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Iranian representatives take six medals at Karate 1-Series A Salzburg 15



Italian cinematographer Luca Bigazzi to hold workshops at Fajr festival 16

Khwarizmi Intl. Award announces winners



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‘Iraq willing to establish joint bank with Iran’

TEHRAN — Iraq has expressed readiness to establish a joint bank with Iran, Tasnim news agency reported on Monday quoting the secretary general of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce. “The Issue was discussed during Zarif’s talks with the Iraqi side and the Iraqi Rafidain Bank expressed its readiness to establish branches in Iran.” Hamid Hosseini said.

Mentioning the two countries close economic relations, the official noted that Iran and Iraq’s relation doesn’t completely

rely on banking relations. “We managed to keep our mutual trade during the sanctions and even expand it in some areas.” He said. Regarding the plans for facilitating export to Iraq, following the recent decision of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Hosseini said: “In coordination with CBI plans and according to a framework which will be released soon, our exporters can deliver their dinars to Iranian banks both inside the country or in Iraq and receive its rial equivalent.” → 4

Tehran: Europe would be facing terrorists if Hezbollah did not exist

TEHRAN — Europe would be facing many problems with the terrorists if Hezbollah did not exist, Tehran said on Monday in reaction to Britain’s listing of the Lebanese resistance movement as a terrorist organization.

In a press conference, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said, “In an optimistic situation, Britain has made a

strategic mistake, and in a pessimistic one, this policy reflects their relations with certain regional countries.” Hezbollah is an important part of the Lebanese administration and parliament, played an important role against the terrorists in recent years and prevented the spread of terrorists to other regions including Europe, Qassemi stated. → 2

Amano insists Iran complying with nuclear deal

By staff and agency
Yukiya Amano, the head of UN nuclear watchdog, said on Monday that Iran is complying with the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Amano made his assessment in a regular update to the IAEA’s board of governors,

confirming a confidential report distributed to member states last month, AP reported. He said, “Iran is implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.” Amano added that “it is essential that Iran continues to fully implement those commitments.” → 2



PERSPECTIVE

M.A. Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

Blind subsidy system costing economy greatly

The heavily subsidized gasoline and its rising consumption are putting the country in a difficult situation both strategically and economically.

Strategically because the country has come under illegal tough sanctions by a deceitful and mad person at the White House, and economically because the country’s oil export is being reduced to almost half due to sanctions.

Despite these cruel sanctions, both the government and parliament are following the failed and costly policy of energy subsidy, especially in regard to gasoline.

Following the devaluation of national currency due to sanctions, the current price of gasoline is very far from its real price and this has led to further smuggling of gasoline and other fuels.

In submitting the national budget bill to the parliament for the next fiscal year, which starts on March 21, 2019, the government did not propose an increase in gasoline prices. It even did not propose rationing it.

The special parliamentary committee (tafiq commission), which comes into existence when the national budget is being studied at the parliament, also did not propose an increase in gasoline prices. A majority of parliamentarians also blindly backed the special committee’s decisions when the issue was put for vote at the parliament on February 23

The special committee and government opposed proposals by the Majlis Research Center to distribute the dividends from a partial release of gasoline prices to those who do not have cars. The committee members said it causes more inflation, which has already increased due to sanctions. They claimed it hurts the poor people.

Kazem Jalali, the Majlis Research Center director, rightly said gasoline, which is being sold too cheaply, belongs to the entire people and its current price is mostly benefiting car owners.

Currently gasoline is being sold at 1000 toman per liter. However, some say its real price is about 7000 toman. Whether 7000 toman or higher or lower, it is being sold at a very low price.

The U.S. dollar is currently 4200 toman and 12700 toman at official and street rates, respectively. → 4

Iranian revolutionary experience had effective leadership: Falk

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Richard Anderson Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, says “Iranian revolutionary experience had effective leadership and a clear vision of what it was for and against.”

Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights says “I became rather uncomfortable after the first hour or so. I was very impressed by Ayatollah Khomeini’s demeanor, his dark bright eyes, his softly spoken confident words, and his probing questions raising serious issues.”

Following is the full text of the interview:
■ You met with Ayatollah Khomeini shortly

before the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. What memory do you have of the visit? What did you think about Ayatollah Khomeini at that meeting?

A: It was a vivid climax of our visit to Iran early. Prior to the meeting we had been in Iran for two weeks. During that time, the Shah had left the country, and it became clear to the world that revolutionary movement of the Iranian people had been successful. → 7

Khwarizmi Intl. Award announces winners

TEHRAN — The 312th Khwarizmi International Award ceremony was held in Tehran on Monday announcing winners for their scientific achievements, IRIB reported.

The annual festival is an opportunity for both Iranian and foreign participants to put their scientific achievements on display. Khwarizmi International Award is dedicated to recognizing outstanding scientific achievements made by researchers, inventors and innovators from all over the world. 16 laureates, 10 from Iran and 6 from other countries, received their awards during the closing ceremony.

In general some 271 research works from Iran

as well as 111 from other countries in various categories of applied research, fundamental research, research and development, and invention and innovation were submitted.

Parviz Davami, university professor at Department of Materials Science and Engineering of Sharif University of Technology; Hossein Baharvand, professor at Royan Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Technology; and Dariush Talai, the iconic tar and setar player, are some of the Iranian laureates of the award.

The six foreign accomplished researchers as laureates of the prestigious Khwarizmi International Award are:

Prof. Habib Zaidi (Switzerland) for his paper on advanced hybrid imaging PET/MR system, Prof. John Yates (U.S.) for his paper on the study of proteins function using mass spectrometry and proteomics, Prof. Dongyuan Zhao (China) for his paper on the interfacial assembly and synthesis of ordered mesoporous materials for applications, Prof. George Chrousos (Greece) for his paper on the Biology and medicine of stress and stress-related disorders, Prof. Stephen Holgate (UK) for his paper on understanding the pathobiology of asthma and allied disorders, and Prof. Peidong Yang (U.S.) for his paper on semiconductor nanowire technology for energy conversion and storage.

‘Ceasefire, trust-building key to effective peace process in Afghanistan’

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — The Afghan Taliban and U.S. officials have been engaged in hectic negotiations in many countries reportedly facilitated by the Pakistan government. Currently, the two sides are holding talks in Doha, with Taliban deputy chief Mullah Baradar also in participation.

Despite the series of talks over past many months, the two sides have failed to produce a

draft agreement. President Ashraf Ghani has been sidelined by the Taliban and coldshouldered by the U.S., undermining the credibility of his government.

Farkhunda Zahra Naderi is a former Afghan parliamentarian, N-Peace awardee, former advisor to Afghan President on UN affairs and a strong voice in Afghanistan. In an interview with Tehran Times, she talks about the prospects of ongoing peace talks, importance of ceasefire and trust

building, inclusion of women and the road ahead. Following are the excerpts:

■ Another round of negotiations between the Afghan Taliban and U.S. officials is underway in Doha. Have the two sides made any progress so far?

A. There are claims of progress, but to me so far only the consistency of their meetings seems positive. However, we need ceasefire to see the real progress on the ground. → 6

Leader Ayatollah Khamenei memoirs released

TEHRAN — Memoirs of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei have been published in Tehran, his office announced on Monday.

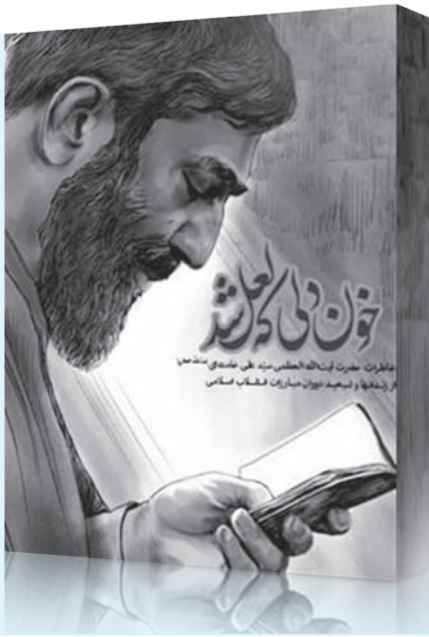
Published by the Islamic Revolution Publications, “The Pains that Changed into Gains” contains his memories of imprisonment and exile during the Pahlavi period and his struggles against the regime.

The book is a Persian translation of “Inna Ma as-Sabri Nasra” the Leader had written in Arabic. The memories were then compiled by the Iranian Arabic language scholar Mohammad-Ali Azarshab.

The Arabic version was unveiled by Lebanon’s Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah during a ceremony held in Beirut in early February to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The book also contains unpublished photos of the Leader, his father and his children, in addition to a photo collection of the paintings related to the topics in the book.

Photo: Front cover of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei’s memoirs “The Pains that Changed into Gains”.



ARTICLE

Syed Zafar Mehdi
Journalist
from New Delhi

Israeli footprint in India-Pakistan sabre-rattling

Last Tuesday when Indian air force conducted pre-dawn ‘surgical strike’ in neighboring Pakistan, the relations between the two nuclear powers and regional giants touched a new low.

While news about the airstrike and subsequent retaliation by Pakistan hogged headlines across the world, pushing the two countries to the brink of full-fledged war, there was something remarkable it.

According to news reports, India used Israeli-made bombs in the airstrike what New Delhi claimed was targeted at militant sanctuaries in Pakistan-held territory.

Fighter jets armed with Israeli-made Spice 2000 smart missiles attacked the militant sanctuaries. Each missile weighed 1,000 kilograms and operated on pre-fed GPS coordinates. They were fitted with technology making them difficult to be jammed or deflected, the reports said.

The relations between Narendra Modi-led nationalist government in India and Benjamin Netanyahu-led Zionist regime in Israel have grown rapidly in recent years, much to the chagrin of peaceniks in India.

Writing in The Independent, veteran Middle East watcher Robert Fisk said Israel has been for months lining itself up alongside India’s BJP government “in an unspoken — and politically dangerous — ‘anti-Islamist’ coalition, an unofficial, unacknowledged alliance, while India itself has now become the largest weapons market for the Israeli arms trade.”

“Not by chance, therefore, has the Indian press just trumpeted the fact that Israeli-made Rafael Spice-2000 “smart bombs” were used by the Indian air force in its strike against Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) “terrorists” inside Pakistan,” Fisk wrote.

India-Israel trade has exponentially expanded in recent years, touching the figure of \$6 billion. Many major Israeli defense companies have created a space in the burgeoning Indian market, including Aerospace Industries, Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, Israel Military Industries and Elbit.

In 2017, India happened to be Israel’s largest arms client, shelling out £530 million for Israeli air defense, radar systems and ammunition, including air-to-ground missiles, which Fisk noted have been used during Israel’s military campaigns against Palestinians and in Syria. → 6

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



New Judiciary chief to be named within days: Amoli Larijani

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ayatollah d e s k Sadeq Amoli Larijani said on Monday that he had asked Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to appoint the new head for the Judiciary sooner than expected.

Amoli Larijani said his successor will be named in the coming days, ISNA reported.

He said he made the request due to his heavy responsibilities in the Expediency Council and the Guardian Council.

The Leader appointed Ayatollah Amoli Larijani as the head of the Judiciary in August 2009, replacing Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi.

Under law, Judiciary chief is appointed by the Leader for a period of 5 years, which is extendable.

According to unofficial reports, Ebrahim Raisi, the current custodian of the Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad, will replace Amoli Larijani.



Government says favors provincial parliamentary polls

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein-Ali Amiri said on Monday that the administration is in favor of a bill that changes parliamentary elections from local to provincial levels.

In an open session of the parliament, Amiri said the bill was put forward after the viewpoints of experts and political and social activists were considered, Mehr reported.

Speaking against the bill, MP Abbas Goudarzi said provincial elections would decrease voter turnout and prevent younger generations from becoming lawmakers.

He also said the move will create a rift between the establishment and the people.



Iranian diplomat in Moscow to discuss Venezuela

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Director of the Foreign Ministry Department for the Americas was expected to depart Tehran for Moscow on Monday night to exchange views about Venezuela with the Russian side.

According to the YJC, Mohsen Baharvand's visit is intended to create coordination between Iran and Russia on international affairs, especially the political situation in Venezuela.

Since the beginning of the political crisis in Venezuela, the Islamic Republic has voiced objection to any form of interference in the internal affairs of the country, especially by the United States.

Iran has also voiced its support for the Venezuelan government's proposal for dialogue with the opposition.



The Netherlands recalls ambassador to Tehran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Netherlands on Monday recalled its ambassador to Iran for consultations after diplomats at its embassy in Tehran were expelled, said Foreign Minister Stef Blok, Reuters reported on Monday.

The move comes just two months after the Netherlands accused Iran of being behind political killings in the Netherlands that triggered new European Union sanctions against Tehran.

"The government has decided to recall the Dutch ambassador in Tehran for consultations," Blok said in a statement. "This decision follows the announcement by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that two Dutch diplomats at the embassy in Tehran have been declared persona non grata and have to leave the country."



'Route to rebuilding Baghdad, Damascus passes through Tehran'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — A former Iranian ambassador to Amman has sent messages to Jordanian officials stating that the route toward rebuilding Baghdad and Damascus passes through Tehran.

Citing an article published by Ammon News, ISNA reported on Monday that Mojtaba Ferdowsipour has sent a number of similar messages to Jordanian authorities.

Ferdowsipour has also criticized Jordanian officials for not welcoming Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and not sending an ambassador to Tehran, ISNA added.



IRGC stops large smuggled fuel cargo

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Intelligence have successfully intercepted the export of a large cargo of smuggled fuel before it could leave Iran, a report by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting said on Monday.

The cargo consisted of over 10 million liters of gas oil and kerosene and was intended to be carried away by a large smuggling band through legal terminals, the report said.

A severe depreciation of the Iranian currency, the rial, against international currencies while the fuel prices have remained unchanged has multiplied the lucrativeness of fuel smuggling in Iran.

Leader: Do not pin hopes on Europe

Ayatollah Khamenei told Rouhani the JCPOA promise 'conditioned' people and that's enough

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Leader of d e s k the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei advised President Hassan Rouhani and his cabinet back in July 2018 not to rely on Europeans to protect Iran against U.S. sanctions.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), did not resolve economic problems, a Monday video release of the private meeting revealed.

"Don't wait for this or that," the Leader suggested.

He said, "One day the resolution of economic problems was tied to BARJAM, (but) BARJAM could not resolve any of the country's economic problems... and the result was that the people became conditioned to BARJAM... we have become conditional. We have conditioned the people. This time it's the European package. Don't make people conditional to the European package."

BARJAM is the Persian acronym for the JCPOA.

The U.S. imposed new sanctions on the Islamic Republic after President Donald



Trump abandoned the JCPOA in May 2018.

The Europeans said they would not follow suit, trying to keep Iran in the agreement by promising incentives.

After spending months discussing possible mechanisms to guarantee continued trade with Tehran, the Europeans last month unveiled the Instrument in

Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) with strings attached.

"But of course the Europeans have to. May they go blind! They should tell how they will be able to defend our interests, for which the name is the package. But do not make that a fundamental issue of the country. The European package may make it or not. We have jobs to do in the country," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He added, "They (Europeans) are bad. They are really bad. I have a breastful of things to say about the Europeans, not because of their current policies, but their mischievous nature in the last few centuries."

Senior Iranian officials have objected to Europe's preconditions, which require Iran to join the FATF (the Financial Action Task Force) before INSTEX enters into force.

"But of course I say relations should be preserved. Those who have been with me during these years know that, regarding diplomatic ties, I believe relations should be boosted day by day," the Leader remarked.

"Stepping aside or severing [ties], these are not my idea, except in rare cases such as America.... Ties with the East should be strengthened. So too with the West."

Zarif says U.S. hegemony is over

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister d e s k Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that post-West world has been formed and the U.S. hegemony is over.

President Donald Trump's secret visit to Iraq shows that the U.S. hegemony is over, he said during a speech at AJA University of Command and Staff.

On December 26, Trump spent a few hours at al-Asad Air Base in Iraq's western Anbar Province but did not visit the capital Baghdad. A scheduled meeting between Trump and Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi was scrapped and they only talked over the phone.

Trump acknowledged the security concerns about visiting Iraq, saying it was "pretty sad" that he needed such secrecy to see U.S. troops.

"Pretty sad when you spend \$7 trillion in the Middle East, and going in has to be under this massive cover with planes



all over and all of the greatest equipment in the world, and you do everything to get in safely," he said.

■ **'Iran builds missiles by relying on own capacities'** Zarif also said that Iran builds missiles by relying on

domestic capacities.

"The U.S. and certain other Western countries are angry, because we build our missile by relying on domestic experts and we are not dependent on them," he said.

The chief diplomat noted that the Iranians have succeeded to turn limitations into opportunities.

He also said that Iran is independent and no country can decide for it.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said on Sunday that Tehran decides about its missile program based on its interests and the issue is "non-negotiable".

"We take decision about range, precision, speed and destruction power of our missiles based on our interests and threats and this process is not negotiable," Shamkhani told reporters on the sidelines of a conference held at the National Library of Iran.

Security contingent upon deterrent power: military chief

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Major General d e s k Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Iranian Armed Forces chief of staff, said on Monday that security of the country is contingent upon upgrading deterrent power.

"We should always update our capabilities based on threats and our country's defense needs," he said during a speech at a conference.

Baqeri noted that the enemies have spared no effort in causing harm to the Islamic Re-

public and have always updated and changed their tactics.

The general added that deterrence power is an issue which should always be updated.

The military chief attached great importance to industrial researches, especially in defense area as an element of power.

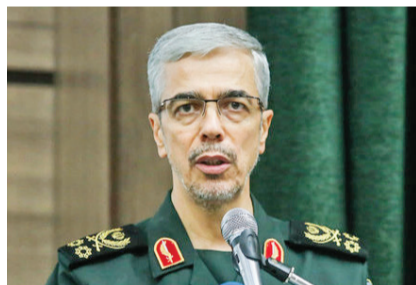
"We should always provide our national security through gaining knowledge and developing deterrence by relying on domestic scientific capacities to stop the enemies from

even thinking about causing harm to the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

Baqeri also said that security of the country can only be maintained by "new and creative moves in defense sphere".

He added that creative moves can only yield result by expert and committed human capital.

"Human capital is a great treasure which should be supported both financially and spiritually," he added.



Tehran: Europe would be facing terrorists if Hezbollah did not exist

1 → Hence, he continued, Hezbollah should be supported and hailed by other countries. "The British government must be held accountable for the bitter incidents that might happen in the future."

Hezbollah proved a strong force against terrorist groups such as Daesh (ISIS), al-Nusra and other militant groups in Syria.

■ **Qassemi: UAE's claims shows hateful conduct toward Iran**

The spokesman also reacted to the recent allegations made by the Emirati foreign minister against Iran, saying his remarks showed the UAE's hateful behavior toward Iran.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the 46th session of the Council of OIC Foreign Ministers in Abu Dhabi on Friday, Emirati Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan claimed that Iran interferes in other countries' domestic affairs and supports, finances and arms terrorist groups.

"Unfortunately, some countries have gotten used to repeating such claims in order to cover up the harm their policies have imposed on the Muslim world," Qa-

ssemi remarked.

Taking advantage of the OIC meetings and raising divisive and false issues against other members are contrary to the organization's objectives and philosophy, he added.

■ **'Tehran, Europe disagree on regional policies'**

On Iran's regional influence and some European countries' objection to it, Qassemi said, "We have a difference of opinion with some European countries on some of Iran's regional policies, and whenever possible, we've tried to explain to them that Iran's regional influence, which is raised and vilified by America and the Zionists, is an inherent, historical and popular influence and it does not have anything to do with some measures that we take."

He further said that Iran's influence "has always existed and is not something that can be reduced or extended by the request of one or two countries."

The European countries know that Iran will never accept any conditions about its domestic and foreign policies and does not need permission from others, he emphasized.

"We have paid a great price for our country's inde-

pendence and will act as an independent country," Qassemi added.

■ **European delegation due in Tehran to discuss INSTEX**

Elsewhere in the press conference, Qassemi said a European delegation is to visit Tehran to discuss the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX).

The Iranian foreign ministry spokesman added, "Inside Iran, the relevant organizations are preparing a corresponding mechanism to be able to make their practical move about the European mechanism."

"In the past weeks, we have had good talks about economic and banking sectors," he said.

Qassemi said in their meetings, the experts of the two sides will discuss the steps to operationalize and finalize the mechanism.

After months of delay on January 31, France, Germany and Britain finally announced the creation of INSTEX, a special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran, avoiding U.S. sanctions.

Amano insists Iran complying with nuclear deal

1 → The UN nuclear watchdog has confirmed Iran's compliance to the JCPOA for 14 times since the deal went into force in January 2016. The deal was signed in July 2015 in Vienna between Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, and China) plus Germany.

Despite repeated confirmations by the IAEA, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of the JCPOA in May 2018 and ordered reimposition of sanctions against Iran.

On January 31, France, Germany and Britain announced the creation of INSTEX, a special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran.

The European Union foreign pol-



icy chief Federica Mogherini, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt have said INSTEX will support legitimate European trade with Iran.

Iran, Turkey hold security task force meeting

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran d e s k and Turkey held on Monday their fourth joint security task force meeting in Ankara.

Iranian Deputy Interior Minister Hossein Zolfaghari and Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu participated in the meeting.

The two officials discussed the latest developments in Iraq and Syria, situation of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, and also the necessity of cooperation in fighting terrorism and organized crimes.

In line with their security cooperation, Iran, Turkey and Russia launched the Astana peace talks on the Syrian crisis.

