

# 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Against all odds

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## ARTICLE

**Hanif Ghaffari**  
Political analyst

### The great message of Bahman 22 rallies

The widespread presence of the Iranian people on the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution is a further victory for the country. Donald Trump, the president of the United States and his entourage in the White House, especially those in the last months, particularly John Bolton and Mike Pompeo, have been struggling to make a difference between the nation and the government of Iran. However, the widespread presence of the Iranian nation has thwarted these actions.

The Iranian nation yesterday gave a great lesson to the controversial president of the United States: that Trump, like other U.S. presidents over the past forty years, would not have the power to confront the Iranian government and nation. Undoubtedly, Donald Trump will take a very tough defeat to Iranians like the previous presidents of the United States.

On the other hand, the Iranian nation has shown that it has a good understanding of current developments in the world and the United States: Neither the victory nor the failure of one of the two traditional American parties could change the American authorities' policies towards our country. The hostility of the U.S. Democrats and Republicans to our nation, and the vicious and extensive efforts of the two to confront the foundations of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, have been proven to all. In this equation, there's no difference between Jimmy Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, George W. Bush, Obama, and Trump.

The president of the United States, like his predecessors, has been working hard to confront the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The formation of an action group against Iran by the U.S. Department of State can be analyzed and evaluated from different dimensions. In recent months, the news about the formation of an action group against Iran by the Trump government has attracted the attention of Western media. ➔13

### 4 decades after the Islamic Revolution: What are the reasons behind its steadfastness?

By Sondoos Alasaad

**BEIRUT** — Four decades ago, this month, the Iranian people changed the history of their homeland. They all stood firmly to smash the Imperialist hegemony and its Shah Puppet regime. Since then, Iran has witnessed a fundamental change in its diplomatic and political stance.

This article responds to some critics who have recently claimed that if the Supreme Leader Sayyed Ali Khamenei were not orienting the country's policy, Iran would have a leading role in the world and would have solid ties with the United States and other countries. However, it must be said

that the Iranian political behaviour is rooted in the depth of its ideology.

The ruling system in Iran is not based on a figure himself and what he says but rather on the ideology of the Velayat-e faqih. This ideology has been established by the later founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, who had originally derived it from the authentic and moderate Islamic teachings. The teachings that guarantee justice and equality for all, despite their gender, race, religion, view, etc. Under this system, the political stance remains firm and those who constitute a threat and show a

hostile position against the revolution would always be enemies.

This distinctive regime is feared by the imperialists for its independence and strength. If we draw on an analogy between this regime and the other regimes in the region, we would obviously notice how the U.S. backs them. One might ask why them and not Iran? Well, simply because, from the very beginning, and in its core ideology, Iran has settled to safeguard its sovereignty, wealth and natural resources. Another reason is that Iran is ruled democratically by those members who the public have already freely elected. ➔7

### Fake Imam darling of Zionists and Hindu fanatics

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

**TEHRAN** — A self-proclaimed Imam of Iraqi origin, born in Iran, currently based in Australia, his only claim to fame is Islam-bashing. His ticket to stardom in the West has been blatant hate speech and toxic sectarian rhetoric. He has become a darling of Islamophobes, New Atheists and right-leaning hate preachers who seek to sow seeds of discord among Muslims.

Imam Tawhidi, who has not been recognized

by the Australian National Imams Council nor is he affiliated with any Australian mosque (according to ABC investigation), is again in news.

The white-turbaned trouble-monger masquerading as a cleric is visiting India to attend a cultural festival organized by a prominent television group close to radical Hindu organizations.

Over the past few days, social media has been abuzz over Tawhidis much-publicized visit to India. While he has been ecstatically welcomed by the

ideological right (RSS and ilk), including some leaders of the ruling party, Muslim organizations and peace activists have strongly denounced his agenda-based visit.

Tawhidi banks heavily on his aggressive PR machinery, dishing out inflammatory statements that stoke the flames of sectarianism and malign the image of Islam. That's precisely why he is idolized by right-leaning ideologues from America to Israel to India. He makes their job easier. ➔6

### Zarif: Iran waits Lebanon to accept its military assistance

POLITICS  
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**TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran is waiting for Lebanon to show a desire to accept Tehran's past offers of military assistance.

"We always have this type of readiness and we announced on other occasions that this tendency exists in Iran but we are waiting for this

desire to exist on the Lebanese side," Press TV quoted Zarif as saying upon his arrival at Beirut's international airport.

He also expressed Iran's support for new the Lebanese government led by Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri.

Zarif said his visit to Beirut was aimed at declaring Tehran's support for Lebanon and to

announce that it "has complete and comprehensive readiness to deal with the brotherly Lebanese government in all areas."

Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah expressed his readiness on Wednesday to bring air defense systems from Iran in order to confront the invading Israeli warplanes. ➔2

### Savage murder of 6-year-old Saudi boy 'act of sectarianism'

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

**TEHRAN** — The savage murder of a six year old boy in Saudi Arabia has shaken the collective conscience of humanity. It has also unraveled the scale and magnitude of sectarian indoctrination in the Kingdom.

The news has been verified and according to reliable sources the boy, Zakaria Al-Jaber, was in the holy city of Medina with his mother to visit the shrine of Prophet

Mohammad (pbuh) when the tragic incident took place.

Many different versions of the incident have been reported in different media outlets. The most reliable version says the boy and his mother were travelling to the green-domed shrine, one of the two holiest shrines for Muslims, in a taxi when the driver got inkling that they were Shiites.

The taxi driver immediately stopped the car

near a coffee shop in Al-Tilal neighborhood and forced the boy out. Then he smashed a glass bottle and with a shard of broken glass slit the boys throat and stabbed him in front of his screaming mother.

The helpless mother tried to stop the assailant but he managed to overpower her. She cried out for help but nobody came. Then she collapsed on the ground, next to the bleeding body of her tender-aged son. ➔6

### Iraq rebuffs U.S. demands to stop buying energy from Iran

Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbasi has reiterated his country's opposition to sanctions imposed by the United States against Iran.

During a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi on Saturday, Halbasi said Iraq had to meet its energy needs by importing gas and electricity from Iran but the U.S. sanctions had created problems in this regard, according

to the New York Times.

Iran on Friday signed an agreement to extend exports of 1,200 megawatts of electricity to neighboring Iraq.

The deal was inked by the managing director of Iran's state-run Organization for Management of Electric Power Generation and Transmission (Tavanir), Mohammad

Hassan Motevalizadeh, and the Iraqi deputy electricity minister in Tehran.

Iraq is the biggest importer of electricity from Iran. It needs more than 23,000 megawatts of electricity to meet its domestic demand but years of war following the 2003 U.S. invasion have left its power infrastructure in tatters and a deficit of some 7,000 megawatts.



## ARTICLE

**By Yuram Abdullah Weiler**  
Analyst and journalist

### The Islamic Revolution at 40: Acknowledging the women

"This victory has come to us first and foremost because of the women rather than the men."

—Imam Khomeini, 23 Farvardin 1358 (12 April 1979).

Congratulations to all Iranians on this auspicious occasion of the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Having escaped the clutches of domination by the United States by toppling the U.S.-installed despot was a grand accomplishment in itself, but having maintained the majestic momentum of the Islamic Revolution for 40 years despite the most intensive economic, political and military subterfuges and plots of the enemy aimed at regime change is something truly above and beyond the norm.

With Iranophobes holding top positions in the Washington regime, the pressure upon Iran seems as high now as it was during the Sacred Defense years, when headlines of the imminent collapse of the revolutionary government were the daily fare in the western media. John Bolton, Trump's national security advisor, whose anti-Iran venom seems to be unbounded, declared before a conference of the despised terror cult, Mujahedin-e-Khalq, that "before 2019, we here will celebrate in Tehran!" Predictably, that did not happen, and it will not happen, insha'Allah.

And one of the reasons the best efforts at regime change by the enemies of the Islamic Republic have always failed and will always fail is the spirit of resistance demonstrated by the Iranian women over the course of history. As stated clearly by Imam Khomeini in the epigraph, it was the women rather than the men who were primarily responsible for the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. And Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei concurs. "I have pointed out on many occasions that in my meetings with the families of our martyrs," he stated, adding, "I have often found mothers more courageous and more resistant than fathers."

Likewise, during the long war with the Ottoman Turks in the Safavid period, it was the women of Iran who came out on the roofs of their homes to pour boiling water on the heads of the Ottoman soldiers. ➔13



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran, Japan to boost economic co-op: Larijani

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Monday that his trip to Japan is aimed to boost economic cooperation between Tehran and Tokyo, Mehr reported.

“[My] visit to Japan is taking place to boost bilateral cooperation..., and certainly the economic and the trade relations between the two countries will increase in the near future,” Larijani said at Mehrabad International Airport prior to leaving Tehran for Tokyo.

He also praised the friendly relationship between Iran and Japan, saying his visit to Japan will help expand ties between the two nations.



U.S. lies saying sanctions don't target people, VP says

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Monday that the U.S. officials are lying when they say that their sanctions target Iran's government and system and not the people, IRNA reported.

“It is a lie when they [the U.S. officials] say the sanctions target Iran's system and government. They have said in the book The Art of Sanctions that we should prevent the Iranian people from meeting their main needs to cause chaos,” he said on the sidelines of rallies to mark the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Shiraz.

The vice president added by participating in the rallies the Iranians are sending the “message of resistance” to the U.S. that they will defeat the sanctions.



Daesh-linked terrorists arrested

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said on Sunday that Iranian security forces arrested on February 8 seven individuals linked to the Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group before they could carry out any acts of terror in the country.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran, Alavi said the group had hatched plots but their ploys were foiled successfully, Tasnim reported.

Iran has arrested dozens of terrorists since June 2017, when a twin terrorist attack in Tehran left 17 people dead and dozens more injured.



Military chief: Iranophobia aimed to sell arms

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff, said on Sunday the enemies of the Islamic Republic have intensified their effort to spread Iranophobia with the purpose of signing arms deals with Middle Eastern countries.

Speaking to reporters, Baqeri stated that the Islamic Republic has never had a covetous eye on any regional country over the past four decades, but has maintained advisory presence in regional countries that have been facing terrorist attacks, Press TV reported.

“We will continue our presence in those countries as long as they want and will leave them whenever they do not want [Iran's presence],” he remarked.



U.S. milking Arabs through Iranophobia: Kharrazi

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Kamal Kharrazi, head of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said on Saturday that the United States and other big powers have always been seeking to instill fears in the Arab world about Iran's growing influence only to make them more dependent on the West.

Kharrazi said Saturday it was a policy of Washington to try to distort Iran's image in the eyes of the public in the Middle East so that it could justify its weapons deals with the governments in the region, Press TV reported.

“The business of Iranophobia has been created just to impose their policy on some countries in the region and take their money in exchange of expressing support for their security,” he added.



Iran, Russia, China may hold naval drills in Indian Ocean

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Navy's deputy commander said on Thursday that Iranian naval forces may hold large-scale drills with Russia and China in the Indian Ocean soon.

Rear Admiral Touraj Hassani-Moqaddam said the Air Force along with the Navy will participate the military maneuvers, Press TV reported, citing IRNA.

He said the drills are to be held in an area extending from the Makran Coast in southeastern Iran to the Indian Ocean.

“The Navy's state-of-the-art armaments and equipment will be deployed during the large-scale exercises,” he explained.

# Against all odds

## Rouhani: ‘I bow to the greatness of our dear nation’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranians took to the streets in very large numbers to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

The rallies started in more than 1,000 cities and 10,000 villages across the country. The winter cold, rainfalls and snowfalls could not deter people from participating in the rallies.

The Bahman 22 marches (Feb. 11 marches) started with the slogan of “Proud of the Past and Hope on the future”.

This year's rallies are proving a milestone as the revolution has entered its 40th birthday, while certain extremists such as John Bolton, the national security advisor to U.S. President Donald Trump, had wrongly predicted that the Islamic Revolution would not see its 40th anniversary.

The rallies are also a show of strength and firmness that the Iranians will not give in under illegal and tough economic sanctions introduced against the country by the Trump administration in violation of the international 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

People from all walks of life are participating in the rallies. They wave the national flag to show their love to the country despite the economic hardship created by the sanctions.

The Trump administration, encouraged by its regional allies including Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, ordered sanctions against Iran in May 2018 with the aim of inciting public protests inside the country. However, as the massive rallies are showing the pressures are backfiring against the United States.

In a speech to the Air Force officers on Friday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said “Death to the U.S.” is not a slogan against the American nation. Instead, the Leader insisted, it is a slogan against Trump, Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Trump, Bolton and Pompeo are not seeing any limits for their animosity against Iran. They use any opportunity to show their disgust for Iran. Trump and his close team's hatred of Iran have shocked the entire world.

**■ Rouhani: Enemy will not achieve its evil goals**

Addressing people in Azadi Square (Freedom Square) in Tehran, President Hassan



© Tehran Times/Iman Hamikah

People in Hamadan defy snowfall to take part in revolution anniversary rallies.

Rouhani said the huge turnout in rallies “means that the enemy will not achieve its evil goals” and that the revolution will “continue its path like the past 40 years”.

In a reference to the illegal sanctions and pressures against Iran, Rouhani said the participation of people in marches, including in the megacity of Tehran, indicates that the “one-year plots of the enemy (against Iran) have ended in failure.”

**■ ‘Iranians will win over sanctions’**

Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh, who participated in the rallies, said, “We are a resistant nation and will emerge victorious in the sanctions as we emerged victor in the imposed war.”

The imposed war refers to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in the 1980s.

**■ ‘Iranians speak with one voice’**

Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani also praised the people's massive turnout in the rallies and said, “The enemies should understand that the roots of the revolution are strong, and in this struggle the Iranian nation speak with one voice.”

Larijani who joined marchers prior to his trip to Japan added, “Have no doubt that massive presence of people in the Bahman 22 rallies and their support for the revolution will disappoint the enemies.”

## Iran unveils underground ballistic missile plant

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Aerospace Division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) unveiled on Thursday an underground plant manufacturing precision-guided ballistic missiles, Press TV reported.

“Unveiling this missile production city deep underground is an answer to the idle talk made by the Westerners, who assume they can restrict us and dissuade us from [pursuing] our long-term goals by means of threats and sanctions,” IRGC chief Mohammad Ali Jafari said during the unveiling ceremony.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jafari said Iran's defense might was in line with the country's deterrence doctrine and was by no means open to negotiations.

“Iran's defensive capability is deterrent [in nature] and in line with preserving its national security, and it cannot be subjected to any transaction or negotiation,” the commander asserted.

“Today, the Europeans are talking of imposing restrictions and sanctions on our defensive capability, while egregiously, their offensive capability is being used to attack the oppressed and innocent people throughout the world,”



he said. “But, we proudly enhance our defensive capability and are not afraid of anything.”

The ceremony, which was attended by the commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, also featured the inauguration of a smart surface-to-surface missile called Dezful.

Hajizadeh said national security is the Iranian Armed Forces' red line, noting the Dezful missile was the latest product of the Aerospace Division's research activities.

Describing the projectile's features, he compared the success achieved through its production to that of the Zolfaghar ballistic missile, whose mass production the country began in September 2016.

## Leader: ‘Death to America’ means death to Trump, Bolton, Pompeo

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said Iran has no fight to pick with the American people, stressing that “Death to America” chants mean death to President Donald Trump, national security adviser John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

“The U.S. regime is the embodiment of evil, violence, creating chaos, and warmongering. The U.S. regime has always lived off trespassing to fulfill its interests. The U.S. is the embodiment of evil, then they complain why we chant ‘Death to America,’” Ayatollah Khamenei said in comments at a gathering of Air Force officers.

“As long as the United States shows viciousness and savagery, the Iranian nation will never cease shouting the words ‘Death to America,’” he said, according to the khamenei.ir.

The Leader also warned Iranian authorities against trusting the Europeans, saying, “In the matter of nuclear negotiations, I had already said that the U.S. officials are not reliable. Today, the officials, who accepted to negotiate, admit that the Americans are not reliable.”

“These days, there is a discussion concerning

deur and power and the enemies are confused in face of this power,” IRNA quoted Alavi as saying.

He also said people's participation in the Bahman 22 march is “heartening the friends of the revolution” and disappoint enemies, top among Trump.

Culture Minister Abbas Salehi drew a comparison between today's circumstances in Iran to the days of Iraq's war against Iran, saying even when the capital Tehran was being bombarded by Saddam Hussein's army people took part in the rallies marking the national day of Bahman 22.

In the current situation the enemies have the “illusion” that after 40 years the Iranians have become tired of the pressures and they can force them into submission “but they cannot fully understand the Iranian society”.

**■ Rouhani: Rallies are a decisive response to exorbitant demands of foreigners and ill-wishers of Iran**

President Rouhani issued a statement thanking people for their massive turnout in the Bahman 22 rallies, saying their “magnificent”, “meaningful” and “timely” participation in the great festivities celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution marked a “durable” show of “solidarity” and the “greatness” of the Iranian nation.

In an open reference to the Trump administration's violation of the nuclear deal, Rouhani said the “enemies” by violating their commitments and imposing “cruel sanctions” and launching a massive propaganda campaign had the illusion that the Bahman 22 rallies this year would be held in a “depressing atmosphere”.

Rouhani told the Iranian nation that their participation in the rallies upon a call by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution was a “proper and decisive response to the exorbitant demands of foreigners and ill-wishers of Iran.”

The Iranian nation proved that they will not compromise on their independence and dignity, Rouhani noted.

“You brave people proved that you have not compromised and will not compromise on your independence and dignity under any circumstances, while not giving up your lofty revolutionary ideals, for which you have sacrificed the dearest members of your family,” Rouhani stated in his message.

Rouhani added, “I bow to the greatness of our dear nation.”



the Europeans and their proposals. My advice would be that they should not be trusted, just like the U.S. cannot be trusted,” he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that taking cautionary steps when dealing with Europe does not imply cutting ties with those nations.

“Even now, regarding Europe, I am not calling for cutting ties with them. However, the point I am trying to make here is about trust.”

“Protesters on the streets of Paris are attacked, to the point that some have lost their eyes. Then they brazenly demand that we observe human rights. Do they even know what human rights is? Neither today, nor in the past, and never throughout their history, have they recognized what human rights is,” he noted.

## Zarif: Iran waits Lebanon to accept its military assistance

**1 →** Syria and Iraq are accepting Iran's help and benefiting from it, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said, adding, “Whatever the Lebanese Army needs to become the strongest regional army, I am willing to go to Iran and bring it.” “Why should Lebanon remain afraid to cooperate with Iran?” he asked.

**■ ‘Iran ready to help new Lebanon government’**

Zarif said on Sunday that Tehran is ready to cooperate with the new Lebanese government in all sectors.

“If the Lebanese government requests, Iran is ready to cooperate with this country in all fields,” Press TV quoted him as telling reporters in Beirut, shortly after



Zarif (L) meets with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Monday, February 11, 2019

his arrival for a two-day official visit.

Zarif met with Lebanese President Michel Aoun on Monday.

Zarif said that Iran-Lebanon relations are beneficial to the people of both countries. Aoun thanked Iran's supports for Lebanon. He called on Iran to help Syrian refugees to return to their country.

On Sunday, Iran's chief diplomat held separate meetings with Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement chief Ramadan Shalah, leaders of Palestinian groups in Lebanon and Syria, members of the political bureau of Hamas, and representatives of political parties and movements in Beirut.

## Iran able to enrich uranium beyond 20% purity: Kamalvandi

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said on Sunday that Iran is able to enrich uranium beyond 20% purity.

“From the outset, we have worked in a way to be able to return to the previous situation if necessary,” he said on the sidelines of a ceremony in Qazvin.

Kamalvandi said the Atomic Energy

Organization of Iran (AEOI) chief has said “several times that we can return to previous activities and continue enrichment and have no problem in this regard.”

He also said that new nuclear products are scheduled to be unveiled on April 9, a date recognized as National Day of Nuclear Technology in Iran.

AEOI director Ali Akbar Salehi said in January that Iran can resume uranium

enrichment to the purity of 20 percent in 3-4 days.

Under the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of economic and financial sanctions. The deal was signed between Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN

Security Council including the United States. It went into effect in January 2016. However, President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. unilaterally from the nuclear deal in May and ordered sanctions against Iran. The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were imposed on November 4.



# Warren: Trump ‘may not even be a free person’ by 2020

U.S. President Donald Trump might be in jail by the time Election Day comes around, Massachusetts Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren said on her first full day of campaigning as a declared presidential candidate.

“By the time we get to 2020, Donald Trump may not even be President,” Warren said to voters in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, gathered at the Veterans Memorial Building. “In fact, he may not even be a free person.”

The moment marked a notable shift in tone for Warren, who has been reluctant to take on Trump directly by name since she announced her exploratory campaign on New Year’s Eve.

Warren elaborated on those comments to reporters at an event in Iowa City, pointing to the ongoing investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 election by special counsel Robert Mueller. “Well come on. How many investigations are there now? It’s no longer just the Mueller investigation,” Warren said. “They’re everywhere and these are serious investigations, so we’ll see what happens.”

Asked whether she believes Trump should be impeached, the senator said it is important to first see Mueller’s findings.

Warren, who has repeatedly said over the weekend that bigotry has no place in the Oval Office, also told reporters that she has



already called out Trump for being a racist “many times.”

“I don’t think there’s much doubt of that,” she said. Earlier in the day, the Massachusetts Democrat had lamented in Cedar Rapids that the country is in a “dangerous moment,” and that, “what happens in 2020 is going to determine the direction of our nation, the direction of our people.”

“Every day, there’s a racist tweet, a hate-

ful tweet, something really dark and ugly,” Warren said of Trump. “And what are we, as candidates, as activists, the press, going to do about it? Are we going to let him use those to divide us?”

The answer to that question, Warren went on to say, was to avoid the trap of engaging in every one of Trump’s actions.

“Here’s how I see it: Donald Trump is not the only problem we’ve got. Yeah. Donald

Trump is the symptom of a badly broken system,” Warren said. “So, our job as we start rolling into the next election is not just to respond on a daily basis. It’s to talk about what we understand is broken in this country, talk about what needs to be done to change it and talk about how we’re going to do that, because that is not only how we win, it’s how we make the change we need to make.”

A Warren campaign official told CNN that the presidential candidate does not plan to engage in every single tweet or attack from Trump as the 2020 season ramps up. Much as she has been doing over the last month, Warren will continue to ignore much of his “every day efforts to divide and distract,” the official said, noting that Warren wanted to use her first event of the day to explain her rationale for this strategy.

Warren officially launched her campaign in Massachusetts on Saturday, where she issued a challenge to the super wealthy and called Trump “just the latest and most extreme symptom of what’s gone wrong in America.”

Warren’s weekend kickoff saw her formally joining a growing field of candidates for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination as the group competes for the opportunity to unseat Trump.

(Source: CNN)

## Top Pentagon official in Afghanistan amid push for peace

The Pentagon’s top official made an unannounced visit to Afghanistan on Monday to meet with U.S. commanders and Afghan leaders amid a push for peace with the Taliban.

Pat Shanahan, the recently installed acting secretary of defense, said he has no orders to reduce the U.S. troop presence, although officials say that is at the top of the Taliban’s list of demands in exploratory peace negotiations.

Shanahan said he is encouraged that President Donald Trump’s administration is exploring all possibilities for ending a 17-year war, the longest in American history.

