



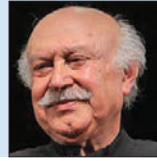
Trump after commercializing world security **2**



Dutch diplomats expelled in a reciprocal move **2**



Not good enough for Iranian teams at 2019 ACL **15**



Maestro Fakhreddini's book "Under Heaven" unveiled in Tehran **16**

Is Zionism in U.S. over?

One former spy & counterintelligence officer says yes



© File photo

INSTC meeting makes important decisions

TEHRAN — The seventh meeting of the coordination council of International North South Transit Corridor (INSTC) wrapped up on Tuesday and the council reached a conclusion including several important decisions regarding the corridor.

As reported by the Iranian transport ministry news portal, equalization of customs tariffs for member countries, establishing a joint company by the member states and determining a corridor manager

in each country were among the decisions which were made at the end of the two-day gathering.

According to Iranian Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamnejad, establishing a joint company between all member states has been one of the major decisions reached in the meeting and the plan for this company will be designed, analyzed and executed within the next few months. **→4**

Iranians not trusting Europe over JCPOA: Kharrazi

TEHRAN — Kamal Kharrazi, chief of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said on Tuesday that Europe's approach to the 2015 nuclear pact has caused Iranians to become more distrustful of Europe.

Kharrazi said due to such an approach, Iranians have also become deeply sensitive to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Mehr reported.

He further said Europe's immediate implementation of its trade mechanism for Iran, also known as INSTEX, may gain the trust of the Iranian nation.

After Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the nuclear deal in May 2018 and reintroduced sanctions against Iran, Europeans has so far done nothing concrete to protect the agreement. Experts even say INSTEX lacks teeth. **→2**

Syria launches airstrikes against Daesh positions in Badiya desert

The Syrian military has launched airstrikes against remnants of the Takfiri Daesh terror group and engaged its elements in the central part of the Arab country.

The air raids on Monday targeted terrorists in al-Sukhna, an area between Palmyra and Dayr al-Zawr, west of the

Euphrates River, Syria's al-Watan newspaper reported.

The Syrian Air Force mounted "a number of airstrikes targeting Daesh movements in the eastern Badiya, specifically on one of the dirt roads leading to the town of al-Sukhna and southeast of the town", al-Watan said, citing a military source. **→3**



PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

Trump attack to the heart of Europe!

U.S. President Donald Trump continues to oppose the EU. Four months later, the European Parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place. U.S. government officials are trying to win European nationalist streams in this election. Heads of the European Union are aware of U.S.-backed nationalist groups in Europe.

From the year 2016, Trump claimed support from nationalist groups during the presidential election campaign. The White House believes that the main and most convenient way in this regard is the victory of nationalist groups in Europe.

Many analysts of the international affairs have recently had a special focus on U.S.-EU relations! Some signals and speeches by the President of the United States which are addressed to the European authorities indicate the full opposition of the White House to the European Union. Over the past few days, there has been news about the specific talks between the President of the United States and some of the European Union's member states.

Trump called on French President "Emmanuel Macron" to leave the European Union and thus build wider bilateral relations with the United States! On the other hand, Trump has officially asked the British Prime Minister "Theresa May" to sue the European Union rather than interacting with it.

These are indications of the wide and extensive opposition of the United States to the United Europe. This confrontation can become a full-fledged dispute in the future. However, the European Union has not yet made a firm response to the United States, and it has adopted a policy of "having interactions with Trump," but this policy can't be adopted for a long time!

What is certain is that Europe has not gotten much of a chance to prevent a crisis (a crisis that is headed by the White House).it should be noted that Trump doesn't basically follow the confrontation with the United Europe in the form of a "hidden strategy", but he explicitly declares it publicly and before the media. This reflects the serious conflict between Washington and the European Union during the presidency of Donald Trump. **→13**

Iran's intelligence body rolls out documentary on infiltrating France-based anti-Iran media

By Yaser Nazifi Gilavan

TEHRAN (FNA) — Channel 2 of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting (IRIB) aired a documentary film on an anti-Iran figure famous for his self-proclaimed leaked information against the country, revealing how the country's intelligence forces had extensive surveillance over him and played him for a long span of time.

Amad News, a website and a Telegram-based news outlet with over one million subscribers, was a glimmer of hope for anti-Iran groups and their financial supporters who are mostly based in Western countries, with its self-proclaimed leaked pieces of information allegedly disclosing "much less known realities" about Iran.

After the Telegram channel of Amad News invited people to use violence and instructed how to assemble Molotov cocktails in last year



unrests in a number of Iranian cities, the channel was closed by the social networking platform and the owners of the outlet opened a new one with the new name of Sedaei Mardom. Iran filed a complaint to shut down the new channel on charges of provoking violence, but Telegram's Russian owner defied the request.

'Foreign forces withdrawal from Afghanistan to restore regional security'

TEHRAN (MNA) — Expressing his concern over possible repetition of Taliban's wrong doings, General Shahnawaz Tanai said withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan will restore security to the region.

General Shahnawaz Tanai, defense minister of Dr. Najibullah administration and one of the main members of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan whom high-ranking Taliban members were proud of fighting against him in a different approach defended peace process with Taliban. He said to Mehr News agency that Taliban's way of ruling should not be considered in the process of consolidation of peace in Afghanistan.

He said, "Taliban is not the only responsible party for the war and devastation in Afghanistan, but all governments and involved parties in the

war have made big mistakes for their parts."

He went on to mention, "As a result of inconsistencies all groups, political factions and governors of Afghanistan have done inconvenient deeds against the defenseless people over the past 45 years and Taliban is no exception to this rule."

Tanai believes if Taliban's way to rule the country is the reason for the continuation of the current war in Afghanistan therefore all parties that have committed crimes during the decades of war must be treated in the same way Taliban is treated.

He said that war in Afghanistan has been prolonged and there is no other way but ceasefire. All people of Afghanistan are seeking for peace, both those who are abroad and inside the country. He added that there are only a few who disagree

The anti-Iran mouthpiece was founded in 2015 mainly by Ruhollah Zam, the son of an Iranian official of 1990s.

In the documentary made by an Iranian intelligence service and aired by the IRIB's Channel 2, an insider who had been cooperating with Zam is first identified and detained by the intelligence forces and the collaborator, self-called Alireza and sometimes Hajj Ali, continues his relationship with the head of Amad News.

Alireza had been in touch with Zam, who is known to his audience as Nima, for a long time from his room in Tehran through Whatsapp, and he was found and arrested through monitoring all of Zam's contacts with his links through the application. Intelligence forces discovered that Alireza happens to be among the most important people in Iran that Zam is in touch with via Whatsapp. **→13**

with the peace process because they feel their interests are at stake.

He mentioned that consolidating peace is beneficial for countries of the region and even trans-regional countries in addition to people of Afghanistan. He went on to say that restoring peace in Afghanistan will let people live and co-operate with the other countries of the world in peace, friendship and brotherhood.

Referring to history of Afghanistan in the last few decades and bitter experiences, he said war and destruction have been imposed on people of Afghanistan as a result of inconsistency and division.

"Taliban may have made a lot of irreparable and unforgivable mistakes, but is war a solution?" former official stressed. **→13**

2,500 houses built in quake-hit Kermanshah

About 2,500 residential units, built for quake-stricken dwellers of the western province of Kermanshah, were completed by Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation.

Over a ceremony held on Monday, Parviz Fattah, the foundation's director, inaugurated the houses.

On November 12, 2017, a destructive earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale hit Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermanshah. Some 90,000 houses were partly or completely damaged by the tremor. Sadly, the quake took over 660 lives and left more than 10,000 injured.



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ARTICLE

Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

Muslims can be proud of Omar and Tlaib in the U.S. Congress

Muslims worldwide can be proud that the most courageous and quite possibly, with tremendous luck and time, the most effective U.S. Congressional representative in years may turn out to be Ilhan Omar who won election from a district in Minnesota last November. And it is all about remarkable courage, something that even her detractors must eventually recognize -- as it is human nature to recognize real courage when it is so evident.

Omar has touched, and is still touching, the so-called "third rail" of political discourse in the U.S. by calling out the absurdities and dangers of U.S. foreign policies that for decades have awarded overweening support for criminal Zionism and which has resulted, directly and indirectly, in more carnage and human suffering and financial waste than any other aspect of U.S. foreign policies and actions in the Middle East. And this is because for years the most basic posture of various U.S. administrations and the U.S. Congress has revolved around giving Israel anything it has wanted well before doing much else.

Speaking last week at a forum at a Washington bookstore along with freshman Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, Omar says she fears any and everything she and Tlaib might say about Israel is or would be construed as "anti-Semitic" because both women are Muslims, and that such insidious charges prevent a broader debate about Israel's 70 year plus mistreatment of Holy Land natives, the Palestinians. She is not at all incorrect about this.

Earlier, Omar used Twitter to express her dismay over the powerful influence the AIPAC lobby has had. And last week she made this statement: "I want to talk about the political influence in this country that says it's okay to push for allegiance to a foreign country." And added: "Why is it okay for me to talk about the influence of the National Rifle Association, or fossil fuel industries or Big Pharma and not talk about another powerful lobbying group that is influencing policy?" **→7**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Zarif says will visit Syria in near future

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that he will pay a visit to Syria in the near future.

Zarif made the announcement in an interview with Al Forat TV. On February 27, Syria's Ambassador to Tehran Adnan Mahmoud presented an invitation from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to Foreign Minister Zarif.

Iran is a key ally of Syria as the Islamic Republic has been providing military advisory assistance to Damascus in its terrorism fight.

Iranian officials have made it clear that Tehran would stand by the Damascus government in the reconstruction projects of the war-stricken country.



Araqchi in Vienna to attend JCPOA joint commission

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi left Tehran for Vienna on Tuesday to participate in the joint commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Wednesday.

Co-chaired by Araqchi and European External Action Service Helga Schmid, it will also be attended by deputy foreign ministers of Germany, Britain, France, Russia, and China, Mehr reported.

Araqchi will also meet separately with some of his counterparts and also with Helga Schmid on Tuesday.

The Wednesday session will be focused on ways to get around U.S. unilateral sanctions against Iran, as well as solutions to implement remaining parties' commitments.

In a meeting with a German Foreign Ministry official in Tehran on Monday, Araqchi said Europe must do concrete actions to protect the JCPOA and pay its costs.



MP urges Germany to reconsider ban on Mahan Air

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Chairman Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh has criticized Germany for banning Iran's Mahan Air, saying Tehran expects the German government to reconsider its decision.

Falahatpisheh made the remarks in a meeting with Philipp Ackermann, Director General of Germany's Foreign Ministry, Tasnim reported on Tuesday. "The two countries' friendship has a long history (and) because of this long history, it is necessary to make efforts to improve these ties and strengthen Iran-Germany relations at different levels," he suggested.

The lawmaker further said the move to ban Mahan Air is in contradiction with the friendly atmosphere between the two sides.



Zarif not informed about Assad trip to Tehran: spokesman

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was not informed about Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's visit to Tehran last week and that was a reason he submitted his resignation, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Tuesday.

"The Foreign Ministry did not have information at any level (about the trip) and this lack of information was maintained until the end of the trip," Qassemi said, according to ISNA.

The resignation "was not a private and individual issue and the goal and intent of that was a positive effort to return the Foreign Ministry and the diplomatic system of the country to its main place," he stated.



Europe must pay the price to salvage JCPOA: deputy FM

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Political will alone would not suffice to save the JCPOA, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday, urging Europe to "take practical measures and pay the price" to salvage the 2015 nuclear accord.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Philipp Ackermann, director general of Germany's Foreign Ministry. He added the European side is expected to take more serious efforts for achieving practical results of the JCPOA, Tasnim reported.

He also urged Europe to intensify efforts to implement INSTEX, a payment channel that the EU has set up to maintain trade with Iran.



Ambassador: Russia would welcome U.S. return to JCPOA

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Moscow would welcome the United States' return to the international nuclear deal with Iran, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly Antonov said on Monday.

"We consider it important to continue to stick to our position to support the JCPOA," Antonov said in remarks at the Stimson Center in Washington DC, Pakistan Point News reported. "It would be wise if the United States could revise its decision and could return back to this deal and abide by the UN Security Council's decision."

President Donald Trump announced last May the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and ordered sanctions on Tehran.

Tehran mediating between Pakistan, India

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran has been acting as mediator to help settle a dispute between Pakistan and India which has intensified over the past few weeks.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA) that he had talked to his Pakistani counterpart as well as Indian officials "to do what can be done".

"For this situation to go on is not expedient for the region," the Iranian top diplomat observed.

At least eight civilians and two soldiers have been killed in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir since tensions soared following India's airstrike on February 26 inside Pakistan. India said the strike targeted militants behind a February 14 suicide bombing in Indian-controlled Kashmir that killed more than 40 Indian troops.

Pakistan retaliated, shooting down a fighter jet on February 27 and detaining its pilot, who was returned to India on Friday. India, in turn, on Saturday handed over the body of a Pakistani civilian prisoner beaten to death by inmates in a jail in India last week. The man, Skahir Ullah, was buried on Sunday in his home village of Sialkot in Punjab province.

Kashmir has been divided between India



Pakistani Kashmiris carry the coffin of a civilian who was killed in a gunfight between Indian and Pakistani troops on the Line of Control at a funeral ceremony on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad on March 02, 2019; AFP photo: Sajjad Qayyum

and Pakistan practically since their independence from British rule in 1947. The two countries each claim Kashmir in its entirety and have fought two of the three wars between them over it.

The rivals struck a cease-fire deal in 2003

but regularly trade cross-border fire.

■ 'Iran-Pakistan border issue discussed'

In the same interview, Zarif said that he and his Pakistani counterpart also discussed terrorist ventures into Iran

Trump after commercializing world security: general



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — A top military adviser to the Leader says U.S. President Donald Trump is seeking to commercialize the security of the world and region.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi said on Monday the entirety of Trump's strategy in the region and the larger world is to the benefit of U.S. government's economic interests and against other nations' security and independence.

"He has told some Arab countries of the region that they have to pay the costs if they want America to stay in the region and protect their security," Rahim Safavi said, Mehr reported.

He also said Washington's interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela is contrary to international law.

"(However) Mr. Trump doesn't know that the era of being a superpower and

dominating other governments and nations is over," he remarked.

The general also underlined the importance of resistance in the victories gained in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, saying resistance is needed to defeat the American-Western-Zionist-Arab coalition.

He made a reference to the late political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski, saying his last book on decline of the U.S. power shows the Americans know that they are not superpower anymore.

"They would have overthrown the Bashar al-Assad government if they were able to," Rahim Safavi argued.

A new source of power consisting of China, Russia and India has been formed and another one is being formed in the Muslim world, which the Europeans and Americans do not want to mention, he added.

Dutch diplomats expelled in a reciprocal move: Zarif



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday Iran has declared two Dutch diplomats persona non grata in reaction to the "illegal" expulsion of two Iranian diplomats by the Netherlands on false accusations. "We expelled two Dutch diplomats in line with the decision, which was communicated to the Foreign Ministry, and in reaction to illegal expulsion of Iranian diplomats [by the Dutch government]. The Netherlands has also summoned its ambassador [to Iran] for consultation," Zarif said, Press TV reported.

"The Dutch officials have admitted that their decision to expel the Iranian diplomats was not based on any evidence or document and was merely a politically-motivated move," he added. Zarif stressed that the Foreign Min-

istry is taking all necessary measures in this regard.

Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok said in a statement on Monday that the government of the Netherlands "has decided to recall the Dutch ambassador in Tehran for consultations."

"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," Blok added.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Monday that Iran has told two Dutch diplomats to leave the country after Tehran declared them persona non grata.