The Astana peace talks were launched on Jan. 23-24, 2017 with the aim of putting an end to the Syrian conflict.



Kazakhstan has hosted multiple rounds of talks on Syria since January 2017, backed by the three power brokers, most of which involved delegations from the Syrian government and opposition.

Israeli soldiers kill two Palestinians after alleged car-ramming

Israeli soldiers shot three Palestinians after a car ramming attack in the occupied West Bank, the Israeli army said.

Media outlets in Israel said two of the alleged attackers on Monday were killed, while the Israeli military said another was slightly wounded.

In a statement, the Israeli army said an officer was critically injured and a soldier slightly hurt when they were hit by the vehicle, about 10km northwest of the Palestinian city of Ramallah.

Israeli soldiers had stopped their car on the roadside at night - Israeli media reported it had broken down - and were deliberately struck, the military said.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and has occupied the territory since, further consolidating its grip on the area by building illegal settlements that are now home to hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers.

The attack came as the United States officially shuttered its consulate in al-Quds (Jerusalem), downgrading the status of its diplomatic mission to the Palestinians by folding it into the U.S. Embassy to Israel.

For decades, the consulate functioned as a de facto embassy to the Palestinians. Now, that outreach will be handled by a Palestinian affairs unit, under the command of the embassy.

The symbolic shift hands authority over the US diplomatic channels with the West Bank and Gaza to ambassador David Friedman, a longtime supporter and fundraiser for the West Bank settler movement and a fierce opponent of the Palestinian leadership.

The announcement from the State Department came early on Monday in al-Quds (Jerusalem), and the merger was effective the same day.

■ Israeli warplanes launch new airstrike on northern Gaza

Meantime, Israeli jet fighters have launched a fresh airstrike against one of the positions of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in the east of Beit Hanoun, a city on the northeast of the besieged Gaza Strip.

Palestinian media have not yet reported any casualties caused by the Sunday night attack.

The attack came shortly after the Israeli regime's warplanes raided another Hamas position in Maghazi, a city in central Gaza. Also on Wednesday, Israeli fighter jets



and attack helicopters struck multiple targets in the southern Gaza Strip in their latest air raids against the besieged enclave.

According to Palestinian media reports, several posts belonging to Hamas resistance forces in the south of the coastal enclave were hit, including one in the Khan Yunis seafont and another outside the city.

Some of the sites hit are believed to belong to Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas.

The Israeli military claimed the airstrikes were conducted in response to an explosive device allegedly flown into the occupied territories from the Gaza Strip which had reportedly detonated outside a home in the Eshkol region, causing damage but no injuries.

Tel Aviv's airstrikes come as Palestinians have held weekly protests on the Gaza border since last year over the siege on the enclave and the right for refugees to return to their homes they were forcibly expelled from during the 1948 creation of Israel.

The Israeli regime's forces shot dead a Palestinian and injured dozens more last Friday in mass protests along the fence separating the besieged Gaza Strip and the Israeli-occupied territories.

More than 260 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces ever since anti-occupation protest rallies began in the Gaza Strip on March 30, 2018. Over 26,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on

May 14 last year, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of Nakba Day (Day of Catastrophe), which coincided with the U.S. embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

■ Israel pushing for Africa foothold with military training

Elsewhere, a report says Israeli commandos are training local forces in more than a dozen African nations where Israeli arms exporters are already accused of being complicit in war crimes.

Israel's Channel 13 on Sunday showed footage of Israeli officers coaching Tanzanian troops in hand-to-hand krav maga, hostage operations and urban combat, saying there is dramatic rise in Tel Aviv's military activities in Africa.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made inroads into Africa a key part of his agenda, becoming the first Israeli leader to visit the continent in 50 years in 2016.

"I've been in Africa four times in the last two years, that's gotta tell you something," Netanyahu said in a speech at an event in February.

Over the past two years, he has traveled to several African states in a bid to convince them to stop voting against the Israeli regime at the United Nations.

Israel is also said to be seeking to take advantage of insurgency and Takfiri militancy gripping parts of Africa to sell advanced military equipment to conflict-ridden states

in the continent.

Tel Aviv's policy to spice up ties with Africa, the report said, also features combined efforts by Israeli foreign ministry, military, Mossad spy agency and the regime's so-called security agency, Shin Bet.

The report named Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Angola, Nigeria, Cameroon, Togo, Ivory Coast and Ghana as among the African countries that Israel was seeking to stake out a niche.

Israel's military cooperation with the African states possibly emanated from the fact that many of those nations take part in peacekeeping missions on the border between the occupied territories, Syria and Lebanon, it said.

It would be advantageous to Israel if these forces were led by Israeli-trained soldiers, said the report.

An Israeli delegation has reportedly been traveling to countries in Africa and "carefully" weighing requests for further military collaboration.

The delegation is taking into account how likely Israeli military expertise could be used in committing mass atrocities in the continent, the report said.

Israeli media reported in November that Tel Aviv was actively working to establish diplomatic ties with Sudan, as part of wider efforts to upgrade relations with central African countries.

The Israeli TV channel also reported that Israel's ministry of military affairs recently summoned retired Maj. Gen. Israel Ziv for a hearing after the U.S. accused him of selling \$150 million in weapons to both sides of the civil war in South Sudan.

Last year, the U.S. Treasury Department placed sanctions on the Israeli businessman for his role in the civil war in South Sudan.

A recent report by the London-based Middle East Eye said the head of Mossad met his Sudanese counterpart in Germany last month as part of a secret plan by the House of Saud regime, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to oust President Omar al-Bashir.

In January, Bashir was quoted to have lamented that he had been advised to normalize ties with Israel because a normalization would help stabilize growing unrest sweeping Sudan.

(Source: agencies)

Pakistan vows again to act against armed groups

India-Pakistan border quiet but Kashmir tense amid militancy crackdown

Tensions are running high between India and Pakistan following a suicide attack on an Indian paramilitary convoy last month, which killed 42 soldiers in Indian-administered Kashmir.

The suicide attack, the deadliest in 30 years of Kashmir conflict and claimed by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM/The Army of Muhammad), escalated into a massive standoff between the two South Asian nuclear powers.

On February 26, twelve days after the JeM attack, Indian fighter jets bombed inside Pakistani territory, claiming to have hit a camp belonging to the armed group and eliminating "many rebels".

An infuriated Islamabad, which denied any casualties in the Indian bombing, launched its own incursion across the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border between the two countries in the disputed Kashmir region.

The fight resulted in the capture of a downed Indian air force pilot, who was released on March 1 as part of a "peace gesture" by Pakistan.

Meanwhile, violence and deaths continue in Kashmir, the Himalayan territory claimed in full by the two arch enemies.

Pakistan plans to take action against armed groups operating on its soil, a minister said on Monday, amid global pressure to act after JeM attack last month.



Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry denied Indian accusations that Pakistan was involved in the February 14 attack, which led to a sharp rise in hostilities, saying it "had nothing to do with us".

Chaudhry said the decision to act was taken at a meeting of the National Security Committee before the suicide bombing, claimed by terrorist group JeM, in the town of Pulwama.

"A full-fledged strategy is now in place," Chaudhry told Reuters news agency.

"We have different strategies for different groups, but the main aim is that we have to enforce the writ of the state. We have to demilitarize if there are groups (on our soil)," he added.

■ India-Pakistan train service resumes

Elsewhere, the operation of a bi-weekly cross-border train service between India's capital New Delhi and Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore has resumed, according to a Pakistani railway official.

Ejaz Shah, Pakistan railways spokesman said the train service, known as Samjhauta Express, left Lahore on Monday for India's border town of Attari, with some 180 passengers on board.

The neighbors agreed on Saturday to restart the rail link after suspending it last week due to the "prevailing tensions" between the two countries.

The first train left India on Sunday.

■ Pakistan PM: 'I'm not worthy of Nobel Peace Prize'

The developments follow as Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has said he is "not worthy" of the Nobel Peace Prize after growing calls on social media and by his ruling party to award him for his "sagacious" role in defusing tensions with India.

"The person worthy of this would be the one who solves the Kashmir dispute according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and paves the way for peace and human development in the subcontinent," Khan wrote on Twitter.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry submitted a resolution to the National Assembly on Saturday, suggesting Khan, 66, receive the prestigious award.

More than 400,000 people have signed an online petition calling for the prize be given to Khan.

As the world held its breath during the tense India-Pakistan standoff, Khan made the surprise announcement last week that the captured Indian pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, would be freed in a "peace gesture". Varthaman was handed over to Indian authorities on Friday.

■ India-Pakistan border quiet but Kashmir tense amid militancy crackdown

As India and Pakistan seemingly dial down hostilities that brought the arch enemies to the brink of another war, a massive crackdown on militancy in the Indian-controlled Kashmir region is killing both militants and security personnel in big numbers.

At the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border between the nuclear-armed neighbors, there was relative calm in the past 24 hours, their armies said on Sunday. The exchange of fire in the past few days has killed seven people on the Pakistani side and four on the Indian side, though the release of a downed Indian fighter pilot by Pakistan on Friday night has helped de-escalate tensions.

In Indian-ruled Kashmir, troops on Sunday shot dead two militants after a three-day gun battle that also killed five security force personnel, taking the total death toll to 25 in the past two weeks.

■ Pakistan denies Indian claims it used F-16 jets to down warplane

The United States has said it is trying to find out whether Pakistan used the U.S.-built F-16 jets to down an Indian warplane, potentially in violation of trade agreements.

The U.S. embassy in Islamabad said on Sunday it was looking into reports that Pakistan used F-16 jets to shoot down the Indian pilot, a potential violation of Washington's military sale agreements that limit how Pakistan can use the planes.

Pakistan has denied using F-16 jets during the dogfight, but it has not specified which planes it used. It assembles Chinese-designed JF-17 fighter jets on its soil.

Pakistan has a long history of buying the U.S. military hardware, especially in the years after 2001 when Islamabad was seen as a key partner in the U.S.-led "war on terror".

(Source: agencies)

Russia confirms N. Korean leader Kim Jong Un will visit Moscow



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will visit Russia, according to the press secretary of the Russian president who did not share dates or other details of the trip.

"Such a visit is indeed on the agenda," said Dmitry Peskov. "We hope that the precise date and venue will be determined via diplomatic channels within the foreseeable future."

The announcement came as Kim makes his way back to Pyongyang following talks with the United States President Donald Trump in Vietnam, where the two sides failed to sign an agreement on denuclearization or easing of sanctions on North Korea.

On Monday, Russian media reports said members of a parliamentary group that deals with Russia's relations with North Korea will visit Pyongyang on April 12.

Meanwhile, South Korea has proposed semi-official three-way talks with the United States and North Korea as it struggles to put nuclear diplomacy back on track after the collapse of the Hanoi summit.

The proposal for the talks came during

a National Security Council meeting on Monday, led by South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who said it was Seoul's "utmost priority" to prevent nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea from derailing.

At the meeting, South Korea's Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-in said the proposed talks, which could include civilian experts from the U.S. and South Korea, would help settle differences over how much sanctions relief Washington should provide to North Korea in exchange for nuclear disarmament steps.

"We should look into what and how the U.S. and North Korea see the current situation and we will come up with practical mediation measures," said Kang.

"We will come up with multiple measures to reopen dialogue between U.S. and North Korea. In addition, we will cooperate with countries which are interested in the issue, such as China and Russia, to reopen the U.S.-North dialogue as soon as possible."

(Source: agencies)

At least 23 killed after tornado hammers Alabama, U.S.



At least 23 people were killed after a tornado slammed into the state of Alabama in the United States and destroyed numerous homes with a death toll that could rise as rescuers sift through the rubble.

Emergency workers toiled into the night on Sunday, pulling bodies and the injured out of demolished homes and businesses in Lee County.

Sheriff Jay Jones told WRBL-TV the number of dead was 23. "And again the search continues. We still have some people that are reported missing," he said.

Lee County Coroner Bill Harris said the death toll could rise. "We've still got people being pulled out of rubble," he told the Birmingham News newspaper.

Authorities paused search efforts overnight because conditions were too dangerous in the dark with massive amounts of debris.

Severe weather unleashed one of the numerous possible tornadoes that threatened the U.S.'s south. Weather warnings extended into Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey warned residents more severe weather might be on the way.

■ Power cuts

The storm left more than 10,000 people without power as the temperature dropped.

In rural Talbott, Georgia, about 130km south of Atlanta, a handful of people were injured by either powerful straight-line winds that destroyed several mobile homes and damaged other buildings, said Leigh Ann Erenheim, director of the Talbot County Emergency Management Agency.

Televised news footage showed smashed buildings with rooftops blown away, cars overturned and debris everywhere.

Authorities said a tornado was confirmed by radar in the Florida Panhandle.

The threat of severe weather was expected to continue. A tornado watch was in effect for much of eastern Georgia, including Athens, Augusta and Savannah. The tornado watch also covered a large area of South Carolina, including the cities of Charleston and Columbia.

(Source: agencies)

4 American tourists, Kenyan pilot killed in chopper crash

Four American tourists and a Kenyan pilot were killed when their helicopter crashed on an island in a lake in northwest Kenya, police said on Monday.

The accident occurred in the Central Island National Park in Lake Turkana at around 8pm (1700 GMT) on Sunday, police said in a statement.

All five on board the chopper were killed. The cause of the crash was not immediately known, and the identities of the victims would be released once their next of kin have been informed, the statement said.

Known as the Jade Sea, Lake Turkana, which is popular with tourists, is the most saline lake in East Africa and the

largest desert lake in the world.

It is also a candidate site for the birthplace of mankind. Its islands are breeding grounds for the Nile crocodile, hippopotamus and several snake species while the lake itself is important to migratory birds.

(Source: AFP)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	164238.6
IFX	2090.08

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,765 rials
GBP	54,427 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$65.07/b
WTI	\$56.26/b
OPEC Basket	\$65.28/b
Gold	\$1,286.65/oz
Silver	\$15.18/oz
Platinum	\$844.65 oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Over 873,000 cars manufactured in 11 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian carmakers manufactured 873,243 vehicles during the eleven-month period from March 21, 2018 to February 19, 2019, IRNA reported on Monday citing the data released by the Ministry of Industry.

The data show that the car output in the mentioned eleven months has fallen 37.8 percent from 1.404 million cars manufactured during the same period of time in the previous year.

As reported, 814,265 passenger cars, 45,957 vans, 1,613 minibuses and middle buses, and 557 buses have been manufactured during the eleven-month time of this year.

Iranian carmakers manufactured over 1.535 vehicles during the past Iranian calendar year 1396 (ended on March 20, 2018), with 13.7 percent rise from the figure of its preceding year, Industry Ministry has previously announced.

‘Iraq willing to establish joint bank with Iran’

1 → Late last week, the foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq had a phone conversation during which they discussed issues of mutual interest as well as the latest regional and international developments.

During the conversation, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Ali al-Hakim underlined the need for expansion of cooperation between the two countries in all areas.

Iran is one of the major trading partners of Iraq. Baghdad has resisted pressure by the Trump administration to cut economic ties with Iran since Washington reintroduced sanctions against Iran last May. Iran and Iraq have agreed to trade in euros.

Relations between Iran and Iraq have increased greatly since the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003. Iran was the first country that recognized the governing system in Iraq after the Saddam fall.

Iran’s weekly heavy crude oil price grows \$2 yr/yr

Iran’s heavy crude oil price in the week that ended on February 22, 2019 grew \$2.2 from the same period last year.

The price of Iran’s heavy crude oil reached \$63.75 per barrel in the week ending February 22. This figure is higher than the preceding week by \$3.17/b on average.

Iran’s heavy crude oil on February 22, 2018 was \$61.73 per barrel.

The price of OPEC crude oil basket was \$66.17 per barrel in the week ending February 22, up by \$3.8/b compared to the same period last year. *(Source: Shana)*

Global stocks could see 10% trade discount narrow on deal

Global stocks are currently trading at a 10 percent discount thanks to the trade war -- a gap which could eventually close if reports the U.S. and China are close to a deal are accurate.

Strategists at UBS Group AG including Yianos Kontopoulos isolated the impact of equity moves on “trade shock” days to show the MSCI AC World Index has been hit by almost 10 percentage points since the dispute started. European stocks have been most hit with the Stoxx 600 Index showing a near 13 percentage point impact, and Australian stocks the least with just a 0.4 percent hit.

“On our estimates, equities are still pricing relatively large trade discounts,” the strategists wrote. “The probability of a near-term resolution is rising, and even if our model somewhat overstates the discount priced into equities, room remains for equities to rise on a further reduction in tensions.”

The U.S. and China are close to a trade deal that could lift most or all U.S. tariffs as long as Beijing follows through on pledges ranging from better protecting intellectual-property rights to buying a significant amount of American products, according to people familiar. One of the remaining sticking points is whether the tariffs would be lifted immediately or over a period of time to allow the U.S. to monitor whether China is meeting its obligations, they said.

Bank of America strategists said in a note last month U.S. stocks could hit a new record high should a “real deal” with China be struck, while JPMorgan Chase & Co. strategists led by Marko Kolanovic estimated in June that market reactions to trade headlines had yanked \$1.25 trillion in value from American shares. *(Source: Bloomberg)*

Tehran hosting 7th meeting of INSTC’s coordination council

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The seventh meeting of the coordination council of International North South Transit Corridor (INSTC) kicked off on Monday in Tehran, IRIB reported.

As reported, Iranian Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami, Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamnejad along with senior officials and delegations from the member nations attended the opening ceremony.

During the two-day summit, the fourteen member countries are going to explore ways of facilitating cooperation among the member states and discuss new approaches to increase the volume of trade through increasing the economic attractiveness of the corridor as well as its competitiveness compared to rival corridors in the region.

Speaking in the opening ceremony, Adamnejad expressed hope that during this gathering decisions will be made that would lead to the further expansion of transit in this corridor, and consequently, the growth of trade and economic exchanges in the region.

“Since 2000, in which the coordination council of the INSTC was established, the council have held six meetings.” He said.

The official further emphasized the need for close cooperation and unity among the



member countries in order to promote this corridor and commercialize its routes.

“Undoubtedly, the current and future plans and actions of the member states in developing and completing their transport infrastructure and facilities, in a context of synergy and coordination, will have a significant impact on the prosperity of the corridor routes.” Adamnejad added.

He also mentioned other advantages of the INSTC, saying “Considering the great tourist attractions along the north-south corridor, in addition to the development of transit traffic, establishment of touristic facilities along the corridor is also being pursued. In this regard, preparatory talks have been conducted with some neighbors and the plan has been in discussed with other

corridor countries.”

INSTC is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia via ship, rail and road.

The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali, etc.

Russia, Iran and India signed the agreement for the NSTC project on May 16, 2002. All three countries are founding member states on the project. Other important member states include Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Belarus with other states having varying levels of involvement.

Given its location in the INSTC, Iran’s southeastern port of Chabahar is of high significance in the INSTC project.

India and Iran have a long-standing agreement, signed in 2002, to develop Chabahar into full deep sea port. The port has the ability to handle cargo ships bigger than 100,000 tons and industry analysts have highlighted there are long term plans to integrate Chabahar with the NSTC.

Transit of goods via Iran increases 14% in 10 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Transit of commodities via Iran rose 14 percent during the ten-month period from March 21, 2018 to January 20, 2019 from the same period of time in the previous year, IRNA reported on Monday citing the data released by Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

The TPO data put the value of commodities transited from Iran at \$2.905 billion during the mentioned ten-month period, increasing \$358 million from \$2.547 billion in the same period of time in the past year.

Transit of goods via air borders stood at \$366 million, via sea borders at \$133 million, and via roads at \$2.314 billion during the eleven-month period of this year.

As reported, transit of commodities via air borders increased eight percent, via sea borders decreased six percent, and via roads rose 18 percent in the mentioned time span of

this year compared to that of the previous year.

As previously announced by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), transit of goods through Iran rose 24 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2018).

The data released by IRICA and also Iran’s Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization indicate that transit of goods via Iran experienced an increasing trend in the previous calendar year.

Regarding its geographical location Iran can play a significant role in transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due. To take advantage of its location for transit, the country has many plans underway and on the agenda to boost its transit capacity.

Some of these plans include developing Iran’s largest container port, Shahid Rajaei Port in southern province



of Hormozgan, and also Chabahar Port in southeast of the country, connecting the ports to the railway network, development of transit via railway, and also some customs measures such as improving transit procedures in the customs offices.

India’s IDBI Bank receives nod to handle import, exports transactions with Iran

India’s IDBI Bank has received government nod to handle import and export transactions with Iran, a move which would help in promoting two-way trade amid U.S. sanctions on the Persian Gulf nation, industry sources said.

U.S. President Donald Trump had in May last year withdrawn from the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran, re-imposing economic

sanctions against the Persian Gulf nation. Some sanctions took effect from August 6, 2018 while those affecting the oil and banking sectors started from November 4, 2018.

According to sources, IDBI Bank has been identified to route the payments. UCO Bank had in the previous round of sanctions handled rupee payments

India used to pay its third largest oil

supplier in euros using European banking channels. But this channel is also blocked from November last year.

Iran is India’s third-largest oil supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It was India’s second biggest supplier of crude oil after Saudi Arabia till 2010-11 but sanctions by the West over its nuclear program relegated it to the seventh spot in the subsequent years.

In 2013-14 and 2014-15, India bought 11 million tons (MT) and 10.95 MT of crude, respectively from Iran.

Bilateral trade between India and Iran increased to \$13.8 billion in 2017-18 from \$12.9 billion in the previous fiscal. However, India’s exports were only worth \$2.5 billion to that country.