But he stressed that peace terms are for the Afghans to decide. Thus far the Taliban have refused to negotiate with the government of President Ashraf Ghani, calling it illegitimate. Washington is trying to break that impasse.

“The Afghans have to decide what Afghanistan looks like. It’s not about the U.S., it’s about Afghanistan,” Shanahan told reporters traveling with him from Washington.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the administration’s special envoy for Afghan peace talks, said Friday that although talks are in an early stage, he hopes a deal can be made by July. That is when Afghanistan is scheduled to hold a presidential election.

Shanahan, a former Boeing executive who had never been in Afghanistan until Monday, was scheduled to meet with Ghani and other top government officials.

Shanahan took over as acting secretary of defense on Jan. 1 after Jim Mattis submitted his resignation in December. Shanahan had been Mattis’ No. 2.

Shanahan’s views on the Afghan war are not widely known.

He said he would use this week’s visit to inform his thinking and to report back to Trump.

In testimony before Congress last week, Gen. Joseph Votel, the commander of U.S. Central Command, offered a largely optimistic view of Afghanistan, saying the current maneuvering between U.S. and Taliban negotiators is “our first real opportunity for peace and reconciliation since the war began.”

Votel noted that the Taliban are still capable of inflicting significant casualties on Afghan government forces. Just last week the insurgents killed some two dozen Afghan troops in an attack on an army base in northern Kunduz province.

In addition to battling the Taliban, U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan are focused on an ISIL affiliate known as ISIL-Khorasan, comprised of foreign fighters largely from Pakistan. “Left unchecked,” Votel said in his report to Congress, ISIL-Khorasan “will continue to grow as a threat to our homeland.”

In his remarks to reporters during his flight to Kabul, Shanahan said that although the ISIL presence in Syria “has been decimated,” local Syrian security forces are needed to ensure stability. He said ISIL still has a global presence.

“If something hasn’t been completely eradicated, there is a risk of it returning,” he said.

Trump has taken an ambivalent approach to Afghanistan, saying his instinct upon entering office in 2017 was to withdraw. Yet he chose instead to add about 3,500 troops



in 2017-2018 to bolster the U.S. effort to train and advise Afghan forces. After Mattis resigned in December, Trump insisted that he had been unhappy with how Mattis handled Afghanistan. Since then, the administration has said it achieved a tentative “framework” for fuller peace negotiations with the Taliban.

“We do not know whether we will achieve an agreement,” Trump said in his State of the Union address to Congress last week, “but we do know that after two decades of war, the hour has come to at least try for peace.”

(Source: AP)

## Talks collapse on border deal as U.S. government shutdown looms

Talks on border security funding collapsed after Democratic and Republican lawmakers clashed over immigrant detention policy as they worked to avert another U.S. government shutdown, a Republican senator said.

“The talks are stalled right now,” Republican Senator Richard Shelby told “Fox News Sunday.” He said the impasse was over Democrats’ desire to cap the number of beds in detention facilities for people who enter the country illegally.

Efforts to resolve the dispute over border security funding extended into the weekend as a special congressional negotiating panel aimed to reach a deal by Monday, lawmakers and aides said.

Democratic Senator Jon Tester played down any breakdown in talks. “It is a negotiation. Negotiations seldom go smooth all the way through,” he told the Fox program. Tester, one of 17 negotiators, said he was hopeful a deal could be reached.

But Shelby put the chances of reaching a deal by Monday at 50-50. No further talks were scheduled, a source told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

The lawmakers hoped to have an agreement by Monday to allow time for the legislation to

pass the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and get signed by President Donald Trump by Friday, when funding for the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies expires.

Trump agreed on Jan. 25 to end a 35-day partial U.S. government shutdown without getting the \$5.7 billion he had demanded from Congress for a wall along the border with Mexico, handing a political victory to Democrats.

Instead, a three-week spending deal was reached with congressional leaders to give lawmakers time to resolve their disagreements about how to address security along the border.

One sticking point has been the Democrats’ demand for funding fewer detention beds for people arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. Republicans want to increase the number as part of their drive to speed immigrant deportations.

Since he ran for president in 2016, Trump has pledged to stop the influx of undocumented immigrants by building a wall on the border and crack down on immigrants living in the United States illegally by aggressively conducting more deportations.

### ■ ‘Desperately needed’

Democrats proposed lowering the cap on detention beds to 35,520 from the current 40,520 in return for giving Republicans some of the money they want for physical barriers, the source familiar with negotiations said.

But Democrats would create a limit within that cap of 16,500 beds at detention facilities for undocumented immigrants apprehended in the interior of the country. The remainder would be at border detention centers.

By having the interior cap, ICE agents would be forced to focus on arresting and deporting serious criminals, not law-abiding immigrants, a House Democratic aide said on Sunday.

Republicans balked at the Democrats’ sub-cap offer, the source said.

Trump weighed in Sunday, saying the Democratic proposal would protect felons. “They are offering very little money for the desperately needed Border Wall & now, out of the blue, want a cap on convicted violent felons to be held in detention!” Trump said on Twitter.

“Claims that this proposal would allow violent criminals to be released are false,” the Democratic aide said.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, who is close to Trump, warned against limiting beds. “Donald Trump is not going to sign any legislation that reduces the bed spaces. You can take that to the bank,” he said on Fox News’ “Sunday Morning Futures.”

Lawmakers working on a border deal also have not yet nailed down the amount of money to go for physical barriers along the southern U.S. border, the source said.

While a growing number of Republicans in Congress have made it clear they would not embrace another shutdown, White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said he could not rule it out.

“You absolutely cannot,” Mulvaney, who is also Trump’s acting chief of staff, told NBC’s “Meet the Press” on Sunday. “Is a shutdown entirely off the table? The answer is no.”

Lawmakers, however, were working to avoid it.

On Friday, some of the negotiators said that if Congress could not pass a border security bill by Friday, they would move to pass another stop-gap funding bill to avert a shutdown and allow more time to reach a border deal.

(Source: Reuters)

## Leader of Iraqi Shia militia: U.S. using Daesh as excuse to fulfill interests



The leader of a powerful Iraqi militia group has lashed out at the United States for propping up the Daesh (ISIL) terrorist outfit in order to extend the stay of American troops in Iraq.

Qais al-Khazali, leader of the Asaib Ahl al-Haq group, said in a tweet on Monday that Washington looks at its own interests in Iraq before deciding whether to destroy Daesh or help it recover from the many defeats it has suffered in recent months.

Right now, he said, Washington needs the terrorist group to justify the presence of thousands of American forces in Iraq.

Over the past years, Iraqis have been able to recapture almost all of Daesh-controlled territories. With the Takfiri group on its last legs, Iraqi officials have been increasingly calling for an end to the U.S. military presence.

President Donald Trump said this month that U.S. troops need to stay in Iraq in order to “watch” Iran which has been key to helping the Arab country defeat Daesh.

The remarks drew a wave of condemnation, with Iraqi leaders saying they would not allow Trump to use their country as a launchpad for possible attacks and spy missions against neighbors.

“The Iraqi constitution rejects the use of Iraq as a base for hitting or attacking a neighboring country,” President Barham Salih said last Monday.

Salih said U.S. forces were in the country under an agreement between the two sides, but that “any action taken outside this framework is unacceptable.”

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq’s most senior Shia cleric, also took issue with Trump’s remarks, saying Iraq rejects serving as a platform to harm any other country.

He noted that Iraq aspires to have good and balanced relations with all neighboring countries, without interference in their internal affairs.

Iran, meanwhile, has made it clear that it would continue its advisory role in Iraq and Syria as long as their governments want.

“We will continue our presence in these countries as long as they want and will leave them whenever they do not want,” Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said Sunday.

(Source: Press TV)

## Malaysian court postpones ex-PM Najib’s corruption trial pending appeal

A Malaysian court on Monday postponed the corruption trial of former prime minister Najib Razak over charges related to a multibillion-dollar scandal at state fund IMDB pending an appeal, his lawyer said.

Najib was ousted in an election in May last year amid public fury over the alleged theft of \$4.5 billion from IMDB (IMDBB).

He has pleaded not guilty to ten charges of criminal breach of trust, money laundering and abuse of power and his trial was originally set to begin on Tuesday.

His lawyers, however, filed an application last week to stay the trial pending an appeal over a lower court’s ruling to transfer some of the charges to Kuala Lumpur High Court, media reported.

Harvinderjit Singh, one of Najib’s lawyers, told Reuters in a brief text message that the Court of Appeal had agreed to postpone the trial “until the appeal is heard”.

No new date for the trial or the appeal has been set, he said.

The postponement is seen as a blow for the government of Mahathir Mohamad, which reopened probes into IMDB shortly after the election and had promised to bring those involved in the scandal swiftly to justice.

Prosecutor V. Sithambaram told Reuters he expected the appeal to take only a week or two.

“It’s just a hiccup,” he said. “The case is just delayed slightly.”

The charges against Najib relate to a suspected transfer of 42 million ringgit (\$10.3 million) into Najib’s bank account from SRC International, a former IMDB unit.

### ■ Charm offensive

The trial is the first of four criminal proceedings that Najib is expected to face over the IMDB scandal so far, and the sum involved is a fraction of the \$1 billion that investigators say allegedly made their way into his bank accounts.

Police found nearly \$300 million worth of goods and cash at properties linked to Najib soon after the election.

Authorities have also charged his wife, Rosmah Mansor, and several high-ranked officials of the former administration. All of them have pleaded not guilty.

Najib has consistently denied wrongdoing and says the charges against him are politically motivated.

In recent weeks, he has undergone a public makeover, appearing in a music video portraying himself as a champion of the working class and throwing jibes at the ruling government on social media in a bid to shed the image of a wealthy, elite politician.

But the charm offensive may not help him in court. Najib faces years in prison after being hit with a total of 42 criminal charges, most of them linked to IMDB.

At least six countries, including the United States, Switzerland and Singapore, have launched money laundering and graft probes into IMDB, set up by Najib in 2009.

U.S. prosecutors say money stolen from IMDB was used to buy a private jet, luxury real estate, artwork by Picasso and Monet, as well as jewelry for Rosmah.

(Source: Reuters)

## Princess Ubolratana disqualified as Thai PM candidate

Thailand’s Election Commission has disqualified the sister of the king from running for prime minister after King Maha Vajiralongkorn called the bid “inappropriate”, ending a stunning, short-lived candidacy for a populist party.

The commission released the official list of parties’ candidates for prime minister on Monday without the name of Princess Ubolratana, the older sister of the king.

Members of the royal family should be “above politics” and therefore cannot “hold any political office”, the commission said in a statement, echoing the wording of a public statement from the king on Friday.

The 67-year-old princess had accepted the nomination of Thai Raksa Chart party, made up of supporters of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Her shock nomination broke with a long-standing tradition of members of the royal family staying out of politics.

Thailand has been a constitutional monarchy since 1932, but the royal family wields great influence and commands

the devotion of millions. Ubolratana was stripped of her royal title when she married a US national in 1972.

She returned to Thailand in the late 1990s after getting a divorce. Although her formal title was not restored, she is regarded as and treated like royalty by people in Thailand.

In a statement read out on all television stations within hours of her candidacy, King Vajiralongkorn said it was “inappropriate” for members of the royal family to enter politics.

Thai Raksa Chart responded swiftly, cancelling a campaign event on Saturday and issuing a statement saying it “complies with the royal command”.

The party could be banned from the March 24 election after an activist said he would file a petition seeking its dissolution.

Thai Raksa Chart is one of several pro-Thaksin parties contesting the election. The military government’s leader, Prayuth Chan-ocha, is also contesting the race for prime minister as the candidate of a pro-army party. Prayuth was the Thai army chief in 2014 and led the coup that overthrew

a government led by Thaksin’s sister.

Parties loyal to former telecommunications tycoon Thaksin have defeated pro-establishment parties to win every election since 2001 but, since 2006, each of their governments has been removed by court rulings or coups.

The gambit of nominating a member of the royal family could backfire on Thai Raksa Chart, said Titipol Phakdeewanich, dean of the faculty of political science at Ubon Ratchathani University.

“Things are now more unpredictable,” Titipol told Reuters.

If the party is dissolved, it could give more seats to anti-Thaksin affiliated parties, he said, although there are other parties loyal to the former prime minister contesting the election.

Thaksin, himself removed in a coup in 2006, lives in self-imposed exile after being convicted by a Thai court of corruption in absentia.

(Source: Al Jazeera)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	158468.2
IFX	1933.63

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,551 rials
GBP	54,331 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$62.06/b
WTI	\$52.36/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.57/b
Gold	\$1,307.55 /oz
Silver	\$15.76/oz
Platinum	\$797.00 oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Ban on imports of 1,300 goods items to be removed soon**

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian government is to remove the ban on imports of 1,300 types of goods via land borders soon, IRIB reported.

The ban which was imposed in the Iranian calendar year 1395 (starting March 21, 2016) is to be removed according to a ratification made by the cabinet on Thursday, regarding the conditions of people living on borders.



**Russia, Iran give up dollar in settlement payments, says ambassador**

Moscow and Tehran have given up the dollar in settlement payments and plan to shift completely to national currencies, with euro to be used if there are no other options, Russia's Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzhagaryan said in an interview with TASS.

"It is crucial for Russia to shift to national currencies in settlement payments with Iran. We will be using all existing means to bring the mentioned indicators to the highest possible level," he noted, adding that virtually Moscow "has already given up the dollar in cooperation with Iran." "We will rely on the Russian ruble and the Iranian rial, and on the euro if absolutely necessary, if there are no other options," the diplomat emphasized.

"That is a challenging task, though I believe that the banking structures of the two countries have the potential required to successfully implement the tasks," he added.

In the autumn of 2018, Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak said that about 25-30% of settlements between Russia and Iran were conducted in national currencies.

(Source: Tass)

Italy's industrial production dropped again in December

The slump in Italian industry has also continued towards the end of the year.

Their production fell in December to the previous month by 0.8 percent, as the statistics office Istat announced on Friday. The decline is the fourth in a row and is twice as strong as expected by economists. For the full year 2018, industrial production increased by 0.8 percent - the lowest level since 2014. In 2017, it had risen by 3.6 percent.

According to the EU Commission, the economic outlook for the debt-ridden country has recently deteriorated considerably. In its new forecast for growth, the Brussels authority expects 2019 GDP to increase by only 0.2 percent. Previously, it had forecast a plus of 1.2 percent. Italy would be the tail light among the euro countries by far. The country slipped into recession in the second half of 2018.

(Source: Reuters)

IMF warns of global economic "storm" as growth undershoots

The International Monetary Fund on Sunday warned governments to gear up for a possible economic storm as growth undershoots expectations.

"The bottom-line -- we see an economy that is growing more slowly than we had anticipated," IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde told the World Government Summit in Dubai.

Last month, the IMF lowered its global economic growth forecast for this year from 3.7 per cent to 3.5 per cent.

Lagarde cited what she called "four clouds" as the main factors undermining the global economy and warned that a "storm" might strike.

The risks include "trade tensions and tariff escalations, financial tightening, uncertainty related to (the) Brexit outcome and spillover impact and an accelerated slowdown of the Chinese economy", she said.

Lagarde said trade tensions -- mainly in the shape of a tariff spat between the United States and China, the world's two biggest economies -- are already having a global impact.

(Source: Economic Times)

'Iranian private sector to help Iraq overhaul power plants'

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's **d e s k** Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said Iranian private sector is going to contribute to rebuilding and overhauling Iraq's damaged power plants, IRIB reported.

Ardakanian made the remarks after signing an initial agreement to boost cooperation in the fields of power generation and exports as well as the transfer of power industry technology with Iraqi Minister of Electricity Luay al-Khatib in Tehran on February 8.

According to the Iranian official, aligning the two countries electricity systems, construction of power plants as well as reduction of energy losses in Iraqi electricity network are among other provisions of this agreement.

He further noted that a task force will be



set up to follow up on the implementation of the provisions of this agreement, saying that the Iraqi government is ready to implement all the provisions.

As reported, Iran also signed an agreement to extend exports of 1,200 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Iraq.

The deal was inked by the managing director of Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR) Mohammad Hassan Motevalizadeh and the Iraqi deputy electricity minister in Tehran on Friday.

Under the latest contract between the two countries, Iran exports 1,200 MW of electricity to Iraq every year through three power transmission lines in Basrah, Diyala and Amarah.

Weight of non-oil exports to Turkey, Iraq up %50

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran's non-oil exports to its two western neighbors, Iraq and Turkey, increased by 50 percent in terms of weight during the first 10 months of the present Iranian calendar year (ending on January 20, 2019), IRNA reported on Monday.

As reported, by January 20, Iraq imported 16.74 million tons of goods, at the value of \$7.51 billion from Iran registering 53 percent growth in terms of weight and 44.75 percent rise in terms of value.

Turkey, in the said 10-month-period, imported 6.2 million tons of Iranian non-oil products worth \$2.25 billion, showing a growth of 21.33 percent in terms of value and 54.58 percent in terms of weight.

The total value of the country's non-oil exports touched

\$36.36 billion, registering 2.21 percent increase year-on-year in the said time, the same report confirmed.

China, Iraq, the EU, Afghanistan, Turkey, India, South Korea, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Oman were the major importers of Iranian products in this time span.

On February 3, the IRICA Head Mehdi Mirashrafi announced in a news conference that "the U.S. sought to impede Iran's international trade by imposing cruel and unilateral sanctions on the country but our trade with the world is being done easily and we are not in lack of any type of basic goods."

"During the first 10 months of the present Iranian calendar year Iran exported \$36.3 billion of [non-oil] goods and imported \$35.6 billion," Mirashrafi said, "which is equal to a positive trade balance of one billion dollars."



"This happened under the conditions that the U.S. tried to avert our exports and impede imports," he added.

Major steel producers export 4.7m tons of steel in 10 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's major **d e s k** steel producers exported 4.715 million tons of steel during the ten-month period from March 21, 2018 to January 20, 2019, IRNA reported.

The figure shows 19 percent fall compared to the export amount of the same period of time in the previous year.

Over 40% of crude steel produced in Iran is exported to different markets worldwide, Khodadad Gharibpour, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), has recently announced.

Of the 1.79-billion tons of the world's annual crude steel production, some 30 percent

is exported by the producing countries, so Iran's 40-percent share of export is higher than the global figure, the official said.

A recent report released by the World Steel Organization (WSO) indicated that Iran became the world's tenth largest steel producer in 2018.

Iran which stood at the 13th place in 2017

could lag behind three major steel producers in the world, namely Italy, Taiwan, and Ukraine to stand at the 10th place in 2018, despite the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.

According to the WSO's report, Iran produced 25 million tons of crude steel in 2018 which indicates 17.7 percent growth from 21.2 million tons in 2017.

Daily gasoil output exceeds consumption by 16m liters

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Director **d e s k** of supply and distribution at National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) said the country's daily gasoil production is 16 million liters more than the consumption, IRNA reported.

According to Mojtaba Delbari, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018) Iran's daily gasoil output has stood at 98.2 million liters while the daily consumption has reported to be 81.8 million liters.

"With the third phase of Persian Gulf Star Refinery becoming operational, the country's potential capacity for storing refined products like gasoline and gasoil has increased significantly." He noted.



As reported, Iran's current daily gasoline production stands at 105 million liters.

Persian Gulf Star Refinery in the southern province of Hormozgan is the first of its kind designed based on gas condensate feedstock received from South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

British economy is losing considerable momentum

The UK economy is losing momentum as Brexit approaches.

The gross domestic product (GDP) increased from October to December only by 0.2 percent to the previous quarter, as the statistics office (ONS) announced on Monday.

In the summer, an increase of 0.6 percent had been achieved. The carmaker and the steel industry drove back their production. And the construction industry turned out to be a brake on the economy towards the end of the year. In addition, investments in the fourth quarter decreased by 3.7 percent

year-on-year. They had not fallen that much since the beginning of the decade when the United Kingdom was just emerging from the recession. For the whole of 2018, GDP growth of 1.4% fell to its lowest level since 2012.

This year could be even less: The central bank expects only 1.2 percent growth due to the Brexit uncertainties. The economy on the island would be heading for the weakest GDP surplus since the financial crisis ten years ago. Britain wants to leave the EU at the end of March.

(Source: Reuters)

External debt down 11%

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — According **d e s k** to the newest data released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Iran's debts to foreign lenders in the end of the ninth Iranian month of Azar (December 21, 2018) stood at \$10 billion, showing 11 percent decrease in comparison with the announced figure at the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018), IRIB reported on Monday.

In Azar, from the total of \$10.093 billion of foreign debt, \$6.86 billion was mid-term and long-term debts and \$3.174 billion was short-term debts, the report confirmed.

External debt is the portion of a country's debt that was borrowed from foreign lenders including commercial banks, governments or international financial institutions. These



loans, including interest, must usually be paid in the currency in which the loan was made.

Foreign debt as percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the ratio between the debt a country owes to non-resident creditors and its nominal GDP.

As IRIB reported, Iran's GDP was \$431.92 billion in 2017, thus the ratio between the debt and GDP is around 2.5 percent, which is not big.

China's export container transport index edges up in January

China's container transport for export purposes gained momentum in January due to rising shipping demand ahead of the Spring Festival, according to data from the Shanghai Shipping Exchange.

The average China Export Containerized Freight Index stood at 856.43 points in January, up 0.8 percent from December 2018, the exchange said in a statement.

The new figure was much higher than an average of 817.8 points last year.

The exchange said shipping demand rose last month ahead of the Spring Festival,

China's Lunar New Year, which fell on Feb 5 this year.

Last month, the sub-index for the Persian Gulf/Red Sea route saw the strongest rally of 18.6 percent, while those for South American and European routes rose 8.2 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively.

The China Export Containerized Freight Index was first released by the Shanghai Shipping Exchange in April 1998 as a barometer for the export shipping market.

(Source: China Daily)

Krugman expects to see a global recession this year, warns 'we don't have an effective response'

There is a decent chance the world economy is headed for a recession in 2019, according to Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman.

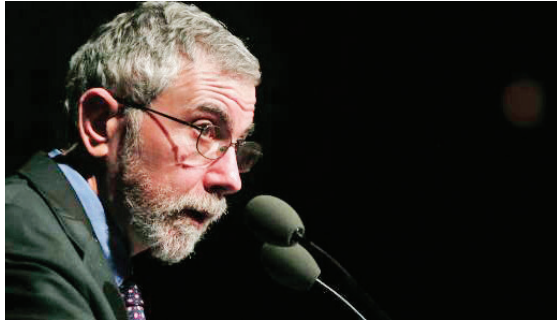
Market participants are increasingly worried about the prospect of a serious economic downturn over the coming months, with a long-running U.S.-China trade war souring business and consumer sentiment.

Most economists, as well as some of the world's business elite, agree that economic growth is slowing but policymakers have expressed some hope for a soft landing rather than an outright recession.

Speaking at the World Government Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates on Sunday, Paul Krugman said there are good reasons to be skeptical about this scenario.

When asked whether investors should expect to see a recession over the coming months, Krugman replied: "I think that there is a quite good chance that we will have a recession late this year (or) next year."

Paul Krugman is a renowned American economist and professor emeritus of Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School. He won the Nobel Prize in 2008 for his work on eco-



nomics geography and identifying international trade patterns. **■ Everybody has a bad 'track record' with growth forecasts**

Krugman said it was unlikely to be just "one big thing" that would prompt an economic downturn. Instead, a range of economic headwinds would increase the likelihood of a slowdown.