Iran "does not seek tension in its ties with European countries, but will take reciprocal actions to any move against its national interests," Qassemi said.

Military chief says Iran facing numerous threats

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Baqeri said on Tuesday that Iran is facing a multiplicity of threats in a variety of forms.

"We are facing various threats and it is natural to prepare our army and other forces for facing the threats," General Baqeri told a graduation ceremony of AJA (Islamic Republic Army) University of Command and Staff, aka DAFOOS.

He also said, "There are a lot of questions regarding the future of the region, the world, and the world power pyramid... But what is important is what role we have in the future of the region and the world according to Islam. He added, "The armed forces should adopt a very outstanding role on this path and have the best of functions."

He went on to say that "our country has no master and



Students attend graduation ceremony at DAFOOS, March 5, 2019; Mehr photo: Shahab Ghayoumi

nobody dictates our strategy."

Speaking during the same ceremony, Army Commander General Abdolrahim Mousavi said recently there have been requests from other countries to attend the DAFOOS programs.

He said the university is prepared to admit foreign students, stressing that the material and human resources of the university provide the necessary basics for international admittance.

DAFOOS is a subdivision of the Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army and offers masters of military art and science courses to personnel of all four military branches of the Army with the rank of major and higher.

The university also provides courses for foreign officers of countries with a close relationship with Iran.

Qassemi may be heading to Paris as envoy

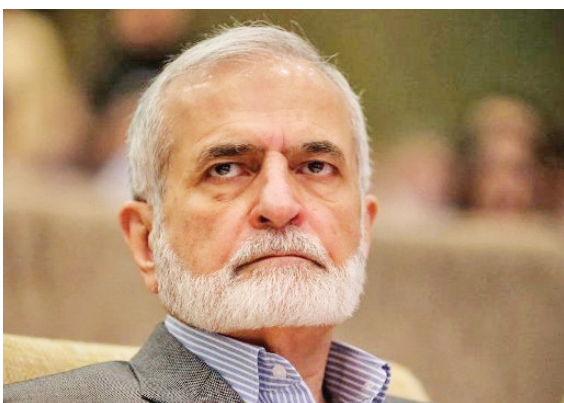
POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The current spokesman of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bahram Qassemi, will probably be dispatched to Paris as the Tehran's ambassador.

On Monday, Qassemi, who was speaking on the sidelines of his weekly press conference, told reporters that in the near future he would be leaving his post and replaced by someone else.

While he did not specifically mention where he will be heading, unconfirmed reports published by local media have it that he will be Iran's next ambassador to France, to replace

Abulqassem Delfi.

Qassemi has been serving as spokesman and head of the Foreign Ministry's Public and Media Diplomacy Center since mid-2016.



Iranians not trusting Europe over JCPOA: Kharrazi

1 → 'Assad trip to Tehran was not announced due to security reasons'

On Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's recent visit to Tehran, Kharrazi said due to security concerns, the trip was made without prior notice.

He said the Syrian nation has been hit hard by terrorism, adding that Syrians supports Assad to establish peace and fight terrorism.

Kharrazi, who was foreign minister from 1997-2005, also said despite disagreements among Iran,

Russia and Turkey, the three countries have common interests in establishing peace and security in Syria.

"Consultations among the three countries in this regard have been beneficial and productive," he pointed out.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Kharrazi pointed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's anti-Iran remarks, saying, "Netanyahu needs to show off his power for the elections, but he knows well that any move against Iran's interests will be a political suicide."

U.S. warns Turkey of ‘grave consequences’ over purchase of Russian S-400 missile systems

The United States has sent out a stark warning to Turkey over its plan to buy the advanced Russian-built S-400 air defense missile systems, stating that the purchase of the anti-aircraft platform will dramatically affect military ties between the two NATO allies.

Pentagon Spokesperson Eric Pahon told Turkey’s Ahval news agency in a written statement on Monday that the US understands Turkey’s desire to improve its air defense.

“However, Turkey’s acquisition of the Russian S-400 air defense system will have grave consequences for the US defense relationship with Turkey,” Pahon said.

The senior American defense official further noted that the United States is “working to help Turkey find better solutions to address its defense needs while also warning of the broader implications of purchasing Russian S-400s.”

Last week, acting Pentagon chief Pat Shanahan delivered a similar warning to Turkey, emphasizing that the purchase could result in Ankara’s exclusion from the program to build and operate F-35 advanced fighter jets.

Acting Pentagon chief Pat Shanahan warns Turkey over plans to buy a Russian missile defense system, while a US senator questions Ankara’s commitment to NATO.

“My position is that the S-400 and F-35 are incompatible – meaning that they don’t go together,” Shanahan said in an interview with Bloomberg television news network last Thursday.

“We want to find a solution that makes the F-35, for a strategic partner, a critical



asset in their military,” he said.

Washington has reportedly proposed to deliver one US-made Patriot missile system by the end of 2019, on the condition that Ankara abandons the deal with Moscow.

Two senior Turkish officials familiar with the talks, requesting anonymity, said on Friday that Turkey has rejected the offer as it didn’t include a loan agreement nor a technology sharing pact.

Foreign Minister Cavusoglu says Turkey will never backtrack on its earlier promises. Moscow and Ankara finalized an agreement on the delivery of the S-400 missile systems in December 2017.

Back in April last year, Turkish President

Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin said in Ankara that they had agreed to expedite the delivery of S-400 missile systems. At the time it was said that the delivery could be made between late 2019 and early 2020.

A number of the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states have criticized Turkey for its planned purchase of S-400 missile defense systems from Russia, stating that the missile batteries are not compatible with those of the military alliance.

They also argue that the purchase could jeopardize Ankara’s acquisition of F-35 fighter jets and possibly result in US sanctions.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says there is no turning back on the S-400 deal with Russia despite US pressure.

S-400 is an advanced Russian missile system designed to detect, track, and destroy planes, drones, or missiles as far as 402 kilometers away. It has previously been sold only to China and India.

Turkey is striving to boost its air defense, particularly after Washington decided in 2015 to withdraw its Patriot surface-to-air missile system from Turkey’s border with Syria, a move that weakened Turkey’s air defense.

Before gravitating towards Russia, the Turkish military reportedly walked out of a \$3.4 billion contract for a similar Chinese system. The withdrawal took place under purported pressure from Washington.

Ankara’s ties with its Western allies in NATO have been strained over a range of issues. An unnamed source in the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Ankara would not provide the United States with the opportunity to study Russian-made S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been critical of Washington for supporting Kurdish groups in Syria that he says are responsible for terror attacks inside Turkey.

He has also slammed American officials for rejecting his requests to hand over Fethullah Gulen, a powerful opposition figure living in the US, whom Ankara accuses of having masterminded the July 2016 coup attempt, among other issues.

(Source: Press TV)

Canadian budget minister resigns in government scandal

A minister in the government of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has resigned, becoming the second cabinet member to step down amid allegations of government involvement in a major fraud case.

Treasury Board President Jane Philpott announced her resignation on Monday, saying she had “lost confidence” in Trudeau’s government over the allegation that senior officials in his office had attempted to block the prosecution of a major Canadian engineering company in a case involving corruption charges in Libya.

Philpott is said to be a close friend of former attorney general and justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, who testified last week that Trudeau and senior members of his government had made consistent efforts to dissuade her from prosecuting construction firm SNC-Lavalin.

Trudeau has denied the accusation.

The Quebec-based engineering giant was charged in 2015 with bribing Libyan officials to obtain multi-billion dollar contracts between 2001 and 2011, during former dictator Muammar Gaddafi’s rule.

“I have been considering the events that have shaken the federal government in recent weeks and after serious reflection, I have concluded that I must resign as a member of Cabinet,” Philpott said in a resignation letter posted on Twitter.

“The solemn principles at stake are the independence and integrity of our justice system... Sadly, I have lost confidence in how the government has dealt with this matter and in how it has responded to the issues raised,” she added.

It grieves me to resign from a portfolio where I was at work to deliver an important mandate. I must abide by my core values, my ethical responsibilities, constitutional obligations. There can be a cost to acting on one’s principles, but there is a bigger cost to abandoning them.

Twitter Ads info and privacy

Shortly after Philpott posted her resignation letter, Wilson-Raybould responded with a message of support.

“For almost 4 years our country has witnessed your constant & unassailable commitment to always doing what is right & best for Cdn,” she wrote in a tweet. “You are a leader of vision & strength & I look forward to continuing to work alongside you.”

Wilson-Raybould, who resigned from the cabinet in February, had been demoted to veteran affairs minister the month before. Philpott, a physician and a former minister of health and minister of indigenous services, was widely viewed as one of Trudeau’s most competent cabinet ministers.

Trudeau thanked Philpott in a short statement later on Monday for “her years of service and her dedication to Canadians.”



Commenting on the growing political scandal at a rally in Toronto, the Canadian prime minister said, “Concerns of this nature must be taken seriously and I can ensure you that I am [taking them seriously].”

The leader of the opposition Conservative Party, Andrew Scheer, said at a news conference that Philpott’s resignation demonstrates “a government in total chaos,” and reiterated his call for Trudeau to step down and for a police investigation into the affair.

The scandal is expected to deal a blow to Trudeau just months ahead of an October election.

(Source: Press TV)

UK liberation from EU after Brexit a fantasy: Former diplomat

Britain’s former ambassador to the European Union Sir Ivan Rogers has said that his country will never be free from the bloc despite claims that Brexit will be an end to Brussels’ control over London.

“These fantasies of release and liberation – they are fantasies. We are going to be negotiating on everything from aviation to farming for evermore with our biggest neighbor,” said Rogers in a speech covered in the Guardian newspaper on Tuesday.

The seasoned diplomat said Britain will be forced to accept many of EU rules and regulations in future even if the government manages to deliver on a 2016 referendum and leaves the EU. “We cannot live in glorious isolation. Talk to the Swiss and to the Norwegians – they live in a permanent state of negotiation with the EU,” said Rogers, adding that there was no chance that the UK would be able to disentangle itself from the EU forever.

Te comments come as the British government is desperate to secure a draft Brexit



deal in the parliament just weeks before it is planned to officially leave the EU at the end of March. Lawmakers are expected to vote on a revised version of the deal on March 12, nearly a month after they roundly rejected

the agreement signed off by EU leaders in November.

Rogers said that British Prime Minister Theresa May’s strategies for leaving the EU were partly to blame for the current stand-off

in the parliament over Brexit.

He said May was unfamiliar with EU rules and institutions when she triggered the Brexit process in 2016, adding that people around the Conservative leader also “didn’t know very much about European councils or that much about the EU” at the time.

The UK opposition accused the government of trying to buy votes for its Brexit agreement.

Roger said May and other government officials had been under the illusion that they could circumvent Brussels by making direct deals with the major capitals.

“Capitals obviously matter, but I think that reflex in the British system always to think that we can deal direct with the organ grinders and not the monkeys: it never works like that,” he said, adding, That stuff is not done in the way British politics works, leader to leader. It’s done via the bureaucrats, and the sherpas, and the people at the top of the institutions.”

(Source: Press TV)

Syria launches airstrikes against Daesh positions in Badiya desert

➡ The Syrian army recaptured Sukhna, the last on the desert road to Dayr al-Zawr city, from Daesh in 2017 as it pushed the militants back across central Syria in an advance along the crucial desert highway from Palmyra to Dayr al-Zawr.

However, some of Daesh terrorists remained in the rugged desert areas around and have carried out attacks on army positions and convoys, according to a Syrian source.

A report says the US and Daesh have clinched a deal, under which Washington received massive amounts of gold in exchange for providing safe passage to the terror group’s members in Syria.

In a separate operation, the Syrian army pounded the positions of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham Takfiri terrorist group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, in the northwest of the country.

Army troops fired a barrage of missiles at the hideouts and equipment of terrorists on the outskirts of al-Tah village



and Khan Shaykun district in the southern countryside of Idlib province.

Daesh lost its territorial rule in 2017 thanks to large-scale army operations, backed by Iran and Russia.

On the eastern bank on the Euphrates, several hundred Daesh militants remain holed up in the village of Baghouz, in Dayr al-Zawr, which is currently under siege by militants of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

US-backed Kurdish militants in Syria have reportedly been helping the Daesh terrorists holed up in an eastern village to escape their last hideout and reach the Turkish border in return for “hefty bribes.”

Russia and Syria have opened humanitarian corridors out of Baghouz to facilitate the exit of civilians from the area near Jordan.

The two allies have called on the US to end its military presence in Syria so they could finish the evacuation operation in the last Daesh hideout.

(Source: Press TV)

Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejects in the strongest terms the new escalation in the US aggressive behavior against Cuba.

The US State Department announced today the decision to allow, as from March 19 this year, the filing of lawsuits before US courts under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act only against Cuban companies included in the List of Restricted Entities issued by that government on November of 2017, which was updated one year later. This arbitrary and illegitimate list, intended to tighten the blockade and expand its extraterritorial effects, forbids US citizens from engaging in direct financial transactions with the aforementioned entities.

The announcement made by the US State Department also indicated that it would suspend only for 30 days the possibility to initiate legal action with the same purposes against other Cuban entities or foreign companies which maintain commercial or economic relations with Cuba.

Since its entry into force in 1996, the Helms-Burton Act has sought to universalize the economic blockade through brutal and illegal pressures exerted by the United States against third countries, their governments and companies. It is intended to suffocate the Cuban economy and generate or increase shortages among the population with the purpose of imposing in Cuba a government that serves the interests of the US.

Given the illegitimate character of the goals they pursue, which are contrary to International Law, the Helms-Burton Act and the blockade arouse universal rejection, which has been reiterated for almost three decades at the most important regional and international fora. The most recent example of that was the United Nations General Assembly meeting held on November 1, when said policy was rejected through 10 consecutive votes, thus leaving the US in complete isolation.

Title II of the Helms-Burton Act states that the overthrowing of the revolutionary government, the subsequent tutelage by a US interventor and the ultimate establishment of a counterrevolutionary government subordinated to Washington would unequivocally pursue the return or compensation to former owners for all the properties they or their descendants might claim, regardless of whether or not they were US citizens at the moment when nationalizations took place or the fact that they abandoned them. During all that period, the economic blockade would continue to be fully implemented.

Consequently, Cubans would be forced to return, reimburse or pay to US claimants for the house where they live, the area on which their communities are built, the arable land where they farm their products, the school where their children are educated, the hospital or polyclinic where they receive medical assistance, the place where their workplace is located or where they have a private business, and also for subsidized services such as electricity, water, and communications enjoyed by the population.

This is an aspiration that can only be conceived by the minds of those who identify Cuba’s a colonial possession. According to the Helms-Burton Act, the economic blockade would be lifted only when that ambition is fulfilled.

This law relies on two fundamental lies: the notion that nationalizations carried out soon after the triumph of the Revolutionary were illegitimate or inappropriate and that Cuba is a threat to the US national security.

Cuban nationalizations were carried out in accordance with the law, strictly abiding by the Constitution and in conformity with International Law. All nationalizations included processes of fair and appropriate compensation, something that the US government refused to consider. Cuba reached and honored global compensation agreements with other nations which are today investing in Cuba, such as Spain, Switzerland, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany and France.

The real threat against regional peace and security are the irresponsible declarations and actions of the US government as well as the destabilizing plans against Latin America and the Caribbean aimed at pursuing the stated purpose of imposing the Monroe Doctrine.

The Reaffirmation of Cuban Dignity and Sovereignty Act of December 24, 1996, states that the Helms-Burton Act is illegal, inapplicable and has no legal value or effect whatsoever. It considers null and void any claim under that law by any natural or juridical person.

