperature differences between the equator and the poles become less extreme. This, in turn, alters wind and current patterns — which are largely driven by this temperature difference — ultimately increasing the flow of warm ocean water to Antarctica’s edge.

(Source: *livescience.com*)

Japan satellite blasts into space to deliver artificial meteors

A rocket carrying a satellite on a mission to deliver the world’s first artificial meteor shower blasted into space on Friday, Japanese scientists said.

A start-up based in Tokyo developed the micro-satellite for the celestial show over Hiroshima early next year as the initial experiment for what it calls a “shooting stars on demand” service.

The satellite is to release tiny balls that glow brightly as they hurtle through the atmosphere, simulating a meteor shower.

It hitched a ride on the small-size Epsilon-4 rocket that was launched from the Uchinoura space center by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on Friday morning.

The rocket carried a total of seven ultra-small satellites that will demonstrate various “innovative” technologies, JAXA spokesman Nobuyoshi Fujimoto told AFP.

By early afternoon, JAXA confirmed all seven satellites had successfully been launched into orbit.

■ Artificial meteor showers

“I was too moved for words,” Lena Okajima, president of the company behind the artificial meteor showers, told the *Jiji Press* agency.

The company ALE Co. Ltd plans to deliver its first out-of-this-world show over Hiroshima in the spring of 2020.

The satellite launched Friday carries 400 tiny balls whose chemical formula is a closely-guarded secret.

That should be enough for 20-30 events, as one shower will involve up to 20 stars, according to the company.

ALE’s satellite, released 500 kilometers (310 miles) above the Earth, will gradually descend to 400 kilometers over the coming year as it orbits the Earth.

ALE says it is targeting “the whole world” with its products and plans to build a stock-



pile of shooting stars in space that can be delivered across the world.

When its two satellites are in orbit, they can be used separately or in tandem, and will be programmed to eject the balls at the right location, speed and direction to put on a show for viewers on the ground.

Tinkering with the ingredients in the balls should mean that it is possible to change the colors they glow, offering the possibility of a multi-colored flotilla of shooting stars.

Each star is expected to shine for several seconds before being completely burned up — well before they fall low enough to pose any danger to anything on Earth.

■ Light-polluted metropolis

They would glow brightly enough to be seen even over the light-polluted metropolis of Tokyo, ALE says.

If all goes well, and the skies are clear, the 2020 event could be visible to millions of people, it says.

Okajima has said her company chose Hiroshima for its first display because of its good weather, landscape and cultural assets.

The western Japan city rose from the ashes after the 1945 U.S. atomic bombing and faces the Seto Inland sea where the floating gate of Itsukushima Shrine is.

ALE is working in collaboration with scientists and engineers at Japanese universities as well as local government officials and corporate sponsors.

(Source: *phys.org*)

New study says urbanization may hold key to tiger survival

A new WCS-led study published in the journal *Biological Conservation* says the future of tigers in Asia is linked the path of demographic transition — for humans. The study marks the first-of-its-kind analysis that overlays human population scenarios with the fate of these endangered big cats.

Prior to the 20th century, some experts estimate there were more than 100,000 tigers living in the wild; today that number is between 3000 - 4000. At the same, over the last 150 years, the human population of Asia as grown from 790 million to over 4 billion, with dire consequences for tigers and other wildlife.

But these trends are changing. The demographic transition is the process by which human populations peak and then go down. The researchers looked at different scenarios of economic, education, migration, and urbanization policy.

In 2010, 57 million people lived in areas defined as “tiger conservation landscapes” that contained all of the world’s remaining wild tigers. However, by 2100, depending on population trends, as few as 40 million people could be sharing space with tigers, or it could be as many as 106 million.

■ Demographic transition

Different population scenarios depend on the course of the demographic transition.



Over the long-term, the scenarios associated with the lowest human populations are also associated with the greatest levels of urbanization and education. At the same time, urban consumption is the source of many of the threats to tigers. Therefore, the authors say conservation authorities must engage with people in cities to save tigers, while continuing to support site-level protection efforts around tiger source sites.

Said lead author Eric Sanderson, Senior Conservation Ecologist with WCS: “Urbaniza-

tion and the subsequent human demographic transition is arguably the most important historical trend shaping the future of conservation. How that transition plays out is not pre-determined. Rather it depends on the policy decisions that governments, and the societies they represent, take with respect to fundamental matters such as urban governance, education, economic reform, and the movement of people and trade goods. These decisions matter for us and tigers too.”

Said co-author and WCS Senior Vice Presi-

dent of Field Conservation Joe Walston: “If we want a world with tigers, forests, and wildness to persist beyond the 21st century, conservation needs to join forces with groups working to alleviate poverty, enhance education for girls, reduce meat consumption, and build sustainable cities.”

■ Biophysical futures

Said co-author Professor Bryan Jones of Baruch College: “Demographic futures, and the socioeconomic causes and consequences thereof, are notoriously difficult to predict. As such, biophysical futures are similarly fraught with uncertainty.

Understanding the consequences of different pathways, driven in large part by policy decisions, is crucial to developing a conservation strategy to protect the planets most endangered habitats. Our ability to understand the future will depend in part on how well we understand urbanization, in terms of both land use and demographic behavior.”

The paper builds on a 2018 WCS study that found that the enormous trends toward population stabilization, poverty alleviation, and urbanization are rewriting the future of biodiversity conservation in the 21st century, offering new hope for the world’s wildlife and wild places.

(Source: *eurekalert.org*)

Scientists find increase in asteroid impacts on ancient Earth by studying the moon

A team of scientists has determined the number of asteroid impacts on the Moon and Earth increased by two to three times starting around 290 million years ago. Previous theories held that there were fewer craters on both objects dating back to before that time because they had disappeared due to erosion. The new findings claim that there were simply fewer asteroid impacts during that earlier period.

“Our research provides evidence for a dramatic change in the rate of asteroid impacts on both Earth and the Moon that occurred around the end of the Paleozoic era,” said lead author Sara Mazrouei, who recently earned her PhD in the Department of Earth Sciences in the Faculty of Arts & Science at the University of Toronto (U of T).

It had been previously assumed that most of Earth’s older craters produced by asteroid impacts have been erased by erosion and other geologic processes. But the new research shows otherwise.

The “relative rarity of large craters on Earth older than 290 million years and younger than 650 million years is not because we lost the craters, but because the impact rate during that time was lower than it is now,” said Rebecca Ghent, an associate professor in U of T’s Department of Earth Sciences and one of the paper’s co-authors. “We expect this to be of interest to anyone interested in the impact history of both Earth and the Moon, and the role that it might have played in the history of life on Earth.”

Scientists have for decades tried to understand the rate that asteroids hit Earth by using radiometric dating of the rocks around them to determine their ages. But because it was believed erosion caused some craters to disappear, it was difficult to find an accurate impact rate and determine whether it had changed over time.

(Source: *sciencedaily.com*)

CERN reveals plans for particle collider four times larger than LHC

Science requires finesse, but sometimes it also needs more power. CERN took the latter approach when it built the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), a 17-mile (27 kilometers) particle accelerator that smashes protons together with so much energy they fracture into subatomic confetti. By studying the remnants of those collisions, scientists have learned more about the nature of the universe.

The Large Hadron Collider is currently the world’s largest scientific instrument, sitting under the France–Switzerland border near Geneva. Having a long “runway” for speeding up particles is essential for a particle collider because that lets you reach higher collision energies. The LHC has been setting records in this department ever since it came online in 2008. By 2009 it had crossed in the teraelectronvolts (TeV) range. In 2018, CERN achieved a whopping 13 TeV collision, and the instrument is currently being upgraded for even higher power.

According to the new CERN report, the FCC could have a 62-mile (100 kilometers) track in the same region of Europe — that’s four times larger than the LHC. When completed, the FCC should be capable of smashing atoms at unprecedented energies of up to 100 TeV.



The FCC wouldn’t simply be a larger version of the LHC, either. It will need more powerful electromagnets, new detectors, improved superconducting materials, and enhanced computing facilities to process all the data it gathers.

Some of the necessary technologies don’t exist yet, but we’ve got time. Among the most notable achievements of the Large Hadron Collider is the 2012-2013 discovery of the Higgs boson, first theorized by Peter Higgs in 1964. While we know it exists, the nature of the Higgs is still murky. Higher-energy collisions from the improved LHC might shed some light on it, but scientists may need to wait for the FCC to study the particle in detail.

(Source: *extremetech.com*)

Sloths are better at adapting than we ever gave them credit for

Unless you live in the tropical rainforests of South or Central America, most of the sloths you’ll encounter will be two-toed sloths (*Choloepus* sp.). This is because they are able to eat quite a varied diet and are therefore relatively easy to keep in captivity.

Their relatives, the three-toed sloths (*Bradypus* sp.), on the other hand, have a very restricted diet, subsisting solely on Cecropia: a group of fast-growing tree species with soft wood and large, juicy leaves.

Or so it has always been thought. A paper published this week by the Royal Society gives quite a different picture of the lifestyle of three-toed sloths.