He highlighted President Donald Trump's tax cut stimulus as one area of concern, saying the program was "not very

effective." Krugman also warned it was "starting to look like the bubble may be deflating" when it comes to tech growth.

Citing a broad lack of preparedness among economic policymakers, Krugman said: "The main concern has always been that we don't have an effective response if stuff slows down."

"The place that looks really close to recession right now is the euro area," he added.

Late last week, the European Commission sharply downgraded its forecast for euro zone economic growth in 2019 and 2020.

The Commission said euro zone growth will slow to 1.3 percent this year from 1.9 percent in 2018 and is expected to rebound in 2020 to 1.6 percent.

The estimates were markedly less optimistic than the EU executive's previous forecasts, released in November, when Brussels expected the 19-country currency bloc to grow 1.9 percent this year and 1.7 percent in 2020.

The news exacerbated fears that a global economic downturn is spreading to Europe.

"By the way, my track record for this is bad -- as is everybody's. No one is good at calling these turning points," Krugman said.

(Source: CNBC)



# IDRO in 40 Years of the Islamic Revolution Honor to Previous, Hope to Future



## ■ Development of Phase 1 of South Pars Gas Field

Contract for the construction of onshore refinery of development project of Phase 1 of South Pars Gas Field was transferred in July 1999 to a consortium including Industries Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) and South Korea's DAELIM Company in the basis of EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction). Development of First Phase of South Pars Gas Field was delegated to Iran's IDRO (50%) and South Korea's DAELIM Company (50%) equally. This giant project, valued at approx. \$300 million, was put into operation officially in Nov. 2004 with the daily production of products including 25 million cubic meters of purified and treated gas, 40,000 barrels of gas condensates and also 200 tons of sulfur. It should be noted that more than 100 domestic and foreign companies cooperated for constructing this giant project in a way that 58 percent of this project was constructed by expert domestic engineers. Engineering operations, providing goods, manufacturing, transporting, installing and commissioning decks and bridges of platforms in Phase 1 of South Pars Gas Field, valued at \$199.8 million, were undertaken by SADRA – SAMSUNG Consortium. (It should be noted that SADRA has been affiliated to the organization.) Each share of partners in this consortium stands at 53 and 47 percent respectively which was put into operation in 2003.

## ■ Industrial Projects Management Institute

Development of Phases 6, 7 and 8 of South Pars Gas Field

### Bushehr

The contract for the construction of onshore refinery for the development of Phases 6, 7 and 8 of South Pars Gas Field was transferred in May 2003 to consortia [including Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) (29%), Japan's Toyo Company (29%) and Japan's JGC Company (24%) and also South Korea's DAELIM Company (18%) as Joint Venture (JV) project in the basis of Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC). This giant project, valued at about \$2 billion, was put into operation with the daily production of products including 172,000 barrels of gas condensates, 370 million cubic/feet ethane, 4,290 tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and also 3.64 billion/feet cubic meter of gas for being injected to Aqajari Oilfield. The development plan of phases 6, 7 and 8 of South Pars Gas Field includes three offshore platforms, three 32-inch underwater pipelines, one gas refinery, one 56-inch pipeline, five gas pressure boosting stations and installations for injecting gas to Aqajari oil wells. The daily production capacity of this refinery stands at 3.9 billion feet cubic meter gas. The refinery can treat and purify 1.3 billion cubic/feet meter of sour gas per day. In addition, the refinery has the capacity of condensation 130,000 barrels of oil liquids per day and also 5,00 tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Statistics show that 53 percent of this project has been constructed in the country for the first time. It should be noted that some parts and equipment of this project have been constructed for the first time in the country.

- Iran Industrial Projects Management Institute (IPMI) is considered as one of the general contractors in the field of oil, gas and petrochemical constructed within the framework of EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction).
- Main Topics of Business:



- Exploration & Production (E&P) projects,
- Refinery projects (oil, gas and gas condensate refinery)
- Petrochemical projects
- Environmental projects (extracting and recovering gases emitted from flares, incinerator and power generation)
- Industrial and mineral projects
- Power plant projects

## ■ Development of Phases 17 & 18 of South Pars Gas Field

The contract for the development of phases 17 & 18 of South Pars Gas Field (including onshore and offshore sectors) was delegated to a consortium including



[Industries Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) (48%), Iran Offshore Installations Engineering and Construction Company (21%) and also Oil Industries Engineering and Construction Company (31%) in March 2006 in the basis of Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC), under the strict supervision of Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO).

The construction operation of this giant project, valued at approx. \$4 billion, was finished in 2017 with the aim of daily production of 50 million cubic meters of treated and purified gas, 80,000 barrels of gas condensates, 400 tons of sulfur and annually production of one million tons of ethane and one million tons of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

## ■ BAHR GOSTARESH HORMOZ Company (Subsidiary of ISOICO, Iran Shipbuilding & Offshore Industries Complex)

Delivery of Iran-Kashan Container Carrier Vessel

Hormozgan prov.

This vessel is the 3rd oceangoing vessel that was manufactured by Iran Shipbuilding & Offshore Industries Complex, ISOICO. This oceangoing vessels has been delivered to the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), as employer of this project, successfully.

The aforementioned oceangoing vessel is superior to its similar foreign one qualitatively. It should be noted that this oceangoing vessel has been fully designed and commissioned by expert domestic engineers. This oceangoing vessel is equipped with 29 advanced systems including 300,000 working packages, about 50,000-inch diameter of piping, 65 km of cabling, 450 km of welding operations.

ISOICO, Iran Shipbuilding & Offshore Industries Complex is considered as the largest company active in the industry of shipbuilding, equipped with high capabilities and potentials in the country and region, including floating pond, dewatering the ship up to the capacity of 28,000 tons (Dock Floating), Syncro-lift (hoisting system), parking lots equipped with crane, various wharfs and quays, etc. Fulfilling large national projects such as construction of some oceangoing vessels according to the world's latest shipping standards for the first time in the country. Manufacturing tens of various types of steel, aluminum, services, trade, commercial and cruise vessels is of the salient achievements of ISOICO in a way that the company took giant strides in manufacturing high-tech and advanced vessel since its establishment.

BAHR GOSTARESH HORMOZ Company is of the subsidiary company of ISOICO which was set up in 2007.



## ■ HAFT TAPPEH Sugarcane Agro-Industry Company

Renovation of HAFT TAPPEH Sugarcane Agro-Industry Company

Khuzestan Province

HAFT TAPPEH Sugarcane Agro-Industry Company was established in 1958 with the aim of producing sugarcane, other agricultural and stockbreeding products, and also setting up affiliated products. This industrial and production company was put into operation in 1961. This company was delivered to this Organization in 2008. The following steps were taken in order to reform structure and promotion production

in the company.

Hereunder, the objectives behind implementation of all predicted activities include as follows:

- 1- Reconstructing factory for the production of 100,000 tons of sugar per year,
- 2- Increasing under cultivation land area up to 10,000 ha in order to extract one million tons of sugarcane,
- 3- Changing system of extracting and harvesting sugarcane from manual to mechanism system on a land area as large as 4,500 ha,
- 4- Changing irrigation method from traditional method to hydrofoil irrigation system and reducing water consumption volume with exertion of optimal consumption management,
- 5- Reducing sugar wastes in the production process up to acceptable existing technology,
- 6- Development of non-sugarcane cultivation on a land area as large as at least 3,000 ha.

## ■ Yasuj Sugar and Food Products Company

Renovation of Yasuj Sugar and Food Products Company

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province

Construction operation of Yasuj Sugar Production Factory started in 1965 with the nominal production capacity of 1,000 tons of sugar and lump sugar. This industrial and production company was put into operation two years later in 1967.

This industrial and production factory faced ups and downs in the recent decades. The company was transferred to the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) in 2010 with 63% stocks.

Hereunder are the measures taken by IDRO:

- Fully reconstruction and modernization of installations, boilers, power plant, lime furnace, sugarcane processing unit and also sugar refining unit,
- Renovation and increase of production capacity of receiving beetroot from 900 tons to 1m200 tons per day and commissioning the units after 12 years of closure.
- Reconstruction, renovation and increase production capacity of sugar refining unit from 200 tons to 450 tons per day
- Promoting level of automation of factory to PLC system

## ■ Dezful Sugar Production Company

Dezful Sugar Renovation Company

Khuzestan Province

Dezful Sugar Production Factory is located in 10 km away from Shoush – Dezful Road, Khuzestan Province. This factory was launched with the nominal production capacity of 5,000 tons of sugar beet/day in a period of 100 days in a year. This industrial and production company has been set up for a period of eight months with the nominal production capacity of about 600 tons/day.

Construction operation and commissioning this industrial and production factory was set up in 1977. The company was first put into operation in 1984. After about 20 years of incessant activity, production of company ceased in 2003.

In 2012, bankruptcy of the company was announced officially, the issue of which was reported to the Justice Administration of Shoush.

The company was put under the insurance coverage of Supporting Board on Jan. 11, 2015. On June 14, 2015, the Supporting Board selected Industries Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) as its legal executive manager.

Operations for equipping workshop and selection of contractors started in Dec. 2015. Up to June 2017, all units of the factory including boiler, power plant, lime furnace (kiln), diffusion, saturation, boilers, operation, sugar beet and sugar refining unit were overhauled and renovated in late June 2017.

Administration of this company was delegated to IDRO (Industries Development and Renovation Organization of Iran) in 2009 with the accumulated losses, amounting to over 300 billion rials, in addition to yearly losses of about 25 billion rials. Totally, 145 billion rials has been spent for the renovation and rehabilitation of this company. The major part of this amount has been spent for the renovation and modernization of installations, exchange of parts and compensating deficit of current costs of the company.

Renovation Plan: This plan was provided and launched in 2005 for the production of various types of cotton thread with the annual production capacity of 6,000 tons, costing 822 billion rials (including 327 billion rials and 16 million Swiss franc).

Plan to Reconstruct and Modernize Parts and Machinery: this plan was approved in 2006 in Industries Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO), costing 100 billion rials, in 2006 with the aim of renovating and modernizing spinning unit. This plan was not put into force due to the simultaneousness with the stock transfer stage.

Comprehensive Plan to Transfer and Renovate Company to ROSTAM KALA Industrial Park: This comprehensive plan was provided by RAAK SANAT PARS Consulting Engineering Company in 2012. Producing and supplying various types of clothing fabric to meet domestic demand has been cited as the main aim of this project. about 1,000 billion rials (equal to \$20 million) has been spent for launching this project. The duration for implementation of this project has been set 24 months.

## ■ Esfarayen Industrial Complex (EICO)

Production of various types of cast-iron and steel products

North Khorasan Province

Development projects underway at EICO

- Completion of available projects and workshops including installation of equipment and devices such as straightening, shut blast, laboratory equipment and quality control (QC)

- Setting up continuous die casting unit in order to produce ingots with 250 to 560mm diameter using (Continuous Casting) to meet demand of Esfarayen Industrial Complex as well as Luleh Gostar Esfarayen Factory

- Launching Electro-Slag Re-melting (ESR) Unit for re-melting and final treatment of ingots with 450-1200mm diameter

- Setting up light- and heavy heat treatment workshops including various types of furnace in order to carry out heat treatment of anneal, thermal, and necessary equipment for quenching and tempering

- Setting up light- and heavy machining workshop including various types of lathe machines (CNC), piercing, stoning, machining, drilling, cutting and lathing

## ■ Luleh Gostar Esfarayen Company

Producer of seamless tubes, ranging from 6- to 16-inch diameter

North Khorasan Province

As the sole producer of seamless steel tubes, Luleh Gostar Esfarayen Company was constructed in 1991 in order to meet demands of oil, gas and petrochemical industries.

This industrial and production unit was put into operation in 2006 after commissioning and transferring technical knowhow and technology.

This industrial company is equipped with five production lines including hot- and cold rolling unit, heat treatment line, casing line, tubing line, coupling line. Luleh Gostar Esfarayen Company benefits from 642 personnel. Presently, the company is producing and supplying its products to the consumer market.

## ■ ROYAN Stem Cell Technology Co.

Setting up umbilical blood bank and maintaining stem cells

Tehran province

ROYAN Stem Cell Technology Company was established in 2008. In early 2008, plan to freeze and store environmental blood started officially in ROYAN Stem Cell Technology Company in order to render quality services to patients diagnosed with multiple myeloma, Hutchins lymphoma, aplastic anomaly, chronic lymphoid leukemia, etc.

The company has started offering quality services in 2017.

This plan has been implemented and launched in cooperation with Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) through LIDCO and ROYAN Research Center, affiliated to the University Jihad (Academic Center for Education, Research and Cultural Activities).

Presentable Services:

ROYAN Stem Cell Technology Company

offers the following quality services:

- 1- Separation of Adipose, Osteoblast, Osteoclast and RBC from bone marrow,
- 2- Freezing and preserving stem cells of bone marrow
- 3- Isolating RBC from environmental (Peripheral) blood
- 4- Freezing and preserving peripheral blood stem cells

## ■ Hamanandsaz Baft Kish Company

Producer of different types of bio implants

Kish Island

Hamanandsaz Baft Kish Company, affiliated to LIDCO, a subsidiary of Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) is a specialized and multipurpose institute which is tasked with providing a wide spectrum of tissues according to the tissue engineering science.

Tissue engineering is an emerging science with the aim of reconstructing and rehabilitating biological tissues as well as creation of new tissue using the biological and biomaterial cells.

Tissue engineering is the use of a combination of cells, engineering and materials methods, and suitable biochemical and physicochemical factors to improve or replace biological tissues. Tissue engineering involves the use of a tissue scaffold for the formation of new viable tissue for

ovation Organization. The company is in charge of managing the assembly of CKD Renault cars by local manufacturers Iran Khodro and Iran Saipa's Pars Khodro

## ■ AZAR AB Industries Company

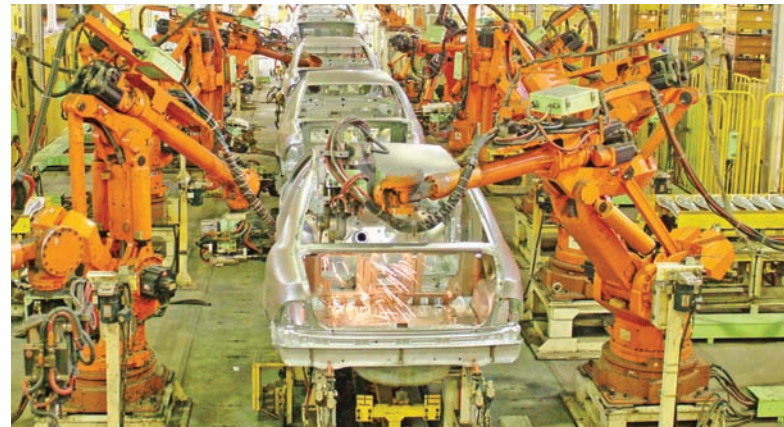
Designing and manufacturing industrial parts and equipment

Markazi Province

AzarAb Industries started its activity in 1989 officially. With the operation of \$89 million worth of imported equipment and machinery and more than 50 billion rials worth of education equipment, benefitted from cooperation of more than 2,000 experts and technicians, the company managed to cooperate in large national projects in a short period including manufacturing boilers for Shahid Rajaei Power Plant, Combined Cycle Power Plant in Qom, Shazand Power Plant in Arak, as well as manufacturing tanks, heat exchangers, cooling towers in the projects of lubricating unit of Isfahan Refinery, Kangan Gas Refinery, Arak Petrochemical Complex and Arak Petrochemical Company.

With due observance to the said issue, ArazAb Industries managed to play a leading role in industrial development of the country.

AzarAb Industries is a large Iranian manufacturer of power plant and oil, sugar and gas refinery equipment in Arak. As of 2005, Azarab Industries, employed more than 2,500 people. Their main products



a medical purpose.

Products of this company include bone bio-implants, tendon, cruciate ligament as well as cardiovascular bio-implants.

## ■ Iran Heavy Diesel Manufacturing Company

Manufacturing different types of diesel engines

Mazandaran Province

DESA Company was constructed in 1991 with the aim of manufacturing different types of diesel engines in Amol, Mazandaran Province.

The Iran Heavy Diesel Manufacturing Company is an Iranian company manufacturing heavy diesel engines from 200 to 3500 kW for railway, marine and power generation purposes

Hereunder are the most important measures and achievements taken by DESA Co.:

- Matching and testing 70 RK215 engines for ALSTOM Co. since 2004,
- Manufacturing 36 generative wagons for the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (I.R. I.R)
- Matching and testing 104 Deutz engine units for power plant of the Telecommunications Company of Iran (TCD),
- Manufacturing several power plants, ranging from 700 kW to 10-megawatt in various regions of the country
- Converting fuel (hybridization, dual burning) of Sanandaj Power Plant
- Launching plan for manufacturing national engine "D87" in 2004,
- Offering quality consultation services in the field of designing engine and applied engineering since 2007
- Starting plan to repair and maintenance of 50 RK215 engine units in 2008
- Matching and testing 120 MTU engines since 2010

## ■ Renault Pars Company

Manufacturing Renault cars in production lines of Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO) and Pars Khodro Company

Tehran Province

Renault Pars is an Iranian joint venture established in 2004 and owned by Renault and Iran's Industrial Development Ren-

are boilers, butterfly valves, turbines, and pressure vessels.

## ■ PETCO Turbine and Pump Company

(Heavy Duty Pumps & Water Turbine Mfg. Co.)

Manufacturing different types of pumps and turbines

East Azarbaijan Province

Large water turbine manufacturing company with trademark of "PETCO" was established in 1992 with the joint investment of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO). The company was put into operation in 1999 and in line with materialization of Article 44 of the Constitution in 2008, stocks of this company were transferred to SADID Industrial Group, as a privately-funded company.

(Sadid Industrial Group was established in 1963 in Iran. It is an industrial conglomerate in the fields of designing, engineering and fabrication of machines/equipment, production of spiral and longitudinal welded steel pipes, general contracting of oil, gas and petrochemical projects, water and sewage utilities and manufacturing of wind power generators)

## ■ AZIM Gostareh Hormoz Shipbuilding Industry Company (AGHCO), affiliated to ISOICO (Iran Shipbuilding & Offshore Industries Complex)

Construction of dry ponds

Hormozgan Province

AZIM Gostareh Hormoz Shipbuilding Industry Company is one of subsidiaries of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) which was established in 2007.

The plan for the construction of dry ponds in Bandar Abbas includes two ponds for repairing and renovating ponds measuring 375\*80\*14.5m and 475\*80\*14.5m as well as industrial workshops required for repair unit and manufacturing various types of giant vessels.

The repair and maintenance phase of 120,000-ton ships was put into operation in Persian Gulf Special Economic Zone in 2017.





NEWS IN BRIEF



### China protests Modi's visit to Arunachal

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — Bringing India-China border dispute again in spotlight, China this week protested the visit by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

The state is a contested region situated on the border between the two countries and has been source of political and diplomatic tension between the two regional powers.

Modi was there to inaugurate construction work for two airports.

Relations between New Delhi and Beijing have been marked by animosity since the 1962 war over Arunachal Pradesh border, when Chinese troops temporarily seized control of a part of contested territory.

The dispute remains unresolved, with India considering Arunachal Pradesh one of its northeastern states while China claims about 90,000 square kilometres of the territory as its own.

"Indian leaders visit Arunachal Pradesh from time to time, as they visit other parts of India. This consistent position has been conveyed to the Chinese side on several occasions," India's foreign ministry said in a statement.

In 2017, the two regional giants were involved in a standoff in Bhutan's Doklam region after the Indian army sent troops to stop construction of a road by China.



### 'Taliban can open office in Kabul': Ghani

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN** — With the Taliban directly engaging with the U.S. and regional countries, Afghan government led by Ashraf Ghani has been completely sidelined.

But, President Ghani has not given up. He says he is ready to pay the ultimate sacrifice for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

During his visit to eastern Nangarhar province on Sunday, President Ghani said the Afghan government is ready to allow the Taliban to open an office in Kabul, Kandahar or Nangarhar.

Ghani, who came to power in 2014 following an agreement with his main rival Dr. Abdullah Abdullah brokered by the U.S., has doggedly wooed the insurgent group for direct negotiations with the government in Kabul.

However, despite the offers, the Taliban has refused to hold talks with the Afghan government, considering it a "puppet" of Western regimes.

Taking a potshot at Afghan politicians who went to Moscow to hold talks with a Taliban delegation, Ghani said it serves no purpose as they lack the implementation power.

Ghani said he is expected to give up his position — for peace — but he has been elected by the people and there will be no compromise on that.

Delegates who attended the Moscow talks, said the main message to emerge from the meeting was that the war should end and channels to facilitate peace need to be explored.

Meanwhile, Patrick Shanahan, the U.S. acting secretary of defense, arrived in Afghanistan on Monday on an unannounced visit. He will hold talks with Afghan President Ghani.

## Fake Imam darling of Zionists and Hindu fanatics

**1 →** Over the last few days, his interviews have appeared in leading newspapers of India, in which he spews venom against Muslims, against Islam, against Pakistan, against Iran, against the Islamic revolution. He makes no secret of his surreptitious love affair with Zionists in Israel and Hindutva brigade in India.

In an interview with Times of India, Tawhidi described himself as a peace advocate working for healthy interfaith dialogue. In the same breath, he denounced Pakistans version of Islam, which he said is amended to fit the narrative of the government and to justify all of its wrongdoings. Exactly the kind of rhetoric Hindu fanatics in India want to hear from their foreign guests.

He went on to label Irans revolutionary guards and Lebanons Hezbollah movement as Shia terrorist organizations, in line with what his masters in Tel Aviv and Washington have suckled him.

Tawhidis association with Iran is old. He was born in the holy city of Qom and had his elementary and secondary education in the religious seminaries of the city. Owing to his suspicious activities, he was expelled from the Qom seminary after which he traveled to Australia and unveiled his real face there.

He has toured many countries in the West in recent years promoting his warped worldview and distorted image of Islam, thereby bringing bad name to the religion he falsely claims to profess. The latest being India, where he has overt and covert association with Hindu militant organisations that have been accused of mob lynching of Muslims in recent past.

Some of the people he has met in India over the past few days based on his Twitter feed include the infamously famous hate-mongers BJP politician Subramanian Swamy



and writer Tarek Fateh. Both Swamy and Fateh are master conspiracy theorists whose job is to polarize communities in India for vote bank politics.

In May 2018, Swamy, who is known for whipping communal passions, said Muslims of India were the descendants of Hindus, so if any Muslim citizen of India identifies with or glorifies Islamic rule in India, he should be declared a defeated alien. Fateh, a Pakistan-born and India-based writer, in September 2018 said Muslims owe Ram Mandir to Hindus and it would be constructed in Ayodhya, a disputed site in northern India where a historic mosque was demolished by radical Hindus on December 6, 1992.

Tawhidis camaraderie with these people is based on their common hatred for Islam and Muslims. Their meetings are part of the

larger plot to demean the great religion of Islam and its great adherents.

He not only hates Muslims, but he also promotes the views that fit the narrative of Hindu fanatics in India. For instance, in an interview with right-wing portal OpIndia last year, he said Pakistan is an illegitimate country founded upon hate and blood, and added that Kashmir is a Hindu land and it belonged to India before Pakistan was created.

To please his friends in New Delhi, Tawhidi even jumped in defense of India forces and legitimized the cold-blooded killing of Kashmiri youth Qaiser Amin in Kashmir earlier this year.