According to that law, claims for compensation for nationalized properties could be part of a process of negotiation on the based on equality, mutual respect between the governments of Cuba and the United States, and be “reviewed together with the indemnifications the Cuban State and people are entitled to as a result of the damages caused by the blockade and aggressions of every sort, of which the US government is responsible”. It also makes it clear that those who resort to procedures or mechanisms under the Helms-Burton Act to the detriment of others shall be excluded from possible future negotiations.

The Cuban Government reiterates to all economic partners and foreign companies operating in Cuba that full guarantees will be granted to foreign investments and joint projects. Article 28 of the Cuban Constitution, which was ratified by an overwhelming majority on February 24, 2019, also recognizes those guarantees, which are also included in Law No. 118 on Foreign Investments of March 29, 2014.

Today’s decision imposes additional obstacles to our economic development and progress goals, but the United States will keep on failing to achieve its main purpose of submitting by force the sovereign will of Cubans and our determination to build socialism. The majority feelings of the peoples of Cuba and the United States in favor of improving relations and establishing a civilized and respectful coexistence shall prevail.

Havana, March 4, 2019.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	162593.5
IFX	2064.08

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,591 rials
GBP	55,284 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$65.17/b
WTI	\$56.18/b
OPEC Basket	\$65.32/b
Gold	\$1,285.35/oz
Silver	\$15.12/oz
Platinum	\$840.65 oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



ICCIMA to dispatch trade delegation to Bulgaria in mid-April

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) will dispatch a trade delegation to Bulgarian capital city of Sofia in mid-April, ICCIMA website reported.

The Iranian delegation's visit will be concurrent with the meeting of Iran-Bulgaria Joint Economic Committee chaired by Iranian Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami which will be held in Sofia from April 15 to 18.

The delegates to be led by ICCIMA Vice Chairman Hossein Selahvarzi are active in the fields of road building and urban projects as well as technical-engineering services.

Euro could plunge to \$1.05 if Chinese gloom grows

The euro could weaken to levels last seen in early 2017 if China's economic slowdown persists, according to Stephen Jen, chief executive officer of Eurizon SLJ Capital.

Jen said the common currency could slump to \$1.05 later this year if stress emanating from China bleeds further into Europe's economy and prevents the European Central Bank from normalizing policy, while the U.S. "continues to outperform." Fiscal stimulus and slowing structural reforms in China probably won't be sufficient to spark a "V-shaped recovery" in the first half of 2019 for the Asian nation, according to Jen.

Europe's "manufacturing and the tradables sector are clearly exhibiting stress, arising in part from the shock from China," the London-based hedge fund manager wrote in a note Friday. "If I am right that the Chinese economy will remain weak, Europe and the ECB will remain under pressure."

Jen's call for the euro is more pessimistic than the most bearish of analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. The median forecast is for the common currency to strengthen to \$1.19 in the fourth quarter, while the low forecast sits at \$1.10. The euro traded at \$1.1325 as of Monday morning in New York, after falling roughly 8 percent against the greenback over the past year.

On the other side of the trade, the dollar could continue to enjoy its recent resilience, according to Jen. With the Federal Reserve pledging patience in regards to its policy tightening plans, Treasury yields should be expected to decline over time, creating a "sweet spot" for foreign bond buyers. Additionally, mounting questions over the global economy should keep the greenback bid, Jen wrote.

"In light of the dovish Fed and the rally in equities, the dollar has been remarkably robust," Jen wrote. "The dollar is supported precisely because the world has grown more uncertain about the economic outlook."

(Source: Bloomberg)

UK firms report weakest growth since April 2013: CBI

British businesses reported their weakest growth in nearly six years during the past three months due to fears of a no-deal Brexit and rising global trade barriers, the Confederation of British Industry said on Sunday.

The CBI's index of private-sector activity over the past three months dropped to -3 in February from zero in January.

This was its lowest since April 2013, when Britain was still recovering from the global financial crisis. Firms expected similar weakness in the three months ahead, when Britain is due to leave the European Union after over 40 years of membership.

Prime Minister Theresa May has yet to win parliament's support for a Brexit transition deal although she has paved the way for a possible delay to Brexit beyond its scheduled date of March 29. "More and more companies are hitting the brakes on investment and day-to-day business decisions are becoming increasingly problematic," the CBI's chief economist, Rain Newton-Smith, said.

A survey last week showed manufacturers stockpiled goods by the most on record for any big advanced economy as they prepared for the possibility of border delays after Brexit.

The Bank of England predicts Britain's economy will grow by just 0.2 percent in the three months to March and growth in 2019 to be the weakest since 2009, even if Brexit goes smoothly.

Britain's trading partners in Europe are facing weaker growth too, due to trade tensions between the United States and China that have hurt global manufacturers.

The CBI survey was based on responses from 650 businesses in retail, manufacturing and services.

(Source: CNBC)

INSTC meeting makes important decisions

1 → "As for determining an executive manager for each country, it was decided that each member will introduce its nominated representative to the INSTC secretariat in the Iranian transport ministry within a month." Adamnejad said.

The deputy minister also pointed to customs tariffs, saying "Equalization and synchronization of customs tariffs among the member states was another decision which was emphasized in the meeting. I hope this happens in the next three months."

The seventh meeting of the coordination council of INSTC kicked off on Monday in Tehran.

Iranian Transport Minister Moham-



Iranian Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamnejad speaking at the seventh meeting of the coordination council of INSTC in Tehran on Tuesday

Iran holds specialized electricity exhibition in Baghdad

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The first specialized exhibition of Iranian electricity and related industries kicked off at Baghdad International Exhibition Center on Tuesday.

Iraqi Electricity Minister Louay Al Khateeb along with Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi accompanied by a handful of officials from both sides attended the opening ceremony, IRNA reported.

Speaking in the ceremony, Masjedi pointed to the exhibition as an important step for Iran's further engagement in Iraq's potential market.

"We are striving to expand the activity of Iranian companies in various sectors of Iraq's electricity which would lead to an increase in the exports of electricity-related equipment and components." He said.

Al Khateeb for his part, expressed satisfaction with holding such exhibitions in his country, calling Iranian companies capable trade partners.

The official further noted that the Iraqi electricity ministry plans to use the experiences and capabilities of Iranian companies in many projects related to the repair and

rehabilitation of Iraq's electricity network, the supply of equipment especially in the transmission and distribution network and construction of power plants.

"Using the experiences and knowledge provided by the Iranian companies in the electricity industry as well as importing electricity from Iran will continue to the point of Iraq self-sufficiency in this industry," Al Khateeb said.

As reported, bilateral and multilateral meetings between Iranian and Iraqi companies and businessmen in the field in order to reach new understanding and explore new areas of cooperation are also planned to be held during this event.

During the one-week exhibition, 20 major Iranian companies including exporters and manufacturers active in the field of power industry will be showcasing their latest achievements, products and capabilities.

Iran and Iraq share a long history of cooperation in energy sectors and Iran is one of the main suppliers of electricity to the Arab country.

Earlier in December 2018, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in energy sector.



The MOU was signed by Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Al Khateeb in Baghdad.

Based on this MOU, Iran is going to help the Iraqi side with developing and overhauling their power plants and electricity grid while improving the Arab country's electricity grid management system.

IRENEX to hold next round of offering crude oil on March 11

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The next (seventh) round of offering crude oil will be held at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on March 11, IRNA reported.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) offered one billion barrels of crude oil at the base price of \$59.63 at IRENEX for the sixth time on Monday.

The least amount of sales was 35,000 barrels like the previous rounds, although like the fourth offering the sixth round wrapped up with no sales.

NIOC offered crude oil at IRENEX first on October 28, just few days before new U.S.

sanctions on Iran's petroleum sector took effect (November 4). In the first round, NIOC could sell some 280,000 barrels of crude oil at \$74.85 per barrel. With the daily supply amount of one million barrels, the market wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel-cargos of oil on the day.

The second round was on November 11 for offering 700,000 barrels of light crude oil at the price of \$76.29 per barrel.

NIOC offered one million barrels of light crude oil at IRENEX for the third time on January 21. The set price for that round of oil sale was \$52.42 per barrel.

The third round witnessed some

advantages compared to the first and second rounds to facilitate purchase process for the applicants.

The fourth round of offering took place on February 4, when one million barrels of light crude oil was offered at the base price of \$56.24 per barrel and the least amount of sale was 35,000 barrels. This round ended with no deals.

Then on February 18, NIOC sold 35,000 barrels of light crude oil at IRENEX at the base price of \$52.25 per barrel for the fifth time.

Since the U.S.'s withdrew from Iran's nuclear pact in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero, the Islamic

Republic has been taking various measures to counter U.S. actions and to keep its oil exports levels as high as possible.

One of the main strategies that Iran chose to execute to help its oil exports afloat has been trying new ways to diversify the mechanism of oil sales, one of which is offering oil at the country's stock market.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said that NIOC will offer crude oil at IRENEX every week.

The minister said that it may take some time for selling crude oil at IRENEX to be common and regular, but the oil ministry will offer the product at this market every week.

Japanese firms hopeful of working with Iran: envoy

Japan ambassador in Tehran Mitsugu Saito said that despite sanctions, the Japanese companies are hopeful of working with Iran.

Addressing a meeting with South Khorasan Governor Mohammad Sadeq Motamedian, Saito said the Japanese firms are seriously involved in sanctions but despite some European companies' withdrawal from Iran they are still working in the country.

Referring to U.S. disrespect to Iran nuclear deal also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran has always respected international agreement, said the ambassador.

He added that today the international

community is supporting the deal.

Referring to South Khorasan Province's various potentials, he said Japan will review Iran's requests in different fields.

Meanwhile, Motamedian elaborated on the capacities of the province especially in economic field, saying South Khorasan hails Japanese companies' investment in mineral field.

Pointing to the fact that 76% of Iran coal resources are in South Khorasan, he said 1,500 national historical works, 4 international works, and 40 handicrafts are among tourist attractions of the province.

(Source: IRNA)

SMEs export \$3b of goods since March 2018

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) exported \$3 billion worth of commodities since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018), head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced in a press conference on Tuesday.

Mohsen Salehnia said the exports have been conducted by 2000 units, IRNA reported.

He said about 43,000 units are active in Iran's industrial parks under his organizations' management and 875,000 persons are working in them; so these units contribute to 45 percent of domestic employment.

He mentioned preparing the condition for the activity of SMEs as the main objective of ISIPO and said the major requirement of these enterprises is attraction of financial resources.

Last week the official said that about 1,300 industrial units have come back online to production cycle via injection of financial resource.

According to Salehnia, in the upcoming Iranian calendar year 1398 (starting March 21, 2019), the government plans to provide facilities under the framework of subsidies for projects with more than 60 percent of physical development, to supply working capital of firms, to renovate production units and etc.

Evidence grows that Trump's trade wars are hitting U.S. economy

President Donald Trump regularly declares that he's winning his trade wars. Yet evidence is growing that the U.S. economy is a net loser so far.

In two separate papers published over the weekend, some of the world's leading trade economists declared Trump's tariffs to be the most consequential trade experiment seen since the 1930 Smoot-Hawley tariffs blamed for worsening the Great Depression. They also found the initial cost of Trump's duties to the U.S. economy was in the billions and being borne largely by American consumers.

In a study published on Saturday, economists from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Princeton University and Columbia University found that tariffs imposed last year by Trump on products ranging from washing machines and steel to some \$250 billion in Chinese imports were costing U.S. companies and consumers \$3 billion a month in additional tax costs and companies a further \$1.4 billion in deadweight losses. They also were causing the diversion of \$165 billion a year in trade leading to significant costs for companies having to reorganize supply chains.

Significantly, the analysis of import price data by Mary Amiti, Stephen Redding and David Weinstein also found that almost all of



the cost of the tariffs was being paid by U.S. consumers and companies. That contradicts Trump's claim that China is paying the tariffs.

"This is kind of the worst-case scenario in terms of consumers," Weinstein said in an interview. "It's pretty unclear that this trade war is a net win for the economy at this point."

The trade war was only one factor affecting the U.S. economy, Weinstein said, and with the U.S. less exposed to trade than other major western economies such as Germany, it was not having as much of an impact as it might.

Delayed investment

But the numbers were still consequential, he insisted. They also did not capture all of the costs to the U.S. economy. The three economists are now working on quantifying the amount of investment that has been put on

hold as a result of the heightened uncertainty caused by the trade wars, Weinstein said.

In a separate paper published on Sunday four economists including Pinelopi Goldberg, the World Bank's chief economist and a former editor-in-chief of the prestigious American Economic Review, put the annual losses from the higher cost of imports alone for the U.S. economy at \$68.8 billion, or almost 0.4 percent of gross domestic product.

That was offset by the gains from protectionism derived by U.S. producers benefiting from the tariffs, the economists found. After accounting for the impact of higher tariff revenue and the benefits of higher prices to domestic producers the study found the aggregate annual loss for the U.S. economy fell to \$6.4 billion, or 0.03 percent of GDP.

The study by Goldberg, Pablo Fajgelbaum of UCLA, Patrick Kennedy of the University of California, Berkeley, and Amit Khandelwal of Columbia also found that consumers and U.S. companies were paying most of the costs of the tariffs.

But it also went a step further: After factoring in the retaliation by other countries, the main victims of Trump's trade wars had been farmers and blue-collar workers in areas that supported Trump in the 2016 election.

Retaliation costs

"Workers in very Republican counties bore the brunt of the costs of the trade war, in part because retaliations disproportionately targeted agricultural sectors, and in part because U.S. tariffs raised the costs of inputs used by these counties," the authors wrote.

The studies are the most authoritative yet to document the negative effect of Trump's tariffs on the U.S. economy, though others have shown the negative consequences. Economists at the Institute of International Finance last week calculated Chinese retaliatory tariffs alone were causing roughly \$40 billion a year in lost U.S. exports.

Official trade data due to be released on Wednesday also are expected to show the U.S. trade deficit in goods with the world hitting a new record in 2018 because of the combination of a surge in imports to get ahead of the new tariffs last year and slowing exports.

A spokeswoman for Trump's Council of Economic Advisers declined to comment on the new papers and referred inquiries to the office of U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. Spokespeople for USTR did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

(Source: Bloomberg)

OPEC can declare mission accomplished on output cuts by April: Goldman Sachs

OPEC and its allies will probably achieve their goal of draining oversupply from the oil market and boosting prices by next month, says Jeff Currie, global head of commodities research at Goldman Sachs.

The 14-nation producer group and its allies led by Russia set out to balance the market after oil prices plunged more than 40 percent at the end of last year. To do that, they aim to keep 1.2 million barrels per day off the market in the first six months of the year.

"OPEC is pursuing a shock and awe strategy" by slashing output at the start of their production-cutting deal, Currie said on Monday. He noted that OPEC is throttling back output faster than Goldman expected, while Venezuelan supply continues to tank and Russia says it will accelerate its production cuts.

"This market is likely to be rebalanced by



April," he told CNBC's "Closing Bell."

That will force OPEC to lay out its plans for lifting the production curbs by May or June, he said. Currie believes that by telegraphing its exit strategy, OPEC can dissuade U.S. drillers from turning on the taps, thereby preventing another price-crushing oil glut.

However, OPEC's "shock and awe" policy, combined with robust oil demand, could easily push Brent crude oil back to \$70 to \$75 a barrel in the near term, up from current prices in the mid-\$60 range, Goldman forecast last week.

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih recently told CNBC he is leaning towards extending the six-month deal into the second half of 2019. The broader group expects to carry over the production cuts when they meet in June, several OPEC sources told Reuters.