(Source: Economic Times)

Blind subsidy system costing economy greatly

1 → Based on the proposal by the Majlis center, 30 liters of gasoline was going to be allocated to every citizen per month. According to the plan, those who used car could buy 30 liters per month at the current price of 1000 toman per liter, and if they used more, they had to pay more for it. Also, those who did not use gasoline received cash instead.

However, the proposal was rejected in its entirety by the Majlis. The Majlis did not propose any plan instead. It even did not vote to ration gasoline to partly reduce its ever-increasing consumption and smuggling.

Even if MPs were against paying direct gasoline subsidy to those citizens who don’t have cars, they could at least allocate 30 liters to every car per month at its current price and exact more money from the buyer above that amount.

They even failed to raise prices and allocate the incomes to the production sector.

Mohsen Delaviz, the managing director of the National Company to Improve Energy Efficiency, said in October 2018 that the Oil Ministry is paying 35 million dollars of gasoline subsidy per day.

Delaviz also said between 10-35 million liters of gasoline is trafficked every day. He also said 50 percent of the gasoline subsidy goes to the top three decile groups of the society.

Donya-e Eghtesad, a specialized economic newspaper, has also said the share of each Iranian from gasoline trafficking is about 500 liters per year.

A number of young researchers along with a number of noted economists released a statement on March 2 suggesting that a cutting of “hidden subsidy” is a path to economic

justice. They said gradual release of hidden energy subsidies and distributing its dividends are the most effective way to establish justice.

The more consumption of cheap petrol, which now stands between 86-100 million liters per day, means paying more and more blind subsidy and lowering the budget for economic projects.

The Majlis Research Center says the government is annually paying 60,000 billion toman subsidy to gasoline while the cash subsidy that is being paid directly to citizens is less than that.

In the previous round of sanctions against Iran, between the years 2012-2015, the U.S. banned sale of gasoline to Iran. Analysts say if this time the Trump administration has not banned the sale of gasoline, it is because Iran has become self-sufficient in gasoline production. However, they say if the consumption of gasoline continues to increase at its current pace it may be added to the list of sanctions.

Experience has shown that successive parliaments have been pursuing populist policies more forcefully than administrations when it comes to gasoline prices or fuel prices in general. Now, a great number of sitting parliamentarians are more concerned about being reelected in the coming winter’s elections rather than caring about national resources. They think if gasoline prices go up, their chances of being reelected will be reduced.

For a majority of parliamentarians, national resources come after personal interests. Of course, part of the problem lies with the oversight Guardian Council which disqualifies

competent hopefuls for the parliament. If qualified hopefuls who had had knowledge of economy and preferred national interests over personal interests probably the country would have got rid of the trap of the heavily subsidized fuel some years ago.

MP Mohammad Qassim, who represents the Kurdish city of Boukan in the parliament, says the behavior of some MPs are motivated by elections. In an interview with the Arman newspaper published on Sunday, Qassim said the MPs’ disregard for the “views of experts” is damaging.

Qassim says a majority of MPs lack necessary knowledge in making decisions in normal conditions, let alone in difficult situations, an indirect reference to the current situation in which prices have gone up highly and the value of national currency has decreased because of sanctions. “Unfortunately, it should be said that most expert views, which can help reduce people’s problems to some extent, are being ignored (by Majlis representatives),” the lawmaker regretted.

The current gasoline policy is anti-justice. The Majlis Research Center has said statistics by the central bank show that a considerable percentage of the population do not have private cars and therefore they are deprived of such a lavish subsidy.

The country’s economy is partly addicted to oil money, but the society’s addition to cheap fuel, especially gasoline, is worse.

No decision by itself is panacea for all problems in the energy sector but the current policies cannot continue for long. Finally, they will reach a dead-end. At that time, the people and government should pay a high cost.

U.S. and China said to appear close to deal to roll back tariffs



The United States and China appear close to a deal that would roll back U.S. tariffs on at least \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods, as Beijing makes pledges on structural economic changes and eliminates retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods, a source briefed on negotiations said on Sunday.

U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping could seal a formal trade deal at a summit around March 27 given progress in talks between the two countries, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday.

In an eight-month trade war, the United States has imposed punitive tariffs on \$250 billion worth of imports from China, while Beijing has hit back with tariffs on \$110 billion worth of U.S. goods, including soybeans and other commodities. The actions have roiled

financial markets, disrupted manufacturing supply chains and reduced U.S. farm exports.

Trump administration officials have said they expect the two presidents to “close” a deal at a summit in coming weeks at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

The source briefed on the talks said that no dates for a summit had been determined,

but that Beijing had reserved a 10-day window from around March 20 for a possible summit.

Many details still needed to be worked out, including the terms of an enforcement mechanism to ensure that Beijing follows through on pledges to make changes to policies to better protect U.S. intellectual property, end forced technology transfers and curb industrial subsidies.

Another source familiar with the talks said that Washington and Beijing were close to agreement on non-enforcement issues, including China’s pledges to increase purchases of farm, energy and manufactured products, as well as six agreements on structural policy changes.

The Wall Street Journal said that in the pending agreement, China would lower tariffs

on U.S.-made goods including agricultural products, chemicals and cars in exchange for sanctions relief from Washington, citing people briefed on the matter on both sides.

The newspaper’s sources cautioned that hurdles remain, and each side faces possible resistance at home that the terms are too favorable to the other side.

As a part of the deal there would be a \$18 billion purchase of natural gas from Houston-based Cheniere Energy Inc, the report said.

Cheniere declined to comment on the potential for a new LNG supply deal with China, a spokesman said. It last year signed a 20-year deal to supply state-run Chinese National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) with natural gas from its Louisiana export terminal through 2043. *(Source: Reuters)*

Oil resumes its upward trend on U.S.-China trade deal hopes

Staff & Agencies — Oil markets started this week with the good news that U.S. and China's long lasting trade war could see an end to it.

On Sunday, the news broke that the United States and China were getting close to signing a trade deal that would end a tariff row that has slowed global economic growth.

"China and the U.S. are in the final stage of completing a trade deal, with Beijing offering to lower tariffs and other restrictions on American farm, chemical, auto and other products and Washington considering removing most, if not all, sanctions levied against Chinese products since last year," Washington post reported.

On the same day, Wall street Journal reported that U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping could reach a formal trade deal at a summit around March 27 given progress in talks between the two countries.

Supported by a tightened supply amid output cuts by OPEC and driven by the reports on U.S.- China's expected truce, the prices which had fell significantly on Friday due to the concerns over slowing global economy and consequently lower global demand, rose



on Monday.

International Brent futures were at \$65.39 a barrel at 0416 GMT, up 32 cents, or 0.5 percent, from their last close.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$56.08 per barrel, up 28 cents, or 0.5 percent.

The market which has been rallying for

the past two months on OPEC production cuts is now supported by the new hopes on a better global economic growth.

Supply from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) fell to a four-year low in February, a Reuters survey found, as top exporter Saudi Arabia and its allies over-delivered on the group's supply

pack while Venezuelan output registered a further involuntary decline.

Oil market experienced a high volatility level last week, starting with a steep fall early in the week to posting a new high later on and then once again a three percent fall in the weekend.

Earlier last week, President Trump tweeted: "Oil prices getting too high. OPEC, please relax and take it easy. World cannot take a price hike - fragile!"

Brent crude dropped 2.5 percent immediately after Trump's tweet, and was on course to close near \$65 a barrel by the afternoon.

According to a Reuters survey, analysts and traders grown more pessimistic over the prospects for a significant price rally this year, global fuel consumption is expected to dip this year in the face of a broad economic slowdown.

The ups and downs of the oil prices last week could testify to the fact that the prices don't seem to be able to reach to levels higher than their current \$65 ceiling however the new progresses in the U.S. and China's economic relations could be a positive sign for the market to once again rise their bets on the prices in the months to come.

Global oil and gas drilling set to surge in 2019

After the recovery in global oil and gas drilling seen in 2018, this year the pace of drilling growth around the world is set to step up, albeit moderately, analysts at World Oil forecast.

The undisputed leader in drilling activity last year was the United States, with shale production surging, and it will continue to lead growth in global drilling activity in 2019 as well.

Excluding the United States, the world's drilling activity is set to increase by 2.5 percent to 46,209 wells expected to be drilled in 2019, following more modest 1.6-percent growth in drilling in 2018, World Oil has estimated.

World Oil analysts have forecast drilling activity across eight major regions, in which they have included selected countries, typically the biggest oil and gas producers in each of those regions. The eight regions are North America excluding the U.S., South America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union (FSU), Africa, the Middle East, Far East/South Asia, and South Pacific.

All but one of those eight regions are expected to see a higher number of wells drilled this year compared to 2018. The only exception would be the Middle East, where drilling activity is set to slightly decline by 0.5 percent. Nevertheless, World Oil sees 2019 as a very strong year for the major producers in the Middle East.

Another key takeaway from the forecasts is that growth in offshore oil and gas drilling will outpace the overall global drilling market. While total global drilling activity—excluding the U.S.—is set to rise by 2.5 percent this year, offshore drilling is expected to grow by just over 6 percent to 2,204 wells. The most active offshore drilling areas will include East Canada, Brazil, Norway, Angola, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, China, and India, according to World Oil.

Last month, research firm Rystad Energy said that global deepwater liquid production is set to jump by 700,000 bpd from 2018 to reach a record-high of 10.3 million bpd in 2019 thanks to new fields coming on stream in Brazil and the U.S. Gulf of Mexico. In addition to Brazil and the United States, the other biggest deepwater producers will be Angola, Norway, and Nigeria, according to Rystad.

Breaking down drilling activity by the eight main regions, World Oil finds that North America, including Canada and Mexico and excluding the U.S., will see activity rise by 5.1 percent this year. Drilling in Canada is expected to remain flat this year as the oil industry is implementing a production cut mandated by the province of Alberta in order to cope with the glut amid constrained takeaway capacity. Mexico's rig count has increased over the past few months, and although new President Andrés Manuel López Obrador is halting tenders for new oil and gas blocks and reviewing all previous contracts with foreign firms, there is still hope that he would not entirely backtrack on his predecessor's energy reform, World Oil reckons.

South America will see drilling up by just 1.7 percent this year, with hot spots Brazil and Guyana offsetting a massive 15.8 percent decline in Venezuela and weaker Argentina, where the economic slump continues.

Western Europe's drilling is forecast to increase by 3.9 percent, driven by high activity offshore Norway and UK drilling growing at a pace similar to the 5.7 percent rise in 2018.

Eastern Europe/FSU activity is set to rise by 1.4 percent this year after 4.3 percent growth last year, which was driven by record Russian production thanks to ramp-ups from its biggest oil producer Rosneft.



Drilling in Africa is expected to grow at the fastest pace among all regions, by 8.7 percent, with Angola and Egypt leading the way.

Middle East activity is set for a 0.5-percent drop, but top OPEC producers Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the UAE are all set for growth—by 5.4 percent, 1 percent, and 2.5 percent, respectively.

The Far East/South Asia will see drilling up 2.6 percent, following a 12-percent jump in 2018, with Chinese drilling expected up by 2.5 percent as major energy companies aim to boost domestic oil and gas production.

In the South Pacific, drilling will increase by 3 percent, with Australian activity up 2 percent, according to World Oil. (Source: oilprice.com)

Australia planning to import LNG: What's next? Coals to Newcastle?

Australia is on the verge of becoming the biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas, with dozens of tankers a week carrying fuel to North Asia. It could also soon be importing LNG as supply sources in its southern states run out.

Five LNG import projects are vying to start up between 2021 and 2022, possibly forcing gas users in New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria into more direct competition with Asian buyers for gas from northern Australia.

Those states represent a yearly market of 420 petajoules (PJ), equivalent to 7.8 million tonnes of LNG worth about \$3 billion. That represents just 2 percent of global LNG trade, but import proponents say the terminals would be another key outlet for spot cargoes of the fuel, especially during periods of low demand in the northern hemisphere.

Piping gas from Queensland in northern Australia to southern markets is expensive, making LNG imports potentially viable.

Credit Suisse analyst Saul Kavonic says, though, if final investment decisions are delayed into 2020, the case for imports will weaken as pipeline tariff reforms are likely by then.

"Based on the five proposals to date, Australia now appears to be planning to overbuild LNG import capacity in response to an overbuild of LNG export capacity," Kavonic said.

Eastern Australia has ample gas reserves to meet demand. The market outlook is tight, though, due to falling output from Exxon Mobil's and BHP Group's Gippsland Basin joint venture off Victoria, rising production costs and state restrictions on onshore drilling.

"We definitely would see a rationale for one terminal to give another source of gas into the east coast market," said Nicholas Browne, Asia gas and LNG director at consultancy Wood Mackenzie. "We think one terminal would be sufficient till the mid to late 2020s."

Import advocates need to be wary,



however, of potential government moves to divert gas from exports to the domestic market and approvals for two long-delayed local gas projects, Narrabri and Surat. Gippsland Basin output could also prove more resilient than expected.

AGL's Crib Point project is the most likely to go ahead, industry executives and analysts say. Australian Industrial Energy's (AIE) Port Kembla terminal is also possible, but that hinges on signing up industrial customers.

Two other projects - Newcastle LNG, led by privately owned South Korean firm EPIK, and Venice Energy, set up by former executives of BHP Group now at Integrated Global Partners - have yet to submit applications for state approvals.

Newcastle LNG and Venice Energy are looking to limit commercial risk by building import terminals and charging suppliers and traders to regasify LNG to sell to customers.

"We aim to provide a cost-efficient infrastructure solution in markets that are in need of gas," said EPIK founder Jee Yoon.

Australian LNG producer Woodside Petroleum said gas for such pay-per-use terminals could come from Australia, the United States, Asia, wherever spot prices are cheapest.

"We would take those cargoes out of our portfolio, and we would decide where they come from," Woodside Chief Executive Peter Coleman told reporters in February.

Exxon Mobil is a big wild card, as it is considering imports to protect its turf in southeastern Australia, where it has been the dominant supplier for nearly 50 years.

Its infrastructure and experience selling into the southeastern market put it in a unique position, said Exxon Mobil Australia Chairman Richard Owen.

"We've got some competitive advantage and probably have a little bit more time than some of the other players," Owen said at a business event on Friday.

Importing LNG into a gas-rich country is not new. Both Malaysia and Indonesia, the third and fifth-biggest LNG producers, have import terminals because transporting gas between islands by ship makes more sense than pipelines.

AGL, Australia's No.2 energy retailer, is the furthest ahead with its import plan. Pending a state environmental review, it expects to make a final investment decision by early 2020, targeting first imports in 2021.

Its advantage over AIE is that it has an existing customer base for its gas.

AIE still hopes to be the first up and running, expecting approval from New South Wales this quarter for a mid-2020 start.

"We think there's a significant shortfall of gas in the domestic market," said AIE Chief Executive James Baulderstone.

AIE, working with the world's biggest LNG buyer, Japan's JERA, and Marubeni Corp on import plans at Port Kembla in New South Wales, has been talking to industrial customers for more than a year, without yet signing any buyers.

"We've had oil prices moving around a fair bit and a lot of our LNG is priced to oil. That's obviously a big issue," Baulderstone said. At \$60 a barrel for oil, several dollars below the current Brent price, AIE sees LNG imports as competitive with domestic pipeline gas.

Industrial users are reluctant to commit to imports amid uncertainty over local gas developments, notably Narrabri in New South Wales, for which Santos Ltd hopes to win state approval this year.

Royal Dutch Shell's and PetroChina's Arrow Energy Surat project in Queensland, Australia's biggest undeveloped coal seam gas resource, aims to start producing by 2021, but has been delayed due to a spat between the partners.

An international LNG trader said Australia could build up to two LNG import terminals, but called it absurd. The country just needs to lower pipeline tariffs to ease the flow of gas from north to south, he said.

"As a trader, I think it's really insane. When this kind of insanity happens, it doesn't last for very long."

(Source: Reuters)

Seven-figure bonuses are spreading for Europe's energy traders

After a few years of roughly stable payouts for many of Europe's energy traders, big bonuses are back for the cream of the crop.

The best traders in natural gas to power can look forward to handsome rewards after navigating markets that last year sparked to life with more bullish trends and a good dose of volatility. More people than previously will enter the seven-figure bracket, according to recruiters surveyed by Bloomberg.

Expectations across the board is for about 20 percent more in compensation compared with the previous year. And the best are looking at a total pay in the range of \$2.5 million to \$3 million or more, according to Peter Henry, managing director at H.W. Anderson Ltd., who has hired for utilities, banks and trading houses for more than a decade.

Last year's price surge was to a large extent driven by a revival in the carbon market as regulators tightened supply. The cost of permits tripled, beating all other major commodities, and sent power prices surging. Companies from Gunvor Group Ltd., one of the largest independent oil traders, to Citadel LLC are expanding again or returning to the market after the industry retrenched with the lull in prices that followed the last financial crisis.

Carbon and power surge

"The market has been good with the right type of volatility and clear trends," said Jonathan Funnell, head of gas and power at recruitment firm Proco Commodities Ltd., which lists Trafigura Group Ltd. and PetroChina Co. as clients. "The carbon rally has had a knock-on effect for power and the whole fuels complex. Good traders should have been able to make money."

German benchmark power contracts jumped 44 percent last year, the most on record. The bullish trends made the markets more interesting again for the biggest trading houses, as well as hedge funds. That means more hiring of staff from utilities, which for some are the springboard to a career in trading. And they are not the only ones in demand, experienced analysts are also highly sought after.

Big pay day

Traders tempted to leave utilities could be "young professionals who haven't yet had a big pay day," said Henry. "They do want to test themselves and it often comes after a good year."

Profit at Electricite de France SA's trading unit in London jumped 74 percent to 633 million euros (\$721 million) last year after the company turned the market volatility to its advantage. Proprietary trading at Swedish utility Vattenfall AB is "performing really well," Chief Financial Officer Anna Borg said on a conference call, declining to be more specific.

Traders in the liquefied natural gas market also "had a good year" in 2018, said Peder Bjorland, vice president at Norway's biggest energy company Equinor ASA. Prices jumped to the highest in four years, while activity in both the physical and futures markets soared.

But all markets moves were not fundamental. Trade wars and sanctions had "a massive impact" on commodity markets, and that created some big winners and losers, said Douglas Ferguson, managing director at Kariba Search in Singapore.

Lucky traders

"Although most traders wouldn't dare to admit it, a lot of their 2018 profit was generated more by luck than skill," Ferguson said.

More active markets, coupled with the general trend toward electrification and the shift away from fossil fuels have meant that trading houses are increasingly looking to diversify beyond oil, their staple commodity for decades.

Gunvor, which set up power and gas desks about a decade ago before scaling down, has hired a team of traders from Trailstone. Trafigura expects its expansion in natural gas to continue and "sees further opportunities to build our position in southern and eastern Europe," according to its 2018 annual report. Castleon Commodities International LLC bought a Dutch power plant in 2017, its first asset purchase in Europe.

Citadel hires

Billionaire Ken Griffin's Citadel investment firm hired Peter Brewer, the founder and Chief Investment Officer of weather-driven hedge fund Cumulus, along with about 20 traders and analysts.

Cumulus was among the first specialist traders who began focusing on short-term gas and power markets, where the weather is one of the biggest price drivers. A decade on, the impact of the sun and the wind is only increasing. In Germany, Europe's biggest power market, renewable energy became the biggest source of electricity last year, beating coal.

Renewables rising

And as energy trading is becoming more and more data driven, a good analysis team is a prerequisite, not just to get an edge, but to stay in business as millions of data points covering everything from Nordic rainfall to sunshine in Spain need to be taken into account. And cargoes with gas are now sailing to Europe from everywhere from the U.S. to Russia and the Middle East.

That's driving demand for analysts with experience and a good track record, according to recruiters. Many left the industry as investment banks from Barclays Plc to Deutsche Bank AG exited or scaled down their commodities operations earlier this decade and utilities shrank trading during the lull years.

Those who stayed in energy, and senior fundamental gas analysts in particular, have seen "a big hike" with compensation rising as much as 50 percent from two to three years ago, said Anthony Baron, a director at Eleven Recruitment.

LNG growth

And with the International Energy Agency saying that LNG is on course to overtake shipments via pipelines by the middle of the next decade, gas now has to be seen as a global commodity, which means it's vital to know all the fundamentals, according to Equinor's Bjorland.

"The market is short analysts and good people are in real demand," said Funnell. "There has been an explosion of data and the need to analyze this is becoming ever more important. Desks that survived without it and relied more on relationships now realize they need to build out."

All the data is also transforming the role of the modern power trader. More and more utilities and specialist companies are now using automated systems to buy and sell electricity -- sometimes just minutes or hours before delivery.

In Aarhus, Denmark's second biggest city, a whole new industry has emerged focused on short-term power markets. Trading company MFT Energy said it has hired staff from local competitors, while peer InCommodities are hiring both traders and software developers this year and next, Chief Executive Officer Jesper Severin Johanson said by email.

"It is all about data and programming skills," said Henry from H.W. Anderson. "Power is very tech and programming driven, and these skills are the biggest trend in the power trader hiring."

(Source: Bloomberg)

NEWS IN BRIEF

**Trump alleges India is a 'very high-tariff nation'**

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — In an indication of another simmering trade war between the United States and India, U.S. President Donald Trump has alleged that India is a very high-tariff nation.

Addressing the conservative political action conference (CPAC) in Washington DC on Saturday, Trump said he wants a reciprocal tax or at least some kind of tax.

"India is a very high-tariff nation. They charge us a lot," Trump was quoted as saying. He touched upon a wide range of issues including domestic, global and bilateral relationship with countries like India.