The authors of the paper looked at how the availability of different tree species, including those of the genus *Cecropia*, affected the survival and reproduction rates of sloths.

Given that these trees are the sloths’ favorite food, this specialist sloth species might be expected to spend most of its time in them. However, the authors found that at certain life stages, sloths may desert their favored tree for other species.

Density of *Cecropia* is critical to the survival and reproductive success of adults, especially the males, but was not correlated with survival rates of juveniles.

The authors attribute the differing importance of *Cecropia* at different life stages to the shape and growth habits of the tree, and they give a detailed analysis of its effects.

Because *Cecropia* species grow fast and produce lots of leaves with few chemical defenses rather than a few leaves that are defended by a lot of toxins, there are always young, palatable, easily-digestible leaves available for adult sloths.

The leaves also contain essential nutrients that keep sloths in good health, which would suggest that juveniles should also favor them.

(Source: *sciencealert.com*)

2nd anniversary of Plasco building fallen firefighters marked

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The second death anniversary of the firefighters who were killed in Plasco building collapse was held in Tehran on Friday.



On January 19, 2017, the 17-stroey Plasco building, a shopping center in downtown Tehran, caught fire and smashed to the ground after hours of effort to put out the fire. Sadly some 16 firefighters got trapped under the building and it took almost 9 days to clear through debris to find the bodies.

The anniversary was held in Tehran cemetery, known as Behesht-e Zahra, with the presence of firefighters and their family members.

Heavy snow piled up in 19 provinces

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Heavy snow blanketed 19 provinces across Iran, head of Rescue and Relief Organization, Morteza Salimi, has said.

Over the past 48 hours 19 provinces of East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Isfahan, Alborz, Tehran, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, North Khorasan, Khuzestan, Zanjan, Semnan, Qazvin, Kordestan, Kermanshah, Lorestan, Mazandaran, Markazi and Hamedan are covered with snow, Fars news agency quoted Salimi as saying on Friday.

Some 6,390 received rescue services and 240 individuals stranded in snow storm received emergency accommodation, he added.

Also 7 provinces of Isfahan, Alborz, Khuzestan, Qazvin, Golestan, Lorestan and Mazandaran

were hit by flood and water was pumped out of 40 houses, he explained.

113 rescue and relief teams including 395 forces offered services to the people stricken by the storm, he concluded.

LEARN ENGLISH

Buying Jewelry

Shop assistant: Good afternoon, sir, is there anything I can help you with today?

Mark: umm... yeah! I'm looking for a nice gift to give my wife. Our fifth anniversary's next Friday.

Shop assistant: Well, I would be happy to assist you in choosing the perfect gift for her. Is there anything particular that you **have in mind**?

Mark: No, not really... I'm completely at a loss.

Shop assistant: Well, you can give her a set of pearl earrings, or this beautiful **heart-shaped pendant**. What is her favorite **gemstone**?

Mark: That purple one. I'm sorry...I've never bought jewelry for anyone and I'm kind of nervous.

Shop assistant: Don't worry, we specialize in providing our customers a relaxed, pressure-free shopping environment. That stone is an **amethyst**. We have a range of beautiful amethyst pieces. Take a look at this **bracelet**. It's **18K** rose-gold, studded with amethyst and **blue topaz**. It's a great statement piece.

Mark: Oh...wow. That's really pretty. Jess would love that. But... I was thinking of something a little more delicate, perhaps a necklace?

Shop assistant: We have this beautiful **platinum** pendant, or you could also get her a **locket**. You could also get her a timepiece—it's both glamorous yet functional. If you tell me a little more about your wife, maybe I can help you find something for her.

Mark: Jess? Well, she's very smart, and has a great sense of humor. She's very feminine...

Shop assistant: Perhaps you could give her a ring?

Mark: Okay, I've decided. I'm going buy her a ring!

Shop assistant: Fabulous! We should look at the rings then! Now that's a whole other section.

Key vocabulary

anniversary: the date on which a romance began

have in mind: to be thinking of something

heart-shaped: something in the shape of a heart

pendant: a piece of jewelry that hangs on a chain

gemstone: a stone that can be used in jewelry

amethyst: a clear purple or bluish- purple stone

bracelet: a piece of jewelry worn on the wrist

18K: contain 75% gold

blue topaz: a blue precious stone

platinum: a heavy, silver-colored metal

locket: a small ornamental case

Supplementary vocabulary

bling-bling (slang): a term used to describe shiny jewelry, usually with a lot of diamonds

carat: a unit of weight in gemstones

flashy: eye-catching, shiny and brilliant; ostentatious, attention-grabbing but not classy

show-stopper: something that is so interesting as to figuratively “stop the show”

gold-digger: someone who marries for money

(Source: irlanguage.com)

To see the azure sky everyday should be a ‘clean air day’: mayor

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — In order to see the azure sky everyday should be a “clean air day”, Tehran mayor wrote on the occasion of the national clean air day, marked annually on January 19.

“For the city to feel good again and for everyone to see the azure sky, free of any pollution, everyday should be marked as clean air day,” Pirouz Hanachi wrote on his Instagram page, adding that, “we all know that the city [of Tehran] is not feeling alright and only observing a day as a clean air day won’t make things right again.”

There is no need to take part in such symbolic occasions, all citizens should strive to fight air pollution and the efforts should not limit to one day or week, Fars new agency quoted Hanachi as saying on Friday.

By using public transport or cycling, having our vehicles periodically inspected to live up to emission standards, less use of private cars and also development of public transportation infrastructure, and easing the access to urban rail transit would help improving the city’s air quality, the mayor suggested.

According to ISNA news agency since the beginning of the current year (March 21, 2018) T ehraners have breathed 17 days of excellent air quality and 237 days of good air quality.

Based on the figures released by Tehran Air Quality Control Company last year in the same period the number of days with excellent air quality amounted to 12 and days of good air quality was 222 which indicates a 32-day increase in the number of excellent and good air quality.

PM 2.5 and PM 10 particulate matters are the main pollutants in Tehran.

PM10 is particulate matter 10 micrometers or less in diameter, PM2.5 is particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter. Particles in this size range



By using public transport or cycling, having our vehicles periodically inspected to live up to emission standards, less use of private cars and also development of public transportation infrastructure, and easing the access to urban rail transit would help improving the city’s air quality, the mayor suggested.

make up a large proportion of dust that can be drawn deep into the lungs. Larger particles tend to be trapped in the nose, mouth or throat and cause respiratory, lung and even heart conditions.

According to the report the concentration of PM 10 in Tehran decreased by 32 percent measuring at 67.1 micrograms per cubic meter in the autumn compared to the same period a year earlier. Additionally concentration of PM 2.5 also dropped from 36.6 micrograms per cubic meter to 26.8

which also shows a 26-percent decrease comparatively.

The main reason behind the increase in the number of clean air days is considerable increase in precipitation amounts.

As per the data published by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center it seems that recent rainfalls and the increase in the precipitation levels has played a much more key role in improving air quality nationwide and in other metropolises of Iran as well.

Sand, dust storms hit Khuzestan, PM at 22 times above safe levels

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — South-western province of Khuzestan was hit by sand and dust storms on Thursday where particulate matters (PM) concentration peaked at 22 times the safe levels, IRNA news agency reported.

According to the provincial department of environment PM concentration reached 3,304 micrograms per cubic meters in city of Ahvaz which is 22 times above standard levels.

Other cities including Shadegan, Hamidiyeh, Abadan, Khorramshahr, Ramshir, Bandar-e Emam, Omidiyeh, Dezful, Shoush, Shoushtar, Mahshahr, Andimeshk, Gutvand, and Behbahan are also affected with high levels of particulate matters, the report added.

The sand and dust storm is originated in Iraq and will be followed with another one in the coming days.

Sand and dust storms have been striking the southwestern province for over 10 years.

Mohammad Sabzehzari, the provincial meteorological organization director, said in mid-December, 2018 that the number of dusty days in southern province of Khuzestan have increased by day-and-a-half over a 30-year period per annum on average.

The number of dusty days is different in different seasons, but on average over a 30-year period sand and dust storms hit the area 63 days annually, he added.

The main reason behind the sand and dust storms during the aforesaid years were dust hotspots in Iraq and low precipitations



had given rise to crippling sand and dust in the region, he explained.

Nonetheless, this year with increased rainfalls in the province of Khuzestan sand and dust storms only stricken the areas one or twice during the first month of autumn.

According to data released on Thursday by the National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2018) province of Khuzestan received 329.4 millimeters of rain while last year’s precipitations in the area amounted to 53.2 millimeters.

A sandstorm or duststorm is a meteorological phenomenon usually caused by strong and turbulent winds blowing over loose soil or sand and sweeping up large quantities of sand or dust particles from the ground, clouding the air and reducing the visibility drastically.

But once rain falls on the soil it won’t let the wind to blow the loose soil or sand and hence decrease the chances of a sand and dust storm.

At least 60% of wild coffee species face extinction triggered by climate change and disease

Two decades of research have revealed that 60 per cent of the world’s coffee species face extinction due to the combined threats of deforestation, disease and climate change.