(Source: CNBC)

Russia aims to reach OPEC+ production cut quota by end-march

Russia will speed up its oil production cuts this month and plans to reach its share of the OPEC/non-OPEC output reduction by end-March or early April, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Monday.

There is an understanding that Russia will reach higher compliance levels in March, Novak said, as carried by Russian news agency TASS. At the end of March-early April, Russia will have reached the planned reduction, 228,000 bpd, Novak added.

As part of the OPEC+ production cuts between January and June, Russia is taking the lion's share of the non-OPEC cuts and pledged to reduce production by 230,000 bpd from October's post-Soviet record level of 11.421 million bpd, to 11.191 million bpd.

Moscow, however, has repeatedly said that due to weather and geological conditions in the cold Russian winter, it cannot cut its oil production too quickly.

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

Referring to Russia's share of the cuts,



Novak said last month that as of February 14, the country had reduced its production by 80,000 bpd-90,000 bpd from October's levels. Novak said last month that the Russian companies would try to accelerate the cuts to reach the target by April.

Last Friday, the minister held a meeting with Russia's oil companies to discuss the cuts and the situation on the oil market.

Russia is fully complying with its pledges to gradually reduce production, Novak said, as carried by the Russian energy ministry. In February, Russia cut its oil production by around 97,000 bpd compared to October levels, and as of end-February, the country had cut a total of 118,000 bpd compared to October 2018, the energy minister said on Friday.

(Source: oilprice.com)

South Sudan urges China's CNPC to boost crude output, explore for more oil

South Sudan's oil minister, Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, said China's state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation should increase oil production from its key blocks in the country, helped by new exploration in the concessions.

In a meeting with CNPC and its subsidiaries in Beijing during a five-day trip to China last week, Gatkuoth's priority was on talks for the optimization of oil production and water management at the producing block 3/7, the oil ministry said.

CNPC is the largest shareholder in blocks 3/7 and blocks 1/2/4, which contain South Sudan's Upper Nile and Unity oil fields respectively.

China dominates South Sudan's oil industry with CNPC operating the country's Dar Petroleum Operating Company (DPOC) and Greater Petroleum Operating Company (GPOC) consortia which are producing all the country's oil.

"South Sudan is building a sustainable oil sector that makes investment in our oil and gas blocks more appealing," Gatkuoth said in a statement. "The resources are recognized to be world class and we invite new partners to work with us to add to the



great work already done by CNPC and its partners in South Sudan."

Militancy and tribal strife in South Sudan -- which gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a bloody civil war -- have largely thwarted hopes of restarting its main fields, which previously produced over 350,000 bpd.

Together with some 130,000 bpd of Dar blend crude from Blocks 3/7 in the northeastern Upper Nile state and 4,000 bpd from Block 5A operated by Malaysia's Petronas, the country is pumping about 165,000 bpd.

Gatkuoth also discussed with CNPC the resumption of oil production from the Unity blocks 1/2/4, helped by "exploring for new oilfields."

(Source: Platts)

Brazil overtakes Russia as top supplier to China's independent refineries in Feb.

Surpassing Russia, Brazilian crude oil shipments for China's independent refineries topped the list in February at 2.17 million mt, S&P Global Platts monthly survey showed Tuesday.

Total imports from Brazil were just 54,000 mt more than those from Russia, though they were still 5.4 percent lower from January.

The strong increase was believed to be driven by the demand for Lula crudes, which were relatively cheaper compared to Russian crudes, especially ESPO, a favorite crude among independent refineries.

"Prices of Lula crudes were relatively lower compared to ESPO in December, so many refineries chose to buy Lula crudes," an independent refinery official in Dongying said.

According to the official, the price for ESPO crude was around \$2.5-3/b on a DES Shandong basis against ICE futures in December, while Lula was only around \$1.1/b on the same basis, which contributed to the huge arrivals of Lula in February.

Normally independent refineries need to buy Brazilian crudes two months ahead, due to the long haul.

Quality of ESPO and Lula is quite similar in the yields of middle distillates, only ESPO is slightly lighter which yields more naphtha,

according to refinery sources.

In February, around 1.98 million mt of Lula crudes have been imported for the sector, up 61.1 percent month on month. It was just 4,000 mt less from the top grade ESPO last month.

Besides Lula, around 198,000 mt of Iracema and Sapinhoa were also imported from Brazil last month, compared with the remaining around 140,000 mt of Urals from Russia -- the only grade besides ESPO.

In February, around nine buyers have imported Lula crudes, while 12 buyers have imported ESPO crudes.

However, total imports over January-February from Russia still topped the suppliers list, with around 4.56 million mt arrived, up 68.3 percent year on year.

It was just 87,000 mt more than the imports from Brazil, which was the second top supplier in the first two months of this year.

This strong momentum from Brazilian imports is likely to continue in the coming months, according to refinery sources, as ChemChina is likely to cut ESPO crude imports due to the upcoming maintenance at its refineries.

Total imports from Brazil were up 77.4 percent year on year to 4.47 million mt over

January-February, while imports from Colombia were at fifth place to around 897,000 mt over January-February, up 536.2 percent on year.

Crude imports from the top 10 suppliers totaled 8.39 million mt in February, accounting for about 86 percent of the combined imports by the sector.

New Canadian Borealis Heavy Blend crude grade was imported by Hongrun Petrochemical last month, co-loaded with AWB grade from the same country.

Those Canadian grades will be mixed with Kuwait crude as feedstock for producing asphalt, as Hongrun is ready to start up its 1.6 million mt/year asphalt unit in March.

The BHB crude has an API of around 21 and sulfur around 3.8 percent.

In addition to Canadian crudes, the refinery has received the first cargo of 86,000 mt of US Eagle Ford shale crude from South Korean storages, Platts had reported earlier.

The wide spread between Brent and WTI likely made the grade more attractive for the refinery, according to a Beijing-based analyst. US crude exports have risen in recent weeks due to the widening Brent/WTI spread, which reached \$10/b in mid-February.

Platts February survey covers barrels im-

ported for 38 refineries via the ports mostly in Shandong province and Tianjin.

These refineries were awarded a total quota of 72.21 million mt in the first batch, accounting for 85.9 percent of the country's total crude oil import quota allocation for independent refineries in the same batch.

The barrels include those imported directly by refiners and trading companies, which will be consumed by the independent sector.

Despite fewer imports by independent refineries for the month, feedstocks inventories at major ports of Shandong continued to build up in February. It grew 3.8 percent on month to 5.81 million mt as of February 28, from the last record high of 5.6 million mt in January, data from local information provider JLC showed.

Among this, the stocks at Dongjiakou ports have increased by 7.3 percent to 2.66 million mt, or around 45.8 percent of the total.

Qingdao and Dongjiakou ports have received around 52.5 percent of the total imports last month, taking 5.12 million mt in February, down 17.6 percent month on month.

Major ports in Shandong refer to Qingdao, Dongjiakou, Longkou, Laizhou, Rizhao, Dongying and Yantai.

(Source: Platts)

Oil drops towards \$65 as Libya's biggest field restarts

Oil fell towards \$65 a barrel on Tuesday, pressured by the restart of Libya's biggest oilfield and on expectations for an increase in U.S. crude inventories.

Some wells at Libya's El Sharara oilfield have restarted and the aim is to reach initial output of 80,000 barrels per day, a field engineer said on Tuesday. The field had been closed since December.

Brent crude, the international benchmark, fell 62 cents to \$65.05 a barrel as of 0930 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude slipped 44 cents to \$56.15.

"The main development has been the restart of El Sharara," said Olivier Jakob, analyst at Petromatrix. "It's a new input which is on the bearish side."

Oil also slipped on forecasts that the latest round of U.S. inventory reports will show rising crude stockpiles. Six analysts polled by Reuters estimated, on average, that crude stocks rose 400,000 barrels in the week to March 1.

The first supply report is due at 2130 GMT from the American Petroleum Institute (API), an industry group, followed by the government's official figures on Wednesday.

Concern about a slowdown in oil demand growth, especially in Europe and Asia, has weighed on prices. Still, Brent has risen 20 percent this year due to supply curbs led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

China's government said it is targeting economic growth of 6.0 to 6.5 percent in 2019, less than 6.6 percent growth reported last year. That raises the prospect of slowing fuel demand in the world's second-largest consumer.

"There are plenty of signs that the global economy is slowing - weak car sales and manufacturing data from China, flat growth in Europe, and a slowing GDP rate in the fourth quarter for the U.S.," said Matt Stanley, a broker at Starfuels in Dubai.

To prop up the market, OPEC and its allies, an alliance known as OPEC+, have been cutting output by 1.2 million barrels bpd since the start of the year.

The actual cut has exceeded the pledged amount because of U.S. sanctions on Iran and Venezuela, plus unrest in Libya that had prompted the closure of El Sharara, giving additional tailwind to prices.

(Source: Reuters)

French energy group Total buys 10% stake in Arctic LNG 2 project from Novatek

French energy group Total has agreed to buy a 10 percent stake in the Arctic LNG 2 project from Russia's Novatek, Total said on Tuesday.

Novatek and Total also agreed that Total will have the opportunity to buy a 10-15 percent direct interest in all Novatek's future LNG projects on the Yamal and Gydan peninsulas.

"Arctic LNG 2 fits into our strategy of growing our LNG portfolio through competitive developments based on giant low cost resources primarily destined for the fast growing Asian markets," said Total chairman and chief executive Patrick Pouyanne.

Total will pay for the 10 percent stake and provide financing for the project through capital investment as part of the deal, Novatek said.

Novatek added that it expected preliminary capital expenditure for the project to stand at \$20-21 billion.

(Source: Reuters)

India auctions 1.2 gigawatts of solar at 3.59-3.68¢/kwh

The first national-level solar power auction organized by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) witnessed a healthy competition among Indian and foreign project developers and a tariff bid that would make the government happy.

Nearly seven months after SECI partially annulled India's largest solar power tender, four project developers managed to grab 1.2 gigawatts of capacity. These projects can be set up at sites of developers' choosing across the country. The maximum tariff bid allowed by SECI in this tender was Rs 2.65/kWh (3.73¢/kWh).

The lowest bid in this auction was placed by ReNew Power, which secured 300-megawatt capacity at Rs 2.55/kWh (3.59¢/kWh). ReNew Power, a frequent participant in solar power tender, usually is not an aggressive bidder but managed to score the lowest bid in this auction. ReNew Power had secured 500 megawatts of capacity in the July 2018 auction at a tariff bid of Rs 2.71/kWh (3.82¢/kWh). The allocation was subsequently quashed by SECI.

Azure Power, a NYSE-listed India-based independent power producer, also secured 300 megawatts of capacity at a tariff bid of Rs 2.58/kWh (3.63¢/kWh). The company returned to the solar power tender after a gap of a few months. The company was last in the news after it lost 300 megawatts of capacity after SECI cancelled allocation to multiple developers in the 3 gigawatt solar power tender in August 2018. Interestingly, Azure Power had bid for 300 megawatts at Rs 2.64/kWh (3.72¢/kWh).

EDEN Renewables also managed to secure 300 megawatts of capacity at a bid of Rs 2.60/kWh (3.66¢/kWh). The company has been rather new to the large-scale solar power auctions circuit in India and this project would be a major win for it.

Finally, SoftBank-backed SB Energy scored a major win for itself seven months after it placed the largest-ever solar power bid in India's history and had its allocation cancelled following allegations of cartelization. The company had placed a bid for 600 megawatts of capacity in this latest tender at a tariff of Rs 2.61/kWh (3.68¢/kWh), but managed to secure just 300 megawatts due to its comparatively higher tariff bid.

SB Energy had placed a bid to develop 1.8 gigawatts of capacity in the July 2018 auction at a tariff bid of Rs 2.71/kWh (3.82¢/kWh). It was the result of such high tariff bids that SECI was forced to cancel allocation of projects to multiple companies, including Azure Power, ReNew Power, and SB Energy. This even forced SB Energy to participate in state-level auctions which it never does as SECI took a long pause in national-level auctions. Unfortunately for SB Energy, it lost the 250 megawatts of capacity it had bid for at Rs 2.84/kWh (4.00¢/kWh) as the state government again found the bids to be on the higher side.

The tariff bid of Rs 2.55/kWh (3.59¢/kWh) seems to have emerged as a comfortable level for project developers. The lowest-ever tariff bid in India remains at Rs 2.44/kWh (3.44¢/kWh). Following policy uncertainty, tensions between the government and project developers, and imposition of new taxes and import duties, the tariff bids have increased marginally.

(Source: cleantechica.com)

Asian LNG prices continue to tumble

Even if you just casually follow global energy news, you can't help but notice that liquefied natural gas prices (LNG) in Asia keep dropping. Last week, prices for the super-cooled fuel dropped to their lowest point in nearly 19 months, due to pressure as more supply hit the market and buying interest remained low. LNG procurement historically peaks during cold winter months before tapering off at the end of January and beginning of February as spring approaches. However, total shipments of LNG into Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan were at about 15.94 million tons in February, down nearly 19 percent from the previous month, Reuters reported, citing shipping data from Refinitiv Eikon showed.

Spot prices for April delivery to Northeast Asia LNG-AS were trading around \$6.00 per million British thermal units (MMBtu). That's down 20 cents from the previous week at the lowest since Aug. 4, 2017, when prices hit \$5.90 per MMBtu. Spot prices for the fuel breached \$20/MMBtu in February 2014, amid a then somewhat limited supply of the fuel and as gas demand in Japan, still grappling with the loss of nuclear power in the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, was still spiraling upward. Since then, a supply overhang has persisted in global LNG markets due to more projects coming online in both Australia the U.S., and elsewhere.

Traders said on Friday that spot demand from China, now the world's second-largest LNG buyer, remained soft. Last winter, China's LNG spot procurement reached record levels as the country dealt with increased gas demand amid



a colder than usual winter. This year, however, Northeast Asia, which accounts for more than 70 percent of global LNG demand, has experienced warmer than usual temperatures. Moreover, before the winter season, to avoid a repeat of last year when China was caught flat-footed without enough gas for both residential and industrial users, the country filled up storage to record capacity in the months prior to the winter season.

Commenting on current prices, a China-based industry source also said that "The (Lunar New Year) holidays are over and some industries are back online, but I think (demand)

will be the same as usual, though it's still difficult to say which way it will go."

Now markets will wait for warmer temperatures as summer approaches. High summer temperatures can have direct and indirect effects on natural gas prices. Hot weather tends to increase the demand for air conditioning in homes and buildings, which generally increases the power sector's demand for natural gas. During high demand periods, natural gas prices on the spot market may increase sharply if natural gas supply sources are relatively low or constrained. In addition, increases in natural gas consumption by the electric power sector during the summer may lead to smaller-than-normal injections of natural gas into storage and to lower available storage volumes in the winter, which could affect prices.

Historically, LNG prices have been higher in Asia than in Europe, usually by several dollars per MMBtu. Now, however, LNG prices in Asia and Europe are reaching parity, an unusual development. An S&P Global Platts report said Friday that a retreat in the JKM Asian LNG price for delivery in April has pushed its value to almost parity against the Dutch TTF gas price, suggesting Atlantic Basin-based spot LNG suppliers could see a higher incentive to deliver spot cargoes into Europe in the short term rather than destinations in Asia. The JKM or Japan-Korea-Marker is an LNG pricing benchmark price assessment for spot physical cargoes delivered ex-ship into Japan, South Korea, China, and Taiwan.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Kenya should let the ICJ settle its maritime dispute with Somalia



By Patrick Gathara

The last three weeks have witnessed a strange diplomatic spat between Kenya and Somalia. The Kenyan government summoned back its ambassador from Mogadishu and kicked out the Somali ambassador, claiming that Somali leadership had attempted to sell off parts of Kenyan territory.