Referring to his often-cited example of the iconic Harley-Davidson motorcycles, he said, "When we send a motorcycle to India, it is a hundred per cent tariff. They charge 100 per cent when India sends a motorcycle to us, we brilliantly charge them nothing."

"So, I want a reciprocal tax or at least, I want to charge a tax. It's called the mirror tax, but it's reciprocal," Trump asserted.

Trump, however, said there was resistance to his move from the Senate. "I say, fellows, listen, they are charging us a hundred per cent. For the exact same product, I want to charge them 25 per cent. I feel so foolish charging 25, because it should be a hundred. But I'm doing 25 only because of you. I want to get your support," he said.

**Modi under attack from opposition, paramilitary**

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Already pushed on the back foot following brief military showdown with Pakistan, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is facing attack from many politicians, even security forces.

Leader of the main opposition Congress Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said that Indian Air Force (IAF) defends the country, but PM Modi "stole Rs. 30,000 crore from the force".

Addressing a party event, Gandhi alleged there was "corruption" in the Rafale deal, a controversial arms deal between India and France, and Rs 30,000 crore had been wrongfully given to Indian business tycoon Anil Ambani.

North Indian politician and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh Mayawati has also been extremely critical of PM Modi, accusing him of "betraying national sentiments", after he interacted with BJP workers in a mega video conference, amid heightened tension between India and Pakistan.

"In the past few days, the country is concerned and sad about the terror incidents that have been happening in Jammu and Kashmir... The BJP and especially PM Modi is trying to hide his failures and short comings in the garb of what is happening there," she said, adding that "nothing is secret from the people of India."

**Resolution calls for Nobel Peace Prize to Imran Khan**

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — A resolution has been submitted in Pakistan parliament to endorse Prime Minister Imran Khan for the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize due to his efforts to de-escalate recent tension with India.

Pakistan's information minister Fawad Chaudhry Saturday submitted the resolution in the secretariat of parliament, said media reports.

The resolution stated that PM Khan's decision of releasing Indian Air Force pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan has de-escalated the hostility between Pakistan and India.

"Imran Khan played a sagacious role in de-escalating tension between Pakistan and India," the resolution said.

More than 300,000 people have signed online petitions calling for Khan to receive a Nobel Peace Prize.

Meanwhile, the hashtag #NobelPeaceForImranKhan began trending on Twitter on Thursday after Khan unexpectedly announced that the captured pilot would be released as a "peace gesture".

In his speech announcing Abhinandan's release, Khan referred to the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war as he called for talks with New Delhi.

The capture of Indian pilot Abhinandan Varthaman had become the focus of renewed hostilities between the nuclear-armed rivals which have alarmed the international community.

**India, China, Afghanistan hold trilateral summit**

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — The first trilateral summit between Afghanistan, India, and China was held in Kabul on Saturday, according to reports.

In a statement, Afghanistan's ministry of foreign affairs said the summit was chaired by deputy foreign minister Idrees Zaman and was attended by Indian envoy Vinay Kumar and Chinese envoy Liu Jinsong.

Calling China and India as, "old friends and good neighbours" of Afghanistan, Zaman said his country counts on both. Zaman further said that the three countries should focus more on training civil and military personnel, mining, increased energy production, agriculture and transportation development, regional connectivity, establishing a joint chamber of commerce between the three countries, and areas of mutual economic interest, according to a statement.

The envoys of India and China hailed Afghan leadership for hosting the first trilateral summit and added that their countries are prepared to cooperate in the mentioned sectors.

India and China, the two South Asian giants, have increased their engagement in the war-ravaged country in recent years, at a time when the United States and other Western countries have been gradually withdrawing.

Both countries have invested massively in Afghanistan's reconstruction and rebuilding projects and are seen as important allies of Kabul.

India, Russia inaugurate plant to produce AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Taking their defense partnership to the next level, India and Russia on Sunday inaugurated a plant that will produce AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the northeastern Indian town of Korwa, Russian federal service for military-technical cooperation (FSMTC) director Dmitry Shugaev said. Shugaev said it was in accordance with the agreements reached earlier at the highest level between the two countries.

He further informed that about 700,000 rifles will be manufactured under the agreement.

"The plant's capacity allows [the Indian authorities] to fully equip personnel from the Indian security forces [with the rifles], and the sides can agree on an increase of output and production upgrade if necessary", director general of Russian state arms exporter Rosoboronexport Alexander Mikheev was quoted as saying.

In his statement, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed gratitude to Russia and President Putin for the joint venture, saying that the AK-203 assault rifle will not only provide major support to the Indian infantry but will also be a revenue earner in terms of exports to third countries.

"I express my gratitude to my friend President Vladimir Putin, this venture was made



possible in such a short time by his support", said the statement.

Putin, in turn, sent a letter to the official ceremony's participants and guests, where he said that "military and technical cooperation has traditionally been one of the key areas of special and privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India".

Putin hailed the plant as a new symbol of friendship and constructive cooperation

between Russia and India, the two traditional allies.

"The inter-governmental agreement was prepared and signed in the shortest possible time. In this regard, I would like to express gratitude to Russian and Indian specialists, to all those who so promptly made this project happen," the Russian president said.

Putin said he is convinced that commissioning of the new enterprise will contribute

to stronger defence potential of India and to further advance the scientific and industrial basis of the national economy.

According to officials, the talks between the two sides on the production of Kalashnikov rifles in India started back in 2015.

It was during his official visit to India last October that Vladimir Putin and PM Modi reached an agreement on producing Kalashnikov rifles in India, said an official.

Meanwhile Russian defense minister Sergey Shoigu held a phone conversation with his Indian counterpart Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday, according to an official statement.

The two parties agreed to step up mutual counter-terrorism efforts and military cooperation.

Shoigu also expressed condolences to the families of Indian police officers who died in a terrorist attack on February 14 in the Himalayan region of Kashmir, the statement added.

The trade between India and Russia has already crossed \$30 billion a year and expected to hit \$50 billion mark by 2025.

"The \$30 billion investment is just for starters. It could swell phenomenally, as Russia remains one of the closest defence allies for India. India needs Russia as it is one of the very few countries, which has transferred defence technology to India," wrote RN Bhaskar in moneycontrol website.

'Ceasefire, trust-building key to effective peace process in Afghanistan'

1 → The central demand of the Taliban is complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Do you see that happening?

A. Ending the war is something we all want to see in Afghanistan, at least the majority of people. It means not just what Taliban demands but also what Afghan people ask for. Therefore, these are common demands of both sides and consensus should be prioritized and supported by all.

However, the complete withdrawal of foreign troops is conditional to emergence of a sustainable peace where we would not need any further presence of foreign troops in our country to fight terrorism. This means we need to build trust in terms of defining sustainable peace before making it happen.

■ Afghan Taliban has refused to talk to Ghani led government but has appeared more than keen to engage directly with the U.S. Do you think these talks somehow undermine the credibility of democratically elected government in Kabul, as indicated by President Ghani and his aides?

A. Taliban certainly should have talked to Afghanistan's elected government and Afghan people. Unfortunately, for four-five years where the Afghan government was involved in peace process, it monopolized the process. National activities and national interests were in the hands of a small designed group at the top (even in most cases these people were not experienced or even known by Afghan people/politics before).

The misuse of power on the top, the turbulences of national unity within the government and nation and the manipulation of the concept of confidentiality into a secretive peace process (for the benefit of few on the top), undermined the legitimacy and credibility of an elected government in the eyes of people and various political groups including its opposition.

This poor calculation of individual interests at the top weakened the government and broke the invested trust within its system. Now, US must realize that sustainability of democratic regime and the inter-Afghan dialogue are the key to sustainable peace. US' direct talks with Taliban must not undermine the democratic government and people of Afghanistan where women and youth are an important stakeholders.

Therefore, peace talks and negotiations cannot happen in the absence of a democratic government to nourish inclusivity (women, youth, political groups, civil society and more importantly victims of 18 year old war).

■ While the talks have been going on between the Tali-



ban and U.S., attacks have been reported from different parts of the country, including the one in Helmand that came on the eve of Doha talks. Can dialogue and violence go together?

A. War and dialogue together means competition over power to encourage revenge where both revenge and aggression weaken the idea and the intention for peace. Therefore, attacks refresh anger, frustration, bitter feelings to spread the conflict further.

An effective dialogue needs to build trust in order to make peace a reality. Hence, we must not forget that this dialogue does not need only trust building between negotiating teams but also as an inclusive peace process it must build trust in the minds and lives of our people. Therefore, war and dialogue must not go simultaneously, one must stop to allow the other to move forward. Therefore, peace must prevail genuinely.

■ It's not only the government that feels sidelined. Women in Afghanistan have also spoken about the lack of representation in peace process. What needs to be done to make sure women are adequately represented and their voices are heard?

A. It has been the government that sidelined women in the peace process for almost 4-5 years and failed to make them an important part of peace process. The government was after the decoration of its table by women's presence for donor credits and international attraction rather than the true and meaningful participation of experienced, strong and capable women.

We must not forget that anyone who tries to fail democracy (for benefit of few on top), women and children will be the first victims of that failure. Democracy is important

because it has important and strong values, not because of its decoration and attractive shows. In the absence or ill representation of women in peace talks, the process will turn into another phase of deep and complicated war. Therefore, it is important to have the inclusive, true voices of Afghan women rather than the so called government's pieces of decorations.

■ Relations between Kabul and Islamabad have shown signs of improvement since the political transition in Islamabad last year. How important is the role of Pakistan in Afghan peace process?

A. Pakistan plays an essential role in bringing peace in Afghanistan, but it must realize that Afghan ownership of peace is not only for the benefit of Afghan nation but it is for the good of Pakistani people too.

Afghan ownership must bring responsibility not only towards its own nation but towards its neighbours and region, as the termination of the war of terror in Afghanistan will benefit our neighbors and our region, since true peace gives chance to everyone and every nation to compete in healthy atmosphere.

■ President Ghani's eventful first term is coming to an end in few months. While he is seeking re-election, where do you see the peace process heading under the new government?

A. The reason this peace season is turning complicated than it was in 2014 is because of undemocratic and secretive peace that has been developing so far. Our peace process was monopolised by a small group at the top and the rest including the involved institutions were unaware of its process and their concerned figures were mainly used as guests of the events for the celebration of the phases of unknown and excluded peace processes.

A democratic and sustainable peace process does not come from monopoly and discrimination within its process and surely a small group unrelated to people cannot decorate democracy on the surface by ignoring the real voices of people or ignoring other groups or political views wanting/demanding the share of their ownership to build their future.

In order for Afghanistan to achieve real and sustainable peace it needs a strong leadership to allow the big umbrella of democracy to grow within its government and beyond to attract Afghan Taliban, where under this umbrella all Afghans (different ethnicities, religious branches, women, children) can exercise their basic human rights freely, to define coexistence and move towards prosperity

Israeli footprint in India-Pakistan saber-rattling

1 → According to Stockholm International Peace Research arms transfer report, India represented up to 49 per cent of Israel's arms export market in 2017. In January 2018, when Netanyahu traveled to India following Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in July 2017, defense deals figured prominently in discussions.

"Several Indian commentators, however, have warned that rightwing Zionism and rightwing nationalism under Modi should not become the foundation stone of the relationship between the two countries, both of which — in rather different ways — fought the British empire," wrote Fisk.

Khinraj Jangid, Professor at OP Jindal Global University in New Delhi, in one of his articles remarked that Israel is another entity with which "Modi feels a kindred spirit in terms of how to act out being 'strong'."

Adding fuel to the war frenzy, many writers in India and Israel have been calling for closer cooperation between India and Israel, which actually means more wars and destabilization of the region.

"As India mourns its dead and considers its response to this outrage, it behooves Israel to stand with its Indian allies and do

all it can to turn up international and diplomatic pressure on the Pakistani regime," wrote Michael Freund in Jerusalem Post.

Writing in Economic Times, commentator R Sriram said Israel has often been held up as a case study for 'anti-terror operations'.

While acknowledging that the Israeli military, intelligence apparatus and broader security establishment "have used every tool in the book over the past 71 years to counter, harass and intimidate their adversaries and gain the upper hand", he said the government in New Delhi "could learn much from Israel", obliquely calling for Israel-like operations by India against Pakistan.

The newly-appointed Israeli envoy to India, Ron Malka also found the time ripe to jump the bandwagon, asserting that "there is no limit" to Israel's assistance to India in defending itself from terrorism.

"Whatever India needs to defend itself there is no limit. We are here to help our close friend India to defend itself especially against terrorism because terrorism is the problem of the world and not only of India and Israel," he was quoted as saying by India's state-run news agency PTI last.



Achin Vanaik, Indian academic and activist, said the argument of India "responding like Israel" essentially implied that India should also use 'state terror' like Israel has been doing in Palestine.

In its report, India's leading think tank Observer Research Foundation (ORF) commenting on the growing Indo-Israeli ties said Modi was the first Indian prime minister to embark on an official visit to Israel in July 2017. Another important development, it noted, was Modi abstaining

from voting against Israel in the United Nations in several resolutions.


While the India-Israel bonhomie is on full display, Pakistan has also dropped hints suggesting that it seeks to improve ties with Israel, a departure from its stated policy.

Last week, Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi stirred hornet's nest in Pakistan by saying in an interview to an Israeli news portal that Pakistan wants to improve ties with Tel Aviv but it depends on situation in the region.

Former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, who has in the past met with Israeli leaders, addressing a press conference in Dubai this week hinted at making relations with Israel to counter India.

Talking about his efforts to make contacts with Israeli leadership with the aid of Turkey in 2005, the former army chief said that Israeli leadership had responded within 24 hours of his meeting's offer.

It is pretty clear that Israel has a significant role to play in sparking tensions between India and Pakistan and provoking them against each other to boost its defense trade and to destabilize the situation, Muneeb Mir, an Islamabad-based analyst, told Tehran Times.




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National Iranian Drilling Company

* Tender descriptions :

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indet No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,194,491	Tender No.: FP/04-97/055 Indet No.: 08-22-9745140	18,801,640,000

* Qualitative evaluation of tenders

Method	
	<p>£ Based on minimum scoring (60 points) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.</p> <p>1- Applicants which have more than 4 in process contacts with NIDC are not allowed to participate in this tender . Applicants which have more than 2 in process contacts with NIDC in similar subject (exclusively same subject) are not allowed to participate in another tender</p>

* Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and will be continued for 10 days.	
	Distribution Place	Hall No. 113, 1 st floor, foreign procurement Dept., Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148253 +98-61-34148252
	Submitting Method	Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 400111400420491 in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
	Closing date	Days after the last time of Purchasing 14
Documents Receiving Method	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

* Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	941,000,000 Rial / 19,606 Euro
Type of guarantee	✓ - Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓ - Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee & quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)

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Triplex, 800 sq.m, 4 Bdrs. with one
suit furn, spj, elevator
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\$18000

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storage, 3 parking spots
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1st floor, 163 sq.m, 3Bdrs.
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sauna, elevator, storage, parking
\$1500

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Apt in Elahieh
brand new, 7th floor, 370 sq.m
4 Bdrs., fully furn, equipped
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sauna, Jacuzzi, billiard, squash sa
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Apt in Soheil
almost new, 5th floor, 190 sq.m 3
Bdrs., fully furn, balcony Jacuzzi,
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\$3000

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa

Duplex Villa
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750 sq.m built up, 5 Bdrs.
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Jacuzzi, beautiful yard
parking spot
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renovated, green garden
one 100 sq.m separate suit
with 2 Bdrs., **\$6500**

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Villa in Niavaran
900 sq.m land, 1000 sq.m built up,
8 Bdrs., 7 bath rooms
3 kitchens, 3 big reception saloons
with one suit for servant, Jacuzzi,
swimming pool
outdoor / indoor parking spots
\$12000

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Duplex Villa in Fereshteh
300 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., fully renovated,
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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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Health NGOs to be supervised, supported: minister

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Health will support all non-governmental groups (NGOs) active in the health sector, Health Minister Saeed Namaki has said.

All NGOs making efforts to offer health-care services will be directly supervised and supported by the ministry, IRNA news agency quoted Namaki as saying on Monday.

Supervising and supporting NGOs will most importantly help them in obtaining necessary permits in providing healthcare services to the public, Namaki added.

Moreover, in case NGOs make investments the ministry will provide them with medical equipment at government rate, he highlighted.

According to IRNA news agency there are 723 NGOs active in health sector. Ad-

ditionally 422 charity institution as well as 4 national network including NGOs active in fields such as HIV/Aids, cancer, addiction, and rehabilitation services are up and running in the country.

In the Iranian calendar year of 1395 (March 2016-March 2017) philanthropist have contributed some 15 trillion rials (nearly \$357 million) to health sector. In addition in the Iranian calendar year of 1396 (March 2017-March 2018) donations made by the philanthropist in this sector increased to 17 trillion rials (nearly \$405 million).

Furthermore, philanthropists have made 1.4 trillion rials (nearly \$33 million) donation to reconstruct health facilities and hospitals in Kermanshah province, western Iran, which hit by 7.3 earthquake in November 2017.



Ultra-sensitive new blood test could locate ‘undetectable’ ovarian cancer

Cancers previously thought undetectable could be identified using a new blood test developed by a team in America.

When tumors appear in the body, they release tell-tale substances that circulate in the blood and can be picked up by doctors.

Using a technique capable of pinpointing individual molecules of some otherwise hidden proteins in blood samples, scientists hope to create a new, ultra-sensitive means of identifying cancer.

In their initial studies, the team from Johns Hopkins University found proteins in patients with ovarian cancer that were not present in other people.

Among the substances they detected was mutant p53 – a well-known protein linked to tumors that had never before been found in blood.

This is likely because current methods are not able to capture its incredibly low blood concentrations.

The scientists also found evidence of PD-L1, a chemical marker found on the surface of some cancer cells that has already proved an effective target for cancer therapies.

If PD-L1 can be identified at low levels early on, the scientists think this could speed up these treatments.

Along with picking up on previously hidden substances, the test also identified cancer-related molecules screened for in conventional tests.

Terming their new approach single-molecule augmented capture (SMAC), the researchers now want to see their test developed to a level at which it can be made commercially available.

“With SMAC, we have brought single-molecule imaging into the clinical arena,” said Chih-Ping Mao, one of the two graduate students who developed the test. By visualizing and examining individual molecules released from diseased cells into the blood, we aim to detect diseases more accurately and gain new insights into their mechanisms.”

The team presented their research at the Biophysical Society Annual Meeting in Baltimore.

There are around 7,400 new ovarian cancer cases diagnosed in the UK every year, and these numbers are expected to grow significantly in the coming decades.

Excitement has grown in recent years at the prospect of more advanced screening techniques, as most British women are currently diagnosed after the cancer has already spread.

“This piece of research sounds promising,” said Cary Wakefield, chief executive at Ovarian Cancer Action.

“If we are to make a major difference to ovarian cancer survival rates we must develop a screening tool that would catch the disease in its very earliest stages, or better still, before it even develops.

“It is vital we diagnose and treat the disease in its earliest stages to give every woman the best chance of survival.”

(Source: The Independent)

Free dental services available at 60,000 elementary schools

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — As per a scheme dental care services were offered at 60,000 elementary schools nationwide, director of dental care at Ministry of Health has said.

In order to treat cavities and identify children with tooth decay students aging 6-14 were provided with dental care services across the country, Hamid Samadzadeh told ISNA news agency on Monday.

According to a memorandum of understanding signed between Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health in the year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) dental care services were offered to 7 million children over the past three years, Samadzadeh highlighted.

“Within the framework of the scheme we are striving to increase oral hygiene among students,” he noted, adding that in order to improve oral hygiene educational brochures and books are sent to school as well.

Oral hygiene is a basic factor for oral health. Poor oral hygiene leads to dental plaque-collections, which in turn can cause gingivitis eventually leading to periodontal diseases.

Before implementing the plan decay-missing-filled (DMF) index among 1.2 million children aging 12 was 2.9 which decreased to 1.84 and is planned to drop to less than 1 by the year 2022, he added.

The decay-missing-filled (DMF) index or decayed, missing, and filled teeth (DMFT) index is one of the most common methods in oral epidemiology for assessing dental caries prevalence as well as dental treatment needs among populations

Samadzadeh went on to say that about 37,000 forces including teachers and healthcare providers are trained to improve oral hygiene among students.

Also students’ oral health profiles are created as well, he said.

He finally concluded that 8 free of charge dental care services for children aging under 14, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers are being offered in rural and urban areas with population less than 20,000.

Oral health worldwide

Oral diseases are the most common noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and affect people throughout their lifetime, causing pain, discomfort, disfigurement and even death, World Health Organization (WHO) highlights.

The Global Burden of Disease Study 2016 estimated that oral diseases affected half of the world’s population (3.58 billion people) with dental caries (tooth decay) in permanent teeth being the most prevalent

condition assessed.

Severe periodontal (gum) disease, which may result in tooth loss, was estimated to be the 11th most prevalent disease globally.

Severe tooth loss and edentulism (no natural tooth) was one of the leading ten causes of Years Lived with Disability (YLD) in some high-income countries.

In some Asian-Pacific countries, the incidence of oral cancer (cancer of the lip and oral cavity) is within the top 3 of all cancers.

Dental treatment is costly, averaging 5% of total health expenditure and 20% of out-of-pocket health expenditure in most high-income countries.

The oral health care demands are beyond the capacities of the health care systems in most low-and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Oral health inequalities exist among and between different population groups around the world and through the entire life course. Social determinants have a strong impact on oral health.