While he has been praised by far-right ideologues including American Hindu author David Frawley, anti-Islamophobia and peace activists like Middle East Eye columnist CJ

Werleman have criticized him in unequivocal terms.

In a November 2017 article titled The Islamophobia Industrys favourite Imam is a fake, Werleman brilliantly exposed the fake Imam and the darling of New Atheists. His cartoonish and paradoxical efforts to portray himself as the sum of all xenophobic fears, while at the same time echoing xenophobic narratives made him an irresistible magnet to Australian media outlets and racist hate groups, he wrote.

While the radical Hindu groups in India rolled red carpet for him, Muslim organisations strongly protested against his visit. Majlis Ulama-e-Hind, a body of Muslim clerics in India, expressed its strong disapproval over Tawhidis visit by writing a letter to Indias Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

Maulana Kalbe Jawad, general secretary Majlis Ulama-i-Hind and top Shia cleric, said the man was masquerading as a scholar while he was not related to Shiism or Islam, because his preaching and books are against the teachings of Islam and Shiite faith.

Shujaat Ali Quadri, National President of Muslim Students Organisation of India, also opposed his visit to India, terming him a puppet of the West and Israel.

Alt News founder Pratik Sinha accused him of spreading fake news. He was soon blocked on Twitter.

To protest against Tawhidis visit to India and denounce his hate-filled rhetoric, hashtags like #GoBackTawhidi, #NoToTawhidi, #ImamOffitna have been trending on Twitter in India.

He is a fraud, a big fraud, wrote on Twitter user. His only agenda is to humiliate Muslims and show disrespect to Islam, which is also the agenda of Zionists and Hindutva groups.

## Savage murder of 6-year-old Saudi boy 'act of sectarianism'

**1 →** According to TMV, a broadcaster that shared the footage of slain boys funeral on its website, a cop near the site tried to stop the driver but was unable to save the boy. The incident occurred in broad daylight last Thursday.

TMV quoted officials in Saudi Arabia saying that the taxi driver had mental health issues but local residents were quoted as saying that it was an act of sectarianism.

Shia Rights Watch also confirmed that in an unprecedented incident the child was brutally killed after the assailant came to know about his Shia identity.

The rights group, in a statement said, the unidentified assailant had asked the mother if she was Shia when they were heading to the holy shrine, and she had answered Yes.

Minutes after that, the statement added, the car stopped and the child was dragged out of the car and mercilessly attacked with a broken piece of glass, quoting witness reports that the child was attacked from behind his head as his mother watched and screamed helplessly.

There was no intervention from anyone and no response from authorities thus far, the statement noted.

People in the community where the boy and his mother live came together to mourn the tragedy and denounce the

growing number of sectarian incidents in the country and lack of action against the perpetrators.

The rights group said the Shiites in Saudi Arabia have been under a military crackdown by their government and many Shia activists are languishing in prisons and [sentenced to] death.

According to sources, the regime in Riyadh has given free hand to state and non-state actors to inflict harm on Shiites and force them into submission. That is precisely what emboldens people like this taxi driver to commit such a horrendous crime and possibly get away with it, said a source.

Shiites in the country have been under fire since too long now. In a statement July last year, following the execution of four Shiite men in countrys eastern province, Amnesty International said the Saudi regime was employing the death penalty as a political weapon to silence dissent.

The watchdog said it has documented the cases of at least 34 other Shia men currently on death row, including Ali al-Nimr, Dawood Hussein al-Marhoon and Abdollah Hasan al-Zaher.

Ali al-Nimr, Shaheed Baqir Nimrs nephew, was framed under dubious charges of participating in pro-democracy

rallies in 2012 at the age of 17, and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

Meanwhile, social media has been flooded with posts condemning this atrocious crime and the regime that provides impunity for such crimes.

This little boy is 6 years old; he was brutally killed in Saudi Arabia, his crime? Being the wrong sect, tweeted Madiha Raza. This, amongst many others, is an unbearable injustice perpetrated by the Saudi ideology.

There wouldnt be enough media coverage on the brutal killing of this Shia boy in Medina, tweeted Syed Akram Hus-sain. Remember, the whole world stood on their toes when a Saudi journalist was killed in Turkey.

This is what sectarian brainwashing does, and it benefits no one but the Satanic powers (Zionist entity, NATO etc). Sectarianism keeps us down and costs innocent blood, tweeted Ali Salaam.

However, despite the outcry on social media with hashtag #JusticeForZakaria, Saudi authorities have so far taken no action. As a Saudi source said, the case will be quietly brushed under the carpet of Mohammad Bin Salmans grand palace.



Agricultural Support Services Company

### INVITATION TO A ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

55/97/25786  
12/02/2019



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

#### AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

The Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 3×30000±5% MTS of Granular Triple Super Phosphate in bulk (GTSP) in bulk through one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Sunday dated 10/02/2019 until Tuesday dated 19/02/2019 (seven working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000006 will be possible.

The bid participants are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Wednesday dated 10/04/2019 (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on Saturday dated 13/04/2019 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bid bond value should be:

At € 172900 or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on exchange rate of CBI on January 15, 2019 for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% in bank guarantee.

After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the participants are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as bid bond.

Participants are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% will be IR. 8337000000.

For more information, you may refer to our **website [www.assc.ir](http://www.assc.ir)**, and **<http://iets.mporg.ir>** or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.  
**PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)**



Agricultural Support Services Company

### INVITATION TO A ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

55/97/25786  
12/02/2019



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

#### AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

The Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 2×30000±5% MTS of Granular Potassium Chloride (GMOP) in bulk / bagged through renewal one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Sunday dated 10/02/2019 until Tuesday dated 19/02/2019 (seven working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000006 will be possible.

The bid participants are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Saturday dated 06/04/2019 (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on Sunday dated 07/04/2019 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bid bond value should be:

At € 193626 or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on exchange rate of CBI on January 15, 2019 for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% in bank guarantee.

After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the participants are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as bid bond.

Participants are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% will be IR. 9336000000.

For more information, you may refer to our **website [www.assc.ir](http://www.assc.ir)**, and **<http://iets.mporg.ir>** or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.  
**PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)**



# 4 Decades after the Islamic Revolution: What are the reasons behind its Steadfastness?

➔ On the contrary, the rest of the region's regimes are ruled by families, who the U.S. and the U.K. immensely back, for such regimes lack their free-will and for they are subjects of the imperialist dirty propaganda. They would never reject the American policy as this would lead to their overthrow. Besides, to serve their interests, those colonial powers turn deaf ears and blind eyes to the inhumane human rights violations committed by those autocratic governments against their fellow citizens.

In Iran, the government and the parliament are established through free elections. Accordingly, people say their word and express their voices and concerns. In addition, the leader is appointed neither forcibly nor arbitrarily but by the council of elites, according to a specific and objective criterion. Therefore, one to lead the revolution and to maintain its principles and bodies must undoubtedly be shrewd and wise enough to manage the Iranian domestic and foreign policies.

Before 1979, Iran had social, cultural, political and economic affiliations with the U.S. and other European countries as Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the former dictator, had been at their services. The Shah, then, made Iran the U.S.'s lactating cow in the Middle East. During his reign, the Iranians were governed by force and intimidation; their rights as humans were blatantly infringed. The majority were from the lower class and had been subjugated to preserve the interests of the powerful Bourgeoisie. They endured humiliation, oppression and persecution.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi had been the U.S. gendarme in the region and directed by the Zionist enemy against the resistance factions. Whatsoever, under his reign, the Iranian suffered from various and critical security, health, educational, civic, social and economic crisis. Class discrimination and injustice have been enough reasons to rebel and make an inevitable change.

The rise of the revolution in Iran caused a terrible shock to many regional, European and U.S. regimes. They had early perceived



that this step would endanger their interests. Remarkably, none of them considers the Iranian people's interests and their hostility against the revolution has nothing to do with the mob's desires and aspirations.

Frequently, the U.S. has tried to intervene to weaken the revolution, as what happened in the 20th of August 1953, 2009, December 2018. Nonetheless, the more the U.S. tries to shake the Islamic Republic, the latter stands firmly and ferociously. Further, the more the U.S. intensifies its inimical conspiracies against Iran, the more the Iranians show alertness and readiness to confront such unethical and imperialist practices. The U.S. still ignore that who safeguard this revolution are the people, their determination, their faith and their resolution. Again, it is an ideological well-built regime, which no empirical might would be able to force it into surrender.

The U.S. and other European governments' unfortunate support for the terrorist MKO, reflects the nature of this malicious conspir-

acy against Iran and those governments' dual-policy. They preach on democracy and claim that they are fighting terrorism, whilst it is vivid that they sponsor criminals and terrorists such as Mariam Rajavi and her followers, who have committed scores of atrocities against innocent people.

The world must remember that despite the prolonged arbitrary sanctions and the U.S. and some Arab countries' provoked war, the Baathist troops were humiliated, defeated and forced to retreat. The imposed economic sanctions turned out to be an opportunity for the Iranians to implement the golden rule: The necessity is the mother of innovation. Unequivocally, today Iran is among the world's top advanced countries at various industrial, scientific, technological, agricultural, medical and surgical, etc. levels.

Military speaking, Iran is now able to defend itself through its mighty home-made ballistic missiles. In Syria and Iraq, Iran has shown unprecedented capabilities in the fight against the NATO-backed terrorists,

along with the governmental and popular resistance movements there. So, while Iran defends the oppressed innocent civilians, other countries spend trillion dollars-worth of logistical and military to support radical and fanatic terrorist groups.

In a similar vein, the violation of Iran's nuclear deal by the U.S. is yet another stance of aggression against Iran, despite the fact that it was ratified by five European countries and endorsed by the UN Security Council. Meanwhile, Trump is insistently and persistently trying unbridge the gap between the Iranians and the American people, who reject his and their consecutive administrations' colonial policies. The Americans are pretty much aware how, for at least 40 years, have been paying taxes to cover the wars' expenses led by Washington and its unlimited payment for those who plan to spread anarchy and commit suicidal attacks in Iran, and the entire world, such as the terrorist MKO.

MKO and some U.S. affiliated Iranian dissents are like a worm in its cocoon; literally captured in the world of wishes and dreams and rely on an illegitimate and aggressive agenda, which Tehran so far have been accommodated to and ready to smash at any time. Indeed, this self-proclaimed opposition, that the U.S. back by each and every means, is well-aware that the suspicious protests in Iran are to some extent held as a result of the U.S. economic pressure and sanctions. Those dissents, under the pretext of saving the mother, are obviously killing her instead.

The American politicians should have so far acknowledged that this spectrum in Iran is a complete failure and an unmatched dream. Their reputation in Iran is notorious, particularly after the recent abruptly detention of the US-Iranian Journalist Marzieh Hashemi and their predetermined involvement in the murder of the Saudi Journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The Iranians today, the revolutionaries and their sons, after 4 decades of the honourable revolution are stronger and steadily driving their homeland towards a prosperous and bright future.

## Marzieh Hashemi's Detention spoils Trump's re-election

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Cynthia McKinney, American Politician and Activist, believes Trump's chance in 2020 U.S. presidential election could be compromised, as there are evidences that someone from his administration "greenlighted" Marzieh Hashemi's detention.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, the American Ex-Congresswoman said the detention indicated that "at least one person in the Trump White House was filled with so much hatred for Iran".

Meanwhile, the American Activist hailed the peaceful reactions by Muslims around the world, saying "They all responded to hatred with love."

Cynthia McKinney is an American politician and activist. She currently teaches at North South University, Bangladesh. She served six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives as a member of the Democratic Party. However, she left the Democratic Party and ran as the presidential candidate of the U.S. Green Party in 2008.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ FBI could have seized Marzieh Hashemi's travel documents had it been concerned she would not appear before a grand jury. She was arrested on no criminal charges, though. What does it demonstrate?

A: The kidnapping of Marzieh Hashemi indicates that at least one person in the Trump White House was filled with so much hatred for Iran (and by proxy, for Marzieh) that he thought he could get away with violating the U.S. Constitution in the lead-up to a war between the U.S. and Iran. Whoever is responsible for pulling the trigger on Marzieh felt that, because they hate Iran, that the people of the U.S. should also hate Iran. Whoever greenlighted this, cares more about the agenda and goals of Zionist Israel than they do the Constitution of the U.S. Whoever greenlighted this, despite serving in the Trump Administration, also does not care about the re-election prospects for Trump — as such an act could destroy Trump's chances of re-election. And, they thought that the Iranian state would not defend Marzieh because she is African-American. Finally, whoever greenlighted this is filled with hatred for African-Americans AND for Iran; and Marzieh represented BOTH.

What they did not count on is the response to Marzieh's kidnapping of the Iranian state and of the Iranian people, as well as Muslims around the world. They all responded to hatred with love and demonstrated that love is stronger than hate. It is an important lesson for all of us.

■ How do you assess Marzieh Hashemi's being denied her religious rights, such as forcing her to remove her Hijab and depriving her of Halal food for several days?

A: I am not surprised at anything the leaders of the U.S. do when they are so filled with so much hatred. Expect even worse. They still think they can drop bombs on Iran!

■ Marzieh Hashemi says she will "speak out against U.S. justice system until last breath". What future do you view for those who struggle for justice?

A: People who struggle for justice in systems replete with injustice are always inconvenient, unwanted, and repressed. Their struggle, however, is the only way we can replace the unjust with the just. Therefore, they are necessary and are to be celebrated and protected. Thank goodness, Marzieh was celebrated and protected by the love of the people in Iran and around the world who share her goal of justice for all.

## Four decades of Iranian revolution

By Asif Durrani

**ISLAMABAD** — Iran is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Islamic revolution amidst the worst kind of American sanctions. It is a nation under stress economically; considered an interventionist state by its GCC neighbours and their allies; and is in a state of undeclared war with Israel. Being the champion of Shia Islam, the country is deeply involved in Iraq and Syria where Daesh/ISIS have played havoc forcing millions of Iraqis and Syrians to flee their countries.

What is it that keeps the revolution going in Iran despite myriad challenges that the theocratic order faces from day one? The Iranian officials would proffer the strength of the revolution which gave voice to the common man and toppled the monarchical rule of the erstwhile king Reza Shah Pahlavi. The post-revolution history of Iran is quite elaborate about the sacrifices rendered by the people under the leadership of Imam Khomeini. Conspiracies of the Americans to topple the Islamic system and the former dictator Saddam Hussein's imposed war are the major planks of Iran's contemporary history.

The Iranian system of governance has evolved in the past four decades. From a pure theocratic order, it has adopted the modern system of governance. Interestingly, conservative and moderate presidents have alternated in the corridors of power to accommodate the ideological divide within the theocratic system, mostly gauged in terms of social freedoms.

President Ahmadinejad represented the conservative ranks, who was accused of curbing social freedoms; irking the West due to his frank and terse remarks over its duplicity on Palestine and, doubting Israel's exaggerated narrative over holocaust.

The incumbent President Hassan Rouhani is considered a moderate who has further relaxed social freedoms, especially dress code for women. He is also credited with signing of the Joint Comprehensive Programme of Action (JCPOA) to limit Iran's nuclear programme to peaceful purposes. While the agreement brought Iran to global mainstream, President Trump's decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal on the pretext that the agreement ignored Iran's missile programme and its interference in the Middle East. US decision has been a clear setback to the international disarmament regime. The nuclear deal has also put President Rouhani under pressure from the conservative camp which blames Rouhani of holding a soft corner towards the West.

Iran's internal political scene has also evolved over the four decades in which the ruling elite have made substantive progress in providing relief to the masses. Even opponents of the theocracy in the country admit that post-revolution Iran has achieved universal literacy (97 percent); developed the education system on modern lines with emphasis on development of technology.

Despite American sanctions since the inception of the Islamic revolution, Iran has focused on encouraging indigenous research; in terms of scientific research and publications Iran is ranked second after Turkey in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Poverty in the country has fallen from 13.1 percent to 8.1 percent between 2009 and 2015 although 26 million Iranians still suffer from absolute poverty.

In the health sector, according to the WHO report, Iran tops the list in primary health while it has made tremendous strides in secondary and tertiary health throughout the country. Infrastructure development in the country is exemplary and can be compared to anywhere in the devel-

oped world. Most importantly, hygienic standards in the country are par excellence which immensely contribute to raising the health standards.

Pakistan-Iran relations during the past four decades have evolved into a mature and stable partnership. Both countries have always stood by each other despite differences in perceptions in the past on certain regional issues. Pakistanis do not forget that Iran was the first country in the neighbourhood which recognized Pakistan soon after independence. During Shah's regime, Iran was forthcoming in helping Pakistan in its wars with India in 1965 and 1971. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has steadfastly supported right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

Similarly, Pakistan stood by Iran in the post-revolution period despite pressures from the Americans and some Arab countries. Whether it was Iran-Iraq war or vote in the IAEA against Iran's nuclear programme, Pakistan supported Iran. India backed out during the IAEA vote in 2008 ostensibly to gain access to the American nuclear technology. The scorecard of the Iranian revolution's achievements is still incomplete. In the 21st century when the speed of information transfer is just seconds away, putting carbs on media has not worked in Iran; twitter or WhatsApp may be officially banned but are widely used throughout the country. The Iranian leadership although mindful of the peoples' pressure has to grapple with the ensuing challenges.

However, it goes to the credit of the Iranian revolution that it could survive the Arab spring due to existence of a parliament with regular elections. Lively debates amongst the conservatives and moderates over the domestic and foreign policies of the country channelize the collective wisdom into decision making process at the top level. As compared to the rest of the Middle East, Iran has a vibrant political system which can sustain external pressures; socio-economic freedoms continue to evolve to keep pace with the modern trends in politics and economy. Today's Iran is much different than two decades ago when slightest dissent would tantamount to conspiracy against the system with grave consequences for the dissenters.

Another important feature of Iran's political system is the establishment of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) which serves as a parallel force to the country's armed forces. IRGC has all the three wings-army, air force and navy-to ensure that no harm comes to the system and also keep a check on the regular armed forces to contemplate staging a coup in the country.

Second, IRGC is also involved in the ongoing war against Daesh/ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Its Qods Force commander General Soleimani has attained the legendary status in the country for his daring feats in Iraq and Syria. Third, IRGC's subsidiary flank, Basij (voluntary force), with a strength of over two million, are available all the time to defend the revolutionary system.

The ongoing tensions in the region, especially Iran's tussle with Saudi Arabia over Yemen, may have serious implications. It has already generated an arms race compelling the Saudis to spend \$300 billion on American weapons. Additionally, Iran's commitments in Iraq and Syria are costing approximately 9-10 billion dollars per annum which are proving to be onerous on its resources and may become a source of discontent within the country, especially when American sanctions have substantially squeezed Iran's trade. Meanwhile, cost of living in the country due to rising inflation and unemployment, estimated at 27 percent, are further compounding the economic problems of the country.

Some American and Western analysts believe that eco-

nomical crunch may serve as a catalyst to bring a change in the country. American National Security Advisor John Bolton has even claimed a regime change in Iran in 2019. However, ground realities in Iran do not support such claims, at least not in the foreseeable future. There may be some discontent in the country but the general mood is not in favour of another revolution.

Concurrently, the Iranian leadership needs to rethink its policy in the region. Being the largest country in the MENA region with second largest economy after Saudi Arabia, Iran has to show leadership by raising the comfort level of its Arab neighbours.

(Source: Daily Times)



Agricultural Support Services Company

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55/97/25786  
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Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

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All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Sunday dated 10/02/2019 until Tuesday dated 19/02/2019 (seven working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 3580397822635006500000000000006 will be possible.

The bid participants are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Monday dated 08/04/2019 (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on tuesday dated 09/04/2019 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bid bond value should be:

At € 238772 or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on exchange rate of CBI on January 15, 2019 for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% in bank guarantee.

After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the participants are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as bid bond.

Participants are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% will be IR. 11513000000.

For more information, you may refer to our **website [www.assc.ir](http://www.assc.ir)**, and **<http://iets.mporg.ir>** or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

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Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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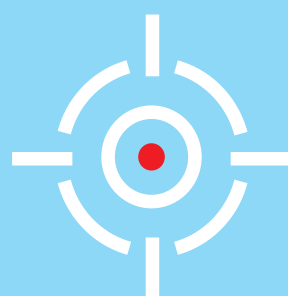
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The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

It can benefit a wide range of tastes from students to professional journalists. Persian equivalents have been given for all entries, including idioms and expressions. The glossary also includes example sentences for entries the authors thought it would be a bit difficult to learn.

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# Sleep deprivation increases our sensitivity to pain, study finds

Sleep deprivation can change the circuitry in the brain in ways that amplify pain, a new study from the University of California has found.

For instance, people who develop chronic pain often lose the ability to sleep well, and quickly point to a bad back, sciatica or arthritis as the reason. The loss of sleep, in turn, can make a bad back feel worse, and the next night's slumber even more difficult.

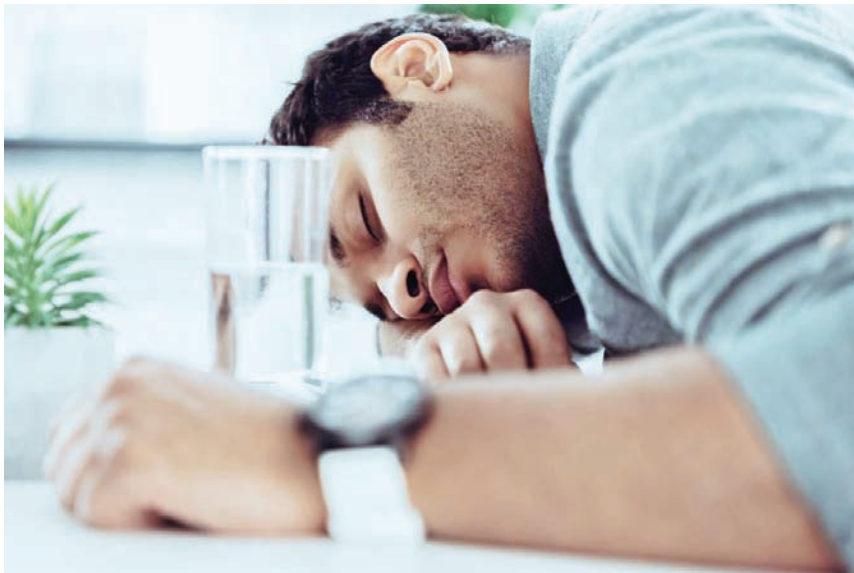
Why sleep deprivation amplifies pain is not fully worked out, but it has to do with how the body responds to an injury such as a cut or turned ankle. First, it hurts, as nerves send a blast up the spinal cord and into the brain. There, a network of neural regions flares in reaction to the injury and works to manage, or blunt, the sensation.

Think of the experience as a kind of physiological dialogue between the ground unit that took the hit and the command center trying to contain the damage. In a new study, a team of neuroscientists has clarified the nature of the top-down part of that exchange, and how it is affected by sleep.

In a sleep-lab experiment, the researchers found that a single night of sleep deprivation reduced a person's pain threshold by more than 15 per cent and left a clear signature in the brain's pain-management centers.

In a separate experiment, the team determined that small deviations in the average amount of sleep from one day to another predicted the level of overall pain felt the next day.

"What's exciting about these findings is



that they will stimulate, and justify, doing more research to figure this system out," said Michael J Twery, director of the sleep disorders branch of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, who was not involved in the new study.

"Once we understand how sleep deprivation changes how these pathways function, we should be able to manage pain more effectively – all types of pain."