The wild strain of arabica, the most widely consumed coffee on the planet, is among those now recognized as endangered, raising concerns about its long-term survival.

These results are worrying for the millions of farmers around the world who depend on the continued survival of coffee for their livelihoods.

As conditions for coffee farming become tougher, scientists predict the industry will need to rely on wild varieties to develop more resilient strains.

The new study by a British team based primarily at Kew Gardens was the first to assess the status of all 124 coffee species that grow wild across Africa and Asia.

“A figure of 60 per cent of all coffee species threatened with extinction is extremely high, especially when you compare this to a global estimate of 22 per cent for plants,” said Dr Eimear Nic Lughadha, who leads Kew’s planet assessment unit.

“Some of the coffee species assessed have not been seen in the wild for more than 100 years, and it is possible that some may already be extinct.”

Arabica coffee makes up 60 per cent of the world’s multibillion pound coffee industry. Scientists at Kew worked with Ethiopian collaborators to reveal the enormous threat posed to these plants

During September 23, 2017-January 17, 2017 the whole country received 35.3 millimeters of rain while this year the amount almost quadrupled amounting to 112 millimeters in the same period.

Tehran received 143.6 millimeters of rain from the beginning of autumn to January 17 while last year’s precipitation is measured at 19.8 in the aforesaid period.

It is also believed that harsher traffic laws with respect to up-to-date vehicle inspection for all vehicles, regardless of their production year, also another reason for the cleaner air this year.

However, there are still shortcomings. For one, Tehran metro is short of cars.

Mohammad Ali Krouni, head of construction and transportation commission of Tehran City Council, said in December 2018 that although currently some 121 trains are running in the capital’s subway system, it will soon face lack of cars with inauguration of new lines being under construction. He went on to say that a budget of 750 billion rials (about \$18 million) is required to develop the subway fleet.

Moreover, the bus fleet is Tehran is both inefficient and old producing great deal of emission. According to Tehran mayor Tehran is short of 3,000 buses and half the buses plying the city now are old and emitting considerable amounts of pollutants.

Ali Mohammadi, an official with traffic police, said on January 9 that the scrappage of clunker vehicles has decreased by 65 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21, 2018) compared to a year earlier.

While last year some 140,000 vehicles were scrapped this year only 50,000 old vehicles were discarded, he regretted. Clunker cars, normally producing great deal of emission, can lead to air pollution especially in metropolises like Tehran.

Much bigger steps must be taken to fight the messy air pollution in metropolises.



by climate change.

As global temperatures soar, the researchers estimate natural populations of arabica are likely to halve by the end of the century.

Coffee farmers growing this species – as well as robusta coffee that makes up the other 40 per cent – have reported their crops being affected by longer dry seasons and the spread of pests.

The scientists emphasized the role that wild coffee could have in ensuring the coffee sector survives in a changing world.

“Among the coffee species threatened with extinction are those that have potential to be used to breed and develop the coffees of the future, including those resistant to disease and capable of withstanding worsening climatic conditions,” said Dr Aaron Davis, head of coffee research at Kew.

The team called for emergency action to protect coffee species both in the wild and in special facilities like seed banks.

(Source: *The Independent*)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

3,404 traffic-related deaths occurred last winter: traffic police chief

Last winter, 3,404 traffic-related deaths happened in Iran, traffic police chief Taqi Mehri said on Thursday.

There are some 500 mountain passes in Iran of which 100 usually get snow in winter and with regard to the fact that this year precipitations have increased respectively driving in such slippery and icy roads is different from other seasons, Tasnim news agency quoted Mehri as saying.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ive”

■ **Meaning**: tending to or performing

■ **For example**: Most of us are more **productive** in the morning.

PHRASAL VERB

Wipe something off something

■ **Meaning**: to reduce the value of shares or prices by a particular amount

■ **For example**: Nearly £7 billion has been wiped off share prices worldwide.

IDIOM

Let the dust settle

■ **Explanation**: to allow for things return to normal after a period of excitement, a high level of activity, etc.

■ **For example**: I know things have been really hectic during this project, so let’s all take a bit of a break and let the dust settle a bit.

Arab summit starts in Lebanon, many leaders absent

Libyan media said Lebanese President Michel Aoun expressed disappointment over the absences of his Arab colleagues.

Mauritania and Somalia are the only Arab states represented at the highest level.

The other countries in attendance sent second-level and third-level ministerial delegations.

The press in Beirut has already defined the summit a "flop", attributing it to Lebanese officials' insufficient guarantees of security to the Arab leaders.

Also weighing on the summit is a climate of tension between Lebanon and Libya, whose participation was rejected by Beirut following accusations by Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri.

Berri is the political heir to the Shia imam Musa Sadr, who disappeared in Libya in 1978, a disappearance that Lebanon claims the Tripoli government is responsible for.

Berri's followers threatened to physically attack members of the Libyan delegation, and removed Libyan flags from the streets of Beirut leading to the site of the summit.

They also said they were ready to block the road that connects the city to the international airport, where flights of Arab delegations have been arriving since Thursday.

Lebanon summit reveals Arab divisions over Syria, Iran

As Lebanon prepares to host a regional economic summit this weekend, the meeting has been overshadowed by divisions over Syria's future and efforts to contain regional power house Iran.

Experts see the talks as an opportunity to bring Syrian President Bashar al-Assad back



into the Arab fold, eyeing an Arab League (AL) foreign minister-level meeting before the summit as a chance to hold a vote on Syria's reinstatement to the regional body.

However, the future of Syria is not due to be on the agenda.

"The league has no plans to discuss an invitation to the body's summit in Tunisia during the upcoming meeting in Lebanon to which Damascus is not invited either," Arab League Assistant Secretary General Hossam Zaki said.

The Arab League suspended Syria's membership in 2011 and imposed economic sanctions over its violent crackdown on anti-government protesters before

the country descended into a foreign instigated war. Some countries withdrew their ambassadors.

Late last year, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir became the first Arab League leader to visit Syria since the crisis began. In the following weeks, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain reopened their embassies in the country, but a consensus among the bloc remains elusive.

Days before the Beirut talks a number of Arab states made their positions clear. Iraq, which did not cut ties with Damascus, said it supports efforts to restore Syria's membership of the Arab League. Qatar, a supporter of Syria's opposition, stressed the reasons

for Damascus' suspension have not been addressed and there are no encouraging signs to push for normalizing ties.

The House of Saud regime has denied it plans to do what its allies - the UAE and Bahrain - did a few weeks ago.

Egypt, which was leading the diplomatic drive to re-embrace Assad's Syria, now says it cannot be readmitted to the Arab League if it doesn't solve the political crisis in line with the United Nations-led political process.

There are also those who warn against prematurely normalizing ties, saying that would only strengthen Assad's position when it came to negotiations.

The United States is particularly eager to curtail Iranian influence in the region, and sees any move that strengthens Assad as strengthening Iran.

Assad's opponents want him to comply with UN resolutions that would require relinquishing some powers.

For its part, Iran has publicly welcomed the shift in policy of some Arab states.

"Arab countries returning to Syria was a positive change that signaled the international community recognized Syria's territorial integrity and legitimate government," the foreign ministry said.

The Arab diplomatic snub of the Beirut meeting is just the beginning of the U.S.-led efforts to contain Iran's influence in the region.

They are expected to gain momentum in the lead up to the anti-Tehran meeting in Warsaw in February.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

U.S. 'deal of century' doomed to hit dead end: Palestine

UN: Israel trying to delegitimize aid organizations working in occupied territories

The United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden - which are all member states to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) - as well as Belgium, Germany and Italy said in a joint statement that the so-called Middle East peace plan should support the Palestinian statehood and end the Israeli occupation.

Israel occupied the West Bank as well as East al-Quds (Jerusalem) during the Six-Day War in 1967. It later annexed the Palestinian city in a move not recognized by the international community.

Israel lays claim to the whole city, but the Palestinians view its eastern sector as the capital of their future sovereign state.

Trump recognized al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the Israeli "capital" in December 2017 and moved the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the ancient city in May 2018, sparking global condemnations.

Fatah trying to drag Gaza into new war with Israel: Hamas co-founder

Meantime, a high-ranking leader of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has accused the West Bank-based Fatah movement of attempts to provoke the Israeli army to launch a new military campaign against the impoverished Gaza Strip.

"Fatah-affiliated people are trying to force the Gaza Strip into a fresh battle with Israel by launching rockets during this sensitive time," Mahmoud al-Zahar said in an exclusive interview with Arabic-language Palestine Today television network.

Zahar added, "Some of these people are linked to Israel and are commissioned to get on with the task. These people are well-known to us. Fatah stands behind them. We have talked with their field leaders about their dangerous acts. Sometimes, they are arrested."

The Hamas leader noted that Gaza-based resistance movements are closely monitoring Israel's acts of aggression against the coastal enclave, stressing that they would never wait too long to respond to such moves.

Zahar's remarks came after Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum warned in a statement on Sunday that the movement "will intensify the confrontation with Israel" in the coastal sliver if the Israeli military launches new attacks against the enclave.

"The Israeli occupation [regime] bears the consequences of continuing to commit its follies against peaceful protesters and deliberately killing them in cold blood as well as bombing sites of resistance," he stated.