Behavioral risk factors for oral diseases are shared with other major NCDs, such as an unhealthy diet high in free sugars, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol.

Poor oral hygiene and inadequate exposure to fluoride have negative effects on oral health.

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World experts to attend symposium on Iranian archaeology

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Experts from nine countries are scheduled to attend the 16th Annual Symposium on the Iranian Architecture, which opens today at the National Museum of Iran.



The three-day symposium is composed of eight specialized meetings on various archaeological projects conducted during calendar years 1395-96 (March 2016 – March 2018), Mehr reported.

Invitees are from Japan, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Austria, France, China, Georgia and Canada, the report added.

British museum agrees to return Ethiopian emperor’s hair

The hair belonging to Emperor Tewodros will be repatriated after a request from Ethiopia, National Army Museum says.

Two locks of hair belonging to a widely revered Ethiopian emperor will be repatriated after a request from Addis Ababa, the National Army Museum in Britain announced, as more countries seek to reclaim heritage they say was taken decades, even centuries, ago.

An outcry erupted last year in Ethiopia over the display of the hair belonging to Emperor Tewodros in an exhibit by the Victoria and Albert Museum on the 1868 British expedition to what was then called Abyssinia.

During that campaign, in which 13,000 troops were deployed to free several British hostages, the emperor killed himself and his fortress was captured and looted.

“Even at the time, this episode was regarded as a shameful one,” the Victoria and Albert Museum noted.

Ethiopians were appalled, with the government saying it would use “whatever legal and diplomatic instruments” to secure the return of items including an intricate golden crown.

“Displaying human parts in websites and museums is inhumane,” Ethiopia’s minister for culture and tourism, Hirut Woldemariam, told The Associated Press last year.

The hair was donated in 1959 by relatives of an artist who painted the emperor on his deathbed, the National Army Museum has said.

“Our decision to repatriate is very much based on the desire to inter the hair within the tomb alongside the emperor” at a monastery in northern Ethiopia, Terri Dendy, the museum’s head of collections standards and care, said in a statement.

It was not clear when the formal handover would occur.

The Ethiopian Embassy in London said it would hold talks with the museum on Thursday about the repatriation, which comes at the end of a yearlong commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the confrontation known as the Battle of Maqda.

(Source: Aljazeera)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Trinidad and the Valley de los Ingenios

Trinidad, located in the central Cuban province of Sancti Spiritus, was founded in the early 16th century but owes its existence and its historical raison d’être to the sugar industry that flourished there and in the nearby Valley de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills) from the late 18th century to the late 19th century.



The exemplary city of Trinidad’s prosperity during this period is clearly legible in its existing built environment, its buildings ranging in expression from modest, vernacular variants to elaborate, luxurious edifices.

The Valley de los Ingenios is a remarkable testimony to the development of the sugar industry. A living museum of Cuban sugar production, it includes the sites of 75 former cane sugar mills, plantation houses, barracks and other facilities related to this vulnerable industry, which has witnessed a gradual and progressive decline.

Trinidad’s urban ensemble of domestic buildings has an exceptional typological continuity and homogeneity in terms of construction and design, in a vernacular fashion nuanced by small- to medium-sized lots, in which early 18th century buildings strongly marked by Andalusian and Moorish influences blend harmoniously with more elaborate 19th-century models that splendidly mix European neoclassical forms, superimposed on traditional spatial patterns.

In addition to its architecture, much of Trinidad’s urban fabric, including the irregular system of squares and plazas, cobblestone streets and other historical and urban elements, has been preserved.

(Source: UNESCO)

VERNADOC documenting historical windmills in Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The International Camp of Vernacular Architecture Documentation (VERNADOC) have commenced documenting arrays of the centuries-old windmills, located in eastern parts of Iran.

A number of Iranian experts along with their peers from Finland, Japan, Thailand and Cambodia are contributing to the two-week project that will be running to March 15.

Results will be presented to the UN cultural body to be assessed as a UNESCO World Heritage nominee, CHTN reported.

Vertical-axis windmills, which are locally known as “Asbads”, are scattered in the provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, Khorasan Razavi and South Khorasan. They bear

testimony to the human being’s adaption with the nature through turning environmental obstacles into opportunities.

Currently, several windmills have been restored and brought back to life in the region. Their simple mechanism draw admiration of avid visitors and researchers each day.

Such manner of documentation emphasizes the collecting of data and information on site by basic techniques to produce high quality measured drawings.

Organizers expect that the results of field measure working will inspire building owners as well as people in the community to realize the values of their property as perceived by outsiders, so that they will co-operate in conserving those buildings.



‘Paris event best opportunity to introduce Iranian cuisine’

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s opulent cuisines along with counterparts from across the globe are to be featured at the Gourmand World Summit in Paris, a prestigious event deemed to be the best opportunity to introduce Iranian gastronomy to the world.

“The event will be the best opportunity to introduce Iranian cuisine and taste to the world,” IRNA quoted Samira Jannatdoost, a top Iranian chef and writer of cookbooks, as saying on Sunday. Her “Samira’s Dried Cookies” won a special award at the Gourmand World

Cookbook Awards in May 2018.

Around 2,000 VIPs including ambassadors, chefs, distributors, agents, photographers, food and tourism journalists, bloggers, publishers, authors and designers will attend the Gourmand World Summit, which will be held in the UNESCO Headquarters from March 20 to 22.

With 2,500 traditional and regional dishes, Iran has a vast potential in gastronomy tourism. Its cuisine, usually embellished with fragrant herbs, varies from region to region, however, it principally accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

Tehran to host handicrafts exhibit days before Noruz



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Hundreds of artisans from across Iran will show their works at a major sales exhibition, which will be held days before Noruz, the new Iranian year, at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

The exhibition will be running from March 6 to 9 in halls number 8 to 11, featuring variety of souvenirs, woodwork, miniature, textile printing, enamel, leatherwork, calligraphy, metalwork, mirrorwork,

marquetry, illuminated manuscripts, potteries, ceramics, and rugs amongst others, Mehr reported.

Noruz, which usually falls on March 21st every year, marks the beginning of spring across a vast geographical area encircling Iran.

Iran’s handicrafts exports reached \$190 million in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2018), showing 11 percent growth year on year.

Tehran museum to showcase ancient objects from Hormozgan



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A collection of ancient objects, unearthed in Hormozgan province, will be put on show at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran.

“A total of 14 objects, excavated across Hormozgan province, will go on show for the first time at the National Museum of Iran,” Reza Boroumand, the provincial tourism chief, said, CHTN reported.

The collection is composed of earthen vessels, clay tools, stone tools and a dagger of the Parthian-era (247 BC – 224 CE), the official said.

“I hope through displaying these objects, we will have an effective role in introducing the history and culture of Hormozgan province,” he added.

The exhibit will be running from March 5 to April 20, Boroumand concluded.

Ancient book proves link between medieval Irish doctors and Islamic culture

An ancient book has revealed astonishing links between medieval Irish doctors and Persia at the height of the golden age of Islamic learning.

The discovery was made by Prof Padraig O Machain of University College Cork’s Irish Department - and has revealed that Irish doctors in the 1400s were exploiting medical knowledge from Persia.

It has also established that the famous

Persian medical text, ‘Canon of Medicine’ by the Persian physician Ibn Sena (980–1037), also known as Avicenna, was in use in Ireland in medieval times for training young doctors.

The discovery arose from Prof Padraig O Machain becoming aware of a book in the possession of a British family which had links to Ireland.

The book - a pocket-sized Latin manual of local administration - was printed in London in 1534/1536.

It had been in the possession of the British family, who are based in Cornwall, since that time.

However, the book had a much older connection than the 16th Century.

Prof Padraig O Machain studied photographs of the binding of the book - and realized it was a special cut-out from a 15th Century Irish vellum manuscript.

It had been specially cut and stitched to

the 16th Century book in order to provide a sturdy spine.

“The use of parchment cut from old manuscripts as a binding for later books is not unusual in European tradition,” Prof Padraig O Machain explained.

“This is the first time that a case has come to light of such a clear example of the practice in a Gaelic context.”

(Source: The Independent)

How to stay fresh on long trips



Just because you have a 12-hour flight doesn’t mean you have to leave the plane smelling like it. Whether it’s a flight, train ride or bus trip, these tips will keep you smelling fresh on those long, strenuous travel days.

When you spend the day in a plane, train or automobile, it’s tough to stay — and feel — clean and fresh. But just because you have a 12-hour flight doesn’t mean you have to leave the plane smelling like it. Here are some tips to help you smell fresh on those long, strenuous travel days.

■ Wear athletic clothes

Few activities crank up the stench quite like working out, and companies that make fitness clothing have gotten good at mitigating this problem. Workout clothes are designed to pull moisture away from your body, kill odious bacteria and be comfortable even when you have to move a lot. You still need to wash these clothes, of course. However, if you save some clean workout clothing for your travel days, you might smell a little better on that last hour of your cramped plane ride.

■ Avoid heavy perfumes or cologne

If you think you have an odor cloud following you around, you might be tempted to mask it with some perfume, cologne or even body spray. Do your fellow passengers a favor and don’t do this. Heavy scents can be just as overwhelming as body odor, and just as inescapable in confined spaces. Instead, reach for a basic deodorant. You can even try some

deodorizing wipes or freshening wipes, which aren’t quite as good as taking a shower, but they’ll do in a pinch.

■ Squeeze in hygiene whenever you can

It’s not necessarily the case that you won’t be able to get a shower or brush your teeth while traveling. For frequent fliers, an airport lounge that offers showers can be an option (or if you’re really desperate, you can buy a day pass for some lounges).

Some long-distance trains offer either private or public bathrooms that may include space to shower. If you’re traveling by car, you can find publicly accessible showers at a variety of places including community gyms or a Y.M.C.A.

While opinions vary on whether it’s acceptable to brush your teeth or wash up in an airport bathroom, you wouldn’t be the first to do so. Worst case, packing some face wipes will help you clean up a bit without going the full shower route.

■ Stay hydrated

Staying hydrated is always healthy, but it’s easy to forget when you’re on the go all day. Among other health benefits, water can help prevent bad breath.

When your mouth dries out, your saliva can’t do its job of keeping your mouth clean and kill bacteria. Staying hydrated will also keep you from sweating as much, which will also help limit body odor. You might also want to skip soda, which can have a tendency to dry out your mouth, as well as avoid some of the more gnarly-smelling foods like garlic, onions and spicy food.

■ Bring a plastic bag just for dirty laundry

Every day you return to your hotel, you bring back dirty clothes that you have to pack. Don’t just throw them back in your suitcase where they’ll just stink up your clean clothes. Bring a plastic bag with you for all your dirty clothes and keep them (and their smell) isolated from the rest of your clothes. If they’re particularly dirty — maybe after a long day of walking around the city under the hot sun — hang them up in your hotel room and let them air out for a bit before putting them in the bag.

(Source: The New York Times)

Human beings are susceptible to ‘boiling frog’ phenomenon, climate scientists warn

The world is getting dangerously hot. Storms have been ferocious. Whole land masses are disappearing. Have you noticed this incredibly bad weather of late?

Not fully, scientists say. New research demonstrates a terrifying adaptability of 21st century human beings: in the face of unprecedented climate change, we are normalizing the weather temperatures, and not realizing how truly bad things have become.

There's a famous analogue for this phenomenon; one that's both fitting and frightening. It's called the boiling frog effect – the notion that a frog immersed in gradually heating water will fail to notice the creeping change in its circumstances, even as it's literally being boiled alive.

Contemporary scientists no longer subscribe to this now discredited observation, but as a metaphor for the way in which humans are sailing unfazed into a dire-looking future of irreversible climate change, it's perfectly apt.

“This is a true boiling-frog effect,” says climate scientist Frances C. Moore from the University of California, Davis.

Getting used to changes

“People seem to be getting used to changes they'd prefer to avoid. But just because they're not talking about it doesn't mean it's not making them worse off.”

Moore and her team sampled over two billion geo-located tweets between March 2014 and November 2016, measuring the sentiment in public posts about weather, and cross-referencing them with localized temperatures, and comparing them against a baseline reference of weather data from 1981 to 1990.

Basically, they were looking for how people reacted to significant changes in localized weather conditions, to determine what kinds of weather people find normal or unusual.



What the team found was that people were generally more likely to tweet about the weather if it was unusual for the season where they lived – for example, warm conditions in winter, or cool temperatures in summer. But this unsurprising tendency also depends on past experience, in terms of people's

memories of weather in recent years – and in a world that's slowly getting hotter all the time, we're actually noticing this extreme weather less (much, in a sense, like that fateful frog). “Temperatures initially considered remarkable rapidly become unremarkable with repeated exposure over a roughly (five-year

The danger in this is that while climate change is a shocking, extreme thing, our experience of the weather it produces is subjective – and our ability to evaluate ‘normal’ weather looks to be based on an imagined reference point of what the weather was like between two to eight years ago.

Scientists show how the icefish got its transparent blood and see-through skull

The Southern Ocean around Antarctica was once warmer. Then about 30 million years ago, the temperature dropped. Few fish could survive temperatures that were just above seawater's freezing point, and they either migrated to warmer waters or went extinct.

One bottom-dweller held on. Through the power of natural selection, its descendants developed traits that let them survive these unlikely conditions. Today, the Antarctic blackfin icefish, or *Channoccephalus aceratus*, thrives in these frigid waters with no scales, blood as clear as water and bones so thin, you can see its brain through its skull.

How this creature – no longer a bottom-dweller – can live in such a hostile environment has long fascinated scientists, who have mapped its genome and continued exploring its unusual traits.

In a paper published Monday in *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, a team of scientists compared the genome of the Antarctic blackfin icefish to those of its close relatives. They found that, across these genomic maps, and tens of millions of years of evolution, gene families had shrunken or expanded, giving rise to some of the icefish's most unusual features.

Evolutionary outliers

A “trait that's maladaptive in one environment can be adaptive in another,” said H. William Detrich, a marine scientist at Northeastern University who has been studying icefish for decades and helped lead the study. He added that, “we can learn a lot about human physiology and medicine by studying these evolutionary outliers.”

The icefish first surprised science



with its clear blood after a Norwegian zoologist caught one in the early 20th century. The species no longer makes red blood cells and hemoglobin to carry oxygen through its body. Those traits are essential to the survival of other vertebrate species, all 60-some-thousand of us.

Becoming the modern icefish required millions of years of natural gene hacking. Parts of their genomes that, in adults, were dedicated to making antifreeze for blood were greatly expanded. More genome space became dedicated to making ice-preventing proteins in the shell-like casings that surround icefish embryos.

Holding more gasses

Frigid water holds more gasses, including oxygen, than warmer water does. But in water so cold, red blood becomes gunky, hard to pump and more likely to freeze. So the fish basically “evolved a therapy for anemia,” said John Postlethwait, a developmental biologist at the University of Oregon who also worked on the paper. It developed supersize gills and lost its scales, which enabled it to absorb the water's plentiful oxygen through its skin. It also expanded its circulatory system with extra vasculature and a heart four times the size of closely related, red-blooded species.

(Source: NYT)

Can any animal survive without sleep?

Some do it hanging upside down. Some do it for a few hours at a time. Some do it buried under a blanket of mud.

Regardless of their preferred mode, bats, elephants, frogs, honeybees, humans and more have something in common: They all sleep.

People often struggle to function after even just one sleepless night. Poor sleep over the long term has been linked to a host of negative health effects, from heart disease and stroke to weight gain and diabetes. These connections, and the fact that all animals seem to slumber, suggest that sleep must play an essential function for animals. But what is that function? Does sleep allow the brain to repair damage and process information? Is it necessary for energy regulation in the body? Scientists and thinkers as far back as the Greek philosopher Aristotle have offered explanations for why we sleep, and yet, the exact purpose of sleep remains an open question.

In the 1890s, Marie de Manacéine, one of the first female physicians in Russia, was troubled by the mystery of sleep.

“We all love life, and we all wish to live as long as possible, but in spite of this, we sacrifice one-third, sometimes even half of our life in sleeping,” Manacéine once wrote. In her quest to figure out what exactly sleep is, she conducted the first sleep-deprivation experiment in animals.

Seems quite cruel

Using an approach that now seems quite cruel, the physician kept puppies continuously awake, finding that they died after a few days of sleep deprivation. Over subsequent decades, further sleep-deprivation experiments using other animals, like rodents and cockroaches,

timescale,” the authors write in their paper.

Anthropogenic climate change

“Since expectation adjustment is rapid relative to the pace of anthropogenic climate change, this shifting subjective baseline has large implications for the notability of temperature anomalies as climate change progresses.”

The danger in this is that while climate change is a shocking, extreme thing, our experience of the weather it produces is subjective – and our ability to evaluate ‘normal’ weather looks to be based on an imagined reference point of what the weather was like between two to eight years ago.

Of course, the study only analyzed what people on Twitter were publicly saying – not what other people around the world were necessarily thinking or feeling about the weather at any given time, which is a limitation to be aware of.

But to the extent that the research reflects general weather sentiment, the shifting inability to understand what ‘normal’ weather feels like could make it harder for scientists and governments to come up with policies that address climate change.

That's because, the researchers say, people are all the time getting used to harsh, unusual weather without even realizing it.

“We are experiencing conditions that are historically extreme, but they might not feel particularly unusual if we tend to forget what happened more than about five years ago.”

Not necessarily, the researchers say, since in the future, climate change will produce temperatures taking the world past “physiological or biological thresholds” that haven't been contemplated in this study – not to mention other kinds of extreme weather, aside from temperature differences.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Europe’s satellites flying blind as space junk spreads, scientist warns

Europe needs its own technology to guard against a growing threat to its satellites from space junk ranging from dead satellites to tiny particles, according to a top adviser to the European Space Agency (ESA).

With the world increasingly reliant on orbital infrastructure to maintain communications links and steer new generations of autonomous vehicles, scientists warn that the danger posed by debris in orbit has grown exponentially.

“We are getting around 100 alarms a day about approaching particles,” said Thomas Reiter, an adviser to the European Space Agency (ESA). “Every two weeks, a satellite has to dodge something.”

Europe has invested billions in its Galileo global positioning satellites, partly to ensure it is not dependent on U.S. systems, but it still relies on the U.S. military to track the hardest-to-spot threats in space.

“Europe needs to be able to analyze what is happening in orbit itself,” said Reiter, a German former astronaut, adding that billions must be spent on a radar system to achieve this. “We are not (currently) in a position to get a picture of what is happening up there.”

For now, the threat from thousands of dead satellites that continue to circle the planet is manageable, since they are relatively large and easy to track. Far more dangerous are an estimated 900,000 particles of over a centimeter in size, and the 130 million that are over a millimeter, the ESA says.

Almost impossible to spot, a particle moving at high speeds can cause severe damage to satellites costing hundreds of millions of euros or even destroy them, disrupting communications for millions of users.

(Source: extremetech.com)

Balloons the No. 1 marine debris risk of mortality for seabirds

The data showed that a seabird ingesting a single piece of plastic had a 20 percent chance of mortality, rising to 50 per cent for nine items and 100 percent for 93 items.

Led by IMAS-CSIRO Ph.D. student Lauren Roman and published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, the study found that although hard plastic accounts for the vast majority of debris ingested it is far less likely to kill than soft plastics such as balloons.

“Among the birds we studied the leading cause of death was blockage of the gastrointestinal tract, followed by infections or other complications caused by gastrointestinal obstructions.

“Although soft plastics accounted for just 5 percent of the items ingested they were responsible for more than 40 per cent of the mortalities.

“Balloons or balloon fragments were the marine debris most likely to cause mortality, and they killed almost one in five of the seabirds that ingested them.

“As similar research into plastic ingestion by sea turtles has found, it appears that while hard plastic fragments may pass quickly through the gut, soft plastics are more likely to become compacted and cause fatal obstructions,” Ms Roman said.

CSIRO co-author Dr. Chris Wilcox said the approach taken in the study was first developed for turtles before being applied to seabirds.

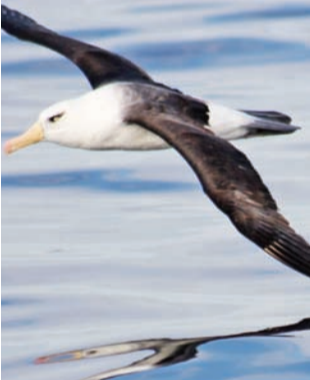
“These two applications are the first time there has been a robust estimate of the impact of plastic ingestion on free living marine species,” Dr. Wilcox said.

“If seabirds eat plastic their risk of mortality increases, and even a single piece can be fatal.

“While hard plastics are less likely to kill than soft plastics they were still responsible for more than half of the seabird deaths identified in our study.

The “evidence is clear that if we want to stop seabirds from dying from plastic ingestion we need to reduce or remove marine debris from their environment, particularly balloons,” Ms Roman said.

(Source: eurekalert.org)



Gene activity in defenders depends on invading slavemaking ants

Temnothorax americanus is a slavemaking ant found in northeastern America. In a new study, biologists examined the special relationship between the parasites and their host and made an exciting discovery: The ability of the host ants to defend themselves depends crucially on whether the raiding slavemakers come from an area with a successful or less successful parasite population.

Temnothorax americanus is a slavemaking ant found in northeastern America. These tiny social insects neither rear their offspring nor search for food themselves. Instead, they raid nests of another ant species, *Temnothorax longispinosus*, kidnap their larvae and pupae to bring these back to their own nest.

Once these have reached adulthood, the abducted ants must feed the brood of the slavemaking species, search for food, feed the slavemakers, and even defend their nest.