The two neighbors have been locked in a dispute over their maritime boundary, with both claiming a narrow 100,000-sq km triangle of sea shelf thought to contain significant deposits of oil and gas. After five years of attempts by both to negotiate a compromise, Somalia eventually filed a case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2014, which is still to be adjudicated. However, Kenya has continued to operate as if there was no dispute and has already sold mining licenses to international companies in the triangle.

The latest flare-up centers, at least nominally, on proceedings at a controversial public meeting organized in London by Somalia's Federal Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources and Spectrum Geo, a Norwegian seismic data processing company. The agenda for the meeting was somewhat unclear, with government officials initially suggesting it would be inviting bids for exploration, and only later clarifying that the meeting would present seismic data collected by Spectrum and offer for sale more detailed information about offshore blocks.

This confusion led to Somali citizens living in London storming the meeting to protest against the presumed auctioning of the offshore blocks to foreign investors, a boycott of the meeting by opposition parties and members of Somalia's Upper House, and then the bust-up with Kenya.

The tone of the statement issued by Kenya on February 16 regarding the summoning of its ambassador in Mogadishu was startling. It fell short of declaring Somalia an enemy state, claiming the latter had indeed auctioned off "oil and gas blocks in Kenya's maritime territorial area. It thundered about a map that had apparently been displayed at the conference showing the disputed territory as part of Somalia, and indirectly threatened to use as leverage "four hundred thousand Somali refugees and asylum seekers" in Kenya.

It also "reminded the Government of Somalia and the international community" of the fact that it had troops serving in the Africa Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which is helping battle the al-Qaeda-linked armed group, al-Shabab. "The patience of the people of Kenya is not infinite," it warned.

Somalis are a more patient lot it seems. In a measured rejoinder a day later, the Somali government averred that no auction had taken place, explained that the map in question mirrored Somalia's long-standing position, and reiterated that the country has no intentions to undertake any unilateral actions (of the type Kenya has) in the disputed area until the ICJ renders its verdict.

What accounts for such an overreaction by Kenya? Well, perhaps it could be panic over the possibility of actually losing the case at the ICJ. Clearly, Somalia seems the more confident of the two about its prospects at the court, which is expected to hand down a verdict sometime this year. Somalia has already won the first round after the court in 2017 dismissed Kenya's challenge to the proceedings on the basis that the two countries had previously agreed to settle the matter out of court. Further, this is a strategy Kenya has deployed before. The perceived success of its obnoxious and hardnosed campaign against the International Criminal Court's indictments for crimes against humanity against President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto, may have emboldened Kenya to think it can similarly bully its northeastern neighbor.

Kenya is not new to playing the bull in Somalia's china shop. The Somali government was not consulted in October 2011 when Kenya sent forces across the border, nor when the objectives of the invasion morphed from pursuing kidnappers to taking southern Somalia's second-largest port, Kismayo.

Against Mogadishu's wishes, Kenyan troops brought former al-Shabab ally, Ahmed Madobe, to power as president of the newly created Jubaland State administration. The country ignored a resolution of the Somali Parliament calling for its troops to leave. Moreover, the Kenyan forces in Somalia have been accused of engaging in illegal trade in charcoal and sugar, which enriches the very terror group they are meant to be fighting. According to an article in the Standard newspaper, one of Kenya's demands for restoring diplomatic ties was that Somalia withdraw its case at the ICJ. This insistence is perhaps most telling of Kenya's true intentions. It thus appears that having already sold prospecting rights within the disputed zones to companies such as ENI, Total, Anadarko and others, and facing huge claims for compensation should the ICJ rule in Somalia's favor, Kenya has fabricated a diplomatic incident to pre-empt that judgment and force Somalia to agree to a negotiated solution. The Mogadishu is already in a weaker diplomatic position having already angered its international partners at the beginning of the year by kicking out the top United Nations official in the country, Nicholas Haysom. Perhaps Kenya smelt blood.

Such tactics are, however, a double-edged sword. A serious rift with Somalia would have repercussions on Kenya's participation in AMISOM as well as risk radicalizing border communities and legitimizing Somalia-based terrorists targeting Kenya. It would also harm the regional cooperation that AMISOM depends on, weakening the fight against al-Shabab and endangering people across the region.

It is thus in everyone's interest that Kenya dials down its rhetoric and, as The Star editorialized, commits to abide by the decision of the ICJ.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Biden's Hamlet act ripples across 2020 field

By Marc Caputo

The Democratic presidential primary is waiting on Joe.

Candidates-in-waiting admit former Vice President Joe Biden is a factor in their decision-making. Democratic donors and bundlers are sitting on their wallets. Then there's the pool of seasoned campaign hands in wait-and-see mode, closely attuned to Biden's next move.

The shadow Biden casts over the Democratic field is a sign of his stature in the party — as the loyal No. 2 of the party's beloved President Barack Obama, his polling numbers place him in the front-runner ranks — but it's also a reflection of the lane he would occupy if he were to run.

Biden's appeal to the white working class and moderates puts him squarely in the path of possible candidates like former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe — and it's coloring their deliberations about the race.

Biden said last week that he is "very close" to a decision, and that it might come as early as April.

"I'm not doing anything until I find out what Terry is doing. And I don't believe Terry will run if Biden does. It's kind of a two-for," said Chris Korge, who raised more for Hillary Clinton's 2016 bid than any other bundler in the nation.

"Terry has probably 25 percent of the major fundraisers and bundlers in the country waiting on him," Korge said, estimating that McAuliffe could raise \$60 million from them in the opening months of a campaign. "But maybe three quarters of the donors saying they're sitting out because of Biden might not be there for him if he ran. They're using him as an excuse."

A source close to McAuliffe confirmed that "Terry is watching Biden and feels that they appeal to a similar set of voters, but Biden's decision will not be determinative of Terry's."

Similarly, a source familiar with Bloomberg's decision-making process said of Biden that "he's a factor. He's not the factor." As a self-made billionaire who's ready to spend as much as \$500 million in the 2020 cycle,



Prospective Democratic candidates, donors and staffers are frozen in place until the former VP makes his decision.

Bloomberg is already polling and conducting focus groups.

Bloomberg had planned to announce his intentions last month and then postponed it to this month, leading to speculation that Biden's presence was causing a delay — a position denied by Bloomberg aides. They say that, contrary to conventional wisdom in progressive circles, there's a relatively broad base of moderate Democratic voters in the primary who won't vote against a candidate simply for being a white man.

Biden should be in no rush to decide, said pollster John Anzalone, who worked for Obama's campaign and is affiliated with no presidential election efforts currently.

"Biden has the luxury of time," Anzalone said. "The only ones worrying about Biden are campaign consultants, campaign staff, insiders and reporters. Real voters aren't out there screaming that he's not making a decision in February or March. And I applaud him for it."

Nationally, Biden pulls about 30 percent of the primary vote and is well ahead of second-place Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). But there are signs Biden's lead is somewhat shaky, and his initial supporters could be up for grabs for other candidates. More than two-thirds of Democratic voters in last week's POLITICO/Morning Consult poll described themselves as still up for grabs when it comes to the 2020 primaries, and more than half of those say Biden would be one of their top choices.

One of Biden's most loyal backers, Obama's former Florida campaign adviser Steve Schale, said he's among a number of consultants waiting on an announcement. Until then, Schale said he's "absolutely" not looking at other campaigns.

Biden and his coterie of supporters know the race would be a challenge if he runs, said Schale, who pushed back on the notion that the former vice president is another older white male candidate with support that's a mile wide and an inch deep. As Obama's

wingman in office, Biden earned chits with nonwhite voters and progressives as well, he said.

"Joe Biden's support is real. And it's not like it comes from one lane," Schale said. "Biden does fairly well with African-American and Hispanic voters, too. And if your lane crosses Joe Biden's, it's going to give you some thought."

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, for instance, has deferred to Biden on running.

Bill Hyers, a consultant who specializes in running progressive campaigns, asserts that Biden only has so much heft and had run two prior presidential campaigns that were "disasters."

"For the candidates I talk to and the people that I deal with, I don't think he casts a super-serious shadow," Hyers said. "He's a very convenient excuse if you want one. But I think the people who are serious about running for president are getting in, come hide nor hair."

As Hyers pointed out, other candidates who have some overlap with Biden are moving ahead anyway.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee announced his bid for president Friday. Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper's campaign announcement is expected as soon as today. Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown looks close to running as well.

"I'm not sure I abide by the wisdom that there's lanes and that there's only so much room in each lane or which lane Sen. Brown or Vice President Biden fit into," said Ohio attorney Michael Wager, a co-chair for a draft Brown movement. He described Brown as a "pragmatic populist" who "ends up being a bridge between the emerging or reemerging progressive flank and the establishment flank."

Financiers like Korge say all the new candidates would pose a problem for Biden, especially if he's the front-runner along with the kick-me sign that goes with it.

"I'm not talking about Republicans going after him. I'm talking about Democrats," Korge said. "There are no rules in politics. So it's game on if he goes."

(Source: Politico)

Renewing Europe



Defend our freedom

The European model is based on the freedom of man and the diversity of opinions and creation. Our first freedom is democratic freedom: the freedom to choose our leaders as foreign powers seek to influence our vote at each election. I propose creating a European Agency for the Protection of Democracies, which will provide each member state with European experts to protect their election processes against cyber-attacks and manipulation. In this same spirit of independence, we should also ban the funding of European political parties by foreign powers. We should have European rules banish all incitements to hate and violence from the Internet, since respect for the individual is the bedrock of our civilization of dignity.

Protect our continent

Founded on internal reconciliation, the EU has forgotten to look at the realities of the world. Yet no community can create a sense of belonging if it does not have bounds that it protects. The boundary is freedom in security. We therefore need to rethink the Schengen area: all those who want to be part of it should comply with obligations of responsibility (stringent border controls) and solidarity (one asylum policy with the same acceptance and refusal rules). We will need a common border force and a European asylum office, strict control obligations and European solidarity to which each country will contribute under the authority of a European Council for Internal Security. On the issue of migration, I believe in a Europe that protects both its values and its borders.

The same standards should apply to defense. Substantial progress has been made in the last two years, but we need to set a clear course: a treaty on defense and security should define our fundamental obligations in association with NATO and our European allies: increased defense spending, a truly operational mutual defense clause, and the European Security Council with the United Kingdom on board to prepare our collective decisions.

Our borders also need to guarantee fair competition. What power in the world would accept continued trade with those who respect none of their rules? We cannot suffer in silence. We need to reform our competition policy and reshape our trade policy with penalties or a ban in Europe on businesses that compromise our strategic interests and fundamental values such as environmental standards, data protection and fair payment of taxes; and the adoption of European preference in strategic industries and our public procurement, as our American and Chinese competitors do.

Recover the spirit of progress

Europe is not a second-rank power. Europe in its entirety is a vanguard: it has always defined the standards of progress. In this, it needs to drive forward a project of

convergence rather than competition: Europe, where social security was created, needs to introduce a social shield for all workers, east to west and north to south, guaranteeing the same pay in the same workplace, and a minimum European wage appropriate to each country and discussed collectively every year.

Getting back on track with progress also concerns spearheading the ecological cause. Will we be able to look our children in the eye if we do not also clear our climate debt? The EU needs to set its target — zero carbon by 2050 and pesticides halved by 2025 — and adapt its policies accordingly with such measures as a European Climate Bank to finance the ecological transition, a European food safety force to improve our food controls and, to counter the lobby threat, independent scientific assessment of substances hazardous to the environment and health. This imperative needs to guide all our action: from the European Central Bank to the European Commission, from the European budget to the Investment Plan for Europe. All our institutions need to have the climate as their mandate.

Progress and freedom are about being able to live from your work: Europe needs to look ahead to create jobs. This is why it needs not only to regulate the global digital giants by putting in place European supervision of the major platforms (prompt penalties for unfair competition, transparent algorithms, etc.), but also to finance innovation by giving the new European Innovation Council a budget on a par with the United States in order to spearhead new technological breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence.

A world-oriented Europe needs to look towards Africa, with which we should enter into a covenant for the future, taking the same road and ambitiously and non-defensively supporting African development with such measures as investment, academic partnerships and education for girls.

Freedom, protection and progress. We need to build European renewal on these pillars. We cannot let nationalists without solutions exploit the people's anger. We cannot sleepwalk through a diminished Europe. We cannot become ensconced in business as usual and wishful thinking. European humanism demands action. And everywhere, the people are standing up to be part of that change.

So, by the end of the year, let's set up, with the representatives of the European institutions and the member states, a Conference for Europe in order to propose all the changes our political project needs, with an open mind, even to amending the treaties. This conference will need to engage with citizens' panels and hear academics, business and labor representatives, and religious and spiritual leaders. It will define a roadmap for the EU that translates these key priorities into concrete actions. There will be disagreement, but is it better to have a static Europe or a Europe that advances, sometimes at different paces, and that is open to all?

In this Europe, the peoples will really take back control of their future. In this Europe, the United Kingdom, I am sure, will find its true place.

The Brexit impasse is a lesson for us all. We need to escape this trap and make the upcoming European Parliament elections and our project meaningful. It is for Europe's citizens to decide whether Europe and the values of progress that it embodies are to be more than just a passing episode in history. This is the choice I propose: to chart together the road to European renewal.

(Source: Project Syndicate)

Is Zionism in U.S. over?

One former spy & counterintelligence officer says yes

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Robert David Steele, a former Marine Corps infantry officer and CIA spy who was recommended for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017, regularly answers questions for Tehran Times.

■ You published an article, “Is Ilhan Omar Cynthia McKinney 2.0?: Will the Zionist Parasite Be Purged from the USA This Time?” in the American Herald Tribune on 18 February 2019. Since then Representative Ilhan Omar has continued to speak out against Zionist control of the US Congress and she is now being attacked in two ways: with posters and statements connecting her to the 9/11 attack, and with some Members of Congress against accusing her of being anti-Semitic and even “vile.” How do you react to this?

A. Plainly speaking, everyone attacking Representative Omar is an unregistered agent of a foreign power – this is a criminal offense in the US but the law is not enforced against Members of Congress, almost all of whom are being bribed and/or blackmailed by the Zionists, or the media. Two articles on this matter, one by Politico and one by USA Today, merit reading – they both appear to have been written by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and immediately published by these servile unregistered agents of a foreign power – Zionist Israel.

Andrew Desiderio, “Top Foreign Affairs Dem rebukes Ilhan Omar for ‘vile anti-Semitic slur,’” Politico, 1 March 2019
William Cummings, “House committee chair calls for Rep. Ilhan Omar to apologize for ‘vile, anti-Semitic slur,’” USA Today, 3 March 2019

■ It is very unusual for any public figure in the USA to speak out so directly on Zionist control of the US economy, US government, and US society. Is there some personal experience that led to you being the foremost voice against Zionist control of the US Congress?

A. I am very glad you asked that question, because it allows me to make two points. First, I have been, like most Americans, “unconscious” about the degree to which Zionists – not to be confused with Jews – control everything in the USA. It was not until I was personally attacked by Zionists when I founded #UNRIG, the movement for integrated election reform, that I realized the full extent of their power to destroy anyone that challenges them as Representative Ilhan Omar is so bravely and truthfully doing.

I tell that story in “How The Deep State Controls Social Media and Digitally Assassinate Critics: #GoogleGestapo – Censorship & Crowd-Stalking Made Easy,” as published in the American Herald Tribune on 7 November 2017. Here I will just list the six ways in ninety days that the Zionists used to destroy a public educational endeavor,



generally working through the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which serves as the Zionist secret police and censor in the USA.