Other researchers cautioned the study was small, and needed larger replication. But, they said, at a time when chronic pain

conditions and narcotic addiction are on the rise, the new work is a pointed reminder that the body's own ability to manage pain can be improved without a prescription.

The study team, led by Adam J Krause and Matthew P Walker of the University of California, Berkeley, had 25 adults come into the lab on two occasions to measure their pain threshold for heat.

Two measurements were taken from each subject, one in the morning after a full night's sleep, and one in the morning after staying up all night. The two visits occurred at least

a week apart, and included measurements in a brain-imaging machine.

The subjects judged the pain sensation of having a small, heated pad pressed against their skin, near the ankle. By gradually adjusting the temperature up and down, the researchers identified the level of pain that each person graded as 10, or "unbearable", on a scale of 1 to 10.

Pulling an all-nighter increased everyone's sensitivity to heat the next morning, by 15 to 30 per cent on the pain scale. This wasn't unexpected; previous research had produced similar findings, for a variety of painful sensations.

But the brain imaging added a new dimension: For each participant, activity spiked in pain perception regions, and plunged in regions thought to help manage or reduce pain. The biggest peaks were in the somatosensory cortex, a strip of neural tissue that runs across the top of the brain like a headphone band.

This is the seat of the so-called homunculus, the distorted "little man" neural map of the body; it seems to be where the perception of pain becomes a conscious "ouch". The lowest troughs of activity occurred in deeper brain regions such as the thalamus and nucleus accumbens.

"So you have two things happening at once here," said Mr Walker, director of the Centre for Human Sleep Science at UC Berkeley. "There's ramped-up sensation to pain, and a loss of natural analgesic reaction. The fact that both of them happen was surprising."

(Source: The Independent)

## Can social media really cause depression?

The notion that social media has a negative impact on mental well-being is widespread. The researchers who conducted a new long-term study, however, say that this might not be the case.

The supposed effects of social media on young people sound drastic enough to make anyone switch off their cell phone.

Some studies have indicated that young people can develop an addiction to social media.

Meanwhile, other studies have linked this with poor sleep, poor self-esteem, and potentially poor mental health.

However, new research has now dispelled the belief that social media use can bring about depression. Previous studies have made this claim based on measurements from a single

point in time, but this new study took a long-term approach.

"You have to follow the same people over time in order to draw the conclusion that social media use predicts greater depressive symptoms," says lead study author Taylor Heffer, of Brock University in St. Catharine's, Canada.

"By using two large longitudinal samples, we were able to empirically test that assumption."

### ■ The real effect on mental health

The study focused on two separate groups of participants. One was made up of 594 adolescents in the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade in Ontario, Canada. The other comprised 1,132 undergraduate students.

The team surveyed the younger group once per year for 2 years. They surveyed the older students annually for a total of 6 years, starting in their first year of university.

The questions focused on how much time they spent on social media on weekdays and weekends, as well as how much time they spent on activities such as watching TV, exercising, and doing homework. They also looked at symptoms of depression. For the undergraduate students, they measured such symptoms using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. They used a similar but more age-appropriate version for the younger participants.

(Source: Medical News Today)

## Pill inspired by leopard tortoise could replace diabetic injections

Scientists have developed a "needle pill" that could allow diabetics to take insulin without the need for daily injections.

The pea-sized capsule contains a small needle made of solid, compressed insulin, which is injected into the stomach wall after the capsule has been swallowed.



When tested in pigs, the device worked consistently and was able to deliver equivalent doses of insulin to those required by someone with diabetes.

Giovanni Traverso, an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School-affiliated Brigham and Women's hospital and a co-author of the study, said: "Our motivation is to make it easier for patients to take medication, particularly medications that require an injection. The classic one is insulin, but there are many others."

Injectations can be painful, cause injuries and be a barrier to people taking medication, he added.

The shape of the capsule is inspired by the leopard tortoise, found in Africa, which has a steep, domed shell that allows it to right itself if it rolls onto its back. In the case of the capsule, the domed shape ensures that the needle is continually reoriented towards the stomach wall. The needle is attached to a compressed spring that is restrained by a disk made from sugar. When the capsule is swallowed, water in the stomach dissolves the disk, releasing the spring and injecting the needle into the stomach wall.

The stomach wall does not have pain receptors, so it is unlikely that this would cause any discomfort. The insulin needle takes about an hour to dissolve into the bloodstream. In tests in pigs, the researchers said they were able to deliver five milligrams of insulin – comparable to the amount that a patient with type 2 diabetes would need to inject.

The metal spring and rest of the capsule passed through the digestive system, without seeming to cause any problems.

The team are now carrying out further tests in pigs and dogs and hope to start the first human trials within three years.

(Source: The Guardian)

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**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.



## Khorasan’s archaeological findings to go on show in Tehran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The National Museum of Iran is about to showcase selects of archaeological findings, which have been excavated over the past four decades in Khorasan region, northeast Iran, Khorasan Razavi province’s tourism chief has said.



“The National Museum of Iran will host an exhibit titled ‘Four Decades of Iran’s Archaeological Treasure’ that features ten magnificent historical relics, being unearthed during scientific archaeological excavations in Khorasan region,” CHTN quoted Abolfazl Mokaramifar as saying on Sunday. “The exhibit will open to the public this week,” the official said.

Located in the heart of Tehran, the National Museum of Iran is somewhat chock-full of priceless relics that represent various eras of the country’s rich history.

## Travel in China grows over Lunar New Year holiday: Xinhua

**SHANGHAI (Reuters)** — People in China made 415 million domestic trips during the Lunar New Year holiday, an increase of 7.6 percent from the same period last year, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday as the week-long break drew to a close.

Domestic tourism during China’s biggest holiday generated revenue of 513.9 billion yuan (\$76.2 billion), an annual increase of 8.2 percent, it said, citing the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Meanwhile, border crossings into and out of China rose 11 percent from the same 2018 period to 12.53 million, with Chinese residents crossing the border for personal reasons 7.22 million times, up 16 percent, Xinhua reported.

The robust growth in domestic and international travel and spending over the Lunar New Year period, or Spring Festival, underscores the rise of Chinese tourism and comes in spite of a slowing economy.

More than 6.2 million arrivals were recorded by border authorities during the week, an increase of 9.5 percent. There were over 6.3 million exits, up 12.5 percent, Xinhua said, citing data from the State Immigration Administration.

Top overseas destinations for Chinese residents this Lunar New Year were Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, the United States, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, Xinhua reported.

Last year during the Spring Festival holiday, 386 million trips were made domestically, contributing to an increase of 475 billion yuan in China’s travel revenue, Xinhua said.

In 2017, Chinese people made 143 million international tourist trips and were the world’s biggest spenders on international tourism, the United Nations World Tourism Organization said.



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Lushan National Park

Mount Lushan, in Jiangxi, is one of the spiritual centers of Chinese civilization.

Buddhist and Taoist temples, along with landmarks of Confucianism, where the most eminent masters taught, blend effortlessly into a strikingly beautiful landscape which has inspired countless artists who developed the aesthetic approach to nature found in Chinese culture.



A view of the Lushan National Park, a World Heritage in China

More than 200 historic buildings are located in the Lushan National Park; complexes of prayer halls that have been rebuilt and extended many times to create an ongoing center for study and religion.

Mount Lushan has an important place in Chinese history and culture. It is an outstanding representative of Chinese landscape culture, as well as a remarkable model of Chinese academy-based education, and a focal point for the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, once acting as the cultural center of southern China. The significant cultural developments and political events occurring over the course of Lushan’s history have influenced the course of Chinese history.

The natural beauty of Lushan is perfectly integrated with its historic buildings and features, creating a unique cultural landscape which embodies outstanding aesthetic value powerfully associated with Chinese spiritual and cultural life. Combining nature and culture, Mount Lushan represents the Chinese national spirit and epitomizes its cultural life.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Persian antiquities found in almost all museums worldwide

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — People around the world visit countless pieces of antiquities from the Persian Empire in different museums every day, without ever asking themselves how those relics ended up thousands of kilometers away from their home in Iran, Press TV wrote in a recent article.

“Almost all museums across the globe feature ancient Iranian relics,” the outlet quoted Mohammad Beheshti, the former director of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, as saying on Saturday.

Among those are some 4,000 artifacts taken from Persepolis, the ancient Persian capital which was once called the “richest city under the sun”, he said.

According to Beheshti, around 80 percent of the objects in the Arab World Museum in Paris also belonged to Iran.

Experts say that Western governments have long tried to cover their involvement in the systematic plunder of Persian antiquities and archaeological finds.

However, over the past couple of years, Iran has managed to repatriate some of the stolen relics, most of them still remain in possession of museums in the U.S. and elsewhere, helping them generate millions of dollars in income.



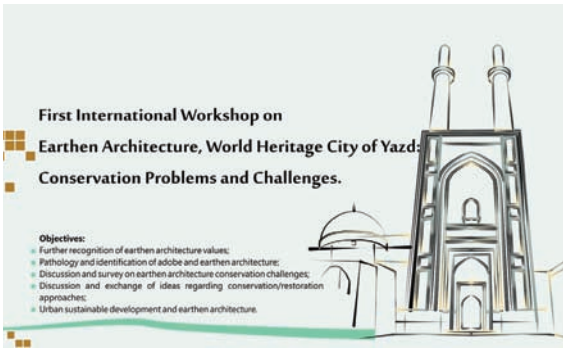
Cyrus Cylinder and other magnificent relics of ancient Persia on display at Room 52 of the British Museum, London

## Yazd hosting intl. workshop on earthen architecture

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The historical Iranian city of Yazd is hosting an international workshop on earthen architecture with its related conservation problems and challenges coming into focus.

Titled “First International Workshop on Earthen Architecture, World Heritage City of Yazd: Conservation Problems and Challenges”, the one-week event opened on February 10, and is being held in the cities of Yazd and Fahraj, both in central Yazd province, IRNA reported.

Amongst instructors of the workshop are Finnish architect and urban planner Jukka Jokilehto, Mariana Correia, an International Consultant in World Heritage for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) as well as Thierry Joffroy, an architect, re-



searcher and President of the International Centre for Earth Construction.

Attendees are also exchanging views about conservation and restoration approaches towards adobe architecture. Further recognition of earthen architecture values is other objective set for the event.

Dominated by abundant badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways and centuries of history, Yazd is a delightful place to stay, referring as a ‘don’t miss’ destination by almost all travel associates in the region.

A UNESCO World Heritage, the oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains.

## Iran, Iraq seeking UN recognition of Arba’een pilgrimage

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian tourism and cultural heritage authorities in collaboration with their Iraqi counterparts are implementing a plan to promote the recognition of Arba’een pilgrimage on the UNESCO’s list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, CHTN reported.

“We, in cooperation with the Iraqi



government, are compiling a dossier on Arba’een, which will be submitted to UNESCO,” Iran’s tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan said.

Arba’een pilgrimage, aka Arba’een trek, is a characteristic spiritual exercise in which hundreds of thousands of Iranians along with other nationals participate.

The long treks will be destined to Karbala, where Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is laid to rest.

The event marks an end to the 40-day mourning period following martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

## Why archaeologists just blasted this ancient shipwreck with a ‘ray gun’

Scientists just blasted pottery from an ancient shipwreck with a “ray gun.” Besides being totally sci-fi, the X-ray blaster revealed where the pottery came from.

The wreck was a trade ship dating to the 12th or 13th century that was thought to have departed from Quanzhou in southeastern China, with the Indonesian island of Java as its destination. However, it sank in the Java Sea near Java and Sumatra, taking its cargo to a watery grave.

Discovered by local fishermen in the 1980s, the ship and its contents were recovered a decade later, and about 7,500 pieces of its cargo are currently in the collection of The Field Museum in Chicago.

In a new study, researchers addressed a long-standing mystery: where the pottery came from. The artifacts’ shape and design suggested they originated in southeastern China — in fact, two boxes described in 2018 even included an identifying stamp. But pinpointing the precise locations where they were made was trickier, as kilns that produce this type of pottery are extremely common in the region, scientists wrote in the study.

To find out, scientists looked at 60 pieces of the wreck’s pottery that were glazed with a blue-white

coating called qingbai; that kind of porcelain is fired at such high temperatures that it is rendered almost glass-like, enabling it to spend centuries underwater without much degradation or damage, study co-author Lisa Niziolek, a research scientist in Asian anthropology at the Field Museum, told Live Science.

Lead study author Wenpeng Xu, a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Illinois, proposed noninvasive, nondestructive X-ray fluorescence to analyze the composition of the blue-white glaze and uncover the pottery’s chemical secrets.

Using a hand-held device, similar to a sci-fi ray gun, the researchers collected data from the Java Sea shipwreck pottery, and compared it with pottery debris gathered from four kiln complexes in China, with samples representing several kilns within each complex.

Variations in clay composition or in the ingredients that pottery-makers mix together create differences in finished vessels that can be detected with X-ray technology, by measuring and comparing their energy signatures, according to the study. By blasting the shipwreck ceramics and kiln debris with their ray gun device, the researchers were able to map the

once-sunken pottery to the kilns where they were made centuries ago.

They divided the shipwreck pottery into groups and found matches among those groups to kiln complexes in Jingdezhen, Dehua, Shimuling, Huajiashan and Mingqing, near the port of Fuzhou.

In fact, their findings suggest that the ship’s port of departure was Fuzhou — where most of the shipwreck’s pottery originated — and it likely later sailed to Quanzhou to take on porcelain from other kiln complexes, the scientists reported.

The number of kilns linked to the shipwreck’s qingbai ceramics suggests that traders and merchants didn’t rely on a single manufacturer to satisfy the demand for quality pottery, Xu said. And figuring out the locations where these ceramics came from adds tantalizing details about important trade routes dating to centuries ago.

“We’re finding that the scale and complexity of exchange networks is greater than anticipated,” Niziolek said. “For people educated to think that large-scale trade networks are only associated with modern Western capitalism, this shipwreck can really challenge those notions.”

(Source: Live Science)

## Robots fired from Japan hotel for not being human enough

If you’re afraid that robots will soon take over the travel industry, fear not — that day has yet to come.

The Japanese hotel that made the Guinness Book of World Records for being the world’s first robot-staffed hotel when it opened in 2015 has just laid off about half of its 243 robots, according to The Verge.

Though robots are being deployed in hotels around the world to help with mindless tasks such as transporting luggage and delivering room service, it turns out they don’t always save humans time and effort. In the case of the Henn-na Hotel, in the Nagasaki Prefecture, the robots were actually creating more problems for the human staff to solve.

TPG points and miles writer, JT Genter, stayed at the Henn-na Hotel with his wife Katie in 2017, and described some of the robots’ shortcomings in his review, including the way the in-room robot “loved to randomly jump into our conversations.”

Those in-room robots (there was one for every room in the hotel) have since been axed. Though they were supposed to provide helpful information like



Siri or Alexa, they didn’t have the answers to basic questions like when the theme park neighboring the hotel would open.

Worse yet, the concierge robot wasn’t able to help guests with questions about flight schedules and nearby attractions, prompting the hotel to replace

it with a human.

Other robots that have been fired include two velociraptor robots that were supposed to ease the check-in process — but couldn’t actually scan guests’ passports — and two robot bellhops that often got stuck trying to bypass each other and failed entirely if it was raining or snowing. They were only able to reach 24 of the hotel’s 100 rooms, anyway.

“The robots at Henn-na Hotel were a bit of a disappointment. It felt gimmicky rather than legitimately robot-assisted, as it was sold. Multiple robots weren’t even working during our stay and others seemed to require more human interaction than one would hope from a robot hotel,” Genter said.

“Still, Katie and I are surprised that they’re ditching the robots, as that was the hotel’s main feature.”

The hotel reportedly decided not to replace the outdated and inefficient robots due to high costs. Perhaps the owners would do better to invest in basic amenities rather than robots that aren’t actually that helpful.

(Source: msn.com)



# Team says Andromeda is coming for our Milky Way galaxy, eventually

Scientists have revised the timing of the impending collision between the Milky Way and the Andromeda Galaxy; it will occur 600 million years later than previously thought.

Astronomers have long known that the Andromeda galaxy, a.k.a. Messier 31, a swirling city-state of a trillion stars — plus all the accretion of gas, dust, dark matter and black holes — is rumbling through the cosmos right toward us at 68 miles per second.

Five years ago astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope calculated that M31 would hit our Milky Way galaxy head on 3.9 billion years from now.

That collision, they said, would initiate a series of do-si-do encounters that would splash streamers of stars and gas across space, and end with the two galaxies merged into a single, supergiant globe of stars.

New data have now revised this forecast. It turns out that the Andromeda galaxy is also going about 20 miles per second sideways. As a result, it will take a more winding path toward us, won't arrive for another 4.5 billion years and won't hit so hard, at least not at first, according to a paper in the *Astrophysical Journal*.

## ■ Data from Gaia

This reprieve, if it can be called one, is the latest tidbit in a cornucopia of data from Gaia, a European spacecraft tasked with measuring the precise positions, velocities and other



attributes of more than a billion stars in the Milky Way and other nearby galaxies.

The data have provided new insight into the history, dynamics and future of the Local Group, the small cluster of galaxies to which the Milky Way belongs. Joining us is the Andromeda galaxy, a slightly larger twin of

the Milky Way, about 2.5 million light years distant, and, slightly farther away, a smaller spiral in the Triangulum constellation called M33. Other members of the group include a few dozen dwarf galaxies such as the Large and Small Magellanic clouds — puffs of light visible in the Southern hemisphere.

**Five years ago astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope calculated that M31 would hit our Milky Way galaxy head on 3.9 billion years from now.**

## Massive insect decline could have ‘catastrophic’ environmental impact, study says

Insect populations are declining precipitously worldwide due to pesticide use and other factors, with a potentially “catastrophic” effect on the planet, a study has warned.

In addition to the 40% at risk of dying out, a third of species are endangered -- numbers that could cause the collapse of the planet's ecosystems with a devastating impact on life on Earth.

The report, co-authored by scientists from the universities of Sydney and Queensland and the China Academy of Agricultural Sciences, looked at dozens of existing reports on insect decline published over the past three decades, and examined the reasons behind the falling numbers to produce the alarming global picture.

While the focus in the past has been on the decline in vertebrate animal biodiversity, this study stressed the importance of insect life on interconnected ecosystems and the food chain. Bugs make up around 70% of all animal species.

## ■ The world's ecosystems

The repercussions of insect extinction would be “catastrophic to say the least,” according to the report, as insects have been at the “structural and functional base of many of the world's ecosystems since their rise ... almost 400 million years ago.”

Key causes of the decline included “habitat loss and conversion to intensive agriculture and urbanization,” pollution, particularly from pesticides and fertilizers, as well as biological factors, such as “pathogens and introduced species” and climate change.

While large numbers of specialist insects, which fill a specific ecological niche, and general insects were declining, a small group of adaptable insects were seeing their numbers rise -- but nowhere near enough to arrest the decline, the report found.

“If we don't have insects as moderators of other pest populations, we have insect populations that flare up and ruin crops



and make them difficult to grow,” he said.

## ■ Affected by human activity

Last year, one study found that flying insect populations in German nature reserves declined by more than 75% over the duration of a 27-year study, meaning that the die-off is happening even beyond areas affected by human activity.

Species that rely on insects as their food source -- and the predators higher up the food chain which eat those species -- were likely to suffer from these declines, according to the scientists. The pollination of both crops and wild plants would also be affected, along with nutrient cycling in the soil.

Indeed, “ecosystem services provided by wild insects have been estimated at \$57 billion annually in the USA,” according to an earlier study.

Some 80% of wild plants use insects for pollination while 60% of birds rely on insects as a food source, according to the study. Sands said an immediate danger of the insect decline was the loss of insectivorous birds, and the risk of larger birds turning from eating insects to eating each other.

In his native Australia, “birds that are running out of insect food are turning on each other,” he said, adding that this is likely a global phenomenon.

(Source: CNN)

## Nitrogen gets in the fast lane for chemical synthesis, research team finds

Rice University scientists have given organic chemists a boost with their latest discovery of a one-step method to add nitrogen to compounds for drugs, pesticides, fertilizers and other products.

Rice synthetic organic chemist László Kürti said the method, reported in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, is a major step forward as it quickens and boosts the yield of valuable molecules known as alpha-aminoketones.

Ketones are carbon-based compounds found in nature and important feedstocks for the chemical industry. The primary amino group (NH<sub>2</sub>) is a functional group present in many important chemical products. It contains one nitrogen atom and two hydrogen atoms. When a ketone is functionalized with a primary amino group at the alpha carbon, it forms a compound called a primary alpha-aminoketone.

“It's a good precursor, because there's no extra functionalization, like an acyl group, on the NH<sub>2</sub> and it can then be converted to whatever you want,” said Kürti, an associate professor of chemistry. “Previously, this was the issue: People would put nitrogen in there with extra functionality, but the further processing necessary to get to a free NH<sub>2</sub> was complicated.”

Postdoctoral researcher Zhe Zhou discovered the reaction when he mixed a silyl enol ether and a nitrogen source in a common solvent, hexafluoroisopropanol, at room temperature and found that it mimicked Rubottom oxidation, an established technique to oxidize enol ethers.

“Oxygen is routinely put into the alpha position,” Kürti said. “But nitrogen, no. We are the first to show this is possible in a large number of substrates, and it's simple. It turns out that the solvent itself catalyzes the reaction.”

## ■ Amino acid precursors

Zhou and co-author and postdoctoral researcher Qing-Qing Cheng refined the

By precisely measuring the motions of stars in M31 and M33, Dr. van der Marel and his colleagues were able to measure the sidelong trajectories of those two galaxies for the first time, and determine that Andromeda is not coming straight at us. Instead it will sideswipe our galaxy, like an out-of-control driver, 4.5 billion years from now.

## ■ Disrupting the stars

Because galaxies are mostly empty space, they will pass through each other like ghosts. The chances of stars or planets actually colliding are the inverse of astronomical, astronomers say. But gravity will disrupt the stars and strew them across space in vast, spectacular ribbons. Eventually the stars will collect themselves into a giant elliptical galaxy.

The supermassive black holes that anchor the core of each galaxy will find each other and slowly circle inward. In the end they will collide, producing one of those space-quivering explosions of gravitational waves detected by the LIGO antennas.

The data also allowed the astronomers to refine their knowledge of the motions of M33. That galaxy, they concluded, is still on its first trip into the center of the Local Group from farther out in space. Eventually it will enter a wide orbit around the merged galaxies, until, slowed by friction, it spirals into the center and joins the crowd.

(Source: NYT)



method and subsequently tested it by making 19 aminoketones, including three synthetic amino acid precursors. “These unnatural amino acids are significant for drug design,” Kürti said.

“Before we had this process, it wasn't impossible to make these kinds of structures,” Zhou said. “It was just very complicated and took many steps. The goal, generally, is to get them by the most direct method possible.”

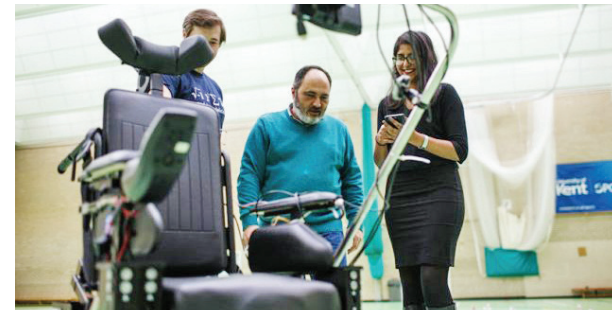
Earlier synthetic processes by the Kürti lab eliminated the need for transition metal-based catalysts in the manufacture of amines in order to simplify the usual and often inefficient trial-and-error approach involved in making new chemical compounds like drugs. Metal-based catalysts that speed up amination — the introduction of amine groups to an organic molecule — can also contaminate the product, so the new process avoids them as well.