In a new study, biologists from Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) examined the special relationship between the parasites and their host and made an exciting discovery: The ability of the host ants to defend themselves depends crucially on whether the raiding slavemakers come from an area with a successful or less successful parasite population.

If the slavemakers come from a site where slavemakers are rare, the host ants react aggressively to the invaders. If, in contrast, the intruders come from an area where slavemakers are common, the hosts do not recognize them and, as a result, do not respond aggressively. The study also revealed that this difference in how they react is also reflected in how active the genes associated with aggression are in the brain of the ants.

Similar to avian brood parasites such as cuckoos, *T. americanus* belongs to a class of parasites known as social parasites that do not directly harm the bodies of their hosts, but manipulate their social or brood care behavior instead. The social parasites and their hosts are engaged in a “co-evolutionary arms race”: The parasites perfect the exploitation of their hosts, while the hosts continually develop better defensive strategies.

(Source: sciencedaily.com)

Asteroids are stronger, harder to destroy than previously thought

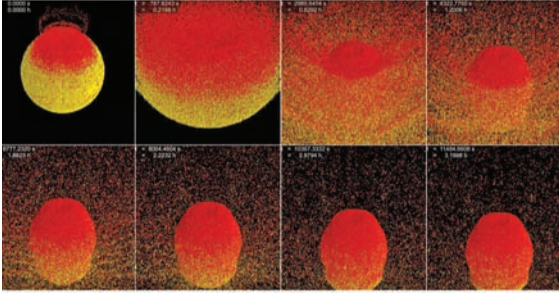
A popular theme in the movies is that of an incoming asteroid that could extinguish life on the planet, and our heroes are launched into space to blow it up. But incoming asteroids may be harder to break than scientists previously thought, finds a Johns Hopkins study that used a new understanding of rock fracture and a new computer modeling method to simulate asteroid collisions.

The findings, to be published in the March 15 print issue of *Icarus*, can aid in the creation of asteroid impact and deflection strategies, increase understanding of Solar System formation and help design asteroid mining efforts.

“We used to believe that the larger the object, the more easily it would break, because bigger objects are more likely to have flaws. Our findings, however, show that asteroids are stronger than we used to think and require more energy to be completely shattered,” says Charles El Mir, a recent Ph.D. graduate from the Johns Hopkins University's Department of Mechanical Engineering and the paper's first author.

Physical materials

Researchers understand physical materials like rocks at a laboratory scale (about the size of your fist), but it has been difficult to translate this understanding to city-size objects like asteroids. In the early 2000s, a different research team created a computer model into which they input various factors such as mass, temperature, and material brittleness, and simulated an asteroid about a kilometer in diameter



striking head-on into a 25-kilometer diameter target asteroid at an impact velocity of five kilometers per second.

The simulation was separated into two phases: a short-timescale fragmentation phase and a long-timescale gravitational reaccumulation phase. The first phase considered the processes that begin immediately after an asteroid is hit, processes that occur within fractions of a second. The second, long-timescale phase considers the effect of gravity on the pieces that fly off the asteroid's surface after the impact, with gravitational reaccumulation occurring over many hours after impact.

In the first phase, after the asteroid was hit, millions of cracks formed and rippled throughout the asteroid, parts of the asteroid flowed like sand, and a crater was created.

This phase of the model examined the individual cracks and predicted overall patterns of how those cracks propagate. The new model showed that the entire asteroid is not broken by the impact, unlike what was previously thought. Instead, the impacted asteroid had a large damaged core that then exerted a strong gravitational pull on the fragments in the second phase of the simulation.

Just a rubble pile

The research team found that the end result of the impact was not just a “rubble pile — a collection of weak fragments loosely held together by gravity. Instead, the impacted asteroid retained significant strength because it had not cracked completely, indicating that more energy would be needed to destroy asteroids.

“It may sound like science fiction but a great deal of research considers asteroid collisions. For example, if there's an asteroid coming at earth, are we better off breaking it into small pieces, or nudging it to go a different direction?

“We are impacted fairly often by small asteroids, such as in the Chelyabinsk event a few years ago,” says Ramesh. “It is only a matter of time before these questions go from being academic to defining our response to a major threat. We need to have a good idea of what we should do when that time comes—and scientific efforts like this one are critical to help us make those decisions.”

(Source: phys.org)

\$71 million allocated for breadwinner women’s insurance

WOMEN DESK **TEHRAN** — The budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1398 (starting on March 21, 2019) has predicted an amount of 3 trillion rials (about \$71 million) for the insurance of breadwinner women.

The Sixth Five-Year Economic Development Plan (2016-2021) has passed some bills for preventing social vulnerabilities and the budget allocated for the program, ISNA quoted Iranian member of Majlis (Iranian Parliament), Farideh Olad Qobad, as saying.

An amount of 2.3 trillion rials (nearly \$54 million) was allocated for preventing social vulnerabilities in the current year’s budget, said Olad Qobad.



Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and Iran Welfare Organization are supporting women heads of families, she said, noting women living in special situation should not be forgotten.

According to statistics released in 2017, there are around 2.5 million breadwinner women in the country, including 180,000 families, making up 500,000 people.

About 71 percent of breadwinner women have taken the responsibility of their families due to loss of their husbands.

Some 11 percent of breadwinning women are divorced, 10 percent are disabled or handicapped or have drug-addicted husbands, and about 5 percent of them are unmarried girls who are taking caring of their parents or their whole families, the official explained.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Fresh broccoli salad

“This is a yummy salad that uses an interesting combination of fruits, vegetables and meats. Before you decide you won’t like it, try it. You’ll be pleasantly surprised. You can add an extra head of broccoli, if you like.”

Ingredients:



- 2 heads fresh broccoli
- 1 red onion
- 1/2 pound beef bacon
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 3/4 cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar

Directions:

Place beef bacon in a deep skillet and cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. Cool and crumble.

Cut the broccoli into bite-size pieces and cut the onion into thin bite-size slices. Combine with the beef bacon, raisins, your favorite nuts and mix well.

To prepare the dressing, mix the mayonnaise, sugar and vinegar together until smooth. Stir into the salad, let chill and serve.

LEARN ENGLISH

Canceling an Appointment

A: Hello, Samantha speaking.
B: Hi Samantha. This is Angela calling.
A: Oh, hi Angela, **what’s up**?
B: I’m just calling about our meeting today. I wonder, is it possible to **reschedule** our appointment in the afternoon?
I have a bit of an emergency that I need to take care of.
A: Let me see, it shouldn’t be too much of a problem...
B: I’m really sorry, I hope it doesn’t **inconvenience** you too much, it’s just this thing **came up**, and...
A: Angela, you know what, I can’t **make it** to our meeting, either. Why don’t we **postpone** it to tomorrow afternoon at the same time?
B: Sounds great. See you tomorrow.
C: Angela... Angela, look up! See that lady over there who is trying on a red leather jacket? Isn’t that Samantha?
B: What? **No wonder** she told me she couldn’t make it to the meeting, oh, no, I think she saw me...

■ **Key vocabulary**
what’s up: what is the matter
reschedule: schedule something for a different time
inconvenience: cause problem or trouble
come up: occur in an unexpected way
make it: come
postpone: decide to do something at a later time
no wonder: not surprisingly
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
scheduling conflict: two or more appointments scheduled at the same time
call off: cancel
double-book: have two appointments or meetings at the same time
push back: move a meeting or appointment to a later time
rain check: a promise or offer to do something in the future that is not possible to do now

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Iran Meteorological Organization picks first female chief

WOMEN DESK **TEHRAN** — For the first time after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, a woman was appointed as the director of Iran Meteorological Organization, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami appointed Sahar Tajbakhsh as IMO director, replacing Davood Parhizkar.

Tajbakhsh holds PhD degree in meteor-

ology, enjoys more than 20 years of working experience at IMO as deputy director for research affairs. She has served as faculty member of the IMO research center and executive director of international conference on climate change.

Appointment of Tajbakhsh as the director of IMO was in line with the goal of government for benefiting from potentials of women in high ranking positions, noted Eslami.



Iranian women’s development process unique: VP

WOMEN DESK **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran has created changes in life and ideology of people in different arenas which has made the development of Iranian women unique, Vice President for Women’s and Family Affairs, Masoumeh Ebtekar, said on Saturday.

Imam Khomeini, the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has introduced a new ideology for women’s rights in order to preserve their dignity, stated the VP.

Ebtekar further described the Islamic Republic of Iran as a successful model for the role of women in the social sphere while preserving religious and moral values in the world.

Iranian women, honoring religious values, have taken important steps in many different social fields and achieved great success.

The vice president touched on the achievements and



experiences of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of women which can be used in international arenas, especially in Islamic countries, which should be given more serious

Envoy highlights women’s role in national development

WOMEN DESK **TEHRAN** — Iranian women play an outstanding role in development and growth of the country in various fields, Iranian ambassador to Russia, Mehdi Sanaei, said on Friday.

Speaking in a meeting with Iran’s U19 women’s football team, the envoy praised

Iranian women’s significant role in making advances and booming the country.

Sanaei further referred to the Iranian women’s potentials and said that their active participation in various fields is increasing.

Iran participated in the 2019 Kuban

attention in this regard.

Women’s discourse, challenges and issues they are facing now are among the most important issues in all communities to be considered, the official said.

Ebtekar further appreciated measures taken by Qom Religions and Denominations University to pave the way for interactions among different religions.

She also emphasized the empowerment of women as one of the aspects of development of the Islamic Republic of Iran, noting that women play an active role in various fields of education, health, sports, and politics.

Women’s achievements do not mean that there exists no challenges and all the demands of the young people have been met, Ebtekar explained.

Current barriers and problems should be removed through taking appropriate policies about women, she specified.

Working long hours linked to depression in women

Women who work more than 55 hours a week are at a higher risk of depression but this is not the case for men, according to a new UCL-led study with Queen Mary University of London.

The study of over 20,000 adults, published in the BMJ’s Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, found that after taking age, income, health and job characteristics into account, women who worked extra-long hours had 7.3% more depressive symptoms than women working a standard 35-40 week. Weekend working was linked to a higher risk of depression among both sexes.

Women who worked for all or most weekends had 4.6% more depressive symptoms on average compared to women working only weekdays. Men who worked all or most weekends had 3.4% more depressive symptoms than men working only weekdays.

“This is an observational study, so although we cannot establish the exact causes, we do know many women face the additional burden of doing a larger share of domestic labor than men, leading to extensive total work hours, added time pressures and overwhelming

responsibilities,” explained Gill Weston (UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care), PhD candidate and lead author of the study.

“Additionally women who work most weekends tend to be concentrated in low-paid service sector jobs, which have been linked to higher levels of depression.”

The study showed that men tended to work longer hours in paid work than women, and having children affected men’s and women’s work patterns in different ways: while mothers tended to work fewer hours than women without children, fathers tended to work more hours than men without children.

Two thirds of men worked weekends, compared with half of women. Those who worked all or most weekends were more likely to be in low skilled work and to be less satisfied with their job and their earnings than those who only worked Monday to Friday or some weekends.

Researchers analyzed data from the Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS). This has been tracking the health and wellbeing of a representative sample of 40,000 households across the

UK since 2009.

Information about working hours, weekend working, working conditions and psychological distress was collected from 11,215 working men and 12,188 working women between 2010 and 2012. Depressive symptoms such as feeling worthless or incapable were measured using a self-completed general health questionnaire.

“Women in general are more likely to be depressed than men, and this was no different in the study,” Weston said.

“Independent of their working patterns, we also found that workers with the most depressive symptoms were older, on lower incomes, smokers, in physically demanding jobs, and who were dissatisfied at work.”

She added: “We hope our findings will encourage employers and policy-makers to think about how to reduce the burdens and increase support for women who work long or irregular hours -- without restricting their ability to work when they wish to.

“More sympathetic working practices could bring benefits both for workers and for employers -- of both sexes.” (Source: sciencedaily.com)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

E-waste segregation, recycling site opens in Tehran

An electronic waste (e-waste) segregation and recycling site was inaugurated in district 22 of Tehran on Monday, ISNA news agency reported.

“Technology advancement have given rise to e-waste generation worldwide and recycling such waste is essential for safeguarding the environment,” deputy mayor of district 22 for urban services and environment said.

In general recycling and reusing all sorts of waste is cost-effective and also have a number of benefits for the environment, Safaei Kheiratian highlighted.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-cade”

■ **Meaning:** procession
■ **For example:** All the motorways were cleared and our sixteen car **motorcade** cruised down the center of the freeway at 60mph.

PHRASAL VERB

Wake up to something

■ **Explanation:** to start to realize and understand a danger, an idea etc.
■ **For example:** It’s time you woke up to the fact that it’s a tough world.

IDIOM

On the ball

■ **Explanation:** attentive, knowledgeable, and quick to take action
■ **For example:** I’m so glad that my assistant is always on the ball because I’m too scatterbrained to manage my schedule on my own.

افتتاح سایت تفکیک و بازیافت ضایعات الکترونیک در تهران

به گزارش خبرگزاری ایسنا روز دوشنبه سایت تفکیک و بازیافت ضایعات الکترونیک منطقه ۲۲ تهران امروز افتتاح شد.

معاون خدمات شهری و محیط زیست منطقه ۲۲ به توسعه تکنولوژی در جهان که منجر به افزایش ضایعات الکترونیک شده است، اشاره کرد و گفت: از این رو بازیافت این قطعات برای حفظ محیط زیست امری ضروری است. صفایی خیراتیان افزود: بازیافت زباله و بازگرداندن آن به چرخه مصرف در هر زمینه‌ای منجر به صرفه‌جویی و حفظ محیط زیست می‌شود.

Khashoggi's body likely burned in oven at Saudi consul's home

By staff & agencies

The body parts of slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was likely burned to ashes in a large oven at the House of Saud regime consulate general's residence in Istanbul, Turkey, an Al Jazeera investigation revealed. New details of the writer's murder by a Saudi assassination team were reported in a documentary by Al Jazeera Arabic that aired on Sunday.

Turkish authorities monitored the burning of the outdoor furnace from outside the premises as bags believed to be containing Khashoggi's body parts were transferred to the Saudi regime consul's home after he was killed inside the consulate a few hundred meters away.

Al Jazeera interviewed a worker who constructed the furnace who stated it was built according to specifications from the Saudi consul. It had to be deep and withstand temperatures above 1,000 degrees Celsius - hot enough to melt metal.

Large quantities of barbeque meat were girdled in the oven after the killing in order to cover up the cremation of the Saudi writer's body, Turkish authorities reported.

The burning of Khashoggi's body took place over a period of three days, Turkish officials said.

Turkish investigators also found traces of Khashoggi's blood on the walls of the Saudi consul's office after removing paint that the assassination team applied after killing the Washington Post columnist on October 2.

The documentary was based on interviews with security officials, politicians, and some of Khashoggi's Turkish friends.

Turkish intelligence chief Hakan Fidan was the first official to contact the Saudis regarding the whereabouts of Khashoggi, according to the documentary.



In a call with the de facto Saudi regime leader, Fidan reportedly demanded that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) reveal what happened to the journalist.

The call was cut short though when MBS rejected the demand and ended the call over what MBS reportedly perceived as an "unacceptable threat".

A critic of Saudi Arabia's powerful Prince Mohammed, Khashoggi entered the consulate in Istanbul to obtain paperwork so he could marry his Turkish fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, who was waiting outside the building.

Riyadh initially insisted Khashoggi had left the consulate alive before changing its account and admitting the journalist was killed in an operation it said was undertaken by "rogue elements".

The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in a report said MBS likely

ordered Khashoggi's killing - an allegation the Saudi regime denies.

According to a highly-classified CIA assessment seen by The Wall Street Journal, the Saudi crown prince had sent at least 11 messages to his close aide Saud al-Qahitani in the hours surrounding the journalist's killing.

Eleven suspects have been indicted for Khashoggi's murder in Saudi Arabia, which has insisted it would handle the case and refused their extradition to Turkey.

United Nation's special rapporteur Agnes Callamard, who is leading an international inquiry into the murder, called it "a brutal and premeditated killing, planned and perpetrated by officials of the state of Saudi Arabia".

The international investigation started in late January and an official report is due in June.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said the order to slay Khashoggi had been issued from "the highest levels" of the Saudi government, suggesting that Mohammed bin Salman had ordered such a gruesome crime.

A purported transcript of an audio recording of Khashoggi's killing shared with CNN showed that his murder had been premeditated, unlike what Saudi regime officials initially claimed.

The transcript described the last painful moments of Khashoggi's life, noting that his screams and gasps could be heard on the tape. It also identified the sounds of saw and cutting as the victim's body was dismembered.

The House of Saud regime has been facing international condemnation over the brutal murder.

■ Jamal Khashoggi

Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi, was a Saudi Arabian dissident, author, columnist for The Washington Post, and a general manager and editor-in-chief of al-Arab News Channel who was assassinated at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October 2018 by agents of the Saudi regime. He also served as editor for the Saudi Arabian newspaper al-Watan, turning it into a platform for Saudi Arabian progressives.

Khashoggi fled Saudi Arabia in September 2017 and went into self-imposed exile. He said that the Saudi regime had "banned him from Twitter", and he later wrote newspaper articles critical of the Saudi government. Khashoggi had been sharply critical of inexperienced and ambitious Saudi regime second to throne, crown prince, Mohammad bin Salman, and the country's king, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. He also opposed the Saudi regime-led blood-shed in Yemen.

Muslim parents withdraw kids from Birmingham's Parkfield school over 'homosexuality' project

British Muslim parents have withdrawn their primary-level children from a Birmingham school en masse, protesting the school authorities' forcible "promotion of homosexuality."

The parents took their 600 primary pupils from Parkfield Community School after their weekly protests failed to persuade the authorities to pull a program featuring lessons about homosexuality, Daily Mail reported on Monday.

The mass exodus has drained the school of 80 percent of its students.

The parents said the school was "brainwashing" their kids about gay rights through the "No Outsiders" program, the paper wrote.

The Alum Alum Community Rock Forum, which gathers members of the local community in Birmingham's Alum Rock suburb, protested that the school was "undermining parental rights and aggressively promoting homosexuality."

"Dialog, petitioning, and protests by parents have been repeated and arrogantly ignored," the forum said, adding, "Our children, our choice - work with parents not against

them."

The school was the first place in the country where the program was launched in 2014 to teach children about the Equality Act. The act also covers such areas as age, disability, marriage, pregnancy or maternity, race, and religion or belief.

Muslims across Britain have, time and again, risen in protest against measures infringing on their religious and ideological freedoms.

Late last year, the Muslim Council of Britain said it was campaigning along other groups to persuade Prime Minister Theresa May, who lead the ruling Conservative Party, as well as leader of the opposition Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn, to adopt a working definition of Islamophobia.

Hate attacks against Muslims have also been on rise since a series of terror attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) sympathizers across Britain in 2017. Islamic communities in Britain have always condemned such acts of terror.



Campaigners believe a general trend in politics to pander with far-right groups to grab the vote of their supporters have also been to blame for surge in anti-Muslim hate behavior.

(Source: agencies)

Venezuela's Guaido to risk arrest as he returns home to challenge Maduro

Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido plans to run the risk of arrest by returning home on Monday, after he ignored a court-imposed travel ban and toured Latin American allies to boost support for his campaign to oust President Nicolas Maduro.

Guaido's return, details of which his team have kept under wraps, could become the next flashpoint in his duel with Maduro as he seeks to keep up momentum and spur his international backers to further isolate the socialist government.

His arrest could allow the opposition to highlight how the Maduro administration represses political foes and prompt the United States to impose even harsher sanctions. But it could also strip the opposition of a public figurehead who has brought unity after years of infighting.

Guaido, who is recognized as Venezuela's legitimate head of state by most Western countries, said on Sunday he would undertake the "historic challenge" of returning in time to lead protests on Monday and Tuesday during the Carnival holiday period, an unusual time for demonstrations.

"If the regime dares, of course, to kidnap us, it will be the last mistake they make," Guaido said during a broadcast on Twitter,



without disclosing his location. Guaido said they had prepared "the steps to follow" in case he was detained.

Guaido secretly left Venezuela for Colombia, in violation of a Supreme Court order, to coordinate efforts there on Feb 23 to send humanitarian aid into Venezuela to alleviate widespread shortages of food and medicine.

But troops loyal to Maduro blocked convoys of aid trucks sent from Colombia and Brazil, leading to clashes that killed at least six people along the Brazilian border, rights groups say.

From Colombia, he then travelled to Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay to shore up Latin American support for a transition government that would precede

free and fair elections.

On Sunday, he departed by plane from the Ecuadorean coastal town of Salinas but has not appeared publicly since, beyond the Twitter broadcast. To arrive in Caracas by Monday morning, he could take commercial flights from Bogota or Panama City.

Maduro, who labels Guaido a coup mongering U.S. puppet, has said his arrest depends on the justice system.

"He can't just come and go. He will have to face justice, and justice prohibited him from leaving the country," he told ABC News last week.

The United States has warned Maduro of the consequences of arresting Guaido and the Treasury imposed new sanctions on Friday targeting Venezuelan military officials.

"If Maduro took that step, I think it would just hasten the day that he leaves," U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton told Fox News on Sunday.

After the military blocked the aid convoys, Guaido proposed that "all options be kept open" to topple Maduro, but foreign military intervention is seen as unlikely and his international backers are instead using a mix of sanctions and diplomacy.

(Source: Reuters)

Women, children killed in U.S. phosphorous attack on Syria's Dayr al-Zawr

The United States-led coalition has once again fired white phosphorus munitions on Dayr al-Zawr province in eastern Syria, reportedly killing and injuring women and children.