1. Live-Streamed Video Defamation
2. Troll Armies
3. Media “Hit Job”
4. MeetUp Cancellation of \$77,000 Paid Program
5. Denial of Service Attacks on My Websites
6. False Reports to Service Providers of Pornography on My Websites

Put bluntly, it was the attacks on me by the Zionists that turned me into the most vocal critic of the Zionists in the USA, overnight. I am also the person who has single-handedly forced into the mainstream the distinction between Zionism – the evil that is genocide and apartheid and the mafia state of Israel – and Judaism, the religion that is to be respected. In the past the Zionists have relied heavily on playing the holocaust victim card, and pretending that legitimate criticism of Zionist evil is an anti-Semitic attack against the Jewish faith. They are not the same and everyone in the USA understands the difference now.

This also led to my close observation of how the Zionists used their control of Amazon to ban books, and of Facebook, Google, Twitter, and YouTube to censor, manipulate, and digitally assassinate voices who question the official narrative. They also fund #RESIST, the seditionist movement against our President.

■ You make the claim that Jews themselves are repudiating Zionism. Are there any specific Jewish statements or publications that support your claim?

A. There are so many it would be unwieldy to list them all. Here I will provide just three linked articles, and one photograph.

Marjorie Cohn, “The Progressive Except Palestine Problem,” Consortium News reprinted from TruthOut, 6 February 2019

Mira Sucharov, “BDS Blacklist: Sadly, Now Might Be the Time for Jews to Boycott Israel,” Ha’a’retz, 7 January 2018

Henry Siegman, “The Implications of President Trump’s Jerusalem Ploy,” The

National Interest as reprinted in US Middle East Project, 23 January 2018

■ You have published an Open Letter to the author of one of the media article against Ilhan Omar, in which you make seven points related to the end of Zionism in America. Can you summarize them for us?

A. I would be glad to do this. The original open letter with many photographs and links is at this link.

Let me start with the general observation that everyone in the USA who is claiming that anti-Zionism – opposition to the genocidal, apartheid, mafia state of Israel, which also a leading sponsor of terrorism as well as rendition & torture as a service for dictators – is anti-Semitism, is an unregistered agent of a foreign power. Each of them should be investigated, indicted, and convicted for treason, starting with Senator Chuck Schumer, Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz, and the most recent violator, Representative Eliot Engel.

■ Here are the seven points in brief: 01 9/11 Disclosure is a Done Deal. The Zionists will be held accountable before 2020. Memoranda for the President: 9/11 Truth, has gone viral, millions have read it.

02 The “anti-Semitic” defense is done with. There is an excellent video showing former Israeli Minister Shulamit Aloni saying outright: “it’s a trick we always use it.” This trick is no longer working.

03 Big money is going to go after US politicians voting for Israel First. A bill board costs about \$3,000 a month. I know a billionaire who is thinking about placing the below image, personalized for each Senator or Representative that voted for the anti-boycott bill, across the country in June, in time to pressure President Trump to denounce the Zionists at his 4th of July celebration – either he is for America First or Israel First, he cannot have it both ways.

04 Jeffrey Epstein is back in court. I believe that this time he and Ghislaine Maxwell, the daughter of Robert Maxwell, the famous secret agent for Israel who compromised many US computer systems, will be found to be agents of a

foreign power and be convicted of human trafficking and blackmail.

05 AIPAC is done. I am anticipating a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act investigation of AIPAC, to include a comprehensive data mining project across all emails and telephone calls stored in the National Security Agency (NSA) database. This will among other things lead to the termination of non-profit status for the thousands of fronts that AIPAC uses to collect and launder money for illicit purposes.

06 ADL is done. I am anticipating a class action federal lawsuit against Amazon, Facebook, Google, MeetUp, Twitter, and YouTube, such that the role of the ADL as the common censor assassinating conservative voices while waiving fees and “up-voting” anti-Trump #RESIST and related seditious elements, is fully exposed.

07 Sheldon Adelson and dual-citizens are done. Almost ten percent of our Members of Congress and ten percent of our senior government employees – particularly in the national security domain – are dual US and Israeli citizens. Dual citizenship is a direct violation of the Constitutional oath to have no other loyalties, and all dual citizens should have their security clearances stripped. I anticipate Jared Kushner and Eliot Abrams losing their clearances in the near future.

■ What will become of Representative Ilhan Omar, a Muslim who dares to speak truth to power?

A. This is the central question facing the USA as we prepare for the 2020 elections. Cynthia McKinney was able to defeat the Zionists six times – she served six terms in face of enormous hate crimes and financial crimes against her by the Zionists. Ilhan Omar is much weaker than Cynthia McKinney in that her “base” is much smaller – we have more blacks than Muslims. However, the times have changed. If – and I stress this – IF Ilhan Omar stands steady and does not allow herself to be intimidated; and IF our President cleans house by firing Jared Kushner and John Bolton and Eliot Abrams and distancing himself from Shel-

don Adelson, THEN the President can gain the respect and votes of all those in America who despise the pernicious influence of Zionism on the economy (insider trading using cyber-espionage), the government (treating war as a profit center) and the society (normalizing pedophilia and using bribery and blackmail to subvert family values and cultural cohesion, THEN Ilhan Omar is a future Speaker of the House and an icon for a mature America that assimilates and honors its immigrants.

I will say here and now that I believe Ilhan Omar to be naive and her staff to be penetrated by AIPAC. At least of the people working for her, if not more, have some kind of financial relationship with AIPAC or are being bribed or blackmailed by the Mossad perhaps via false flag channels. Anyone who tells her to apologize and stop speaking the truth is in my judgment an undeclared agent of a foreign power and she should refer them to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for examination. Certainly she should not be employing anyone who is an apologist for Zionist Israel and its undeclared agents in the USA.

■ A survey of videos and social media finds increasing mention of you as a candidate for President. Your own post, “Robert Steele: Plan B – 2020 No Trump? UPDATE 1: Trump Defense,” at Phi Beta Iota Public Intelligence Blog, on 28 February 2019, presents a comprehensive approach to being a good President. Will you run in 2020 or 2024?

A. Although I have been and will continue to be critical of President Trump with respect to the areas where he is failing, I am absolutely committed to his re-election. While I ran briefly for President in 2012 and could well run in 2024, President Trump is a unique individual and singularly capable of doing the three things I want done: election reform, a truth channel, and putting all traitors, pedophiles, and white collar criminals in jail.

He did not expect to win in 2016 and Jared Kushner destroyed our President’s first two years by throwing the twelve volumes of transition team planning into the trash in order to pursue an Israel First campaign. As long as the President permits Zionists including Kushner, John Bolton, and Eliot Abrams to serve in the US Government he will be at risk of losing in 2020. Your readers can learn more by reading your earlier interview with me, “Understanding Donald Trump and the White House: A few books,” as published in Tehran Times on 13 February 2019,

I make it quite clear in the post to which you kindly refer that I support our President and I want to see him run and be re-elected. There is no other person in America, least of all myself, who is as prepared – and as well funded, as is our President. He is our Savior in this time and place – in sharp contrast to the False Messiah that the Zionists are about to celebrate as they advance their

takeover of Jerusalem.

The Zionists are the ball and chain around our President’s neck. Because he did not expect to win – a story I tell in Donald Trump, The Accidental President: Under Siege! and because he was deeply afraid of being assassinated after the fact, he appointed too many traitors beholden to the Zionists and the Deep State – and too many losers. I have been quite clear in my Memorandum for the President: Trump Triumph; he needs to clean out the White House, create a Trump Studio and truth channel, implement election reform, and eliminate the National Security Council, replacing it with a much smaller Strategy Advisory Group. If he does those three things he will easily be re-elected and easily be the greatest President in modern American history.

If President Trump fails to implement #UNRIG: Unity for Integrity Election Reform Act (Proposed), then yes, I will run in 2024 with a coalition team including comedian impersonators, a campaign that will rock the Republic and bury the Deep State. I want our President to finish the job with a second term; if he will not, then God Bless him for setting the stage for the rise of American populism, We the People will finish the job.

America First means not Israel first. Not Saudi Arabia or Qatar First. America First. Such an America will eschew foreign adventures desired only by the banks and the Zionists, and it will focus – as the Chinese and Russians and Indians have focused – on doing business. We will have a foreign policy, as Ron Paul puts it, of peace, commerce, and friendship. To get there, we must eradicate the Zionist pest from our homeland.

Allow me to end with an image and a quote. The image is from Donald Trump’s recent appearance before the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). This one image, in my view, virtually assures that our President will be re-elected in 2020 but only by a slim margin. His victory will be greater if he does 9/11 disclosure, arrests the Zionist traitors among us, and commits to never again letting Zionist Israel determine US policy.

Here is the quote, from Jack Welch, legendary leader of General Electric, as it appeared in a new book:

“They can say what they want about him, but I don’t know if any president has been more prepared to sit in that room and talk business. It was like talking to a peer, not a politician. Hell of a meeting.”

Ilhan Omar is the symbol of the conflict we have in America today, between our Constitution and its values, and the reality of a Deep State and Shadow Government in which the Zionists are the enforcers and violators of everything we hold dear.

I support our President, and I support Ilhan Omar. Each in their own way embodies all this is good within America the Beautiful.

Muslims can be proud of Omar and Tlaib in the U.S. Congress

1 → With that, some Jewish leaders said they were appalled by Omar’s suggestion that Jewish-Americans have divided loyalties, reviving an old allegedly anti-Semitic trope. However, and this is important, some notable progressive Jews came to Omar’s defense saying that it is not inherently anti-Semitic to criticize Israeli government policies or AIPAC. Meanwhile, AIPAC slammed Omar’s suggestion of dual loyalties, as expected, as did long entrenched members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. Where is all this sound and fury going?

For one thing, you can bet that come the next election cycle for Ilhan Omar, some Jews and most all devout Zionists will be mounting a huge effort to have her, and Rashida Tlaib, ejected from Congress by voters if only because of bias against Muslims, at bottom a reaction against 9/11 because the perps were, by the official account, Muslim. (In one view, if it’s the case that the U.S. government always has to have an “enemy” to justify its prodigal military spending, it may be that “Muslims” replaced “Communists” in the dark corners of the unofficial American psyche as the designated “enemy” – given the fall of the Soviet Union. And regarding Iran, the hostage crisis at the beginning of the Islamic Republic no doubt gave the U.S. government ammunition to vilify Iran for the past 40 years, pushed by the Zionists, since Iran has advocated for the oppressed at least in Palestine.)



It’s a given that Omar and Tlaib will be targeted for defeat in the next election cycle, but at the same time, it’s quite possible that by then the debate about undue Zionist influence in the U.S. will have finally achieved some sort of critical mass and more and more Americans, heretofore totally ignorant about the realities of faux Israeli “democracy” and Zionist cruelties – since they, the Zionists, always want to play the victims – will have different ideas about right and wrong and re-elect both Omar and Tlaib. And make no mistake, when Americans are fully apprised of the true facts of any particular situation, their generally fair-minded and fundamentally decent nature comes to the fore.

And what in fact has held it back for decades with regard to Middle East matters has been such a volume of disinformation and propaganda, and money spent to create it, that even Josef Goebbels, Adolf Hitler’s Minister of Propaganda, would be thoroughly surprised. It was, after all, Goebbels who once stated that if a lie is big enough and if it is stated often enough, people come to believe it – including the liar.

One argument the Zionists and lovers of modern Israel incessantly trot out is their loud complaint that detractors single out Israel especially for criticism when there are so many OTHER governments around the world that are allegedly less “democratic” and cruel than Israel’s. They point, to cite just one example, to

the Islamic Republic as a country where human rights have not – allegedly – been championed strongly enough. Whether that’s true or not only visitors to Iran can rightfully decide for themselves. But the deep reason Israel is ever singled out for derision, if it has been, is because IF the mighty dam of misguided public opinion regarding the Zionists begins to crack and reveal truths to the masses, particularly in the U.S., it will mark the beginning of the end of some serious governmental corruption in the U.S. (and in other Western countries like the U.K) and of policies and actions damaging to the perceptions of Islam and to some Muslim countries. It may well mark the beginning of the end of U.S. warmongering, foolish “regime change” wars of choice, and a variety of other ills that have plagued the Middle East.

One can only, for now, blissfully imagine a Holy Land where Palestinians, Muslim or Christian, and Jews are treated as equal citizens, and what that would mean for the flowering of the Middle East as a whole and for Islam. But in preparation for this, if it should ever come, it would be hastened if countries like Iran where there has long been more “democracy” than in Israel or Saudi Arabia, make sure that there is continued movement towards good government that literally works for the betterment of the lives of all citizens and not just for some powerful, relatively wealthy elite.

Second Announcement

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One (semi compressed) tender

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National Iranian Drilling Company

Tender descriptions :

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. / Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,194,491	Tender No.: FPI04-97/055 Indent No.: 08-22-9745140	18,801,640,000

Qualitative evaluation of tenders

Method	
	£ Based on minimum scoring (60 points) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.
	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

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 4001114004020491 in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting formal 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.)

More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on:

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parking spot, **\$1700**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

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\$1350
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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ENGLISH PERSIAN GLOSSARY

واژه نامه اصطلاحات مطبوعات
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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.

For more information contact:

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The key to weight loss: ‘Log often, lose more’

Many people consider logging everything that they eat to be a tedious task. However, this effective weight-loss technique takes much less time than most people think, according to a recent study.

Tracking what you eat more regularly appears to increase weight loss.

Obesity is now a common health issue. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 40 percent of adults in the United States had obesity in 2015–2016.

This figure has been steadily increasing since 1999. Most people are aware that obesity carries many health risks, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain forms of cancer. Despite this, people tend to find it difficult to lose weight.

Studies have shown that one of the most effective weight loss strategies is dietary self-monitoring. This method requires a person to record all of the food and drink that they consume throughout the day, noting portion sizes and preparation methods.

People who are trying to lose weight are often less than enthusiastic about this method, believing it to be overly time-consuming. However, researchers at the University of Vermont in Burlington and the University of South Carolina in Columbia have found that monitoring your diet is highly effective and much easier than it seems.

“People hate it; they think it’s onerous and awful, but the question we had was: How much time does dietary self-monitoring really take?” says Jean Harvey, lead author of the study and chair of the University of Vermont’s Nutrition and Food Sciences Department. “The answer is, not very much.”

■ Quicker over time

In total, 142 participants took part in the study. These individuals had already enrolled in the Internet Obesity Treatment Enhanced with Motivational Interviewing



This important finding proves that dietary self-monitoring is not as difficult a task as people think, especially with the invention of numerous relevant apps. The results may also help people set achievable weight loss targets.

(iReach2) trial. They were mostly female, and 81 percent of them had obesity.

The participants joined a dietician-led online session every week for 24 weeks. The researchers also asked them to log their daily diet using an online program. From this data, the team could see not only what people were eating but also how often they recorded their food intake and how long they spent doing it.

Dietary self-monitoring lasted for 6 months, after which the researchers calculated

how long it took people each day and how successful this strategy was for weight loss.

The results feature in the journal Obesity in a paper called “Log Often, Lose More: Electronic Dietary Self-Monitoring for Weight Loss.”

The team deemed the most successful participants to be those who lost 10 percent of their body weight. In the first month, these individuals spent an average of 23.2 minutes per day recording their dietary intake. By the

sixth month, this had dropped significantly to 14.6 minutes

The researchers believe that this decrease could be due to two factors: the participants’ efficiency in logging their diet and the online program’s ability to predict regularly used words and phrases.

■ Frequency is key

This important finding proves that dietary self-monitoring is not as difficult a task as people think, especially with the invention of numerous relevant apps. The results may also help people set achievable weight loss targets.