“Our amination method promises to replace a common three-step process to make alpha-aminoketones, and the yield, comparably, is very good,” Zhou said. “In the standard process, each step cuts the yield, so one-step process is still superior even if the yields are identical, because it takes less time and there's less risk of something going wrong.”

(Source: phys.org)

## Modular AI wheelchairs can watch for obstacles, incorporate head tracking

When I was young, I subscribed to a gaming magazine published by Sierra On-Line. One issue of the magazine had a brief article about how the father of a young man had modified a joystick to allow his son (who I believe was a quadriplegic) to play and beat the game by moving only his head. I was only nine or 10 years old at the time, but the story struck a chord in me. It convinced me that one of the most valuable attributes of modern technology was its usefulness to disabled people. It could help them access experiences and activities that physical or neurological issues might otherwise prevent them from enjoying.



Thirty years later, we've come a long way from serial port joysticks with modified inputs. Exoskeletons are slowly moving towards reality. Microsoft has done commendable work designing its new Xbox Adaptive Controller. And in the UK, Dr. Konstantinos Sirlantzis, Senior Lecturer in Intelligent Systems at the University of Kent, is working on a series of AI-enabled wheelchairs with sophisticated obstacle tracking and eye-based guidance.

Dr. Sirlantzis is developing a modular system to allow specific components to be integrated into already-existing wheelchairs, as PCMag reports, in lieu of building a single one-size-fits-all robotic wheelchair. While it's a vastly different market, this is actually similar to the approach Microsoft took with its Adaptive Controller.

Because it was physically impossible to build one controller that could address every scenario, Microsoft focused on providing a solid basic set of capabilities with modular support for a huge range of additional devices. In this case, Dr. Sirlantzis' has developed a range of tracking features, including iris, head, and nose tracking “depending on the user's changing abilities over time and condition progression.”

(Source: extremetech.com)

## Earliest known seed-eating perching bird discovered in fossil lake

The ‘perching birds,’ or passerines, are the most common birds in the world today -- they include sparrows, robins, and finches. They used to be very rare. Scientists have just discovered some of the earliest relatives of the passerines, including a 52-million-year-old fossil with a thick, curved beak for eating seeds.

Most of the birds you've ever seen -- sparrows, finches, robins, crows -- have one crucial thing in common: they're all what scientists refer to as perching birds, or “passerines.” The passerines make up about 6,500 of the 10,000 bird species alive today. But while they're everywhere now, they were once rare, and scientists are still learning about their origins. In a new paper in *Current Biology*, researchers have announced the discovery of one of the earliest known passerine birds, from 52 million years ago.

“This is one of the earliest known perching birds. It's fascinating because passerines today make up most of all bird species, but they were extremely rare back then. This particular piece is just exquisite,” says Field Museum Neoguanee Distinguished Service Curator Lance Grande, an author of the paper. “It is a complete skeleton with the feathers still attached, which is extremely rare in the fossil record of birds.”

The paper describes two new fossil bird species -- one from Germany that lived 47 million years ago, and another that lived in what's now Wyoming 52 million years ago, a period known as the Early Eocene. The Wyoming bird, *Eofringillirostrum boudreauxi*, is the earliest example of a bird with a finch-like beak, similar to today's sparrows and finches. This legacy is reflected in its name; *Eofringillirostrum* means “dawn finch beak.” (Meanwhile, *boudreauxi* is a nod to Terry and Gail Boudreaux, longtime supporters of science at the Field Museum.)

(Source: sciencedaily.com)

## This newly discovered bug may have been around since the last Ice Age

You know you're a tough nut when the two options that could explain your continued existence are either having spent the last ice age in a cave buried by a sheet of ice, or having ‘fast’ travelled between continents in the last few tens of thousands of years.

But those are the two most likely stories of the recently discovered species *Haplocampa wagnelli*, which was found last year in a limestone cave on Vancouver Island, Canada.

The creature itself honestly isn't much to look at -- it's around 5 millimetres (0.2 inches) long, with medium sized antennae, six legs, and completely white, to the point of almost being translucent.

Although this guy looks like a little insect, it technically belongs to another group of six-legged creatures, the order diptera - they are also sometimes called ‘two-pronged bristletails’.

“This is a very intriguing species because it looks like it lived underground in caves -- for more or less a long time,” one of the researchers, Alberto Sendra from the University of Alcalá in Spain, said in an interview with the Canadian Press.

“This means they can survive in the glacial period. And this is very remarkable because there are no examples of species that live in subterranean areas so up north.”

Most cave versions of dipterans have very long bodies and appendages, including their antennae and tails. But although *H. wagnelli* were also found in a cave, they only had slightly longer antennae and a thicker body.

This points to a bodily shape not entirely well adapted for a life in caves, but these strange dimensions helped the researchers find similar creatures from around the world.

The team has highlighted four other relatives of *Haplocampa* -- two that live in Japan, and one each from Siberia and North America.

“All these four genera can be found in the East of Asia and in North America, on both sides of the northern Pacific Ocean, which suggests dispersal events over the Bering Land Bridge,” they explain in their new paper.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## How bees stay cool on hot summer days, new study suggests

If you've ever walked past a bee's nest on a hot summer day, you've probably been too focused avoiding getting stung, rather than stopping to wonder how all those bees stay cool. Don't worry, Harvard scientists have braved the stingers to ask and answer that question for you.

Honey bees live in large, congested nest cavities, often in tree hollows with narrow openings. When it gets hot inside the nest, a group of bees crawl to the entrance and use their wings as fans to draw hot air out and allow cooler air to move in. The question is, how do bees self-organize into these living ventilating units?

Researchers at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) and the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology (OEB) have developed a framework that explains how bees use environmental signals to collectively cluster and continuously ventilate the hive.

“Over millennia, social insects such as bees have evolved to harness and exploit flows and forces and collectively solve physiological problems such as mechanical stabilization, thermoregulation and ventilation on scales much larger than the individual,” said L. Mahadevan, de Valpine Professor of Applied Mathematics, Physics, and Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, and senior author of the study.

## ■ A communications scheme

“We have demonstrated that bees don't need a



sophisticated recruitment or communications scheme to keep their nests cool,” said Jacob Peters, a postdoctoral fellow in SEAS and OEB, and first author of the paper. “Instead the fanning response of individual bees to temperature variations, and the physics of fluid flow leads to their collective spatial organization, which happens to lead to an efficient cooling solution.”

Experiments began in the dog days of the summer of 2017. Over the course of several weeks, Peters, Mahadevan and former postdoctoral fellow at SEAS Orit Peleg monitored a group of man-made beehives in Harvard University's Concord Field Station.

The research team measured temperature, air flow

into and out of the nest, and the position and density of bees fanning at the nest entrance. They observed that rather than spreading out across the entirety of the nest entrance, the bees clustered at the hottest areas and kept those areas, which had the highest air outflow, separate from the cooler areas with the highest air inflow.

Fanning outward allows the bees to sense the upstream nest temperature; different thresholds of temperature allows for more continuous ventilation and more stable hive temperatures; and, because of the physics of friction and flow, clustering to separate inflow from outflow allows more cool air to enter the nest because of the physics of friction and flow.

“Our study demonstrates how harnessing the dynamics of the physical environment allows for large-scale organization of a physiological process,” said Peleg, who co-authored the paper and is now an Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado Boulder.

“Although this is a physics-focused story, biological variation with roots in genetics and evolution likely plays a big role in order for this system to work,” said Peters. “Our theory suggests that not only does individual variability in temperature threshold lead to a more stable hive temperature but also this diversity is critical to the stability of the patterning of fanning behavior which is required for efficient ventilation.”

(Source: eurekaalert.org)



## Afghan men oppose more women’s rights; elders less hardline

Afghan men strongly oppose giving women more freedom - two in three think they have too much already - and young men are even more reluctant than their elders, a survey said recently.

Nor are women fully on board with the idea of parity. Almost one in three of the Afghan women surveyed think women already have a surfeit of rights and a similar proportion say they are “too emotional” to be leaders.

The male generational gap may be explained by younger men seeking rigid gender roles as they struggle to find work and stability in a country ravaged by war and poverty, said gender equality group Promundo.

Religious teachings against women’s rights under the Taliban regime had also played a role in hardening views among younger men, said Gary Barker, founder of Promundo-U.S., which works with men and boys to promote gender equality.

The survey was organized by Promundo and UN Women, the United Nations equality agency.

“It is pretty concerning,” Barker told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“It says something about the precarious state of a big group of young men who don’t know what to hang their identity on.”

The survey comes amid peace talks between the United States and the Taliban - which controls nearly half of Afghanistan - that may help end war after nearly two decades of conflict.

Afghanistan is not an easy place to be a woman, with forced marriage, domestic violence and high maternal mortality rates, particularly in rural areas, according to equality advocates.

(Source: Thomson Reuters Foundation)

## RECIPE OF THE WEEK

### Stuffed cabbage rolls

“I don’t know where I got this recipe, but I have been using it for well over 20 years. Works well in a slow cooker.”

#### Ingredients:



2/3 cup water  
1/3 cup uncooked white rice  
8 cabbage leaves  
1 pound lean ground beef  
1/4 cup chopped onion  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 (10.75 ounce) can condensed tomato soup

#### Directions:

In a medium saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add rice and stir. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes.

Bring a large, wide saucepan of lightly salted water to a boil. Add cabbage leaves and cook for 2 to 4 minutes or until softened; drain.

In a medium mixing bowl, combine the ground beef, 1 cup cooked rice, onion, egg, salt and pepper, along with 2 tablespoons of tomato soup. Mix thoroughly.

Divide the beef mixture evenly among the cabbage leaves. Roll and secure them with toothpicks or string.

In a large skillet over medium heat, place the cabbage rolls and pour the remaining tomato soup over the top. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for about 40 minutes, stirring and basting with the liquid often.

#### Tip

Aluminum foil can be used to keep food moist, cook it evenly, and make clean-up easier.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### The 7 Wonders Of The World

A: Have you seen this news article? Apparently an organization has made a list to name the new seven **wonders** of the world and people could vote for them online.

B: Wow, that’s really interesting. So who won?

A: Well, the **Great Wall** of China, the **Taj Mahal** in India. B: I’ve been there! It really is an amazing work of **architecture** and art. The entire complex is made of white marble and in the **interior** of the **tomb**, the walls are covered with gems and emeralds!

A: Cool! Also amongst the winners is **Petra**, in Jordan, **Machu Picchu** in Peru and the **pyramid** in Chichenitza in Mexico. B: Wait a minute! It also says that the Christ Redeemer statue in Brazil and the **Colosseum** in Rome are wonders. I would love to go to Italy and see the Colosseum, stand in the middle like a **gladiator**!

A: Well, let’s see if we can find some cheap airfare and we can go towards the end of the year.

B: Good idea!

#### Key vocabulary

**wonder:** monumental human creation that is amazing  
**Great Wall:** an extensive wall in China that kept invaders at bay  
**Taj Mahal:** a mausoleum located in India made entirely of white marble

**architecture:** the art and science of designing buildings

**tomb:** a grave or other place of burial

**Petra:** historical city in Jordan which was carved out of the mountain,

**Machu Pichu:** an ancient city set high in the Andes Mountains in Peru

**pyramid:** a structure where the outer surfaces are triangular and converge at a point

**Colosseum:** an ancient amphitheater located in Rome

**gladiator:** a person trained to entertain the public by engaging in mortal combat

#### Supplementary Vocabulary

**world heritage site:** an area or structure designated by UNESCO as being of global significance

**mausoleum:** an external freestanding building constructed as a monument enclosing the interment space or burial chamber of a deceased person

**temple:** a structure reserved for religious or spiritual activities, such as prayer and sacrifice

**ruins:** the remains of human- made architecture: structures that were once complete, as time went by, have fallen into a state of partial or complete deterioration

**ancient:** having been of long duration; of great age; very old

(Source: [irlanguage.com](http://irlanguage.com))

# Unofficial employment rate among women high despite low economic contribution

**W O M E N** TEHRAN — Despite **d e s k** women’s low rate of economic contribution which stands at 12 percent, it seems that they play an outstanding role in different sections so that unofficial employment rate among women is high, vice president for women’s and family affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar has said.

Home jobs and small businesses which are mainly done by women are not recorded in official statistics, IRNA quoted Ebtekar as saying.

In line with increasing women’s employment rate Ebtekar emphasized that real statistics about women’s employment should be clarified.

She went on to say that empowering and training women for small businesses are essential.

Ebtekar put stress on serious efforts to be made for paving the way for educated women to work on start-ups.



The vice president also requested the municipalities to support young girls for creating new businesses and start-ups.

The official called for formation of start-up homes in order to teach business, trade and information technology to young women, adding that digital revolution is a useful device for improving women’s employment.

A project entitled “The route into my business” is performed in all 31 provinces, for women’s entrepreneurship, said Ebtekar, noting it is an important step taken toward women’s employment.

A total number of 780 women have received primary trainings in 31 provinces, she explained.

Ebtekar hoped for removing employment gap between women and men with the efforts to be made by diligent Iranian girls.

Women make up some half of 80 million population of Iran.

## Women-only workspaces

was unrelated to it. The Wing is also under investigation by the New York City Commission on Human Rights for gender-based discrimination. The Wing said it is working with the commission.

Another fast-growing space is The Riveter, with five locations in Seattle and Los Angeles and plans to open in Austin, Texas, in March. On Tuesday, it announced plans to open five more locations.

About 20 percent of its members are building venture-scale startups, but the majority are small businesses with just a few employees, or people who work on their own such as lawyers or real estate agents, founder and CEO Amy Nelson said. It ranges from \$99 to hundreds of dollars monthly.

About a quarter of The Riveter’s 2,000 members are men, Nelson said, but the difference is that “out of the gate we’re putting women first.”

“I think that we’re seeing a societal shift that isn’t going to go away,” she said. “Women’s voices are being heard.”

The space has brought in high-profile speakers such as Sheryl Sandberg and offers activities such as office hours with a venture capital firm and seminars on digital mindfulness or wellness. That kind of programming sets the spaces apart from more general ones, said Steve King of Emergent Research, who studies the future of work and the rise of the independent workforce.

ModernWell founder Julie Burton, an author and wellness instructor, teaches yoga at her space, which also offers events



## Pregnant women with severe flu more likely to have poor outcomes

Pregnant women so sick with influenza that they’re admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) are more likely to have premature and underweight babies than expectant mothers with milder flu and those who don’t catch flu at all, a recent study suggests.

Researcher compared birth outcomes for 490 pregnant women in five states who contracted the H1N1 strain of influenza-A in 2009, as well as 1,451 women without the flu who gave birth that year and 1,446 women without flu who gave birth the previous year.

Compared to women who either didn’t get the flu or had mild cases, women admitted to the ICU with severe H1N1 infections were almost four times more likely

to have premature babies and more than four times as likely to have underweight infants, the study found.

Women admitted to the ICU were also more than eight times as likely to have babies with low Apgar scores, an assessment of overall wellbeing done right after birth.

“This study supports data from previous studies that have shown increased risks for infants born to pregnant women who are severely ill with flu,” said lead study author Kim Newsome of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta.

Severe flu infections in pregnant women are generally rare. But the increased risk they

present for these poor health outcomes in babies highlights the importance of vaccinating pregnant women against the flu and treating their flu cases with antivirals early to avert severe illness, the study team writes in Birth Defects Research.

Among women in the study with confirmed or suspected flu infections, 82 were so sick they were admitted to the ICU or died. Another 338 were hospitalized, but not in the ICU, and 70 were not hospitalized. Except for the 82 severe cases, none of the women with less-severe flu had higher rates of poor birth outcomes compared to women without flu.

This isn’t surprising. But it offers fresh insight into how the illness can impact birth

outcomes, Newsome said by email.

“The first and most important step for pregnant women and those who might be considering pregnancy to reduce their health risks and risks to their infants is getting a flu shot,” Newsome said. “In addition, it’s important for pregnant women to get prompt treatment with antiviral medications if they get sick.”

Other everyday things like handwashing, avoiding close contact with sick people, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces where germs can lurk can also help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like the flu, Newsome advised.

(Source: Reuters Health)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

### 14 provinces blanketed with snow

Fourteen provinces across Iran are covered with snow on the very first day of winter, Rescue and Relief Organization director Morteza Salimi has said.

Snow piled up in provinces of Hamedan, Lorestan, Golestan, Mazandaran, Gilan, Kermanshah, Kordestan, Qazvin, Zanjan, Khuzestan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Ardebil, East Azarbaijan, and West Azarbaijan over the past two days, Fars news agency quoted Salimi as saying on Saturday.

Some 1,500 individuals who got stranded in snow received relief services and 264 vehicles which were stuck in snow were released, he added.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “co-, col-, com-, con-, cor-”

■ **Meaning:** with, together

■ **For example:** A few weeks ago I had **company** for dinner.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Wear somebody down

■ **Meaning:** to gradually make someone physically weaker or less determined

■ **For example:** It was clear he was being worn down by the rumors over his future.

### IDIOM

#### Make waves

■ **Explanation:** to cause problems, especially when you should not:

■ **For example:** With so many jobs already cut, he didn’t want to make waves.

### برف و کولاک در ۱۴ استان کشور

رئیس سازمان امداد و نجات گفت: در اولین روز زمستان برف و کولاک ۱۴ استان کشور را سفید پوش کرد.

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری فارس مرتضی سلیمی با اشاره به وقوع برف و کولاک در ۴۸ ساعت گذشته گفت: ۱۴ استان همدان، لرستان، گلستان، مازندران، گیلان، کرمانشاه، کردستان، قزوین، زنجان، خوزستان، چهارمحال بختیاری، اردبیل، آذربایجان شرقی و غربی در این مدت درگیر برف و کولاک شده است.

وی گفت: بیش از ۱۵۰۰ نفر به دلیل این حادثه امدادرسانی شده‌اند و در این مدت ۲۶۴ خودروی گرفتار در برف نیز امدادی راهسازی شده است.



# S. Korea signs deal to pay more for U.S. troops after Trump demand

Officials signed a short-term agreement Sunday to boost South Korea's contribution toward the upkeep of U.S. troops on the peninsula, after a previous deal lapsed amid U.S. President Donald Trump's call for the South to pay more.

About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea, where the United States has maintained a military presence since the 1950-53 Korean War.

The new deal must still be approved by South Korea's parliament, but it would boost its contribution to 1.03 trillion won (\$890 million) from 960 billion won in 2018.

Unlike past agreements, which lasted for five years, this one is scheduled to expire in a year, potentially forcing both sides back to the bargaining table within months.

"It has been a very long process, but ultimately a very successful process," South Korean Foreign Minister Kyung-wha said at a meeting before another official from the foreign ministry initialled the agreement.

While acknowledging lingering domestic criticism of the new deal and the need for parliamentary approval, Kang said the response had "been positive so far."

The U.S. State Department senior adviser for security negotiations and agreements, Timothy Betts, met Kang before signing the agreement on behalf of the United States, and told her the money represented a small but important part of South Korea's support for the alliance.



"The United States government realizes that South Korea does a lot for our alliance and for peace and stability in this region," he said.

The allies had struggled to reach a breakthrough despite 10 rounds of talks since March, amid Trump's repeated calls for a sharp increase in South Korea's contribution.

South Korean officials have said they had sought to limit its burden to \$1 trillion won and make the accord valid for at least three years.

A senior South Korean ruling party legislator said last month that negotiations were

deadlocked after the United States made a "sudden, unacceptable" demand that Seoul pay more than 1.4 trillion won per year.

But both sides worked to hammer out an agreement to minimize the impact on South Koreans working on U.S. military bases, and focus on nuclear talks ahead of a second U.S.-North Korea summit, Seoul officials said.

The disagreement had raised the prospect that Trump could decide to withdraw at least some troops from South Korea, as he has in other countries like Syria. But on Sunday, South Korean officials told

Yonhap news agency that the United States had affirmed it would not be changing its troop presence.

Trump said in his annual State of the Union address to the U.S. Congress Tuesday that he would meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Feb. 27-28 in Vietnam, following their unprecedented meeting in June in Singapore.

Citing officials at South Korea's presidential Blue House, Yonhap also reported that South Korean President Moon Jae-in would discuss the upcoming summit with Trump "soon," and that American and North Korean officials would be meeting in an unspecified Asian country ahead of the summit.

After the June meeting, Trump announced a halt to joint military exercises with South Korea, saying they were expensive and paid for mostly by the United States.

Major joint exercises have been suspended, but some small-scale drills have continued, earning rebukes from North Korea's state media in recent months.

About 70 percent of South Korea's contribution covers the salaries of some 8,700 South Korean employees who provide administrative, technical and other services for the U.S. military.

Late last year, the U.S. military had warned Korean workers on its bases they might be put on leave from mid-April if no deal was agreed.

(Source: Daily Star)

## U.S., Russia present rival UN draft resolutions on Venezuela Venezuela launches large-scale drills amid U.S. threats

The United States has presented a draft resolution on Venezuela to the United Nations Security Council, triggering a Russian counterproposal.

The U.S. draft resolution calls for international aid deliveries and presidential elections in Venezuela while stressing "deep concern with the violence and excessive use of force by Venezuelan security forces against unarmed, peaceful protesters".

The U.S. expresses "full support for the National Assembly as the only democratically elected institution in Venezuela", said a copy of the text obtained by AFP news agency.

In response, Moscow came up with an alternative resolution, expressing its concern for Venezuela's territorial integrity and political independence.

The Russian draft criticises any "attempts to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of Venezuela".

The U.S. is sponsoring a campaign for international recognition of Venezuelan opposition leader and head of the country's elected legislative body Juan Guaido over President Nicolas Maduro. Last month, Guaido declared himself the interim head of state.

While no date has yet been set for a vote on the American draft, negotiations are ongoing.

Showing its support for President Maduro's regime, Russia will likely use its veto power to block the U.S. resolution, according to diplomats.

### ■ Military defection

Meanwhile, Colonel Ruben Paz Jimenez, deputy of the Directorate of the Military Hospital in Maracaibo, announced

his support for Guaido.

In a video shared on social media on Sunday, the military leader said "90 percent" of his colleagues in the armed forces are unhappy and urged fellow troops to allow humanitarian aid into Venezuela.

A week ago, an Air Force general also switched sides, saying he was backing Guaido.

### ■ Humanitarian impasse

Humanitarian aid sent by the U.S. recently arrived in the Colombian city of Cucuta on the border with Venezuela.

"Venezuela won't allow the spectacle of fake humanitarian aid because we're no one's beggars," said Maduro. "Venezuela is not suffering the humanitarian crisis fabricated by Washington over the last four years to justify intervening in our country."

He blamed the shortage of food and medicine on U.S. sanctions, which mostly target regime individuals as well as state oil company PDVSA.

"Liberate the money that has been blocked and sequestered," said Maduro. "This is a macabre game. We squeeze them by the neck and make them ask for crumbs."

He said the aid offer was "a message of humiliation for the people".