Trump cancels U.S. delegation to Davos, Pelosi's foreign trips

The United States President Donald Trump has cancelled his delegation's trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, next week due to the ongoing partial government shutdown.

Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement on Thursday that Trump made the move "out of consideration for the 800,000 great American workers not receiving pay and to ensure his team can assist as needed".

Trump, who attended last year's Davos event, had planned to go again this year, but pulled out last week as he grapples with Democrats in Congress over funding for a wall on the border with Mexico that has led

to the shutdown.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo were expected to lead the U.S. delegation in Trump's place, two senior administration officials said this week.

Mnuchin and Pompeo had planned to speak jointly at the opening session of the forum on January 22.

They were also expected to jointly host a dinner of the Group of Seven foreign and finance ministers to discuss national security and economic issues.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and the U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer also planned to be part of the delegation.

Pelosi's 'excursion'

Earlier on Thursday, Trump also cancelled his Democratic opponent Nancy Pelosi's trips.

In a letter laced with sarcasm, Trump told House Speaker Pelosi: "I am sorry to inform you that your trip to Brussels, Egypt, and Afghanistan has been postponed. We will reschedule this seven-day excursion when the Shutdown is over."

"I am sure you would agree that postponing this public relations event is appropriate," he wrote.

Pelosi and her delegation had planned a non-publicized trip to Afghanistan - an active war zone - and were due to travel by a U.S. Air Force plane. Her office said Egypt

France will remain 'militarily engaged' in Middle East through 2019

France will remain "militarily engaged" in the Middle East through 2019, President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday, noting that the deaths of the United States soldiers and civilians in Syria a day earlier showed the fight against extremism was not yet over.

"The retreat from Syria announced by our American friends cannot make us deviate from our strategic objective - eradicating Daesh (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/ISIL)," Macron said in a speech at an army base near Toulouse.

"We are staying invested to participate in the stabilization of the region," Macron said, adding: "Any rush to withdraw would be a mistake."

Macron also expressed condolences for "our four American friends killed on Syrian soil" in a bomb blast claimed

by the ISIL terrorist group on Wednesday.

Macron has criticized the U.S. President Donald Trump for announcing in December that he would begin withdrawing the approximately 2,000 U.S. troops now in Syria. Macron said he "deeply regretted the decision", adding that "an ally must be reliable".

(Source: FRANCE 24)



gations "are baseless or misrepresent and distort critical, factual or legal elements."

The campaign also included "impediments by Israeli banks to the transferring of funds and procedures to close down accounts; refusal of Israeli venues to host events involving certain NGOs; and the potential undermining of information disseminated by organizations whose reputation has been damaged."

The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), which represents the majority of international NGOs and non-profit organizations in the occupied territories, conducted a survey among its members between October and November 2018 to assess the impact of the campaign. Forty-three percent of AIDA's members said the campaign had undermined their funding.

The campaign comes as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living inside more than a dozen refugee camps across the Israeli-occupied West Bank are in dire need of daily assistance by such organizations.

The pressure facing the Palestinians compounded in August 2018, when the United States, Israel's biggest ally, said it was ending all funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

"The United States will no longer commit further funding to this irredeemably flawed operation," the U.S. State Department said in a statement on August 31, 2018.

Washington called the UN's Palestinian refugee agency "irredeemably flawed."

Palestinian officials condemned the move, with President Mahmoud Abbas saying the U.S. decision was a "flagrant assault" against Palestinians.

UNRWA has rejected the Israeli accusations, saying it operates under a strict mandate outlined by the United Nations.

(Source: Press TV)

was not on the itinerary.

According to a congressional aide, several politicians were already loaded onto buses preparing to leave the U.S. Capitol on Thursday when Trump pulled the plug. Trump said that Pelosi could still book her own non-government flights.

"Obviously, if you would like to make your journey by flying commercial, that would certainly be your prerogative," he wrote.

The cancellation followed Pelosi's suggestion that Trump postpones his January 29 State of the Union address to Congress, or do it from the White House instead.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Lebanon FM calls on Arab League to restore Syria's membership

Lebanon's Caretaker Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil has called on the Arab League (AL) to restore Syria's membership in the regional organization, describing attempts to block the move as a "historic mistake."

"We Arab nations don't know how to look out for each other. Arab states continue to trade blame for suffering across the region rather than assembling plans to alleviate it," Bassil said as he opened the first session of an Arab economic summit in Beirut on Friday.

Among the biggest challenges facing Arab nations, the top Lebanese diplomat said, are war, malnutrition and poverty, in addition to extremism and the denial of women's basic rights.

"Let's build a united Arab economic vision, based on the political principle of not attacking each other," Bassil said.

"Syria should return to us... Syria should be in our embrace instead of throwing it into the embrace of terrorism," he pointed out.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad al-Hakim recently said the Baghdad government supports the restoration of Syria's membership in the Arab League.

"We discussed solutions to eliminate terrorism in Syria and support the Syrian government, its territorial integrity and sovereignty," Hakim said at a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif in Baghdad on Monday.

"We also discussed supporting Iraq's efforts to restore Syria's (membership) to the Arab League," he added.

On January 8, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said the incumbent Damascus needs to implement a number of measures toward the political settlement of the ongoing Syrian crisis in order for the conflict-plagued country to reinstate its membership in the Arab League. Speaking at a joint press conference with his Moroccan counterpart Nasser Bourita in Cairo, Shoukry said such measures are required "in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254," which endorses a road map for a peace process in Syria, and sets out the outlines of a nationwide ceasefire.

"There's a need to get out of the current crisis in Syria within the political framework sponsored by the UN envoy in Geneva," the top Egyptian diplomat pointed out.

The Arab League suspended Syria's membership in November 2011, citing alleged crackdown by Damascus on opposition protests. Syria has denounced the move as "illegal and a violation of the organization's charter."

(Source: Press TV)

Britain deadlock over plan B as May, Corbyn double down

Britain's last-minute scramble to shape its exit from the European Union (EU), its biggest policy upheaval in half a century, hit the rocks as Prime Minister Theresa May and opposition Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn dug in their heels for competing visions. After May's two-year attempt to forge an amicable divorce with an independent trade policy was crushed by Parliament in the biggest defeat for a British leader in modern history, May asked party leaders to forget self-interest to find a solution.

Yet there was little sign on Thursday that either of the two major parties, which together hold 88 percent of the 650 seats in Parliament, were prepared to compromise on key demands. Corbyn said May had sent Britain hurtling toward the cliff edge of a sudden exit on March 29 with no transition period, and urged her to ditch her "red lines." But he repeated his own condition for talks: a pledge to block a no-deal Brexit.

"The government confirmed that she would not take 'no-deal' off the table," Corbyn said in a speech in Hastings. "So I say to the prime minister again: I am quite happy to talk, but the starting point for any talks about Brexit must be that the threat of a disastrous no-deal outcome is ruled out." But the further May moves toward softening Brexit, the more she alienates dedicated Brexit supporters in her own Conservative party who think the threat of a no-deal exit is a crucial bargaining chip and should anyway not be feared.

May's spokeswoman said the prime minister had held "constructive" talks Thursday with lawmakers, including some from Labor, to explore ways of winning support for her deal. If she fails to forge consensus, the world's fifth-largest economy will drop out of the European Union on March 29 without a deal or will be forced to delay Brexit, possibly holding a national election or even another referendum.

Corbyn said that, under certain conditions, he would look at options including another referendum - a remark that increased expectations in financial markets that the political chaos would ultimately delay or even stop Brexit.

But a second referendum would take a year to organize, according to official government guidance shown to lawmakers Wednesday, a source in May's office said. Corbyn wants May to call another election, something she has refused, having lost her parliamentary majority in a snap poll in 2017 that left her reliant on the support of a small Northern Irish pro-Brexit party.

She has also repeatedly said another referendum would corrode faith in democracy among the 17.4 million people who voted to leave the EU in 2016. Her spokesman said Britain had not raised the idea of delaying Britain's exit with the EU.

As Britain tumbles toward its biggest political and economic shift since World War II, other members of the European Union have offered to talk.

The EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier said the bloc was open to the possibility of a "more ambitious" Brexit deal than May's rejected agreement, which he said could not be improved on under the principles she had originally set out.

But they can do little until London decides what it wants. May will put forward Monday a motion in Parliament on her proposed next steps. Over the following week, lawmakers will be able to propose alternatives. On Jan. 29, they will debate these plans, and voting on them should indicate whether any of them could get majority support.

If a way forward emerges, May could then go back to the EU and seek changes to her deal. Parliament would still need to vote on any new agreement, and it is not clear when that might happen.

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe held a special government meeting on Thursday on planning to cope with a no-deal Brexit. France is spending 50 million euros (\$57 million) to increase security at airports and the Eurotunnel, and it is hiring hundreds of extra customs officers.

The French Parliament adopted a law Wednesday allowing emergency measures after March 30 in the event that Britain leaves without a deal.

Such measures could aim to reduce problems in cross-border trade and transport, notably through the Eurotunnel beneath the English Channel, and allow British workers and retirees based in France temporary permission to stay until a longer-term deal is worked out.