Syrian sources say the Sunday night's airstrikes targeted the town of Baghuz, the last Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group stronghold in the country.

The attacks came after the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced they had resumed operations against ISIL terrorists in Baghuz, following a break for citizens' evacuation.

According to state Syrian broadcaster Ikhbariya, citing local sources, the phosphorus shelling occurred on Sunday night and claimed the lives of several locals, including women and children. Some civilians were also injured.

The flashpoint town is located in the eastern Euphrates River region.

The U.S.-led coalition had used phosphorous in its earlier bombing raid against the same town on Friday night, targeting the farmlands of Baghuz in the volatile province.

■ Syria takes part in Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union conference after 8 years

Meantime, Syria has taken part in a meeting of Arab states for the first time since the foreign-backed militancy broke out in the country eight years ago, in what has been seen as another sign that Damascus led by President Bashar al-Assad is being welcomed back into the fold.

Speaker of the People's Council of Syria, Hammouda Youssef Sabbagh, traveled to the Jordanian capital city of Amman on Sunday for participation in the 29th Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The conference opened under the theme "Jerusalem (al-Quds) is the Eternal Capital of the State of Palestine," with the participation of the speakers of 16 Arab parliaments and representatives of other parliaments.

Last month, Sabbagh confirmed his participation in the conference along with a delegation of Syrian lawmakers.

Speaker of Jordan's House of Representatives Atif Tarawneh made a speech in which he called on regional countries "to work towards a political settlement to the Syrian crisis ... and for Syria to regain its place" among Arab states.

The development came almost a month after Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said on February 3 that his country will eventually return to the Arab League, stressing that Damascus will never surrender to blackmail or accept conditions for the restoration of its membership to the regional organization.

He added that certain anti-Syria decisions are being made by some Arab states on the instructions of extra-regional powers.

■ Syria 'will not stand idly by in face of terrorist crimes'

Elsewhere, Syria says it will not "stand idly by" while terrorist groups continue committing crimes against Syrian citizens and troops, following a deadly attack against government forces in the central Hama Province.

Syria's official SANA news agency said that a group of terrorists launched a pre-planned attack against Syrian armed forces deployed on the axis of al-Masasneh in the northern countryside of Hama at dawn on Sunday.

The report added that the terrorists, using various types of weapons and exploiting the bad weather conditions, killed a number of government troops, who managed to repel the attack and kill some of the terrorists however.

It did not specify the exact death toll from the side of army soldiers, but a report by the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said that the terror attack claimed the lives of "21 soldiers and allied forces," adding that at least five terrorists were also killed during the exchange of fire.

The UK-based SOHR also added that the al-Qaeda-linked Ansar al-Tawhid terror group was behind the attack.

Later on Sunday, SANA cited an unnamed official at the Syrian Foreign Ministry as strongly condemning the terror attack, saying that it came "as a new episode in a series of the terrorist groups' violations of the de-escalation zone agreement."

Syria "will not stand idly by while such crimes continue to take place, as it will not allow the terrorists and those behind them to persist in their attacks against innocent citizens and the forces of the Syrian Arab Army," the Syrian official stressed.

The official also affirmed the preparedness of the Syrian army in confronting such crimes, stressing Damascus's right "to defend its sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and the safety of its citizens all over Syrian territory."

Since March 2011, Syria has been gripped by a foreign-backed militancy that has largely wound down.

(Source: Press TV)

Labour leader Corbyn attacked while visiting London mosque

British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has been attacked by suspected Islamophobes outside a mosque in north London where he was attending an event meant to tackle negative stigma around Muslims in Britain.

The Metropolitan Police said on Sunday that Corbyn was unhurt after the attack, which took place after a man assaulted the opposition leader with an egg outside Muslim Welfare Centre in Finsbury Park.

The Met said the attacker, a 41-year-old man, was arrested quickly following the attack.

The British media outlets described the attacker as a pro-Brexit activist who was willing to show his opposition to Corbyn's announcement that he and the Labour would back a second referendum on Britain's withdrawal from the EU.

(Source: Press TV)

Center-right opposition wins Estonia general election

Estonia's opposition center-right Reform party pulled off a surprise win over Prime Minister Juri Ratas' governing center-left Center party in Sunday's parliamentary elections.

The results put Reform leader Kaja Kallas in the pole position to become the country's first female prime minister, although she will have to tackle difficult negotiations to form a governing coalition.

Most opinion polls since late last year had put Center in front, although recent surveys indicated a tight race, with some suggesting pro-business Reform could pull ahead.

Reform won 28.8 percent of the vote, giving it 34 seats in the new 101-seat parliament. Centre stood at 23.1 percent and the far-right EKRE at 17.8 percent, more than doubling its vote from the previous election, said the State

Electoral Office.

Kallas, a 41-year-old lawyer and former European Parliament member, took over as Reform leader less than a year ago. The party's founders include her father, Siim Kallas, a former Estonian prime minister and EU commissioner.

Estonia's president is due to nominate the candidate for prime minister in coming days, after which the nominee will begin negotiations to form a coalition as all parties fell well short of winning a majority.

EKRE's success could lead to a coalition of Estonia's main rivals - Ratas' traditionally pro-Russian Centre and pro-Western Reform - which have not governed together since 2003.

While both are fiscally conservative, Center has been

seeking to make the Baltic country's tax system increasingly progressive along the lines of richer neighbors such as Finland, while Reform has championed business-friendly reforms and the flat tax that was long the hallmark of the Estonian economy.

Estonia enjoys strong economic growth and low unemployment, but regional differences in the country of just 1.3 million people are vast.

EKRE's heartland consists of the counties farthest from the capital, Tallinn, areas where its promise to shake up politics resonated with many voters. A fiercely anti-immigrant message lifted its support during the European refugee crisis in 2015 and it has held on to the gains since then.

(Source: Reuters)

Man City ‘much better’ than last year, says Guardiola

Pep Guardiola says Manchester City are playing “much better” than during last year’s record-breaking campaign and his players should not be regarded as losers even if Liverpool pip them to the Premier League title.

City are favourites to retain their crown after Saturday’s 1-0 win at Bournemouth and Sunday’s goalless Merseyside derby left them a point ahead of Jurgen Klopp’s Reds with nine matches remaining.

“In the way we play, we play much, much better (than last season),” Guardiola said. “Everybody knows exactly what we have to do, everybody helps each other. And when this happens, we can compete and if we lose, we lose, but no regrets.

“I know in our society just the first one has the credit and the second one is an absolute loser. But it is impossible to feel that about my players, it’s impossible.”

City smashed a host of records on the way to becoming champions in 2017/18, including amassing 100 points and scoring 106 goals.

Despite failing to replicate that level of dominance this term, they have overturned a seven-point deficit in recent months to wrestle top spot from Liverpool.

Victory at Bournemouth was their fifth in a row in the league and secured with 82 percent possession and by preventing the hosts from registering a shot at goal.

Guardiola admits his team could easily have fallen out of title contention and feels their current position is even more remarkable because a League Cup success and progress to the FA Cup quarter-finals has resulted in a far busier fixture schedule than Liverpool.

“Of course we want to win the Premier League, I feel the players show me every single day they want to win it,” he said.

“But we have played nine or 10 games more than Liverpool. It’s a lot of minutes in our legs in all competitions.”

(Source: AFP)

El Moutawakel, torch bearer for Muslim sportswomen

Nawal El Moutawakel took just 54 seconds to go from the “dark to the light” when she became the first Muslim woman from Africa to win Olympic gold in the 400 metres hurdles at the 1984 Games.

The 56-year-old Moroccan has since forged a successful career as a sports administrator having twice been Minister of Sports, and is an influential member of both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Association of Athletics Federations.

“I consider myself a role model with my other Olympic champions back home in Morocco,” she told AFP.

“I could have stayed and spent most of my life enjoying my glory of 1984 but no, that’s wrong.

“54 seconds allowed me to go from dark to light, like I said from zero to hero. I would like to share every single moment with the younger generation.”

El Moutawakel, whose victory in Los Angeles was marked by the then King Hassan II ordering every girl born that day named in her honour, said the hurdles on the track reflected the challenges she had faced in her life.

However, she always met them head on, claiming “my victory meant no more just washing the dishes for women”.

“In my religion, women were never forbidden to compete,” she said at the recent Laureus awards.

“Our prophet (Mohammed) used to run against his wife, and she used to beat him, until she found out she was pregnant, that’s how he beat her.

“Women could compete equally as men, and that’s why I felt growing up in an environment that was very supportive, very positive until today, so I don’t think there is any resistance whatsoever.”

El Moutawakel supports her claim by citing a passage from the Koran in Arabic.

“Teach your children how to run, do horse-back riding, and also swimming,” she said.

“This is in our religion. He never said, teach your daughter, or teach your son. It says ‘teach your children’, and in children, there is a son and daughter.”

(Source: France24)

Modric: We miss Ronaldo but back Bale

Real Madrid must move on from Cristiano Ronaldo’s departure according to Luka Modric, who said: “We can’t complain about that for 10 years.”

Luka Modric admitted Real Madrid miss Cristiano Ronaldo but backed Gareth Bale to help his side recover from back-to-back defeats at the hands of fierce rivals Barcelona.

The reigning Champions League holders go into the second leg of their Champions League last-16 clash with Ajax smarting from successive home losses to Barcelona, who sit 12 points above them at the top of LaLiga.

Santiago Solari’s men have lost three of their last four matches in all competitions and Modric was asked whether the absence of Ronaldo, who joined Juventus before the season began, was taking its toll on his team-mates.

Modric told reporters: “He’s a player every team would miss. Looking for a replacement for Cristiano is almost impossible. What he’s done for this club... of course we miss Ronaldo.

“What the club tried was for other players to fulfil his role, which was divided between the attacking players. And that’s not easy. Cristiano scored 50 goals and you can’t find someone who scores so many.

“Some had to take a step forward and, not scoring 50, but for three players to score at least 15-20 or 10 goals. And we don’t have that. That’s why I think it’s our biggest problem this year. For example, in the Copa against Barcelona, we had a lot of chances but an opponent with so much quality punishes you.”

(Source: Marca)

England bids farewell to World Cup-winning keeper Banks

Crowds of mourning fans joined luminaries of English football for a final farewell on Monday to Gordon Banks, a steelworker’s son who became one of the world’s greatest goalkeepers and will be remembered for his miraculous save against Pele.

Team mates from England’s 1966 World Cup win and members of former clubs Stoke City and Leicester came to join a cortege from the Stoke stadium to the funeral for Banks who died aged 81 last month.

“He was so humble, honest to God, he didn’t really understand what he had achieved in life and why people made such a fuss of him,” friend Terry Conroy, who starred with Banks and scored in Stoke’s 1972 League Cup win, told Reuters.

Banks was best known for the stunning one-handed save from a Pele bullet header that bounced awkwardly in front of him during England’s group-stage game against Brazil at the 1970 World Cup.

“With the luck of the gods, the angle at which I’d managed to lift that ball was perfect, and it ballooned in the air and over the bar,” the genial Banks said in one of the many recountings begged by fans and media.

Footage shows Banks chuckling afterwards, as England’s Bobby Moore jokingly chides him for not catching the ball.

His achievements went far further than stopping Pele.

Banks won 73 national caps, played nearly



500 times for Leicester and Stoke and won two League Cups, before a car crash blinded him in one eye.

He remained in Stoke, a former mining and pottery city, where he would watch games, attend charity events and take a weekly walk round Trentham Gardens.

“He donated his tie to a charity event I was involved in and we raised 200 pounds. Such a gentleman,” reminisced Phillip Steele, 76, next to a statue of Banks at the hilltop

stadium decked in flags, scarves and flowers.

FAVOURITE SAVES

Some 2,000 fans were at the Bet365 stadium to watch proceedings on a big screen. Others lined the route of the funeral procession, which was to stop outside the old Victoria Ground where Banks plied his trade before ending at Stoke minster for a religious service.

Goalkeepers Jack Butland, Joe Hart and Kasper Schmeichel were to be pall-bearers.

Anger brews in Algeria after Bouteflika bids for 5th term



Algerians on Monday dismissed President Abdelaziz Bouteflika’s promise to quit early if re-elected for a fifth time and said they were ready for new protests seeking his resignation.

The ailing leader, who suffered a stroke in 2013, vowed in a letter read out on state television late Sunday to organise a “national conference” that would set a date for further polls which he would not contest.

“I pledge not to be a candidate in that election which will ensure I am succeeded in undeniable conditions of serenity, freedom and transparency,” the letter read.

“I listened and heard the cry from the hearts of protesters and in particular the thousands of young people who questioned me about the future of our homeland”, it said.

His message -- followed by the formal submission of his candidacy for the April 18 poll by his campaign manager Abdelghani Zaalane -- failed to win hearts as new protests hit the capital Algiers and other cities.

In central Algiers hundreds of mostly young demonstrators rallied peacefully overnight Sunday and into the early hours of Monday as a helicopter buzzed overhead and police deployed gradually across the city.

Similar protests were reported in other cities across the North African country overnight

As the week unfolded Monday, residents of the capital told AFP they were already planning for more protests as they dismissed Bouteflika’s promises as an “insult”.

(Source: AFP)

This isn’t Playstation, grumbles Klopp after derby draw



Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp dismissed criticism of his tactics and substitutions in Sunday’s 0-0 draw with Everton in the Merseyside derby in a tetchy exchange with a reporter in the post-match news conference.

Liverpool’s fourth draw in their last six Premier League games saw them knocked off the top and leaves them a point behind leaders Manchester City with nine games remaining.

Klopp took off striker Sadio Mane for midfielder Adam Lallana in the 84th minute and when asked if the series of draws indicated he should take more risks, the German bridled.

“I’m really disappointed about your question. It’s football — we don’t play Playstation,” he said.

“Do you think we didn’t take enough risks today? Was there any draw where we didn’t try to win? Bring on an extra attacker and football changes? It is not like that, come on.

“We are offensive enough, football doesn’t work like that. There are nine games to go and we don’t lose our nerves, not like you, obviously.”

When the reporter suggested he might have brought on another attacker, Klopp said it was not the right moment to take a cavalier approach.

“You cannot start with four or five strikers in a striker way with nothing else to do than to try to score.

“We are an offensive team and that’s absolutely okay. We take a risk, no doubt

Fellow World Cup winners Bobby Charlton and Geoff Hurst were also expected.

In a largely working-class city obsessed with football, Banks was viewed as a reminder of simpler days before the Premier League’s mega-millions.

Everyone had their favourite save.

“Mine was a penalty he stopped against Geoff Hurst at Stoke’s 1972 League Cup semi-final at West Ham,” Conroy said. “If he hadn’t saved that, we wouldn’t have been in the final and won our first trophy in more than 100 years.”

Banks used to pick out a 1963 FA Cup semi-final when Leicester scored with their only shot on goal while he single-handedly thwarted chance after chance for Liverpool.

Born in the northern city of Sheffield, Banks worked as a coal packer and apprentice bricklayer as a teenager before an inauspicious start at Chesterfield’s Reserves: he let in 122 goals in the 1954/55 season. After military service, he got a first-team contract at Chesterfield — for seven pounds (\$9.24) a week.

Anecdotes from Banks’s life tell of a different era to that of today’s cosseted players. Before kickoff at the 1966 World Cup semi-final, he ran out of the gum he used to chew to generate spit for his hands — so the England trainer popped out of Wembley and down the road to buy some from a news kiosk just in time to stave off Banks’s panic.

(Source: Mirror)

NBA roundup: Harden drops 42 as Rockets dump Celtics

James Harden scored 42 points before fouling out, and the visiting Houston Rockets extended their winning streak to five games with a 115-104 victory over the Boston Celtics on Sunday.

Before being whistled for his sixth foul with 1:44 left to play, Harden staved off a furious Boston rally with a driving layup and a 3-pointer over two defenders that extended the lead to 112-100. The Celtics, once down 71-43, scored the opening 10 points of the fourth quarter and had cut the margin to nine on a Marcus Smart second-chance basket at the 4:40 mark.

The Celtics rallied behind their reserves, with Jaylen Brown posting 15 points and six rebounds off the bench to lead the charge. Boston recorded a 31-9 advantage in bench points.

Eric Gordon matched his career high with eight 3-pointers and scored 32 points to complement Harden, who was 6 of 18 on treys. Chris Paul added 15 points and 12 assists as Houston, which finished 21 of 51 from beyond the arc, improved to 12-0 this season when Paul records double-digit assists.

Thunder 99, Grizzlies 95

Russell Westbrook scored 22 points, including two big shots in the closing stretch, to lead Oklahoma City past visiting Memphis.

The win snapped a four-game losing streak for the Thunder, the team’s first since an 0-4 start to begin the season, and kept them tied with Portland for third place in the Western Conference after the Trail Blazers won at Charlotte earlier in the day.

Avery Bradley scored 27 points to lead the Grizzlies, who have lost six of their last eight.

Pistons 112, Raptors 107 (OT)

Blake Griffin had 27 points and seven rebounds, and Detroit scored the final 10 points of overtime to defeat visiting Toronto.

Luke Kennard and Reggie Jackson had 19 points apiece for Detroit, which has won nine of its last 11 to reach the .500 mark at 31-31.

Andre Drummond had 15 points and 17 rebounds despite foul trouble. Wayne Ellington added 11 points for Detroit, which beat coach Dwane Casey’s former team for the second

time this season.

Trail Blazers 118, Hornets 108

Rodney Hood came off the bench to score 27 points, including 21 in the fourth quarter, as Portland knocked off host Charlotte.

The Trail Blazers bolted to a 15-point lead in the first quarter but then had to pull away again in the fourth quarter, going on a 15-2 run in the final six minutes. Hood scored 14 of 16 Portland points in one stretch of the quarter.

Portland won for the sixth time in its last seven games. Jeremy Lamb scored 23 off the bench to lead the Hornets.

Wizards 135, Timberwolves 121

Bobby Portis had 26 points and 12 rebounds, Bradley Beal scored 22 points and host Washington defeated Minnesota. Reserve Jabari Parker added 22 points for Washington, which had lost five of six.

Karl-Anthony Towns led the Timberwolves with 28 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, his first sub-30 point effort in four games. Derrick Rose scored 18 points off the bench.

(Source: Reuters)

Iranian representatives take six medals at Karate 1-Series A Salzburg

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Six Iranian athletes won medals at the Karate 1-Series A competition in Salzburg, Austria.

The Iranian representatives managed to bounce back from Sara Bahmanyar's defeat and finished the event with two gold medals.

In Female Kumite -55kg, Taravat Khaksar edged Chile's Valentina Toro in the final (1-0) to take the Iranian flag to the top of the podium. This triumph was Taravat Khaksar's first gold medal in major international events.

The second gold for Iran was taken by Mahdi KhodaBakhshi in Male Kumite -84kg. The Iranian karateka who had won a gold medal in international events for the last time at the 2018 Karate 1-Premier League Istanbul shocked Grand Winner Ugur Aktas of Turkey in the final 5-2.

In Male Kumite +84kg, Saleh Abazari won a silver medal after being defeated by Asiman Gurbanli from Azerbaijan by decision in the final.

Sara Bahmanyar seized a silver after losing to Ayaka Tadano from Japan 2-0 in the Female Kumite -50kg title decider.

Also, Bahman Asgari and Zabihollah Poorshab calimed two bronze medals at the Male Kumite -75 Kg and -84 Kg respectively.

Presented in an open format, thus allowing every athlete in the world to compete, the Karate 1-Series A is framed under the umbrella of Karate 1 to bring together the best competitors in a series of open championships of unprecedented scale and quality.

In addition to this, the Karate 1-Series A offers karatekas the chance to increase their ranking position as the universality of the sport's top tournaments is showcased.

2019 Karate 1-Series A in Salzburg was held from March 1 to 3 with the participation of 2057 karatekas from some 100 different countries.

The next event of Karate 1-Series A will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from May 17 to 19.



Kianoush Rostami wins gold at Fajr Weightlifting Cup



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Kianoush Rostami from Iran claimed a gold medal at the 2019 Fajr Weightlifting Cup on Monday.

Rostami took the gold medal by lifting 172kg in snatch and 220kg in clean and jerk for a total of 392kg.

The Latvian weightlifter claimed a silver medal for a total of 362kg and German lifter snatched the bronze after he lifted a total of 355kg.

Rostami had competed at the new

bodyweight class of 96kg in Chiang Mai, Thailand in February and won the gold medal with 371kg.

The 27-year-old lifter won gold in the -85kg weightlifting at the Rio Olympics, lifting a world record combined total of 396kg.

The Fajr Weightlifting Cup serves as the 2020 Summer Olympics qualifiers.

The international competition has seven men's weight categories — 61kg, 67kg, 73kg, 81kg, 96kg, 109kg and +109kg.

Iran football chief Taj meets his Croat counterpart Suker



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) president Mehdi Taj held a meeting with President of the Croatian Football Federation Davor Suker.

The meeting was held in Zurich, Switzerland.

Taj and Suker discussed ways to boost football ties in the meeting.

The Iranian football chief requested his counterpart to arrange a friendly match between two countries' U-23

football teams.

Suker also said he is looking forward to coming to Iran since he has so many good friends in the country.

Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic had been also linked with Iran national football team.

Team Melli parted company with Carlos Queiroz at the end of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Iran were knocked out of the competition after losing to Japan 3-0 in the semi-finals.

Brazilian duo eyeing success with debutants Daegu

Daegu FC's Brazilian strike force of Edgar Silva and Cesinha believe the AFC Champions League newcomers have what it takes to challenge the Continent's elite ahead of their opening Group F game against Melbourne Victory on Tuesday.