On Friday, Guaido said he was ready to take any necessary measures, including authorising a U.S. military intervention, to force Maduro from power and alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

### ■ Large-scale drills

The Venezuelan military has launched large-scale drills to bolster its combat readiness after the U.S. threatened that

it could use military force to oust the elected government of President Nicolas Maduro.

Maduro traveled to the central state of Miranda on Sunday to inspect the troops and military equipment stationed there and attend the opening ceremony of the maneuvers, which will be held across the country and will last until February 15.

Addressing thousands of soldiers at a camp, the president said the war games will be the "most important" drills in the country's 200-year history.

The armed forces "must prepare to defend [Venezuela's] sovereignty, territorial integrity, [and] independence," Maduro said.

Maduro also called on all Venezuelans "to join this comprehensive national plan for the defense of sovereignty and peace. Love the country, and let that love become action. Defend the right to peace."

The maneuvers come amid a political crisis, which saw the U.S.-backed opposition leader, Juan Guaido, abruptly declare himself "interim president" last month.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump hastily declared support for Guaido, announced sanctions on Venezuela's oil industry and said sending military forces to the country was "an option" to push for the Maduro government's ouster.

Guaido and the U.S. have also been encouraging members of the Venezuelan armed forces to abandon the legitimate government and join the opposition camp, which has also the support of Washington's European and Latin American allies.

(Source: agencies)

## The great message of Bahman 22 rallies

➡ The western sources deal with this news in such a way that one may come to think it's an unprecedented action in the four last decades, and the U.S. government has never been involved in a direct opposition against Iran! But in spite of Trump and Pompeo's efforts to make this measure seem unique, we have repeatedly been witnessing such fertile efforts by the United States over the past four decades.

The March rally in Iran meant the White House's complete defeat against the nation and the Iranian government. Undoubtedly, Donald Trump and John Bolton have already lost their power of analysis over Iran. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran, with a great victory over the United States, will stand with greater power against the White House plots. An issue that has severely aggravated Trump and his entourage.

## Myanmar forces violating human rights in Rakhine unrest: Amnesty

Myanmar's military is shelling villages and preventing civilians from getting food and humanitarian help, amid an intensifying crackdown on the rebel Arakan Army in the restive northwestern state of Rakhine that has pushed thousands from their homes, Amnesty International has said.



The human rights group said on Monday its investigations also found that the security forces had used vague and repressive laws to detain civilians in its battle against the Arakan Army, an ethnic Rakhine group that is fighting for more autonomy.

"These latest operations are yet another reminder that the Myanmar military operates without any regard for human rights," Tirana Hassan, Amnesty's director of crisis response, said in a statement. "Shelling inhabited villages and withholding food supplies is unjustifiable under any circumstances."

Fighting between the military and Arakan Army intensified in January after the rebels attacked a police post leaving 13 officers dead.

The military responded by deploying more troops to the region, the site of a massive crackdown on the Rohingya Muslim minority in 2017, in an attempt to "crush" the fighters. The United Nations says some 5,200 people had been homes on January 28, as a result of the conflict.

There was no immediate response from the Myanmar authorities to Amnesty's report.

### ■ Unlawful tactics

Amnesty said it had spoken to people affected by the fighting, as well as to local activists and humanitarian workers to get an understanding of the effects of the latest unrest. It said most of those forced to flee were Buddhist and included minority Mro, Khami, Daingnet and Rakhine people. Myanmar has about 135 different ethnic groups.

It noted that unlawful tactics had been a "hallmark of the military's operations against armed groups" and that previous operations in Kachin and northern Shan states had killed and wounded civilians and displaced thousands. It added that the troop build-up in Rakhine included the 99th Light Infantry Division, a unit Amnesty and others had previously implicated in atrocities against the Rohingya in August 2017.

Two villagers who spoke to Amnesty said that they had fled their homes under military bombardment and when they returned to collect belongings discovered money and other valuables were missing. They suspected soldiers of the theft because troops had been expected to secure the area.

Another said Myanmar soldiers and police had restricted the amount of rice that people in her village could bring into the settlement even though they were already suffering from a shortage of basic foods because fighting in December had prevented them from harvesting their crops. As a result, they abandoned the village, as had other people in settlements nearby.

"We talked among ourselves that it was impossible to live in our village any more," the 34-year-old woman from a remote ethnic Mro village in Kyauktaw Township told Amnesty. "We didn't want to move to a (displaced persons) camp, but we couldn't trade what we found in the forest and we couldn't get through enough supplies."

### ■ Military presence

The unrest has also spilled over into neighboring Chin State where locally-based human rights monitors say the sporadic violence and escalating military presence in its southern part is affecting local communities.

An update from the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) that was released on Sunday said the military had imposed restrictions on movement and a curfew in three villages after troops moved into a nearby town. Residents told CHRO more than 50 military vehicles had arrived in Matupi Town, checkpoints had been erected and that there were regular helicopter flights in and out of the area.

Despite the unrest in Rakhine, the Myanmar authorities have made it more difficult for aid groups to work in the region, Amnesty said. On January 10, the Rakhine government barred all UN agencies and international organisations with the exception of the Red Cross and the World Food Programme from operating in the five conflict-affected townships.

"The Myanmar authorities are deliberately playing with the lives and livelihoods of civilians," Hassan said. "As we've seen time and again, the military's priority is not to protect people in the crossfire, but rather to hide their abuses from the international community."

Amnesty said it had also gathered evidence that the military and police were abusing the law to detain and prosecute civilians, including Aung Tun Sein, a Mro village leader who had been picked up in the wake of an outbreak of fighting in the area around his village in mid-January and remained in jail. Ten other men held with him were released.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## The Islamic Revolution at 40: Acknowledging the women

➡ In the Qajar era, the women came out in mass to demonstrate against Naser al-Din Shah's tobacco concession to Great Britain; even his wives smashed hookahs in protest. Moreover, the shah's most influential wife, Anis al-Dowleh, helped spread the riots. Zinat Pasha from Tabriz led a group of armed, veiled women to the bazaar to protest the tobacco concession.

During the constitutional revolution, the women not only were participants, but also transformed the movement from a purely political one in 1906 into a genuine social revolution. Women not only formed organizations to further their education and enfranchisement, but also participated in demonstrations, street riots, boycotts and armed clashes in support of the constitutional movement alongside their male revolutionary counterparts. At one point, a group of women actually stopped the royal coach and warned its occupant, Mozaffar al-Din Shah, that "if Russia and England support you, upon the orders of Muslim leaders, Iranians will declare jihad against you."

In 1911, when Russia had occupied parts of northern Iran and threatened the occupation of Tehran, it was the women who met in the mosques and planned an armed revolt while the men in the Majles debated on what to do and the royals seemed inclined to submit to Russian demands. Three hundred veiled women, with pistols hidden under their chadors, burst into the Majles chambers and threatened to shoot any deputy who caved in to Russian pressure. The American treasurer general, William Schuster, corroborated the story, confirming that the women "exhibited threateningly their revolvers, tore aside their veils, and confessed their decision to kill their own husbands and sons, and leave behind their own dead bodies, if the deputies wavered in their duty to uphold the liberty and dignity of the Persian people and nation."

Following World War II, the CIA-engi-

neered overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953 and Reza Pahlavi's 1963 program of westernization known as the White Revolution, much protest against the shah and his policies began to materialize. By the mid-1970s, Iranian women were adapting Islamic dress in protest of the shah's regime. "Women who had worn Western clothes and enjoyed Westernized lifestyles joined their more traditional sisters in donning the chador as a symbol of protest," wrote scholar John Eposito.

By 1978 chador-clad bazaari women were becoming more numerous than students during the anti-regime demonstrations, which were being ever more violently suppressed by the shah's security forces. "As the threat of violence grew," scholar Nikki Keddi pointed out, "women often marched bravely at the head of the processions; participants recognized that this put the police and regime in a difficult position." To underscore the Islamic, anti-shah and anti-western symbolism of the hejab, women wearing full chadors took to the streets in support of Imam Khomeini, chanting, "Khomeini-ye azizam begu barat khoon berizam," meaning "My beloved Khomeini, tell me to shed blood for you."

It is arguable that the most important moment for women in the history of Iran came with their participation and involvement in the Islamic Revolution. "For the first time in the history of the modern Middle East," Hamideh Sedghi noted, "millions of Iranians – veiled and unveiled women, organized and unorganized, secular and religious, rich and poor, and old and young – participated in a revolution."

Women assumed roles of great importance during the Islamic Revolution and following its victory. Among the most notable are Masoumeh (Nilufar) Ebtekar, who rose to prominence as the spokeswoman for the students involved in the takeover of the U.S. embassy, Student Followers of the Line of the

Imam (Daneshjuyan peyro khat-e Imam). She is currently Vice President of Iran for Women and Family Affairs and was the first woman to hold a cabinet seat in the Islamic Republic. Also noteworthy was Monireh Gorji, the only woman who was elected in the summer of 1979 to the 73-seat Assembly of Experts that drafted the constitution for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Of course, through the distorted lens of western scholarship, Mohammad Reza Shah tends to be viewed as a benevolent promoter of women's rights. For example, the so-called Family Protection Law of 1967, later revised in 1975, is held up as an example of the shah's desire to promote Iranian women's rights. Lauding her brother the shah, Ashraf Pahlavi went so far as to declare, "Equality between women and men has been truly realized under the laws of my King brother." However, in an interview with Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, Mohammad Reza Shah revealed his true misogynist feelings about women and their place in society. "Women are important in a man's life only if they're beautiful and charming and keep their femininity," conceded the shah, adding, "You're equal in the eyes of the law but not, excuse my saying so, in ability."

When Iraqi dictator Saddam launched his unprovoked attack on Iran on September 22, 1980, women came forward to defend the fledgling Islamic Republic in great numbers, training as guerrilla fighters, regular soldiers, auxiliaries, nurses and cooks for the war fronts. Hamideh Sedghi explained that "the newly mobilized women became the status symbol of the revolutionary era, in contrast to the Westernized and unveiled women who had been the status symbol under the monarchical state."

And the momentum of the Islamic Revolution has continued to today, with Iranian women as its beneficiaries. During the time of the shah, Iranian women may have been technically free of certain alleged restrictions

on their behavior, but in reality, powerful social forces prevented most women from pursuing educational opportunities. Today under the Islamic Republic, Iranian women have been able to enter technical and professional fields in numbers and yet have been able to maintain family life. For example by law, Iranian women are guaranteed six months of maternity leave plus one hour paid leave per day for 18 months, something that not only exceeds International Labor Organization standards, but also is absent in many western countries and, in particular, the United States.

And while the women of Iran, due to their contributions towards the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, made great progress, they were not alone. The goal of raising the standard of living for the lower classes, the underprivileged and impoverished, the mostazafin, was not mere revolutionary rhetoric, but rather was achieved in many areas such as access to education and health services. Conversely, westernized elites who were privileged under the shah were brought down or marginalized. Thus the Islamic Revolution in Iran was a true social revolution, and not merely a reshuffling of political figures or a reaction to American global arrogance.

While the west continues to focus upon the hejab as a symbol of the repression of women, the women themselves continue to be the main force behind the propagation of the Islamic Revolution. "A nation whose women enter the arenas to battle with the superpowers and confront satanic powers ahead of the men will be victorious," declared Imam Khomeini in August of 1980. As the Washington regime unleashes its latest attempts at thwarting the spread of the Islamic Revolution, which is now 40 years stronger than it was when Imam spoke the above words, the arrogant American leaders would be well advised to beware of the power of Islam and Iranian women.



## Scholes named Oldham manager

Former Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes has been appointed Oldham Athletic manager on a one-and-a-half-year contract, the English League Two (fourth-tier) club said on Monday.

British media reported that Scholes was cleared to take up the position last week when the English Football League decided the 44-year-old's 10 percent stake in fifth-tier Salford City would not represent a conflict of interest.

Scholes, a lifelong Oldham fan who spent his entire playing career at United, won 11 Premier League titles, three FA Cups and two Champions League crowns before hanging up his boots in 2013.

"Paul has won everything there is to win in football," Oldham owner Abdallah Lemsagam said in a statement.

"He is a man who will bring a lot of footballing knowledge and his hunger to succeed in management will be there for everyone to see. "It's no secret how much he has wanted this job in the past and how much he loves this club, so I'm very happy to bring him into our family at Oldham Athletic."

Scholes has limited coaching experience, including four matches alongside Ryan Giggs when his former team mate took caretaker charge of United following David Moyes's sacking in 2014.

The former England international has worked as a television pundit for BT Sport in recent years.

Oldham sacked Frankie Bunn in December and academy coach Pete Wild was put in temporary charge of the team.

A 3-0 victory at Crawley Town on Saturday was Oldham's first in the league since New Year's Day and they are 14th in the table - nine points off the playoff spots.

(Source: Reuters)

## Mourinho to get his own TV show in Russia

Former Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho is to get his own show on Russian state television channel RT, the station said on Monday.

The fortnightly programme titled "On the touchline with Jose Mourinho" will provide coverage of the UEFA Champions League from March 7 with the 56-year-old Portuguese analysing the matches.

"I'm going to talk about football on RT. What else did you think I was going to do?," Mourinho says in a promotional video filmed at an ice hockey rink posted on Twitter by RT Sports.

Mourinho also appeared at a hockey rink in Moscow's suburbs this month, slipping on the ice and taking a nasty tumble while performing a ceremonial puck drop.

The former Porto, Chelsea and Real Madrid manager, who was sacked by Manchester United in December, worked as a pundit for RT during last year's World Cup.

RT, which broadcasts news in English, Arabic and Spanish, says it aims to offer an alternative view to what it describes as mainstream western media and to acquaint viewers with Russia's perspective on current affairs.

Critics of the channel, formerly known as Russia Today, accuse it of pro-Kremlin propaganda.

(Source: Reuters)

## Ajax's De Jong doubtful for Real Madrid game

Ajax Amsterdam midfielder Frenkie de Jong is a doubt for Wednesday's Champions League last-16 first leg against Real Madrid after exacerbating an adductor injury.

The 21-year-old, who is heading to Barcelona in an 86-million euro (\$97.2 million) deal at the end of the season, was forced off the pitch 10 minutes from time as Ajax lost to Heracles Almelo in the Dutch league on Saturday.

He had been struggling before the game with injury but was passed fit to play. Ajax also have concerns over the fitness of Nicolas Tagliafico, who completed Saturday's match but has been battling with a knee complaint, local media reported.

The return leg is in Madrid on March 5.

(Source: Goal)

## Lloris warns Spurs they must up their game against Dortmund

Hugo Lloris has warned that Tottenham must improve if they are to have any chance against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Wednesday after a patchy display against Leicester.

The 31-year-old French goalkeeper -- who captained his country to World Cup glory last year -- kept out Jamie Vardy's second-half penalty and made a number of other important saves as Spurs won 3-1 at Wembley to remain on the fringes of the Premier League title race.

Although the scoreline suggests an easy win for Mauricio Pochettino's men, who are in third place in the Premier League, five points behind Manchester City and Liverpool, Leicester looked dangerous and had 20 shots at goal.

"Leicester played in a fantastic way and I think we won the game thanks to our spirit and character," said Spurs captain Lloris ahead of the first leg of their last-16 Champions League tie on Wednesday.

"Without that, we could not win this game. I think we need to improve the team performance. We won but against a bigger side we couldn't have won that type of game. It's up to us."

Spurs beat Borussia Dortmund twice in last season's group stage but the German league leaders are a different proposition this campaign five points ahead of Bayern Munich at the top of the table.

"They play fantastic football," Lloris said. "They have so many fantastic players and I'm not surprised they're top of the league in Germany."

"The manager is very good with a great idea of football. It's going to be very, very difficult. We need to obviously improve the team performance, compared to today (Sunday), and we need the stadium to push, to help us.

"In some days it's difficult to deal with Wembley but hopefully in this big game we'll receive this help from the crowd."

(Source: AFP)

# No excuses as VAR set for Champions League debut



so delighted".

That is despite the Premier League being the only one of Europe's major domestic competitions to not use VAR.

"The Premier League is the last one, so sooner or later also here in England, it's going to happen" said Guardiola, who recalled how his team had benefited from "a ridiculous penalty" awarded against Shakhtar Donetsk in the group stage.

"The referees want to do a good job ...they will be helped."

### ■ 'Clear mistakes'

Bayern Munich chief executive Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said he was convinced it would

make "football fairer and more serious at the international level".

However, Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino believes "no one is happy to watch European matches with VAR".

"When are you going to use it? I don't think it's clear -- before we use it all clubs need to agree with ideas. If not it's going to be difficult."

Roberto Rosetti, UEFA's chief refereeing officer, told a briefing on its use in Rome last week that while "impossible to achieve the right decision 100 percent of the time" they were convinced it would "provide valuable help to match officials

and reduce incorrect decisions".

Rosetti said the Video Assistant Referee would intervene for "clear mistakes" in the four match-changing situations for which it has been used elsewhere: goals, penalty decisions, straight red cards and cases of mistaken identity.

But, unlike at the World Cup, there will not be a centralised video viewing room.

"We'll work within each stadium with a VAR, an assistant-VAR, two operators and a UEFA official responsible to send the information outside," he explained.

### ■ 'Lack of respect'

Meanwhile, Slovenian Ceferin warned coaches that they would have no reason to complain after most snubbed a meeting in Frankfurt to discuss the use of VAR in European competitions.

Of coaches from the 16 teams invited only those from Juventus, Lyon, Paris Saint-Germain, Roma and Schalke attended, with the others sending "assistants, other staff or even marketing people," said Ceferin.

"For me it's not only a lack of respect for Roberto Rosetti's team and the UEFA organisation, but the influence of coaches is huge and if they complain about being refereed they should at least come and see what the experts say about the use of VAR," Ceferin said after being reelected UEFA president last Thursday.

"Now they do not have any excuses, especially the ones that did not even come."

(Source: AFP)

## How James Harden is dominating the NBA



The NBA has seen dominance before. Michael Jordan's sole purpose in life was to pulverise anyone who dared try to defend him. LeBron James is a basketball genius with the body of Thor. Steph Curry might already be the greatest shooter of all time.

But none of them have done what James Harden is doing right now.

On Saturday the Houston Rockets shooting guard put up 42 points against Oklahoma City Thunder, stretching his run of consecutive games scoring more than 30 points to 29.

His unique set of skills are tailor-made for the modern NBA - and are an absolute nightmare for defenders.

He has an arsenal of subtle hesitations and feints to get you off balance, an explosive first step to blow past, then the silkiest of finishing touches at the rim. He tries this 20 times per game, on average - more than any other player in the league.

But here's the real sickener for defenders: give Harden an inch too much space to protect against the drive and he slams on the brakes, then in one physics-defying movement, steps back and launches a three-pointer.

He's deadly from here too - he has a chance to break the record for three-pointers made in a single 82-game season, currently held by Curry at 402. Harden has notched 260 in 52 games, an average of five per game.

This killer combination has led influential American basketball writer and podcaster Bill Simmons to say that Harden "one-on-one would beat just about anybody in history right now".

The record for consecutive 30+ point games was set, like many of the NBA's scoring records, by the legendary Wilt Chamberlain during the late 1950s and early 60s. He holds first and second place, and fourth, on the list.

Basketball, like most sports, has evolved since Chamberlain's era. Harden's run is unprecedented in the modern game. The next best in recent history is Kobe Bryant's 16-game run in 2003. The most Michael Jordan managed was 11 in a row in 1987.

The run has been necessitated by injuries to the other scorers on the Rockets team, and Harden said on Monday night that this style of play can't last forever.

"I have to be ball dominant because we have injuries," said Harden. "We had injuries throughout the course of the year, but when we get Chris [Paul] in a rhythm and Eric [Gordon] back and get our full roster, we have got multiple guys that can make plays, multiple guys that can dominate the ball."

The scoring streak has kept the Rockets in the play-off race and has made him the bookies' favorite to win a second consecutive Most Valuable Player award.

(Source: BBC)

## Neymar absence could be 'big problem' for PSG, warns Buffon



Gianluigi Buffon fears the absence of Paris Saint-Germain's mercurial playmaker Neymar could prove a "big problem" when the French club takes on Manchester United in the Champions League Tuesday.

PSG will be without its star man, who sustained a metatarsal injury late last month, for both legs of the last-16 tie. The Brazilian international is expected to return in April.

It's a huge blow for PSG with Neymar having scored five goals in six Champions League games, and United enjoying a tremendous resurgence under new caretaker boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

And the 41-year-old Buffon, who has reached the final of the competition three times but has yet to win the Champions League during his illustrious career, is wary of facing an in-form United without the Brazilian.

"I think this is a problem for us," PSG goalkeeper Buffon told CNN in an exclusive interview ahead of Tuesday's first leg at Old Trafford.

"I'm not sure if it's a big problem or a little one. I hope it's only a small problem and that we are nevertheless a team that can thrive without him, it would give us great strength and confidence.

"But I must say that without a player of Ney's caliber, it's going to be heavy going, particularly because in the last two or three months he's in excellent condition both

physically and mentally and would have been of enormous help.

"But nevertheless we have to do our best in order not to have any regrets and play the quarterfinals and semifinals with Ney back.

"This would be the best present we could give to him, and I'm sure he would return the favor by playing in those two matches."

PSG faces a tough task to make it past United with the English Premier League team having been transformed by Solskjaer since he replaced former boss Jose Mourinho in late December.

United has won 10 of their 11 games under the Norwegian and have surged into fourth place in the Premier League.

But while Neymar might be out of action, the French side has plenty of attacking talent to call upon including the supremely talented Kylian Mbappe.

The France World Cup winning star has scored 18 league goals so far this season as well as three in the Champions League.

For Buffon, who left Juventus last July after 17 years with the Italian club, the opportunity to work with young players such as Mbappe was a huge draw.

The two enjoy a close relationship with Buffon keen to pass on his experiences to the prodigious young talent, even if Mbappe cheekily refers to him as "grandpa."

(Source: CNN)

## What next for Maurizio Sarri after Man City thrashing

Maurizio Sarri was in a movie Chelsea watchers have seen before - and the final act does not usually end well for the man sitting in the manager's office at Stamford Bridge.

Sarri had that familiar haunted look, one worn by sacked predecessors such as Luiz Felipe Scolari and Andre Villas-Boas, as he sifted through the carnage of a 6-0 thrashing at the hands of Manchester City - Chelsea's heaviest defeat since the 7-0 loss at Nottingham Forest in April 1991.

He admitted that "my job is always at risk" while insisting he did not know whether he was in immediate danger.

Allow us to help him. He will be in serious danger, if he is not already, if this carries on.

Sarri's team have conceded 10 goals without reply in their past two away league games, having lost 4-0 at Bournemouth on 30 January. Chelsea, once a by-word for defensive solidity, conceded all four in the second half against Eddie Howe's side and four in the first 25 minutes at City.

They have now dropped to sixth in the Premier League, a point adrift of Manchester United in fourth place, having

enjoyed an 11-point advantage when Jose Mourinho left Old Trafford in December.

Chelsea lacked heart, fight and any sort of credible game plan from the moment they dozed off at a free-kick in the fourth minute to allow Raheem Sterling to start the rout.

They were humiliated, embarrassed and outclassed by a team who owner Roman Abramovich would at least expect to challenge.

Since the turn of the year, Chelsea have lost away at Arsenal, Bournemouth and now City, shipping 12 goals and scoring none.

They now face a serious fight to make the top four, and Sarri's job is on the line, especially if he cannot come up with results in the FA Cup fifth round at home to Manchester United and in the Carabao Cup final against City.