(Source: Daily Star)

Murray pulls out of next month's Marseille Open

Andy Murray has pulled out of next month's Marseille Open as he "may have to undergo surgery again", the tournament organisers said on Friday.

Three-times Grand Slam winner Murray has struggled to regain form since undergoing hip surgery last January and was knocked out in the first round of the Australian Open on Monday having said the tournament could be his last as a professional.

Murray, who is also scheduled to participate in Montpellier and Dubai next month, said after his Melbourne defeat that he would decide whether to have surgery within a week or push on through the pain to farewell fans at Wimbledon.

"With the firm intention of coming back this year, the former number one in the world had put the Marseille tournament on his calendar," the organisers said in a statement.

"But due to ongoing pain in the hip, Andy Murray may have to undergo surgery again and therefore playing the upcoming tournaments including Marseille was no longer an option."

Murray said pulling out was a difficult decision as he had fond memories of the tournament.

"It's tough but I don't have a choice, I was very keen on returning to Marseille where I won the tournament in 2008. This title, one of the first of my career, remains a great memory," Murray added in the statement.

"I feel for him. It makes me sad to see such a great player, that is also a person that I like a lot, have to go through such tough times," tournament director Jean-Francois Caujolle said.

"I wish for him to be able to overcome this episode in order to come back to the courts and end his career on his own terms. He deserves it."

(Source: Reuters)

Football star Ronaldo expected in Madrid Tuesday for tax fraud trial

Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo is expected back in Madrid on Tuesday to attend a trial for tax evasion in which Spanish prosecutors are asking for a 23-month prison sentence and a fine.

The Portuguese striker, who left Real Madrid for Juventus last July, is expected to plead guilty after he agreed a settlement worth 18.8 million euros (£16.5 million) with Spanish tax authorities last summer.

However, he is unlikely to serve any time in prison as Spanish law states a sentence of under two years for a first offence can be served on probation.

The prosecutor's office said it was seeking a fine of 5.7 million euros, which it said Ronaldo had already paid, as well as interest of about one million euros.

That fine, expected to be confirmed on Tuesday, is part of the total agreed in the earlier settlement, judicial sources said.

Ronaldo, 33, who has helped take Juventus to the top of Italian football's Serie A, will have to travel to Madrid immediately after playing for Juve against Chievo on Monday.

The trial was initially expected to take place on Monday but the prosecutor's office said the date was now set for Tuesday.

It is expected to be concluded on the same day and be short, with officials saying the hearing will only require to Ronaldo confirm he accepts the deal.

(Source: AP)

Gunmen kill Ghanaian journalist who helped expose soccer graft

Gunmen in Ghana killed an investigative journalist who had helped uncover corruption in football, rights groups and his employer said on Thursday.

Ahmed Hussein-Suale was shot three times by men on a motorbike while driving home from work on Wednesday in the capital Accra, said his production company Tiger Eye PI.

"We ... are terribly devastated by this dastardly act, but remain unshaken in our resolve to make ... corruption a high-risk activity in this country," it said in a statement.

Hussein-Suale was part of a team led by well-known undercover journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas. Their crew is famous for a documentary last year that accused 77 referees and Ghana's then soccer chief Kwesi Nyantakyi of taking bribes.

The film prompted Ghana to dissolve its Football Association. Nyantakyi was suspended by world soccer's governing body FIFA and stepped down shortly after, apologising for what he called his "indiscretion".

The killing came as a shock in Ghana, whose vibrant press enjoys relative freedom compared to many African nations.

"I expect the police to bring to book, as soon as possible, the perpetrators of this heinous crime," said President Afuko-Addo on Twitter.

Ghana's police and government officials were not immediately available for further comment.

Ghana is ranked 23rd out of 180 countries in a world press freedom index compiled by Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which is Africa's highest ranking.

But "this shooting is a grave signal that journalists cannot work safely to keep the public informed or hold power to account in Ghana," said the Committee to Protect Journalists, another press freedom group based in the United States.

The killing came after a campaign of abuse against the documentary team. After its airing, government legislator Kennedy Agyapong called Hussein-Suale "dangerous", shared photos of him and told viewers he would pay for them to "beat him".

He was not immediately available for comment on Thursday. Anas, who covers his face in public for safety reasons, posted about the death on his Facebook and Twitter feed.

"Sad news, but we shall not be silenced," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

WADA say 'successfully retrieved' doping data from Moscow lab

WADA said Thursday that they have "successfully retrieved" data from the Moscow laboratory at the heart of Russia's state-sponsored doping scandal which involved more than 1,000 athletes and 30 sports.

The world anti-doping agency had demanded the data be handed over to complete its probe into the 2011-2015 scandal which saw Russia's athletics team barred from the 2016 Rio Olympics and exiled from the 2018 Winter Olympics.

"This is a major breakthrough for clean sport," said WADA President Craig Reedie.

In September, WADA conditionally lifted a ban on the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RU-SADA), paving the way for its reinstatement.

One of the conditions was access being granted to the data by the end of 2018.

But when a WADA team arrived last month, Russian authorities raised issues with the certification of their equipment under Russian law and a December 31 deadline was missed.

"It shows we are continuing to make real progress that simply would not have happened without the September 20 decision," insisted Reedie on Thursday.

"The first phase of the three-phase process outlined by that decision is now complete. The long impasse around access to the former Moscow Laboratory has been broken and that is significantly good news."

Reedie said that WADA will now attempt



to authenticate and review the data to ensure it is complete and "that it has not been compromised".

"Once the data have been authenticated, we will be in a position to proceed to the third phase and support the various sports and other anti-doping organisations concerned to build strong cases against athletes who doped and, as part of that, ensure that certain samples that are still stored in the Moscow Laboratory are re-analysed in an accredited

laboratory no later than June 30, 2019."

The Independent Compliance Review (CRC) has now submitted a recommendation to be considered by WADA's executive committee on January 22.

WADA was strongly criticised over its decision to lift Russia's suspension in September before obtaining access to the anti-doping laboratory in Moscow.

Outspoken US Anti-Doping Agency chief Travis Tygart had described Moscow missing

Sharapova says revenge not behind Wozniacki Open upset



Maria Sharapova denied revenge was a motivating factor behind her shock win over defending Australian Open champion Caroline Wozniacki on Friday.

The five-time Grand Slam winner dumped the Dane from the tournament in a three-set thriller 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 to claim her biggest scalp since completing a drugs ban in 2017.

At the time, world number three Wozniacki was an outspoken critic of the way the WTA eased Sharapova's return from the positive test by handing the Russian wildcards to top tournaments. But Sharapova, who is seeded 30 at Melbourne Park this year as she tries to rejoin the game's elite, insisted the spat was not on her mind as she bundled out the Dane on Rod Laver Arena.

"I just really like winning," the 31-year-old said. "I'm really happy and proud of the way I competed today and I'm into the fourth round. That's all that matters."

The win sets up a last 16 clash with in-form Australian hope Ash Barty for the Russian, who won the title at Melbourne Park in 2008 and has reached the final a further three times.

Sharapova said she was thrilled to overcome a player of Wozniacki's stature.

"I knew I was going to get a really tough match as she's the defending champion of this event and it's no secret she loves this arena. I haven't played many matches in the last year, especially against top players and these are the ones I train for, so it's really rewarding to win."

She has defeated Barty in both their previous meetings but believed the Australian would be a challenge in front of her fanatical

home support.

■ **'In the grind'**

But Sharapova, who once famously summed up her attitude as "I'm not here to make friends", said she would not let the crowd affect her.

"I know it's going to be a tough crowd, but I go out here to perform and play tennis," she said.

There were dramatic momentum shifts in the battle between the two former world number ones, but the decisive period came when Sharapova stormed back from 4-1 down to go on a five-game winning streak and take the first set.

After Wozniacki came back she then broke the Dane late in the third set, screaming "come on" after gaining the advantage.

The Russian rattled Wozniacki with her power hitting, smashing 37 winners to 10.

But her mistakes left the third seed back into the match at crucial moments as she committed 46 unforced errors and made seven double faults.

Wozniacki said Sharapova's inconsistency made it hard for her to settle into the match.

"She was either making a winner or making a mistake," the Dane said. "Then I was waiting and I felt like I just lost my rhythm a little bit."

Sharapova won her last Grand Slam at Roland Garros in 2014 and has struggled to rejoin the game's elite since completing a 15-month ban for failing a drugs test.

She said she was excited ahead of the Wozniacki meeting and enjoyed being on centre court again facing a top opponent.

(Source: AFP)

Nadal hails 'step forward' after ruthless romp past De Minaur



Rafael Nadal declared "everything is a step forward" after brutally brushing aside Alex de Minaur at the Australian Open Friday in just the Spaniard's third match since the US Open.

The world number two was in ominous form as he continued his quest for an 18th Grand Slam by punishing the Australian teenager in a third-round tennis master-class 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

"In general terms, everything is a step forward. So that's positive news for me," said the man who won at Melbourne Park back in 2009.