Edgar Silva joined the Korea Republic side in mid-2018 after scoring four goals in Buriram United's run to the last 16, while his fellow forward Cesinha initially moved on loan in 2016 and has been at the club ever since.

In December last year, the pair scored home and away against Ulsan Hyundai as Daegu's 5-1 aggregate victory saw them lift the Korean FA Cup. It was the club's first major honor in their 17-year history and meant they qualified for the AFC Champions League for the first time.

"My experience in big competitions from different countries helps a lot, and I played against many strong

teams in the AFC Champions League with Buriram last season," said Edgar Silva, who scored against former winners Guangzhou Evergrande and Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors in the 2018 tournament.

"The most important thing this year is Daegu's success in the AFC Champions League. It will be a big challenge for us and I really hope I can contribute to this.

"I will do my best to put in good performances in both this competition and the league this season."

Daegu began their 2019 K League 1 campaign with a 1-1 draw against defending champions Jeonbuk on Friday, with Edgar Silva notching his first goal of the campaign.

Like so often last year, the Brazilian was assisted by his countryman Cesinha, who was among the top creators of goals in the league in 2018 and is now set to

make his first appearance in the AFC Champions League.

After leaving his homeland, the 29-year-old helped Daegu win promotion from K League 2 in his first year in Korea Republic and has since gone on to enjoy two fruitful years in the top flight.

"It's not only about my partnership with Edgar Silva, the whole team became closer and improved a lot in the second half of last year and in the end won the FA Cup," noted Cesinha.

"I'm feeling really confident because this team won the FA Cup, the atmosphere during pre-season has been good and we are enjoying training.

"We want to start the season well, improve [from last year] in the league and also deliver a solid performance in the AFC Champions League."

(Source: Fox Sports Asia)

Preview - Group D: Persepolis FC (IRN) v Pakhtakor (UZB)

The 2018 AFC Champions League runners-up Persepolis of the Islamic Republic of Iran will get their 2019 campaign underway when they host Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in Group D at the Azadi Stadium on Tuesday.

Persepolis produced an excellent performance last year to reach the final for the first time before defeat to Kashima Antlers as they continued their upward momentum having progressed to the semi-finals a year earlier.

Branko Ivankovic's side have won the Iran Pro League for the last two years and

moved to the top of the standings once more last week after a 1-0 victory over Sanat Naft.

Formerly AFC Champions League regulars, Pakhtakor return for the first time since 2016 after defeating Iraq's Air Force Club and the United Arab Emirates' Al Nasr in the qualifying rounds.

The Uzbek side, who are without the suspended Odiljon Xamroboev, won their only previous AFC Champions League meeting with Persepolis when they claimed a 1-0 victory in Tashkent in 2003.

(Source: the-afc)

Preview - Group C: Al Duhail SC (QAT) v Esteghlal FC (IRN)

Qatar's Al Duhail and Esteghlal of the Islamic Republic of Iran will meet in their opening 2019 AFC Champions League Group C match at the Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium on Tuesday.

Al Duhail were one of the stories of the 2018 season as the Doha side went on a nine-game winning run to equal Ulsan Hyundai's record set in 2012. They exited at the last eight stage, however, after Iranian side Persepolis dealt them a first defeat in the second leg of the quarter-finals.

The 2017-18 Qatar Stars League champions currently sit second in their domestic league and go into their Continental opener on the back of a 6-0 victory over Al Ahli last week.

Esteghlal, who will be without the suspended Roozbeh Cheshmi, also reached the quarter-finals in 2018 before elimination at the hands of another Qatari side, Al Sadd, and they return for a third year in a row after winning the 2017-18 Hazfi Cup.

(Source: the-afc)

Austrian Preidler admits to doping amid investigation

Three-time Austrian road race champion Georg Preidler has resigned from the Groupama-FDJ team after admitting to blood doping.

Preidler, who has been racing on the WorldTour since 2013, is the second Austrian cyclist drawn into an investigation that ended in a series of anti-doping raids in Seefeld.

The raids were part of a broader operation targeting a Germany-based criminal organization suspected of having carried out blood doping for years in a variety of sports with the help of a specialist sports doctor.

Nordic skiing was the first sport affected last week, with five athletes from Austria, Kazakhstan and Estonia arrested last week, while Austrian cyclist Stefan Denifl admitted his involvement over the weekend.

"I made a mistake and want to be honest," Preidler said



in an interview with Austrian newspaper Krone.

"It was the biggest mistake of my life. All I can say is that I could not live with the knowledge in my mind that I cheated.

"The last days were a nightmare. I could no longer eat or sleep. I could not live longer with this secret. These last five days have been a nightmare, I didn't know if I was going to be discovered. I didn't know if this doctor had confessed everything."

A statement from the team read: "Groupama-FDJ deeply regrets this and is already collaborating with all bodies. Our ethics have always been a pillar, and we remain determined in its desire to prevent individual slippage.

"The team deplores this case but retains its confidence in the members and will always remain uncompromising in matters of ethics."

(Source: Sky Sports)

Jahanbakhsh awarded man of Brighton match

IRNA — Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club in a Twitter message announced victory of Iranian player Alireza Jahanbakhsh in a poll as man of the match against Huddersfield Town A.F.C.

According to the US media 'Fox Sports', 'For his excellent performance on the pitch, Iran international Alireza Jahanbakhsh was awarded the Man of the Match following their victory.'

"The attacking midfielder did well throughout the match, always being a threat on the flanks and keeping defenders honest," it added.

"The 25-year-old is looking to be a permanent fixture in the Brighton starting XI and with a performance like this, it is likely going to happen."

Scottish winger Jai Quitongo joins Machine Sazi

TASNIM — Iranian top-flight football club Machine Sazi have signed Scottish winger Jai Quitongo.

The 21-year-old player has penned a four-year contract with the Tabriz-based football club.

Throughout his youth career, Quitongo played for Hamilton Academical and Aberdeen.

He also played for Partick Thistle.

Quitongo is also a one-time capped Scotland U-21 internationalist.

Machine Sazi hope to receive Quitongo's International Transfer Certificate (ITC) for Tabriz derby with Tractor Sazi.

Machine Sazi sit eighth in Iran Professional League (IPL) with 22 points from 20 matches.

ACL Group B: Lokomotiv 2-0 Al Wahda

The 2019 AFC Champions League Group Stage got underway with a 2-0 victory for PFC Lokomotiv of Uzbekistan over UAE's Al Wahda in Group B on Monday.

The two sides had met in the opening match of Group B last season at the same ground with the home side running riot in a 5-0 victory.

There were ghosts of 2018 for Al Wahda as Temorkhuja Abdukholikov fired PFC Lokomotiv in front just five minutes into the match.

Sardor Mirzaev's in-swinging corner kick was headed across the mouth of goal by Anzur Ismailov. Abdukholikov met the loose ball with a header from point-blank but was denied by the crossbar. The Number 11 was afforded a second chance to nod the ball into an empty net from the rebound, handing the hosts an early lead.

The visitors shook off the early hiccup and grew into the game. Skipper Sebastian Tagliabue came within a whisker of equalising in the 10th minute.

The Argentine used his strength to see off his marker and control Mohammed Al Shamsi's long pass, before turning and striking on the half-volley from 35 yards out. Goalkeeper Javohir Ilyosov passed his first test of the afternoon, tipping the ball behind for a corner kick.

Lokomotiv had to settle for the one-goal advantage heading into the break after Diyorjon Turapov hit the post with a left-footed effort from the edge of the box after a neat Mirzaev pull back.

Henk ten Cate's men took the game to their opponents in the second half, but they did not have the accuracy to match their intensity.

Leonardo da Souza threatened from 30 yards out, but his curled effort from a free-kick narrowly missed the target 11 minutes after the restart.

The Brazilian tried his luck again from a narrower angle but was not any luckier in the 75th minute.

Tagliabue found space in the Lokomotiv box minutes later, evading his marker and going through on goal. The Argentine's stabbed effort, however, ended on the wrong side of the upright.

Turkmenistan international Arslanmurat Amanov was introduced for his AFC Champions League debut 10 minutes from time and nearly delivered an assist with his first touch.

Lokomotiv's new signing curled in a corner that was met by Abdukholikov's effort and made things awkward for goalkeeper Al Shamsi, who was eventually relieved to see it go behind for a goal kick.

The hosts were made to wait until the dying seconds of the game to get their second. It was captain Islom Tukhtakhujayev who eventually got it, curling in a free-kick into the top corner to seal victory for the Uzbek side in added time.

Lokomotiv will travel to Qatar to face Al Rayyan next week, while Al Wahda are at home to Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad on Matchday Two.

(Source: the-afc)

Gomis eager for Continental challenge

Al Hilal striker Bafetimbi Gomis is relishing the opportunity to show how good he and his team are ahead of their 2019 AFC Champions League opener against Al Ain on Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal reached the final in 2014 and 2017, losing to Western Sydney Wanderers and Urawa Red Diamonds respectively, as the AFC Champions League title continues to elude the Saudi giants despite their participation in each edition since 2009.

This year, the Riyadh-based side kick off their campaign against Al Ain, the same opponents they started against last year, although this time their group stage opener takes place at Al Ain's Hazza bin Zayed Stadium.

"Al Ain are a big team," said Gomis. "They have great experience in the AFC Champions League, but it is important for us to get our first points in the bag as soon as possible."

The trip to the UAE marks Gomis' debut in the competition. The former French international joined Al Hilal from Turkish side Galatasaray in the summer of 2018 and got off to a good start domestically, scoring 17 goals in his first 22 games in the blue shirt.

"My ambition is to do well both as a team and individually. [Al Ain match] will be my Continental debut, so I have to take things one match at a time."

Al Hilal sit top of the Saudi Pro League table, six points clear off their nearest chasers Al Nassr with just eight matches to play, and Gomis wants his side to show the same lethal edge on the Continental stage.

(Source: the-afc)

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The worst co-religionist brother is he who brings trouble to others.

Imam Ali (AS)

Contemporary Iranian art under spotlight at Berlin gallery

A R T TEHRAN — A group of Iranian artists will showcase their latest works at the Katharina Maria Raab Gallery in Berlin in an exhibition that aims to put the spotlight on contemporary Iranian art.

Asieh Salimian and Shahram Entekhabi are the curators of the exhibition “Speaking for Themselves” opening on March 7, the gallery has announced. Ali Bababaizad, Basira Bol-boli, Marjan Qorbani, Zahra Mohammadi, Puneh Oshidari, Nasim Pirhadi, Zartosht Rahimi, Ali Soltani Tehrani, Azam Tabatabai and Ehsan Ziafati are the participating artists in the exhibit.

“Speaking for Themselves” takes a glance at the contemporary art of Iran and is a selection of what the young artists have created,” the curators wrote in a statement for the showcase. “The works narrate different issues. The contemporary Iranian art in the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution can somehow narrate what has happened all these 40 years,” it adds.

The exhibit will be running until March 30.

Iran Video Game Festival to announce winners on March 11

A R T TEHRAN — Winners of the 8th Iran Video Game Festival will be honored during a special ceremony at Tehran’s Parsian Hotel on March 11, the organizers announced on Monday.



The director of the 8th Iran Video Game Festival, Mohammad Hajimirzai (L), attends a press conference at the National Foundation for Computer Games (NFCG) on March 4, 2019. (NFCG)

Over 60 games are competing in three main categories of “Achievement Awards”, “Genres” and “People’s Choice Awards” at this festival, which is annually organized by the National Foundation for Computer Games.

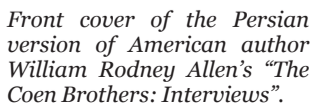
“Causal, action and adventure games have the biggest share of the festival this year,” the director of the festival, Mohammad Hajimirzai, said.

“The Coen Brothers: Interviews” published in Persian

A R T TEHRAN — “The Coen Brothers: Interviews”, a book from Conversations with Filmmakers Series, edited by American author William Rodney Allen, has recently been published in Persian by Rozaneh Publications in Tehran.

Translated by film critic Robert Safarian, the 2006 book is a collection of 30 different interviews with American filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen.

They have jointly made several movies, including “Miller’s Crossing”, “Barton Fink”, “Fargo”, “The Big Lebowski”, “No Country for Old Men”, “True Grit” and “Inside Llewyn Davis”, which have been acclaimed in international events.



Children to perform musical “Seven Adventures of Rustam” in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — Bahareh Jahandoost plans to direct a large group of children to perform a musical in Tehran based on the story of “The Seven Adventures of Rustam” from the Persian poet Ferdowsi’s magnum opus, Shahnameh.

She is negotiating with a number of Tehran’s major theaters to arrange more performances for the musical, which won popular acclaim when it was staged at Tehran’s Shahrzad Theater for three nights from February 27, the Persian service of Honaronline.

The musical was staged in the form of naqqali, a dramatic style of storytelling dedicated to Shahnameh epic stories, said Jahandoost who is also a naqqal, someone who performs naqqali.

Scenes of the story have been previously illustrated, and children will color in the pictures during each performance, she added.

Members of a cast of 37 child performers are taking part in this production.

“The Seven Adventures of Rustam” (The Haft Khan-e Rostam) is the title of one of two famous episodes in the Shahnameh.

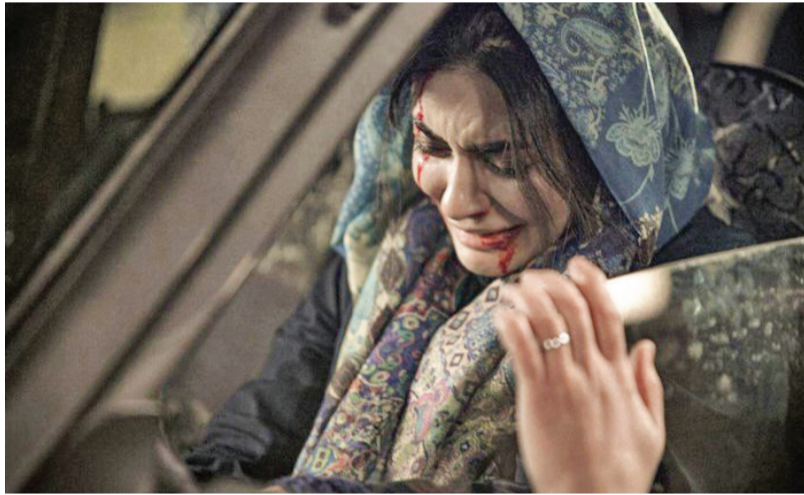
The story recounts Rustam’s endeavors to liberate the Kayanid king Kay Kavus from the bonds of Deev Sefid (White Demon).

Young musician Aidin Bayat conducts the group of musicians and Zahar Hushyar directs the painting crew.



Bahareh Jahandoost (C), musician Aidin Bayat (R) and performers acknowledge the audience after staging the musical “The Seven Adventures of Rustam” at Tehran’s Shahrzad Theater on February 27, 2019. (Hadiseh Moqaddam)

“Watching This Movie Is a Crime” wins Golden Barberrry Award



“Watching This Movie Is a Crime” by Iranian director Reza Zehtabchian.

A R T TEHRAN — Director Reza Zehtabchian’s debut movie “Watching This Movie Is a Crime” has won the Golden Barberrry Award for the worst film participating in the 37th Fajr Film Festival.

The film is about Amir, a religious man, whose pregnant wife loses her baby after being beaten by a drunken English-Iranian man. He files a lawsuit against the man, but the perpetrator is

released based on political convenience.

In 2018, the award was presented to “Emperor of Hell” directed by Parviz Sheikhtadi for the first time by a number of critics and journalists working for the Golden Barberrry Foundation.

In a statement published on Sunday, the foundation said that selecting the worst film can help improve Iranian cinema.

Italian cinematographer Luca Bigazzi to hold workshops at Fajr festival



Italian cinematographer Luca Bigazzi in an undated photo.

A R T TEHRAN — Luca Bigazzi, one of Italy’s most celebrated cinematographers, will hold workshops on the sidelines of the 37th Fajr International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Monday.

Bigazzi has worked with several world-renowned film directors, including legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami on his 2010 film “Certified Copy”.

He has also collaborated with the filmmakers of independent Italian cinema such as Silvio Soldini, Mario Martone, Felice Farina, Gianni Amelio, Francesca Archibugi, Michele Placido and Paolo Sorrentino.

Bigazzi has received awards at several festivals, including the Venice Film Festival, Nastro d’Argento Film Awards and David di Donatello Awards.

The 37th Fajr International Film Festival will be held in Tehran from April 18 to 26.

“How to Train Your Dragon” stays No. 1, “Madea” a strong 2nd

LOS ANGELES (AP) — “How To Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World” topped the North American box office for a second week, but close on its tail was Tyler Perry’s final installment of the “Madea” franchise. Driven by a largely female audience, “A Madea Family Funeral” had a better-than-expected debut.

The third installment in the “How to Train Your Dragon” series grossed an estimated \$30 million this weekend according to Universal Pictures on Sunday, bringing its domestic total just shy of \$100 million. Worldwide, the DreamWorks Animation film has made over \$375 million. In China alone it opened in first place with \$33.4 million.

“A Madea Family Funeral” took second place at the domestic box office with an estimated \$27 million, a third best for the 15-year-old franchise. The “Madea” films have never been all that popular with critics — this one splattered out with a 24 percent on Rotten Tomatoes — but audiences have never seemed to care. This time around the audience, which was 67 percent female and 78 percent over the age of 25, gave the film a solid A- CinemaScore.

“That character just resonates,” said Comscore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian. “These films are absolutely critic proof. The audience has spoken and they love Madea and they’re saying goodbye.” Further down the charts, the Neil Jordan stalker-thriller “Greta”, starring Isabelle Huppert and Chloe Grace Moretz, opened in eighth place to a mediocre \$4.6 million.

“Greta was just another newcomer released in 2019 that had a rough go in a slow marketplace,” Dergarabedian said. “This might have benefited from a platform release given the subject matter and the cast.”

The acclaimed documentary “Apollo 11” also opened on 120 IMAX screens to \$1.65 million. Many people, however, used this weekend to catch-up with the big winners at the Oscars,



This image released by Universal Pictures shows characters Astrid, left, and Hiccup in a scene from DreamWorks Animation’s “How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World”. (DreamWorks Animation/Universal Pictures via AP)

which took place last Sunday.

Best-picture winner “Green Book” got the biggest post-Oscars bump, adding \$4.71 million over the weekend from theaters. To date, “Green Book” has earned \$75.2 million in North America and \$188 million worldwide.

The Universal-distributed film from Participant Media more than doubled its theater count to 2,641 theaters and broke into the top 5 in its 16th weekend, not to mention the fact that it’s also available to rent on the small screen too.

For comparison, last year’s best picture winner “The Shape of Water” added \$2.3 million on the weekend following the Academy Awards, although that was playing in about 1,000 fewer theaters.

“Green Book” wasn’t the only award-winner adding profits this weekend. Best Animated Feature winner “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse” banked an additional \$2.1 million, the encore version of “A Star Is Born” with 12 additional minutes of footage added \$1.9 million, “Bohemian Rhapsody” earned \$975,000 and “The Favourite” took in \$825,000.

Spielberg’s push against Netflix at the Oscars hits a nerve

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When Steven Spielberg speaks about the business of Hollywood, everyone generally listens and few dissent. But reports that he intends to support rule changes that could block Netflix from Oscars-eligibility have provoked a heated, and unwieldy, debate online this weekend. It has found the legendary filmmaker at odds with some industry heavyweights, who have pointed out that Netflix has been an important supporter of minority filmmakers and stories, especially in awards campaigns, while also reigniting the ongoing streaming versus theatrical debate.

Spielberg has weighed in before on whether streaming movies should compete for the film industry’s most prestigious award (TV movies, he said last year, should compete for Emmys), but that was before Netflix nearly succeeded in getting its first best picture Oscar for Alfonso Cuarón’s “Roma” at last week’s Academy Awards. Netflix, of course, did not win the top award — “Green Book”, which was produced partially by Spielberg’s Amblin Entertainment, did.

Still, Netflix was a legitimate contender and this year, the streaming service is likely to step up its awards game even more with Martin Scorsese’s “The Irishman”, which The Hollywood Reporter said may also gunning for a wide-theatrical release. A teaser ad aired during the 91st Oscars for the gangster drama said “in theaters next fall,” instead of the “in select theaters” phrasing that was used for “Roma”.

But Netflix also isn’t playing by the same rules as other studios. The company doesn’t report theatrical grosses, for one, and it’s been vexing some more traditional Hollywood executives throughout this award season and there have been whispers in recent weeks that a reckoning is coming.

Now, Spielberg and others are planning



In this Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019, file photo, filmmaker Steven Spielberg poses at the 2019 “An Unforgettable Evening” at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP/Chris Pizzello)

to do something about it by supporting a revised film academy regulation at an upcoming meeting of the organization’s board of governors that would disqualify Netflix from the Oscars, or at least how the streaming giant currently operates during awards season.

This year “Roma” got a limited theatrical qualifying run and an expensive campaign with one of the industry’s most successful awards publicists, Lisa Taback, leading the charge. But Netflix, operates somewhat outside of the industry while also infiltrating its most important institutions, like the Oscars and the Motion Picture Association of America. Some like Spielberg, are worried about what that will mean for the future of movies.

“Steven feels strongly about the difference between the streaming and theatrical situation,” an Amblin spokesperson told IndieWire’s Anne Thompson late last week. “He’ll be happy if the others will join (his campaign) when that comes up. He will see what happens.”

An Amblin representative said Sunday there was nothing to add.