As Harvey explains, “We know people do better when they have the right expectations. We’ve been able to tell them that they should exercise 200 minutes per week. But, when we asked them to write down all their foods, we could never say how long it would take. Now we can.”

Neither the amount of time that people spent recording their diet nor the level of detail had much effect on weight loss success. Similar studies have shown that it is the frequency with which people log data that leads to a better outcome. Harvey’s research confirmed this theory.

Logging in at least twice a day was likely to result in more significant weight loss. However, it was “those who self-monitored three or more times per day and were consistent day after day” who were the most successful, says Harvey.

“It seems to be the act of self-monitoring itself that makes the difference — not the time spent or the details included.”

Harvey and colleagues hope that the study will encourage people to get on board with self-monitoring as a safe and effective weight loss technique. After all, taking 15 minutes a day to improve your health is not a massive task.

(Source: Medical News Today)

HIV patient in London becomes second person in history to be completely cured of virus



A man has been cured of HIV following an “improbable” stem cell transplant, becoming only the second patient in history to completely recover from the virus.

The unnamed man, known as the “London patient”, was diagnosed with HIV in 2003 and started taking drugs to control the virus, which causes Aids, in 2012.

He developed Hodgkin’s lymphoma the same year and agreed to a stem cell transplant in 2016, aimed at treating the cancer.

Doctors found a donor for the transplant who had a rare gene mutation that confers natural resistance to HIV, in what researchers called an “improbable event”.

Just one per cent of people descended from northern Europeans have inherited the mutation from both parents. They are immune to most HIV.

The donor had a double copy of the mutation.

The scarcity of the genetic quirk is “why this has not been observed more frequently,” Ravindra Gupta, lead researcher at University College London, said.

Such transplants are dangerous and have failed in other patients. They are also impractical to try to cure the millions of people already living with HIV.

The treatment transformed the patient’s immune system and he now has the donor’s genetic mutation and resistance to HIV.

He voluntarily stopped taking HIV drugs to see if the virus would return. Patients with HIV usually take daily pills to stay healthy and when the drugs are stopped the virus usually returns.

This did not happen with the London patient. He has not taken the HIV drugs for 18 months and remains free of the virus.

The procedure has been successful once before with “Berlin Patient” Timothy Ray Brown, a U.S. man treated in Germany 12 years ago. Mr Brown is still free of HIV and has said that he would like to meet the London patient.

He said he would encourage the man to speak publicly about the treatment.

The case was published online by the journal Nature and will be presented at an HIV conference in Seattle.

(Source: The Independent)

Brain clue to ‘broken heart’ syndrome

Your heart can be damaged after a sad event and it may be your brain’s doing, experts believe.

Swiss researchers have been studying people with a rare and unusual condition called broken heart syndrome.

This weakening and failing of the heart happens suddenly, often after a stressful or

emotional event such as bereavement.

It is little understood but the work in the European Heart Journal suggests the mind’s response to stress plays a part.

■ Breathlessness and pain

Also known as takotsubo syndrome - referring to the shape of the heart in people with this condition, which resembles a Japanese

pot with the same name - broken heart syndrome can be brought on by shock.

It’s different to a heart attack caused by blocked blood vessels, but has similar symptoms, including breathlessness and chest pain.

Often, an unhappy event is the trigger, but exciting big events, such as a wedding or

new job, have been linked with it too.

Some people won’t have, or be able to identify, a specific event that caused the condition.

It can be temporary, with the heart muscle recovering over days, weeks or months, but for some it can be deadly.

(Source: BBC)

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Other areas: Farmaniyeh Aghdasiyeh Shahrak Gharb Shariati-Pasdaran Valiasre Tajrish Jordan Vanak Arjantin Zafar... nice cases ready to move in.

Iran enjoys ‘complicated technology’ for producing biopharmaceuticals

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Some biopharmaceuticals need a complicated technology to be manufactured, however, Iran is very successful in this field and has acquired the technology, the secretary of biotech development center (BioDC) at science and technology vice-presidency, has said.



The homegrown biopharmaceuticals are manufactured with high standards and there is no difference between them and foreign medicines, Mostafa Qanei said, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

For producing such biopharmaceuticals we do need human resources who are expert in this field, he said.

In mid-February, Qanei announced that the domestically manufacturing of biotechnology products has so far saved one billion dollars for the country.

There are 146 biopharmaceuticals in global market, out of which, 22 items are available in Iran which are monoclonal antibodies and recombinant proteins.

■ Biotechnology in medicine

According to economywatch.com, the benefits of biotechnology in medicine are without doubt staggering. Although many exciting developments have taken place in the past few years, with continuing research, it is expected that more and more revolutionary procedures, substances, and devices will be developed to improve and enhance human life. When it comes to biotechnology in medicine, there are many different things that have already been discovered and even more on the near horizon.

For instance, today's biotechnology is now being used to develop much-needed vaccines, new drugs to combat tough illnesses, creating xenotransplant organs, developing a variety of nanomedical diagnostic techniques, and even determining origins of disease.

Telecommunications Infrastructure Company to boost privatization

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The Telecommunications Infrastructure Company is preparing a strategy document by the next two months aimed to fight monopoly and strengthen privatization, Mehr reported on Monday.

The share of information and communication technology (ICT) in gross domestic product (GDP) is less than 2 percent while for digital transformation, the figure should increase, Sajjad Bonabi, an official with the company said.

The legal challenges halted ICT development during past years and the company do its best to pave the way for content production and marketing in cyberspace, he added.

Telecommunication Infrastructure Company is responsible for telecommunication networks infrastructure in Iran, it is working as the governmental body of ICT Ministry with the aim of creating, developing, managing, organizing, supervising, maintaining and implementing the main communication backbone of the country and continuous its infrastructural activities.

German car industry to invest €60bn over next 3 years in electric and self-driving cars

Germany's automotive industry is gearing up for the future of mobility as it plans to invest close to 60bn euros (£51.5bn) on electric vehicles and driverless technologies over the next three years.

Ahead of the Geneva motor show starting this week, the boss of VDA, an industry body for the automotive sector in Germany, said "the ramp up of electric mobility" is coming to Europe as regulatory pressure and new competition is forcing change to the country's dominant car industry.

In a statement, VDA's president Bernhard Mattes said: "We will invest over 40bn euros in electric mobility during the next three years, and another 18bn euros will be invested in digitisation and connected and automated driving."

Germany's ambitions to shift to electric vehicles and autonomous driving come as the sector at large reckons with new challenges.

Concerns are mounting that the industry has reached "peak car" as the ride-hailing industry, dominated by the likes of Uber and Lyft, are seeing people forego vehicle purchases, while new modes of transport such as electric scooters could earn favour in cities.

Vehicle sales have stalled worldwide and are yet to hit 100m vehicle sales annually, despite analysts previously predicting the milestone would be reached by 2019.

There is also a growing body of evidence that points to the impact carbon emissions from petrol and diesel fuelled-vehicles have had on climate change.

Mattes added that "the EU's CO2 targets cannot be achieved by 2030" unless car businesses plough significant investment into cleaner energy vehicles and appropriate regulatory conditions are established across the bloc.

In the UK, there are signs of consumer demand starting to lean towards newer energy vehicles. Figures from trade association SMMT show that registrations of diesel cars in the country are down year-on-year to 46,823 from 58,703 in January 2018. Registrations for alternative fuel vehicles in January were up 26.3pc year-on-year to 11,014.

Support for a new electric vehicle industry will require the expansion of battery manufacturing operations in order to meet demand for lithium-ion batteries - the technology at the heart of electric-powered vehicles.

Last year, German chemicals giant BASF announced a 418m euro venture that would see the development of battery plants in Europe. A facility to be built in Finland by BASF is expected to supply batteries to 300,000 vehicles per year from 2020 onwards.

A study published by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in December predicts that upto eight gigafactories would have to be built globally every year between 2030 and 2040 as demand for batteries is forecast to rise.

(Source: telegraph.co.uk)

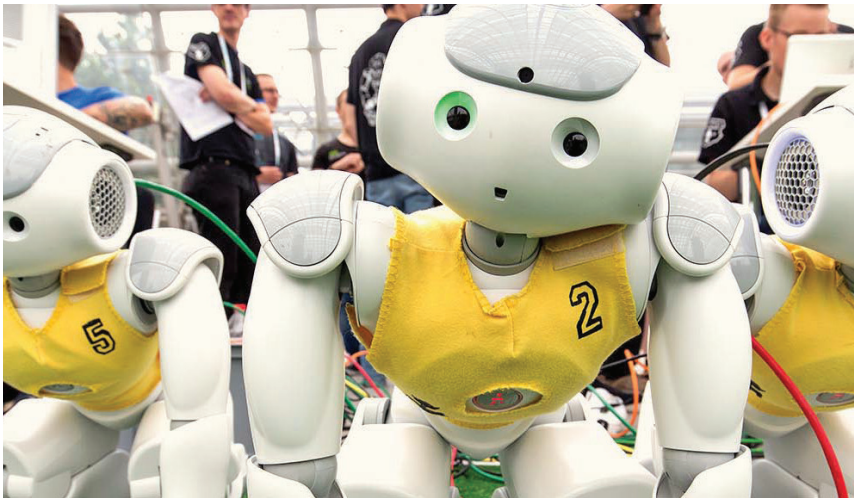
Iran to host 2020 FIRA RoboWorld Cup and Congress

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Iran's proposal to host the Federation of International Robot Soccer Association (FIRA) RoboWorld Cup and Congress in 2020 has been accepted, the head of the Iranian FIRA National Committee, Soroush Sadeqnejad, announced, ISNA reported on Monday.

"This will be a great honor for the scientific community of our country. Iran has been selected as the host country for the 2020 FIRA RoboWorld Cup by such technology-advanced member states such as Canada, Japan, UK, Germany, Russia, and South Korea," he said.

He added that the 2020 FIRA RoboWorld Cup may be held in August 2020 in the Persian Gulf island of Kish, off the southern coast of Iran.

Referring to the Amirkabir International Robotic and Artificial Intelligence Contest (AUTCUP 2019) which was held from March 2 to 4 at Tehran's Amirkabir



University of Technology, he said a total of 302 teams in 28 different leagues in two junior and student sections competed

during the event.

Iran received 21 first prizes, 16 second prizes and 15 third prizes in different

leagues, he noted.

Teams from Russia, Australia, Taiwan, China, Germany, South Korea, Brazil, Mexico, Italy, Canada, Indonesia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Lithuania and Iran competed at the event.

The contest held leagues on artificial intelligence, FIRA Sport, FIRA Challenge, FIRA Drone, FIRA Youth and Demonstration.

FIRA is an international organization that arranges competitive soccer competitions between autonomous robots. The robotics competition includes four categories: Sports, Challenge, Drone and Youth Robots.

The event aims to take the spirit of science and technology to the young generation and laymen, promote the development of autonomous multi-agent robotic system that can cooperate with each other and to contribute to the state-of-the-art technology improvement in this specialized field.

‘We can buy technology but we cannot own it’

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The vice president for science and technology, Sourena Sattari, has highlighted the role of young talented generation in the national development, saying "we can buy technology with money, however, we cannot own it".

"Hence we should encourage young talented generation to utilize their knowledge in knowledge-based activities," IRNA quoted Sattari as saying on Tuesday.

He pointed to the important role of young generation in the society and their great role in scientific and technological achievements of the country.

Over 4200 knowledge-based companies have been already established in Iran which lead to economic boom of the young generation, he said.

Many founders of startups and knowledge-based companies are replaced with old ones in different fields, he added.



These companies will produce the next great wave of entrepreneurs, survey says

Uber finally seemed to shake its bad reputation last year to become a boring but dependable company, thanks in part to the leadership of CEO Dara Khosrowshahi. That perception has created a lot of optimism around the company, to the point where 23 percent of venture capital-backed founders surveyed by First Round said they believed Uber will be the launching point for the next generation of notable founders. The

State of Startups respondents also said employees of Slack (16 percent), Stripe (15 percent) and Airbnb (14 percent) will be the future.

The survey also revealed that 37 percent of founders believed investors are biased against older entrepreneurs, compared to 28 percent who said gender was the biggest bias factor and 26 percent race. In general, a staggering 89 percent of respondents said

that older people -- starting at 46 years old -- face age discrimination in the tech industry.

The surveyed founders were also optimistic about 2019's IPOs, which may include Uber, Slack and Palantir. They also said they expect the valuations of some of tech's biggest companies to rise, including Stripe, SpaceX, Coinbase, Slack and Airbnb.

(Source: entrepreneur.com)



Rethinking the amount of technology in the classroom

By Kelly Richmond Pope

I recently returned from a book publisher's summit along with a group of accounting instructors from around the U.S. In addition to being wine and dined by the publisher; we were there to learn all the new technology "bells and whistles" and how this latest technology could improve the learning experience of our students. It was two grueling days of presentations, and hands-on examples meant to illustrate how adaptive learning techniques can help our students better grasp accounting concepts. I must admit; I was hooked...at first. It is clear that textbook publishers have spent a considerable amount of money embedding technology in order to serve students; however, this approach has pros and cons. Yes, I can observe students' studying patterns with the integration of technology. And yes, it makes it much easier to add an assignment in minutes. But, have you ever asked your students if they like all of this technology? If you do, you may be surprised by their response.

As I was just about to assign my students yet another online homework assignment, one student raised his hand and said, "Professor Pope, please no more online homework. We don't learn best this way." Once one student said it, the entire class agreed. I wanted to explore more, so I asked a few additional questions about what the students did not like. The floodgates opened! The



biggest issue that my students cited was how scrolling and flipping from page to page interrupts their learning process. I always want to listen to my students, so I started doing some research on the topic of typing versus writing. According to a study published in Psychological Science, students learn better when taking notes by hand because you are working slower when writing in comparison to typing. But what about when it comes to reading? Is reading on screen more effective? According to the research...not really. Modern screens fail to recreate

the tactile experience of reading on paper adequately. Additionally, screens may also drain more of our mental resources while we are reading and make it a little harder to remember what we read when we are done. A study published in the Review of Educational Research, states if you are reading something lengthy -- more than 500 words or more than a page of the book on screen -- your comprehension will likely take a hit if you are using a digital device. These findings were supported by numerous studies and held for students in college, high school, and grade school. Therefore, asking my students to read a full chapter online could result in minimal retention in the chapter concepts. So, what are we doing? Following the advice of what a book publisher says to do in the classroom is akin to taking healthy eating advice from McDonald's. Are we doing a disservice to our students by pushing unwanted technology on them? Perhaps the numerous book publishers are not incorporating the learning science research into their research and development, or maybe they are framing this as a tool to make the lives of the professor better rather than the lives of the students. Based on my reading of the research and my discussion with students, I definitely will be making some changes in my courses moving forward. Note to self; always listen to your customer, and in my case, it is my beloved students.

(Source: forbes.com)

New cybersecurity tool lets companies Google their systems for hackers

The tech comes from Alphabet spin-off Chronicle.

Experts believe Russian hackers infiltrated the Democratic National Committee's computer networks in 2016 but the DNC didn't find out until too late. After all, it isn't like they could use something as simple as a search engine to scan the network for hackers.

Backstory, a new product unveiled Monday, aims to do just that. And it's hardly a surprise that Chronicle, the company behind Backstory, is using the search engine model: The cybersecurity company is building on Google's internal security tools.

"If the DNC had Backstory on their network, they would have been able to see this activity and they would have been able to stop it," said Mike Wiacek, chief security officer Chronicle, at a launch event.



Backstory came about when Wiacek and his Chronicle co-founders found a way to take Google's internal cybersecurity tools and make them available to other companies. Chronicle is a spin-off of X, the moonshot factory owned by Google-parent Alphabet.