"I'm very happy for the victory against someone who had won seven matches in a row, winning a tournament."

Nadal ruthlessly dragged the 19-year-old Australian 27th seed -- who won last week's Sydney International -- over every inch of Rod Laver Arena as he romped to victory in 2hr 22min. The Spaniard limped out of last year's Australian Open at the quarter-final stage and ended his 2018 season after retiring in similar fashion from the US Open in September.

He then had surgery on a foot injury and doubts remained when he pulled out of his Brisbane warm-up with a thigh niggle.

But his fitness levels have grown with every outing in Melbourne and he was back to his barnstorming best as he hardly allowed his young rival a sniff.

"I felt more dynamic with my movements tonight -- every day a little bit better, in my opinion," Nadal said.

De Minaur, to his eternal credit, did little wrong and never gave up the fight.

the December 31 deadline as "a total joke".

"In September, WADA secretly moved the goal posts and reinstated Russia against the wishes of athletes, governments and the public," Tygart said. "The situation is a total joke and an embarrassment for WADA and the global anti-doping system."

However, in his New Year message, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach insisted Russia had been sufficiently punished.

"With its suspension from the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018, the Russian Olympic Committee has served its sanction," wrote Bach. Russia's anti-doping body (RU-SADA) was initially suspended by WADA in 2016 after an independent report by Professor Richard McLaren found widespread evidence of state sponsored doping in the country.

Dick Pound, who was WADA's inaugural president from 1999 to 2007, told AFP recently that once access to the lab had been granted the authenticity of the samples "was the big question".

"But until you get the data you can't examine it in a forensic manner to see if it's complete and whether it's been tampered with," said Pound.

"So that's probably going to take a month or two months because there are 9,000 samples that we need to study."

(Source: AFP)

Barcelona dominance feels familiar but biggest tests still to come

With half of the season gone, Barcelona own a five-point lead at the top of La Liga, boast two strikers with as many goals as any other team and look on course for their fourth league title in five years.

But how good are they? Six league wins on the bounce has blurred the memory of unrest in September, when problems at the Camp Nou and Santiago Bernabeu appeared almost on an even keel.

Coach Ernesto Valverde steered his team back into form while Madrid's slump plunged deeper, with a change of coach sparking a brief revival, only for old weaknesses to float back to the surface.

Real's troubles have accentuated Barcelona's superiority, not only in terms of points, where there is a 10-point difference between the club in the table, but on the pitch too.

Barca's 5-1 hammering of Real in October came as a knockout blow for Julen Lopetegui, made even sweeter in Catalonia that they were the ones to deliver it.

But more generally, every jolt dealt to Real -- by Sevilla, Alaves, Levante, Eibar, Real Sociedad and Villarreal in the league alone -- has made Barca's progress appear all the more smooth.

"It is to our advantage but I don't think too much about the other teams teams," Valverde said recently. "I never

discard anyone, not Madrid nor anyone else."

■ **Hitting their stride**

Barca's 3-0 win last weekend against Eibar was one of their best of the season and there is a sense now of a team hitting their stride, when rivals were already struggling to keep pace.

Philippe Coutinho's absence from Valverde's starting line-up had become a concern but against Eibar he returned and was superb.

Luis Suarez, who scored twice, is back to his best. Lionel Messi was quiet, but scored his 400th La Liga goal. Perhaps most impressive of all, Barca hardly needed him.

Messi and Suarez now have 31 league goals between them while Barcelona's goal difference is twice as good as that of second-placed Atletico Madrid. The defence, previously creaking, has tightened.

"There was a time when we had to focus on our defending and see where the problem was," Valverde said. "We have to attack well but also give little away."

Barcelona host Leganes on Sunday and Valverde will know the season is judged in June not January.

Twelve months ago, his team were eight points and three wins better off. Their defence had been sturdier too, by 11 goals. Despite progress in La Liga and the Copa del Rey, suc-

cess in the Champions League remains the priority, even if Valverde refuses to admit it. His future, and the activation of a one-year contract extension in the summer, is likely to depend on it.

■ **Sevilla visit Bernabeu**

Atletico and Sevilla may not prove consistent enough in the league but in Europe, in a knock-out phase, Barca's mettle will be tested. Valverde's priorities will also come into sharper focus as he attempts to juggle three competitions.

"There are those who think that if we lose in the Copa del Rey we will win the Champions League," he said before Thursday's win over Levante. "But I don't."

Their lead over Atletico, who face bottom club Huesca on Saturday, is unlikely to grow this weekend but at least one of Real or Sevilla will drop points, as they play each other at the Bernabeu.

Santiago Solari conceded it was a "weak performance" that brought defeat by Leganes in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday, even if Real still progressed on aggregate.

Victory over Sevilla would deliver a boost to Real's chances of finishing in the top four but their title hopes are now miniscule. In Spain again, Barcelona are in charge.

(Source: Eurosport)



FFIRI president Taj warns Carlos Queiroz to stay away from controversies

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** —Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) President Mehdi Taj has warned Team Melli coach Carlos Queiroz he must talk about technical issues after the Portuguese coach accused Iran sports minister Masoud Soltanifar of ordering the federation to not extend his contract at the end of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup. Queiroz has said the Iranian sports ministry has put the football federation under pressure to terminate his deal after the Asian Cup underway in the UAE.

“Iran sports ministry didn’t want the federation to extend my contract. If I found out about it, I would not extend my deal after the 2018 World Cup. I didn’t want to do anything against the minister’s order,” Queiroz had told reporters on the sidelines of Team Melli training on Thursday.

Queiroz’s interview created concerns ahead of Iran football match against Oman in the Asian Cup Round of 16 scheduled for Sunday.

“Iran’s football family needs to keep more calm and stay away from tension in the pivotal period. If there is any criticism it should be declared after the competition ends. The only aim of Iran sports ministry, football federation and people is Team Melli’s pride and all of us are doing our best to make it happen.

“All wages, salaries and bonuses of coaching staff have been paid so far and the coaching staff must only talk about technical issues. Experience has shown that these kinds of controversies could jeopardize our success,” Taj said.



Iran to meet Oman in AFC Asian Cup Round of 16



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team will meet Oman in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup Round of 16 underway in the UAE. The match will be held at the Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. In the group stage, Iran defeated Yemen 5-0 and Vietnam 2-0.

Team Melli were held to a goalless draw by Iraq national football team and advanced to the knockout stage thanks to a better goal difference.

The winner of Iran and Oman match will face either Thailand or China in the

quarterfinals.

Record-title holders Japan will face Saudi Arabia in the first knockout round, in what is a repeat of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup semifinals. The winning team will play either Vietnam or Jordan in the quarterfinals.

Qatar will face Iraq in the standout tie, while Korea Republic will meet Bahrain.

Hosts UAE will play Kyrgyzstan in the Round of 16. The winner will play either Australia or Uzbekistan.

The first knockout rounds will be played from January 20 to January 22.

Sardar Azmoun among five best strikers from the group stage



The group stage of the AFC Asian Cup 2019 tournament has seen plenty of action, and more importantly, plenty of goals!

96 goals have been scored so far in the tournament, and the bulk of them have come from the forwards of their respective countries. Needless to say, their scoring form could be the key to decide which nation lifts the cup. Here are the best strikers from the group stage:

#5 Mohanad Ali (Iraq)

Mohanad Ali has been a revelation in the tournament so far. The forward has made a name for himself in the competition, and has quickly become one of the players to keep an eye on.

Two goals for him so far, but expect plenty more if he gets going in the knockout rounds of the Asian Cup.

#4 Vitalij Lux (Kyrgyz Republic)

One game can change a whole lot. From being considered a failure, Vitalij Lux has suddenly become the lethal striker Kyrgyz Republic needed.

Lux bagged a hat-trick in the final group game against Philippines, and with those neat finishes, has become one of the players who could play a huge role in the next stage of the competition.

#3 Sardar Azmoun (Iran)

The always exciting Sardar Azmoun has performed yet again when his team

called on him. After showing his abilities at the World Cup, Azmoun has taken the good form into this tournament, and has three goals to his name.

Every time he attacks, it looks like he might score, and considering Iran have been tipped to go far in the tournament, his goals could prove the key.

#2 Eldor Shomurodov (Uzbekistan)

Another of the younger crop of players coming through, Eldor Shomurodov has made an impression and how!

Four goals in the tournament thus far, but more importantly, he looks like he can do no wrong in front of goal. One on one with the keeper, there seems to be no doubt in this young forward’s mind – and he generally slots home comfortably.

Heading into the knockouts, his goals could propel Uzbekistan far.

#1 Almoez Ali (Qatar)

Qatar have impressed one and all thus far, and the biggest reason for that is the goals scored by one Almoez Ali. The striker now has seven in the tournament so far, and he looks like he could double his tally by the end of it!

Four goals against DPR Korea and a couple against Saudi Arabia showed his class, and he surely holds the key for the Qataris to perhaps win the whole thing. (Source: Fox Sports Asia)

Alireza Jahanbakhsh unhappy with Iraqis players’ performance



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran star Alireza Jahanbakhsh criticized the way that Iraqi players performed against Iran in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Team Melli, the first-ranked football team in Asia, were held to a goalless draw by Iraq at a packed Maktoum Stadium in Dubai on Wednesday but advanced to the Round of 16 as the Group D winners.