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(Source: BBC)



# Iran football federation breaks its promise to use VAR

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) reneged on its promise to use Video Assistant Referee (VAR) in the country's league.

FFIRI President Mehdi Taj said that VAR would be used in the second half of the Iran Professional League.

The decision was made after the refereeing mistakes increased in the league.

“It will be initially tested in four stadiums, namely Azadi Stadium in Tehran, Isfahan’s Nagshe Jahan, Foolad Arena in

Ahvaz and Emam Reza in Mashhad,” Taj said in December.

However, after two weeks the VAR has not been tested in the league and the teams have lashed out at a series of decisions that have gone against them.

On Thursday, the referees of Foolad and Persepolis match and Nassaji and Tractor Sazi game made controversial decisions, in which the favorites Persepolis and Tractor Sazi published statement shortly after the match.

Video review can help referees overturn



clear errors in game-changing situations. This means incidents involving goals scored, the award of penalty kicks, red cards, and cases of referees showing cards to the wrong player.

VAR was used for the first time to reverse

a decision in a 2018 World Cup match.

Video review is already used in Serie A, Ligue 1, La Liga and the Bundesliga and will be in place for the 2019-20 Premier League season.

## Carlos Queiroz appointed as Colombia coach



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Former Iran coach Carlos Queiroz has been appointed as new head coach of Colombia football team on Thursday.

The Portuguese coach has signed a four-year contract, and his first major task will be to lead Colombia at the June-July Copa America in Brazil.

Colombia is the fifth national side the former Real Madrid coach has led, three of which he took to the World Cup finals.

Queiroz coached South Africa in South Korea and Japan 2002, his native Portugal in South Africa 2010, and Iran at the

last two tournaments in Brazil (2014) and Russia (2018).

He will be expected to help Colombia reach a third successive World Cup, in Qatar in 2022.

“My goal is to preserve the prestige, reputation and placement of the Colombian national team in the world and that will be my first priority,” the former Manchester United assistant said at the federation’s headquarters in Bogota.

Queiroz left Iran after he failed to bring an end to Team Melli’s 43-year title drought in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup in January.

## Iran jump seven spots to 24th in FIFA rankings



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team jumped seven spots to 24th in the latest FIFA world rankings released on Thursday.

Team Melli registered four wins in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup in the UAE before losing to Japan 3-0 in the semifinals.

Japan, whose bid for a fifth AFC Asian Cup title was thwarted by Qatar in the final, also saw a surge in their ranking as they improved by 23 spots to 27 to sit behind Iran.

Korea Republic are third in Asia after improving to 38 from 53 and Australia, whose defense of the AFC Asian Cup title ended in the quarterfinals, dropped by one to 42 in the world and are fourth in Asia.

Qatar, the Asian Cup champions, made a huge leap from No. 93 to No. 55 in the rankings and moved to fifth place in Asia.

The top-three teams did not change, with Belgium first, followed by 2018 World Cup champions France and Brazil.

# Hakeem Al-Araibi will walk free after Bahrain drops extradition request

Bangkok, Thailand (CNN) - Hakeem Al-Araibi, the refugee footballer detained in Thailand, will be freed from prison after Bahrain Monday made an unexpected decision to drop its extradition case.

A Thai court approved the request to drop extradition proceedings, according to Chatchom Akapin, director general of foreign affairs for the Office of the Attorney General. Chatchom said Al-Araibi must now be released as soon as possible.

The news will delight Al-Araibi and his supporters, who have launched a global campaign calling for his release. Al-Araibi has refugee status in Australia.

Al-Araibi, a citizen of Bahrain, was arrested and detained last November while on his honeymoon in Thailand at the request of the Bahraini government. He had been sentenced in absentia in 2014 to 10 years in prison for a vandalism charge in Bahrain. Al-Araibi fled to Australia, where he was granted refugee status in 2017. He now plays for semi-professional Melbourne-based club Pascoe Vale.

Al-Araibi said he feared he would be tortured and killed should he be handed over to Bahrain by the Thai authorities.

“I am afraid to go back,” he told CNN during an interview inside the prison on February 4. “Please fight for me.”

Thailand’s attorney general has previously said that his

case fell in line with Thai law and it would be up to the courts to decide whether he be extradited.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison welcomed the news Monday, thanking Thai authorities for their help with the matter. But he cautioned “as it always is in these cases, people aren’t home until they’re home.”

“I’m pleased Hakeem is coming home and I’ll be pleased to see him at home when that occurs. But until that happens, we’ll continue to work this process as you would expect us to, not taking anything for granted and doing so in a way that is deeply appreciative and respectful to the Thai government,” Morrison said.

Bahrain’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement carried by local media said that Al-Araibi’s guilty verdict would remain in place despite the decision to drop its extradition case.

“The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its right to pursue all necessary legal actions against Mr. Al-Araibi,” the statement read.

### ■ ‘Human rights defender’

Activists campaigning for Al-Araibi’s release said that the footballer should never have been detained; an international warrant was issued for his arrest although such red notice requests are not meant for refugees.

Former Australian national team player Francis Awaritefe,

a vice-president of the global footballers’ union FIFPro, said last week: “Hakeem is a refugee. He’s a human rights defender. And therefore, under international law, he should not be a subject of these proceedings.”

Football’s world governing body FIFA has been involved in Al-Araibi’s case, with Secretary General Fatma Samoura writing to Thailand’s Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha to campaign for his release.

In a Twitter post on Monday, Craig Foster, a former Australia football captain who has led the charge to free Al-Araibi, said: “My thanks go to the wonderful people of Thailand for your support and to Thai Govt for upholding international law. My deepest gratitude. Also to everyone who stood for what’s right.”

Last week, the Australian Football Federation (FFA) canceled a proposed training camp in Thailand for its Under-23 men’s national team in a show of support for Al-Araibi, who has been openly critical of the Bahraini government and its record on human rights.

In 2012, he was arrested and detained in Bahrain for three months, accused of vandalizing a police station during a protest. He told CNN that he was released because he presented evidence that he was playing soccer live on TV when the protest happened.

## Preview - West Zone: Preliminary Stage Two

The second preliminary round of qualifying for the 2019 AFC Champions League bursts into life on Tuesday when a total eight teams from the West and East Zones will book their place in the competition’s play-off phase.

Preliminary Stage 2 – West Zone

■ **Pakhtakor (UZB) v Air Force Club (IRQ)**

Pakhtakor Stadium, Tashkent; Tuesday, 1500 local time

■ **Pakhtakor**

Pakhtakor claimed a place in the competition’s preliminary phase after finishing as runners-up in the Uzbekistan League. This will be their 15th AFC Champions League campaign, although after reaching the semi-finals in both 2002-03 and 2004, they have not successfully navigated the group stage since 2010.

How they qualified: Uzbekistan League runners-up

Past ACLs: 2002-03 – Semi-finals; 2004 – Semi-finals; 2005 – Group stage; 2006 – Group stage; 2007 – Group stage; 2008 – Group stage; 2009 – Quarter-finals; 2010 – Round of 16; 2011 – Group stage; 2012 – Group stage; 2013 – Group stage; 2015 – Group stage, 2016 – Group Stage; 2018 – Playoffs

■ **Air Force Club**

Air Force Club – also known as Al Quwa Al Jawiya – are braced for their fourth AFC

Champions League outing after finishing as runners-up in the Iraqi Premier League. They have previously not progressed beyond the group stage, but will no doubt be buoyed by their hat-trick of AFC Cup title successes in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

How they qualified: Iraqi Premier League runners-up

Past ACLs: 2004 – Group Stage; 2006 – Group Stage; 2008 – Group Stage

■ **AGMK FC (UZB) v FC Istiklol (TJK)** AGMK Stadium, Almalyk; Tuesday, 1600 local time

■ **AGMK FC**

Based to the east of Tashkent in the city of Almalyk, AGMK are beginning their debut continental campaign from the preliminary stage after winning the Uzbekistan Cup thanks to a 3-1 win over fellow AFC Champions League hopefuls Pakhtakor. AGMK, who have featured in Uzbekistan’s top-flight since 2008, were only founded in 2004.

How they qualified: Uzbekistan Cup winners

No previous AFC Champions League appearances

■ **FC Istiklol**

FC Istiklol (pictured above) are set to make their AFC Champions League debut after claiming a seventh Tajik top-flight crown. They have, however, plenty of continental

experience thanks to their exploits in the AFC Cup – a competition in which they were runners-up in 2016 and 2017.

How they qualified: Tajik League champions No previous AFC Champions League appearances

■ **Saipa (IRN) v Minerva Punjab (IND)** Shahr-e Qods Stadium, Tehran; Tuesday, 1710 local time

■ **Saipa**

After finishing fourth in the Iran Pro League standings, Saipa return to the continent’s premier club competition for only a second time. Their previous appearance came in 2008 when they reached the quarter-finals before being beaten over two legs by FC Bunyodkor from Uzbekistan.

How they qualified: Iran Pro League 4th place

Past ACLs: 2008 – Quarter-finals

■ **Minerva Punjab**

Minerva Punjab famously claimed last season’s I-League title after only two years of football in India’s top-flight. The club, which is based in the city of Chandigarh, will be making their AFC Champions League debut.

How they qualified: I-League champions

No previous AFC Champions League appearances

■ **Zob Ahan FC (IRN) v Kuwait SC (KUW)** Foolad Shahr Stadium, Isfahan; Tuesday,

1900 local time

■ **Zob Ahan FC**

AFC Champions League runners-up in 2010, Zob Ahan are featuring in the competition for an eighth time after finishing as runners-up in the Iranian league. Since their appearance in the final, Zob Ahan’s best performances to date came in 2016 and then again last year when they reached the Round of 16.

How they qualified: Iran Pro League runners-up

Past ACLs: 2004 – Group Stage; 2010 – Runners-up; 2011 – Quarter-finals; 2012 – Qualifying Round; 2016 – Round of 16; 2017 – Group Stage; 2018 – Round of 16

■ **Kuwait SC**

Last week’s impressive 3-2 win at Jordan’s Al Wehdah saw Kuwait SC (pictured above) advance to set up a meeting with Zob Ahan. The Kuwaitis are appearing in the AFC Champions League for a sixth time, with the club’s best performances to date having been group stage finishes in 2005, 2007 and 2008.

How they qualified: Kuwaiti Premier League champions

Past ACLs: 2002-03 – Qualifying Round; 2005 – Group Stage; 2007 – Group Stage; 2008 – Group Stage; 2014 – Playoffs

(Source: the-afc)

## Mollaei wins bronze at Paris Grand Slam

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Saeid Mollaei from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the 2019 Paris Grand Slam on Sunday.

Mollaei emphatically bested Rio 2016 Olympic gold medalist Khasan Khalmurzaev by two scores in the -81kg.



The second bronze medal was won by Budapest Grand Prix winner Alan Khubetsov from Russia who edged past rank outsider Mussayev by a waza-ari score.

The Hague Grand Prix bronze medalist Dominic Ressel from Germany won Grand Slam gold for the first time as he defeated Sagl Muki by ippon.

The 2019 Paris Grand Slam brought 570 judokas from 97 countries together in Paris, France on Feb. 9 and 10.

## Iranian wrestlers win three medals at Grand Prix Zagreb Open

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers claimed three medals at the Grand Prix Zagreb Open.

The competition, the penultimate round of this year’s first UWW Ranking Series event in Greco-Roman, was held at the Dom Sportova Arena in Zagreb, Croatia.

Pouya Dadmarz seized a gold medal at the 55kg final after defeating Turkey’s Ekrem Ozturk 2-1.

Milad Rezaejhad won a silver at the 60kg, being defeated by two-time junior world champion Kerem Kamal from Turkey 9-3.

Mohammad Naghousi also claimed a bronze medal by beating Romanian Ilie Cojocari 5-4 at the at 77kg.

The next Greco-Roman Ranking Series event will be the Hungarian Grand Prix-Polyák Imre Memorial to conclude the season. Competition will be held in Győr on February 23 and 24.

## Iran, Pakistan to play kabaddi series

**IRNA** — Iran and Pakistan have agreed to hold a bilateral kabaddi series this year, a senior official of Pakistan Kabaddi Federation (PKF) said.

“Yes, both nations have agreed,” the PKF secretary Mohammad Sarwar told ‘The News’ newspaper after returning from Iran.

Both nations held a series of meetings on the subject in Tehran last week. Pakistan is expected to invite Iran in April.

“We told them that we would invite them when we hold our camp. We plan to hold the camp in April and then the things would become clear. It will be a series of the Asian style kabaddi as we are going to prepare for the South Asian Games,” Sarwar said.

He was quick to add that Pakistan would tour Iran a couple of months after hosting them. Sarwar visited Iran for delivering lectures to the referees of Iran.

Last month Iranian kabaddi team along with Indian team visited Pakistan to play Triangular International Kabaddi Series in Pakistan.

Iran has emerged as a strong kabaddi power in the world and it bewildered everyone when they clinched gold in the 18th Asian Games in Indonesia last year.

## Iranian boxers claim three medals at Bocskai Istvan Memorial

**TASNIM** — Iranian boxers claimed three medals at the 63rd edition of the “Bocskai István Memorial” International Boxing Tournament.

Moslem Maghsoudi lost to Mateusz Polski from Poland 4-1 and took a silver medal at the -64kg weigh class.

Shahin Mousavi in the -75kg and Omid Ahmadasafa in -52kg claimed two bronze medals.

The international event was held in Debrecen, Hungary from February 5 to 10.

## Jordon basketball team land in Tehran to hold friendly matches

**MNA** — Jordan national basketball team landed in Tehran on Sunday to hold training sessions as well as playing two friendly matches with Iran.

Both Iran and Jordan are preparing for the final window of FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 Asian Qualifiers.

The two teams will hold behind-closed-doors friendly matches on Tuesday and Thursday.

Iran stands second in Group F of the competition with 17 points and just need one victory to seal a ticket to 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup. Team Melli will play final window matches against Japan and Australia on January 21 and 24 respectively, both at Tehran’s Azadi Sports Complex.

Jordan stand fifth at Group E with 15 points. The Falcons of Jordan will host China on February 22 before taking on New Zealand two days later at Amman’s Prince Hamza Arena.

So far, Australia, South Korea, New Zealand, and China (as hosts) have been qualified for the 2019 FIBA World Cup. The three best-placed teams from each group and the best 4th-placed team (total of seven teams) shall qualify for the event.



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who considers himself a leader must train himself before training others, and with a proper method first educate their thoughts and deeds and caress them with his tongue. One who is his own teacher is more worthy of respect than being a teacher of others.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Alireza Zarif is underway at 14 Gallery.

The exhibit named "Look at Me" will run until February 25 at the gallery located at No. 14, Khark St., off Engelab Ave.

■ Arash Alimohammadi and Mahdieh Kavakebpanah are showcasing their latest paintings in an exhibition at Vali Gallery.

The exhibit titled "It Blooms out of Stone" runs until February 20 at the gallery located at No. 71, Khoddami St. off of Vanak Square.

■ Paintings by Fahimeh Amini are currently on display in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until February 13 at the gallery that can be found at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

■ A collection of paintings by Naghmeh Farahvashi is on display in an exhibition at Saleh Gallery.

The exhibit named "Bubble Wrap" will run until February 13 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

■ A large number of artists, including Leila Biabani, Maryam Sina, Helia Chabok, Sina Bozorgi, Roshia Karimzadeh, Mani Rahmati and Nazanin Mohammad, are showcasing their paintings in an exhibition at Idea Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "The Song of the Fish" will run until February 13 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

Multimedia

■ Paintings and sets of installation by Mojtaba Amini are on view in an exhibition at 009821 Projects Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "It Transpired" runs until February 22 at the gallery located at No. 25, 18th Alley, Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ A group of artists, including Mohammad Ehsai, Farzad Adibi, Ahmad Morshedlu, Farshid Maleki, Aida Rajabi and Afruz Yasrebi, is showcasing their paintings, calligraphic paintings, photos and sculptures in an exhibition at White Line Gallery.

The exhibit named "Up to 10 Million" runs until February 18 at the gallery located at 22 Parvin Alley, off Jame Jam St. off Vali-e Asr Ave.

■ The Golestan Cultural Center is playing host to an exhibition of paintings and photos by a group of artists, including Asma Mohammadi, Ahmad Monfared, Shiva Saffari, Nazanin Asgari and Maryam Baiat.

The exhibition will be running until February 14 at the gallery, which can be found at Golestan St., in the Narmak neighborhood.

Photo

■ A collection of photos by Saeid Chupan, Zahra Ahmadi, Alireza Mahmudvand, Parastu Qasemi and 19 more artists is on display in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery.

The exhibition will run until February 13 at the gallery that can be found at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

# “When the Moon Was Full” named best film at 37th Fajr festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – “The Night When the Moon Was Full”, a true love story produced by Mohammad-Hossein Qasemi, has won the Crystal Simorgh for best movie at the 37th edition of the Fajr Film Festival.

The film also brought Narges Abyar the Crystal Simorgh for best director during the closing ceremony of festival held at Tehran's Milad Tower on Monday.

The film is about Abdul-Hamid Rigi, the younger brother of Abdul-Malik Rigi, the founder and leader of the Jundallah terrorist group in southeastern Iran, who marries Faezeh Mansuri, a woman from Tehran. He forces Faezeh to leave her homeland along with her brother to live in Pakistan where they find themselves involved in the Jundallah terrorist activities.

The movie also won Hutan Shakiba the award best actor for playing the role of Abdul-Hamid Rigi, while Elnaz Shakerdoost was crowned best actress for the portrayal of his wife, Faezeh.

Fereshteh Sadr-Orafai received the award for best supporting actress for the portrayal of the mother of the Rigi brothers.

Ali Nasirian was selected as best supporting actor for his role in “The Clown” directed by Homayun Ghanizadeh.

The award for best screenwriter was presented to Mohsen Qarai and Mohammad Davudi for their collaboration in “Qasre Shirin” directed by Reza Mirkarimi.

Director Nima Javidi won the special jury award for his drama “The Indian” about a prison warden who is assigned to transfer the prisoners to a new building during the 1960s. Ashkan Rahgozar’s “The Last Fiction”,



This combination photo shows actors Hutan Shakiba (L) and Elnaz Shakerdoost and director Narges Abyar after accepting their awards for “The Night When the Moon Was Full” during the 37th Fajr Film Festival at Tehran's Milad Tower on February 11, 2019.

which is based on a classic story from Persian poet Ferdowsi's masterpiece “The Shahnameh”, won the award for best animated film.

A jury composed of filmmakers Mohammad-Ali Bashe Ahangar, Mohammad Bozorgnia, Puran Derakhshandeh and Mohammad Ehsani, cinematographer Mahmud Kalari,

film critic Mehrzad Danesh and actress Rima Raminfar judged the movies.

A full report of the closing ceremony of the festival will be published tomorrow.

## Iranian culture minister urges his aids to take artwork export seriously

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi has asked his assistants to take the export of artworks seriously.

“The international sanctions against Iran exclude art and cultural products,” Salehi said last week during a visit to “Charsu-ye Honar”, a new section dedicated to displaying works from galleries in the 11th Fajr Festival of Visual Arts, which is underway at Tehran's Qasr Garden Museum.

“We should take the export of art products seriously and use this opportunity to export Iranian artworks,” he stated.

He said that the culture ministry, which is the main organizer of the festival, welcomes Iranian galleries' collaboration



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi (C) and his colleagues visit the Charsu-ye Honar exhibition at Tehran's Qasr Garden Museum on February 8, 2019.

in the Fajr art festival and added that the cooperation has contributed significantly to the event.

“The circle of artists is becoming increasingly wider in the country and a limited number of buyers of artworks can cause harm to the art market,” Salehi said and noted, “Therefore, we need to increase the number of art customers and the galleries can fulfill the need.”

He said that there is widening gap between the growth of Iranian art market and what is underway in the world economy and asked his assistants to decrease the gap by making modifications to the regulations on export of artworks.

Over 50 galleries are displaying artworks by 270 artists at the Charsu-ye Honar exhibition, which will come to end on Wednesday.

## Iran's “Breath” wins special prize at Seattle children's filmfest



Sareh Nur-Musavi acts in a scene from “Breath”.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iran's submission to the 2018 Oscars “Breath” has won a special prize at the Children's Film Festival Seattle, the organizers have announced.

Competing in the category of the Iron Giants Jury Prizes, the film received the Global Zoom Prize, which is presented to a film that best promotes intercultural understanding.

The story of the film directed by Narges Abyar is about four children whose mother had died a few years earlier and their father decides

to join the Iranian volunteers on the warfront following Iraq's attack in September 1980.

Also competing in the Iron Giants Jury Prizes category with jurors aged above 15, the award for Best Feature Film went to “Supa Moda” from Kenya, and the award for Best Animated Short Film was given to “Genbanojo” from Japan.

The festival ran from January 24 to February 9 at the Northwest Film Forum with 146 fantastic films from 39 countries centering on children and families.

## Jovial folk performances to enrich joy at Fajr Music Festival



An ensemble from the southeastern Iranian region of Baluchestan performs at the 33rd Fajr Music Festival in Tehran, January 2018. (Fajr Music Festival)

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Ali Maghazaei, said in a press release published on Monday. The performances will be held at the Art Bureau in Tehran.

Several ensembles from Rasht in Gilan Province will participate in the festival. However, the organizers have no plans to hold the festival in other cities.

The 34th Fajr Music Festival will take place in Tehran from February 13 to 19.

Ali Maghazaei, said in a press release published on Monday.

The performances will be held at the Art Bureau in Tehran.

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However, the organizers have no plans to hold the festival in other cities.

The 34th Fajr Music Festival will take place in Tehran from February 13 to 19.

## 37th Fajr International Theater Festival kicks off

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – The 37th Fajr International Theater Festival opened Monday with performances by a number of Iranian theater elites in several halls across Tehran.

Federico Garcia Lorca's “The House of Bernarda Alba” went on stage by Ali Rafiei at Vahdat Hall on the first day, while one more performance has also been arranged

for today.

A cast composed of famous actors including Roya Teimurian, Maryam Saadat and Maedeh Tahmasbi are collaborating in this production.

The play is an entry to the guest section of the festival.

“The Exonerated” co-written by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen was also performed

on the first day. The play was directed by Manijeh Mahamedi at the Samandarian Hall of the Iranshahr Theater Complex.

Tehran's City Theater Complex hosted theatergoers for a performance of Polish playwright Tadeusz Rozewicz's “The Trap” by director Esmail Movahhedi. The play is competing in the Iranian national section.

Tehran's Divare Chaharom Theater

hosted the Cologne-based Iranian director and playwright Alireza Kushk-Jalali who staged “Barefoot, Naked, Heart in His Hand”.

The play centering on racial violence has been onstage since January 21 and will continue until the end of the festival in the Plus Fajr section.

The 37th edition of the festival will run at 38 theaters across Tehran until February 23.

## “The Second Trial of Socrates” at Iranian bookstores

**A R T** **TEHRAN** – French philosopher Alain Badiou's comedy play “The Second Trial of Socrates” (Le second procès de Socrate) has recently been published by Ruzbahan Publications

in Tehran.

Translated by Mohammadreza Khaki, the play is about the classical Greek philosopher Socrates' tragic trial, in which he was sentenced to death by

the drinking of hemlock.

In this comedy play, Badiou tries to criticize philosophical and political reflections on today's society, journalism and Communism.