Jahanbakhsh was in Iran lineup after the Brighton & Hove Albion star missed Team Melli’s first two matches against Yemen and Vietnam due to injury.

“We knew that it would be a difficult

match against Iraq because we had experience playing together. But I think they had not come to play football this time. Iraq came to ruin our football and there was not a good enough condition for football,” Jahanbakhsh told reporters after the match. “What’s important is we have qualified for the Round of 16 as the winners. However, we wanted to advance to the next stage with nine points,” he added.

“I just want to say a huge thanks to the coaching staff for trusting me. Hopefully I can help Team Melli in the next matches,” Jahanbakhsh concluded.

Sanchez plays down favorites tag as Qatar impress



Head coach Felix Sanchez has been quick to play down any notion of Qatar being favorites to win the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 following Thursday’s 2-0 win over Saudi Arabia which saw his side finish top of the Group E standings.

Almoez Ali scored twice to take his tally for the tournament to an impressive seven, as the Qataris recorded a third successive victory, a run of form that has yet to see them concede.

However, despite the flying start, Sanchez is adamant that Qatar’s impressive record will count for nothing come the knockout phase.

“I want to congratulate my players for the game against Saudi Arabia,” said the Spanish tactician.

“They showed great team spirit and plenty of quality. It is good for the team to finish first as it helps build confidence going into the next round.”

“Nevertheless, we have finished the group stage and now it does not matter if you have three wins or just the one, as it all comes down to just one match going forward.

“Each game is going to be very hard, and we do not consider our favorites as we know our opponents in the next round will be very difficult.”

Qatar, quarter-finalists in 2000 and 2011, are now scheduled to meet Group D runners-up Iraq in Abu Dhabi on Tues-

day, with Sanchez predicting another tough encounter for his charges.

“We know that our next opponents are one of the strongest in the competition,” he said.

“It’s not that we would prefer to play Iraq rather than someone else as we always play to win the group, it is going to be very tough. We know that we will have to perform well to compete with a well-organized team like Iraq who have talented players.”

Meanwhile, Juan Antonio Pizzi was left to rue the mistakes that cost Saudi Arabia dear on a night when they finished as runners-up to Qatar, setting up Monday’s Round of 16 clash with four-time champions Japan in the process.

“We tried to impose our style of play on Qatar, but our finishing and our ability to make the right decisions at crucial moments were not there tonight,” declared the one-time Chile boss.

“We were good in the first 30 minutes, but an individual error for the first goal and then another mistake from a set-piece saw us concede twice.

“I am just starting to think of the game versus Japan. As I have stated before, I respect all of the teams that are here and do not feel either superior or inferior to anyone. It is now important for us to learn from the mistakes we made against Qatar and perform better when we play Japan.” (Source: the-afc)

Majid Jalali replaces Firouz Karimi in Nassaji

TASNIM — Less than a week after appointing Firouz Karimi as new head coach of Nassaji Mazandaran, the Iranian football club announced that they will resume Iran Professional League (IPL) with Majid Jalali.

Jalali parted company with Paykan by mutual consent in early December.

He was replaced by Hossein Faraki in the Tehran-based football team.

Nassaji started the IPL season with Javad Nekounam but parted ways with Ex-Iran captain at the end of IPL first half.

They reached an agreement with Firouz Karimi a few days ago but changed their minds and appointed Jalali as their new head coach.

Nassaji sit 10th in Iran Professional League table, 15 points behind leaders Sepahan.

The Ghaemshahr-based football team will face Zob Ahan in Isfahan on February 3 at the beginning of the IPL second half.

Iman Mobali named Foolad assistant coach

IRNA —Former Iranian national football team and Esteghlal midfielder Iman Mobali has been named as assistant coach of the country’s Foolad club.

He will assist Afshin Ghotbi in the Ahvaz-based football team.

Mobali has already worked as Ghotbi player in Team Melli. He scored Iran’s winner against Iraq in the 2011 AFC Asian Cup.

Now, the former player of Paykan, Esteghlal, Foolad and Esteghlal Khuzestan has been appointed as assistant coach of Foolad.

Foolad sit seventh in Iran Professional League (IPL) table with 18 points from 15 matches, 13 points behind leader Sepahan.

Jhon Castaneda is December’s Athlete of the Month

Jhon Castaneda has been voted the Allianz Athlete of the Month for December after a record-breaking performance at the World Para Powerlifting Americas Open Championships.

The Colombian set an Americas record of 212kg in the men’s over 107kg on his way to gold in front of a home crowd in Bogota.

Castaneda received 61 per cent of the public votes. Norway’s Nordic skier Vilde Nilsen was second with 34 per cent. Dutch wheelchair tennis player Diede de Groot, Thai boccia player Worawut Saengampa and Georgian wheelchair fencer Irma Khetsuriani were also nominated.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Beiranvand eyes knockouts after Iran achieve group stage target

Alireza Beiranvand has admitted that Islamic Republic of Iran fans wanted victory against Iraq to make up for the 2015 AFC Asian Cup defeat after the sides played out a 0-0 draw in their final Group D match of the 2019 edition at Al Maktoum Stadium on Wednesday.

Having each won their first two matches, the teams went into the game with their places in the last 16 secured but, level on six points apiece, top spot remained up for grabs, although it was Iran who led on goal difference to mean a draw would see them finish in first place.

But much of the talk in the build-up centered on the incredible 3-3 draw in the quarter-finals of the 2015 competition – a game that Beiranvand watched from the bench – when Iraq prevailed 7-6 on penalties in what was one of the most memorable matches in the tournament’s history.

“Our people wanted us to win and there was a lot of pressure on us on social media – they said these are the guys that eliminated you,” admitted the Player of the Match.

“However, we wanted to play our usual game and be completely focused on not conceding first. In the end, we won the group, and this was what we were looking for.

“Everyone expected us to finish first and now we expect to perform even better in each game going forward. When you finish top of a group, you are considered a tough opponent by the other teams.”

Carlos Queiroz’s side started the brighter at a vibrant Al Maktoum Stadium and Sardar Azmoun was off-target with an early header, before Alireza Jahanbakhsh – making his first appearance of the tournament – blazed over shortly before half-time as Iran failed to take advantage of their superiority.

But there was less goalmouth action after the interval and the longer the game went on, the more Iran seemed happy to settle for the point that would see them top the standings, although Beiranvand had to make a fine save to deny Alaa Abbas’s header with 13 minutes remaining.

In the end the deadlock would not be broken as Team Melli advanced to the knockout rounds having yet to concede a goal. Next up the three-time champions will head to Abu Dhabi, where they will play one of the highest-ranked third-placed finishers in the last 16 on Sunday.

“We knew Iraq didn’t want to lose to Iran. We should have taken our opportunities in the first half but, unfortunately, we didn’t,” added Beiranvand.

“But both teams will be happy, because neither of us lost in our last game. Thankfully, we’re done with the group stage, have qualified and have performed well in our games – something the players really strived for.

“We might be the only team that has made four or five changes every game. This proves that we have two teams; everyone plays for the national team and gives their best.” (Source: the-afc)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» www.eshtarak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Hamshahri No. 3 - ISSN: 1017-94No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713

He who constantly jests, exposes a part of his intelligence to destruction.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Cartoon

■ Seyhun Gallery is hosting an exhibition of cartoons by Kambiz Derambakhsh.

The exhibition will run until January 30 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

Photo

■ An exhibition of photos by Kiarang Alaei is underway at Aran Gallery.

The exhibit named "The Fourth Condition" will run until February 8 at the gallery that can be found at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle Le Chateau St.

■ Photos by Maryam Shokrai are currently on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Wait for the Darkness" will continue until January 23 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

■ A collection of photos by Soheil Bazargani is currently on view in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery.

The exhibition will run until January 23 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

■ Photos by Sara Rashidi are currently on display in an exhibition at Saye Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Sound of Silence" runs until January 23 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.

Sculpture

■ An exhibition of sculptures by Banafsheh Hemmati is underway at Iranshahr Gallery.

The exhibit titled "The Trace of the Absence" will continue until January 29 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.

Multimedia

■ Sets of installations and paintings by Mohammadreza Arab Khazaeli are on display in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibition titled "Falling" will run until January 25 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

■ A collection of paintings and collages by Yalda Jamali is underway at Negar Gallery.

The exhibit named "All of My Flowers Come from Your Garden" will be running until January 23 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Afra Safa is currently underway at Elaheh Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until January 28 at the gallery that can be found at 47 Golfam St., off Africa Ave.

■ Emad Noruzi is showcasing his latest painting collection "Humor/Anxiety/Composition" in an exhibition at Ace Gallery.

The exhibit runs until January 27 at the gallery located at No. 1831 Shariati Ave. near the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

■ Kiumars Harpa is hanging his latest painting collection "Memories Colored" in an exhibition at Sareban Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until January 28 at the gallery, which can be found at 130 Hoveizeh St. off Sohrevardi St.

New Persian translation of Kitab al-Kafi published

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Five volumes of a new Persian translation of the Kitab al-Kafi, a hadith collection compiled by Shia scholar Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni who lived during the third and fourth centuries AH, has been published.

The collection was unveiled at the Sarcheshmeh Cultural Complex in Tehran on Thursday during a special ceremony attended by translator Hojjatolislam Hossein Ansarian, Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization director Hojjatolislam Mohammad Qomi and a large number of Shia scholars.

In a speech made during the ceremony, Ansarian gave a brief description of the various Persian translations of the book published over the past centuries and said the translations are not really appropriate to be offered to the younger generation.

"Accordingly, I decided to work on a new translation compelling the younger generation's attention," he noted.

Ansarian said that he has spent three years translating the collection and added that he has read it three times over carefully before it was published.

"This book is available now by God's help, and I hope it will soon find its way to Islamic seminaries, educational centers, and Shias' homes," he mentioned.

He said ten volumes of the collection,



Hojjatolislam Hossein Ansarian speaks during the unveiling ceremony of his translation of the Kitab al-Kafi at the Sarcheshmeh Cultural Complex in Tehran on January 17, 2019. (Hawzeh/Sobhan Beiranvand)

which contains over 16,000 hadiths, will be released during March.

The collection has been published by several publishers under the auspices of the

Qom Seminary, which released the book last December.

Iranian documentary "Beloved" to compete in Berlinale



A scene from "Beloved", a documentary by Yaser Talebi.

A R T **TEHRAN** — "Beloved" ("Delband"), a documentary by Yaser Talebi has been selected to go on screen in the Culinary Cinema section of the 69th Berlin International Film Festival — Berlinale, the organizers have announced.

"Beloved" is about Firuzeh, an 82-year-old female cowherd in northern Iran who prefers a hard, solitary herder's existence with her cows to a more comfortable life among people.

The documentary will have its German premiere at the 13th Culinary Cinema held under the motto "A Taste for Balance" from February 10 to 15.

Ten documentaries and two fiction films focusing on the relationship between food, culture and politics will be presented in

this section this year.

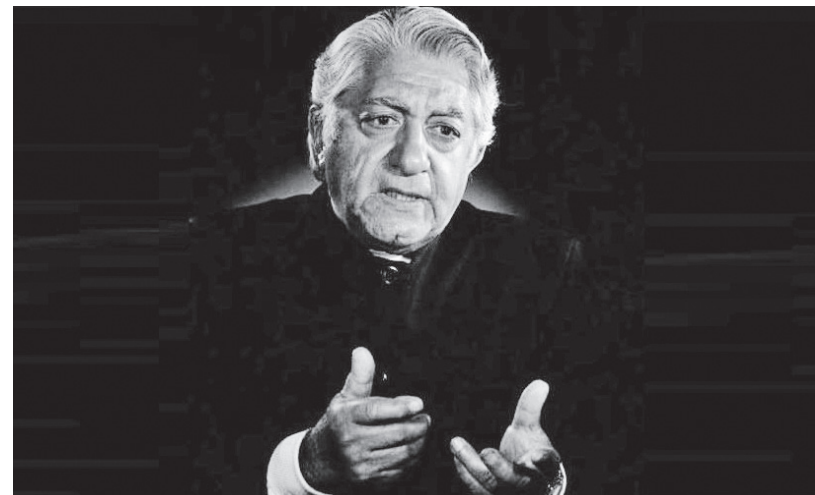
"Sembradoras de vida" by Alvaro Sarmiento and Diego Sarmiento from Peru, "When Tomatoes Met Wagner" by Marianna Economou from Greece and "A God in Each Lentil" by Miguel Ángel Jiménez from Spain are among films competing in this section.

Also included are American documentaries "The Biggest Little Farm" by John Chester and "Chef's Table - Asma Khan" by Zia Mandviwalla.

In addition, Iranian director Farhad Delaram's short film "Tattoo" has been selected for the Generation 14plus section of Berlinale.

The 69th Berlin International Film Festival is scheduled to take place from February 7 to 17.

Fajr festival to pay tribute to Ezzatollah Entezami



Deceased Iranian actor Ezzatollah Entezami in an undated photo.

A R T **TEHRAN** — The 37th Fajr Film Festival plans to pay tribute to legendary actor Ezzatollah Entezami by organizing a special program during the opening ceremony of the event on January 30, the organizers announced on Friday.

Entezami, the veteran actor of stage and screen, who was referred to as the "master actor" and "the honor of Iranian cinema" died in August 2018 at the age of 94.

He was one of Iran's golden generation of actors, which includes Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, Ali Nasirian, Jamshid Mashyekhi and Davud Rashidi, who began his career with acting in traditional Iranian performances at theaters located on Tehran's Lalezar Street, which was

considered as Iran's Broadway during 1950s and 1960s.

Appearance in over 50 movies and dozens of theatrical performance brought him numerous honors. He won four Crystal Simorgh awards at the Fajr International Film Festival for his roles in "Grand Cinema", "The Day of the Angel", "A House on Water" and "The Marsh".

In addition, actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya, filmmaker Azizollah Hamidnejad, graphic designer Ebrahim Haqiqi, voice actor Khosro Khosroshahi and film editor Abbas Ganjavi will be honored with lifetime achievement awards during the festival.

The 37th Fajr Film Festival will take place in Tehran and several other Iranian cities from January 30 to February 11.

Iran celebrates centenary of Academy of Music

1 → "We can trace music in the ancient history of our country. There is no region existing in the country without music and it belonged to people from all walks of life," the minister said.

He added, "This popularity and widespread use of music is part of the Iranian identity. I believe music and poetry are two wings of Iranian identity that have been together."

The ceremony went on by honoring veteran musicians and top students of the academy including cellist Davud Jafari-Omid, martial music composer

Ahmad Haqkerdar and music scholar Amir-Ashraf Aryanpur.

Tombak virtuoso Mohammad Esmaeili, clarinet player Rahmat Afshar and santur player Mina Oftadeh were also honored for their lifetime achievements.

Among the honorees were also Gholam-Hossein Fakhimikia, Parvindokht Eshtehardi, Maliheh Saeidi and Farhad Fakhreddini.

The organizers next unveiled a commemorative postage stamp for the centenary of the academy, and a number of musicians gave several performances.



Music Office exec Taqi Zarrabi signs an autograph on a commemorative postage stamp for the centenary of Iran's Academy of Music at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on January 16, 2019. (Honaronline/Asghar Khamseh)

ABC documentary on Theranos features ex-CEO deposition tapes

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — A television documentary about the rise and fall of Theranos Inc will include deposition tapes from founder and former Chief Executive Elizabeth Holmes and other key players in the downfall of the high-tech blood-testing company.

ABC News said on Wednesday that "The Dropout" was the result of a three-year investigation of the self-made Silicon Valley entrepreneur and her company, which was worth as much as \$9 billion before it became clear that many of its claims were bogus.

The documentary will be previewed on ABC's "Nightline" program on Jan. 23, with a six-part podcast launched the same day. An air date for the full documentary has yet to be announced. ABC released a trailer for the podcast on Wednesday.

Theranos founder Holmes, 34, and the

now-defunct company's former president Ramesh "Sunny" Balwani, were indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice in June 2018 on charges they engaged in schemes to defraud investors, doctors and patients.. Both have pleaded not guilty.

ABC, a unit of Walt Disney Co, said "The Dropout" will feature the first sit-down interview with Balwani's attorney, as well as never-before-aired deposition tapes of Balwani, Holmes, three former members of the Theranos board, and others.

Attorneys for Holmes did not return a request for comment on the ABC documentary.

Theranos grabbed headlines and funding 10 years ago by claiming it could perform a full range of clinical tests using tiny blood samples drawn from a finger stick. Prosecutors allege that Holmes and Balwani knew their device had accuracy and speed issues.

Netflix movie "Bird Box" draws 80 million viewers; no data for "Roma"

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Netflix Inc on Thursday said more than 80 million member households will have watched its thriller movie "Bird Box" in its first four weeks, but the streaming giant gave no viewing data for Oscar hopeful "Roma."

"Bird Box", starring Sandra Bullock and set in a post-apocalyptic society where survivors must wear blindfolds, was released on Netflix on Dec. 21 and triggered a viral sensation when fans posted their own blindfolded "Bird Box Challenges" on social media.

Netflix does not routinely release viewing data for its movies and television series as traditional networks and film studios do. But it gave some limited figures in its fourth-quarter earnings report on Thursday, in which it reported slightly lower-than-expected quarterly revenues.

Netflix said in a statement that with movies like "Roma", from Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón, "we are beginning to have our original movie offering mirror the success of our series."

However, it gave no audience figures for "Roma", which won two Golden Globes earlier in January and is expected to be Oscar-nominated next week.

Netflix said other recent audience favorites included romantic television thriller series "You" and British young adult comedy series "Sex Education", both of which are expected to be watched by more than 40 million member households in their first four weeks.

No figures were released for other high-profile content, including the interactive movie "Black Mirror: Bandersnatch" and the Jennifer Aniston comedy "Dumplin'."