The tool is the latest example of Google technology doing what it's best known for: storing and indexing petabytes of infor-

mation, making it easy to search through quickly. The idea isn't a new concept in cybersecurity. But Chronicle clearly thinks it can do the job.

PACCAR, a company that designs and manufactures commercial vehicles, is an early customer of Chronicle.

"It gives us the ability to capture massive amounts of data and have the ability to search that really, really quickly," said Chuck Markarian, PACCAR's chief information security officer.

The new tool is also a sign that the cat-and-mouse game of finding and stopping hackers is a problem so complex that companies have to bring massive amounts of computing power to have a chance.

Backstory works by storing huge amounts of information provided by Chronicle's customers. The information is a record of everything that happens on

company networks. That includes data like which websites a given computer connects to, whether it's ESPN.com or a website known for dealing out Russian malware.

Of course, Backstory and Google are related companies, and concerns about data privacy are bound to come up. But Chronicle co-founder Stephen Gillett said its "sister company" Google won't have access to data scanned by Backstory.

"We are distinct, we are different, and we are very proud of that," Gillett said.

5G and foldable phones go big at MWC 2019: With international intrigue and a 5G coming-out party, this show doesn't need the boost of a Samsung event.

Galaxy S10 Plus review: No doubt about it, the Galaxy S10 Plus is going to be one of the best Android phones of 2019.

(Source: cnet.com)

Engineers develop fast method to convert algae to biocrude

University of Utah chemical engineering assistant professor Swomitra Mohanty has developed a new kind of jet mixer for turning algae into biomass that extracts the lipids with much less energy than the older extraction method. It is a key discovery that now puts this form of energy closer to becoming a viable, cost-effective alternative fuel.

Biofuel experts have long sought a more economically-viable way to turn algae into biocrude oil to power vehicles, ships and even jets. University of Utah researchers believe they have found an answer. They have developed an unusually rapid method to deliver cost-effective algal biocrude in large quantities using a specially-designed jet mixer.

Packed inside the microorganisms growing in ponds, lakes and rivers are lipids, which are fatty acid molecules containing oil that can be extracted to power diesel engines. When extracted the lipids are called biocrude. That makes organisms such as microalgae an attractive form of biomass, organic matter that can be used as a sustainable fuel source.

Using algae for biomass

These lipids are also found in a variety of other single-cell organisms such as yeasts used in cheese processing. But the problem with using algae for biomass has always been the amount of energy it takes to pull the lipids or biocrude from the watery plants. Under current methods, it takes more energy to turn algae into biocrude than the amount of energy you get back out of it.

A team of University of Utah chemical



engineers have developed a new kind of jet mixer that extracts the lipids with much less energy than the older extraction method, a key discovery that now puts this form of energy closer to becoming a viable, cost-effective alternative fuel. The new mixer is fast, too, extracting lipids in seconds.

The team's results were published in a new peer-reviewed journal, Chemical Engineering Science X. The article, "Algal Lipid Extraction

Using Confined Impinging Jet Mixers," can be downloaded here.

The "key piece here is trying to get energy parity. We're not there yet, but this is a really important step toward accomplishing it," says Dr. Leonard Pease, a co-author of the paper. "We have removed a significant development barrier to make algal biofuel production more efficient and smarter. Our method puts us much closer to creating biofuels energy parity

Utah researchers believe they have developed an unusually rapid method to deliver cost-effective algal biocrude in large quantities using a specially-designed jet mixer.

than we were before."

Oil-rich lipids

Right now, in order to extract the oil-rich lipids from the algae, scientists have to pull the water from the algae first, leaving either a slurry or dry powder of the biomass. That is the most energy-intensive part of the process. That residue is then mixed with a solvent where the lipids are separated from the biomass. What's left is a precursor, the biocrude, used to produce algae-based biofuel. That fuel is then mixed with diesel fuel to power long-haul trucks, tractors and other large diesel-powered machinery. But because it requires so much energy to extract the water from the plants at the beginning of the process, turning algae into biofuel has thus far not been a practical, efficient or economical process.

"There have been many laudable research efforts to advance algal biofuel, but nothing has yet produced a price point capable of attracting commercial development. Our designs may change that equation and put algal biofuel back in play," says University of Utah chemical engineering assistant professor Swomitra "Bobby" Mohanty, a co-author on the paper.

The team has created a new mixing extractor, a reactor that shoots jets of the solvent at jets of algae, creating a localized turbulence in which the lipids "jump" a short distance into the stream of solvent. The solvent then is taken out and can be recycled to be used again in the process.

(Source: sciencedaily.com)

Rethinking old-growth forests using lichens as an indicator of conservation value

Two Canadian biologists are proposing a better way to assess the conservation value of old-growth forests in North America -- using lichens, sensitive bioindicators of environmental change.

Dr. Troy McMullin, lichenologist at the Canadian Museum of Nature, and Dr. Yolanda Wiersma, landscape ecologist at Memorial University of Newfoundland, propose their lichen-focussed system in a paper in the Ecological Society of America journal, Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment.

"We are presenting a paradigm shift for the way we assess forests and manage them," says McMullin. "How do we select the forests with highest conservation value? How do we decide what to protect and what to cut? Lichens are part of the answer."

Old-growth forests, especially those in North America, are perceived to be rich in biodiversity, in addition to capturing aesthetic and spiritual values. These forests are usually defined by the age of the trees, with conservation and management practices developed accordingly. McMullin and Wiersma say this is an over-simplification, as it overlooks the importance of biodiversity in those habitats.

Certainly awesome and important

"Forests with old trees in them are certainly awesome and important," says Wiersma. "However, forests change through time and something that is an older forest now may not always be a forest."

The approach of the researchers lets them look at the presence of forests in the context of the broader landscape.

"If we think of the landscape as a patchwork quilt of different types of forests of different ages, some of those patches of forest will stick around for a long time, while others might wink in and out over different time frames. Our approach lets us identify which patch has been a forest for the longest period of time, even if it's not the one with the oldest trees."

McMullin and Wiersma argue that old trees are only a proxy for biodiversity



in old-forest ecosystems and that biodiversity should be measured directly -- with lichens as the ideal candidates.

The "advantage of lichens as indicators for this biodiversity is that they don't go anywhere, you can study them anytime of the year, and they 'eat the air', which makes them one of the most sensitive organisms in the forest," explains McMullin.

Old-growth forests

Many old-growth forests have high sustained moisture and a high number of microhabitats suitable for certain species, which can't disperse easily. Having these forests in the landscape provides a refuge for the seeds and spores that helps with the continued preservation of this biodiversity.

In their paper, McMullin and Wiersma propose that suites of lichens associated with known old-growth areas can be used to develop an "index of ecological continuity" for forests of interest. This scorecard of lichen species could then be used as a tool by conservation biologists and forest managers -- the more species that are old-growth dependent, then the higher the forest's conservation value.

The scientists note that lichens are already being used to assess old-growth value and forest continuity in parts of Europe, less so in North America. As examples, they cite the studies of British botanist Dr. Francis Rose, who developed an index of about 30 lichens associated with Britain's Royal Forests or medieval parklands, which have been relatively untouched going back hundreds or even thousands of years.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Mystery of green icebergs may soon be solved, team says

Researchers have proposed a new idea that may explain why some Antarctic icebergs are tinged emerald green rather than the normal blue, potentially solving a decades-long scientific mystery.

Pure ice is blue because ice absorbs more red light than blue light. Most icebergs appear white or blue when floating in seawater, but since the early 1900s explorers and sailors have reported seeing peculiar green icebergs around certain parts of Antarctica.

The green icebergs have been a curiosity to scientists for decades, but now glaciologists report in a new study that they suspect iron oxides in rock dust from Antarctica's mainland are turning some icebergs green. They formulated the new theory after Australian researchers discovered large amounts of iron in East Antarctica's Amery Ice Shelf. Watch a video of the new findings here.

Iron is a key nutrient for phytoplankton, microscopic plants that form the base of the marine food web. But iron is scarce in many areas of the ocean.

All the marine life

If experiments prove the new theory right, it would mean green icebergs are ferrying precious iron from Antarctica's mainland to the open sea when they break off, providing this key nutrient to the organisms that support nearly all marine life.

"It's like taking a package to the post office. The iceberg can deliver this iron out into the ocean far away, and then melt and deliver it to the phytoplankton that can use it as a nutrient," said Stephen Warren, a glaciologist at the University of Washington and lead author of the new study in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, a journal of the American Geophysical Union. "We always thought green icebergs were just an exotic curiosity, but now we think they may actually be important."

Warren started studying the phenomenon on an Australian expedition in 1988, when he took a core sample from a green iceberg near the Amery Ice Shelf on the coast of East Antarctica.



Interestingly, the green ice he saw was a deep emerald hue much darker and clearer than that of normal icebergs—a signal to scientists that green ice might be different from regular iceberg ice.

"When we climbed up on that iceberg, the most amazing thing was actually not the color but rather the clarity," Warren said. "This ice had no bubbles. It was obvious that it was not ordinary glacier ice."

Icebergs break off of glaciers and ice shelves that jut out into the sea. Typical glacier ice forms when layers of snow build up and solidify over time, so it naturally has air pockets that reflect light.

Overhanging ice shelf

But in Antarctica, some icebergs have a layer of what's called marine ice: ocean water frozen to the underside of an overhanging ice shelf. Marine ice is clearer and darker than glacier ice because it doesn't have any air pockets to reflect light.

When Warren and his colleagues analyzed that iceberg and other green icebergs sampled by Australian expeditions in the 1980s, they found the green parts were made of marine ice and not glacier ice. They suspected an impurity in the ocean water underneath the Amery Ice Shelf was turning some marine ice green.

Their first thought was that dissolved organic carbon, microscopic particles of long-dead marine plants and animals, was getting trapped in the ice as the water froze to the underside of the ice shelf. Dissolved organic carbon is yellow, so if pure ice is blue, the addition of yellow particles could turn the ice green, according to Warren.

(Source: phys.org)

Breakthrough process welds metal and glass using ultrafast lasers

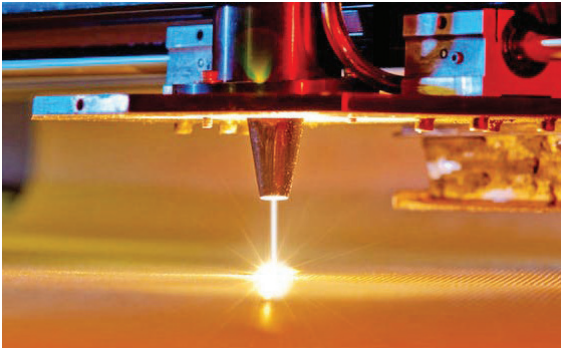
A new breakthrough technology has allowed scientists to weld metal and glass together by turning to the power of lasers.

Traditionally, welding has been limited to materials that share similar properties, so it's tough to make even aluminum and steel join forces.

But now, scientists from Heriot-Watt University are claiming a breakthrough method that can weld together materials as different as glass and metal, thanks to ultrafast laser pulses.

Currently metals can be welded to metals and glass to glass, but the two don't mix well. They require different temperatures to melt and they expand differently in response to the heat. There are other manufacturing methods to get them to stick together, but they aren't quit as neat.

"Being able to weld glass and metals together will be a huge step forward in manufacturing and design flexibility," says Duncan Hand, director of the EPSRC Center for Innovative Manufacturing in Laser-based Production Processes, which developed the new technique.



Organic chemicals

"At the moment, equipment and products that involve glass and metal are often held together by adhesives, which are messy to apply and parts can gradually creep, or move. Outgassing is also an issue -- organic chemicals from the adhesive can be gradually released and can lead to reduced

product lifetime."

The new technique works on optical materials such as quartz, borosilicate glass and sapphire, which can now be welded to metals like aluminum, stainless steel and titanium. The key to the process was an infrared laser that fires pulses on the scale of a few picoseconds -- trillionths of a second.

The "parts to be welded are placed in close contact, and the laser is focused through the optical material to provide a very small and highly intense spot at the interface between the two materials -- we achieved megawatt peak power over an area just a few microns across," Hand explains.

"This creates a microplasma, like a tiny ball of lightning, inside the material, surrounded by a highly-confined melt region. We tested the welds at -50° C to 90° C (-58° F to 194° F) and the welds remained intact, so we know they are robust enough to cope with extreme conditions."

The team is now working with specialists to develop a prototype laser processing system, so the method can be commercialized for manufacturing.

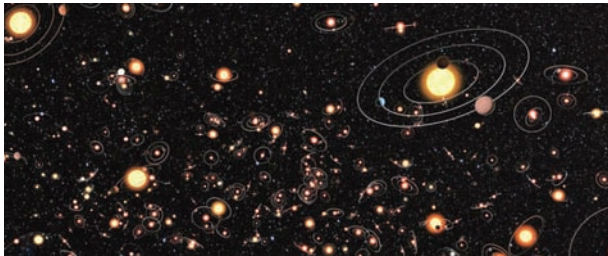
(Source: newatlas.com)

Billions of undetected 'rogue planets' could be tearing wildly through galaxy

We tend to think of planets neatly ordered in systems, like our own Solar System. But every now and then, astronomers get hints of something else - rogue planets, not attached to any star or system, drifting lonely through the galaxy.

Now it turns out there could be many more of them than anyone ever suspected. A new simulation has revealed that there could be billions of rogue planets in the Milky Way.

Taking a census of exoplanets is an extraordinarily tricky business at the best of times, when they're in a planetary system. Planets don't give off any light of their own (unless we're faced with a brown dwarf, but their planet status is debatable), so we have to use other means of detecting them.



When a planet is orbiting a star, there are two main detection methods. These are the radial velocity method, whereby the planet's gravitational effect on the star can be detected, and the transit method, when the planet orbits in front of the star and slightly dims its light.

As you can see, both of these methods rely on the presence of a star - so they're pretty useless when it comes to rogue planets. Nevertheless, there are still some ways we can detect these wanderers. Two rogue planets were spotted last year because of the way their gravity bends light coming from behind them; infrared imaging has revealed others.

In all, around 20 rogue planets or candidate rogue planets have been identified, compared to 3,917 exoplanets in planetary systems. That's a pretty huge gap.

So, to find out how many rogue planets might be out there, drifting darkly through the galaxy, astronomers at the University of Leiden in The Netherlands ran sophisticated mathematical simulations of the Orion Trapezium, a cluster of young stars in the heart of the Orion Nebula.

Five hundred sun-like stars were modelled with four, five, or six planets each, for a total of 2,522 planets in all, with masses ranging from around three times that of Earth to around 130 times the mass of Jupiter (that's brown dwarf-sized).

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Team says system controlling California wildfires is 'overridden'

The end of 2017 saw California set on fire, with over a million acres of land charred by what was the most destructive wildfire seasons the state had ever witnessed -- a record that would be surpassed the following year.

The "last three years may be a harbinger of things to come," said Alan H. Taylor, a professor of geography at Pennsylvania State University and the lead author on a study looking at the climatic conditions that cause devastating fires across California. Findings show that a system normally involved in dampening wildfire seasons no longer has the same impact -- and this shift, scientists say, appears to be here to stay.

The paper, published in PNAS, looked at fire activity across the state starting from 1600 A.D. through the present day. Researchers did this by examining jet-stream dynamics specifically that of the North Pacific Jet (NPJ) stream, a high-altitude wind current that affects how much moisture hits California over the winter period.

The amount of snow and rain California receives in winter directly affects fire activity the following summer, so understanding the NPJ is important in predicting risk.

Taylor and his colleagues reconstructed the behavior of the NPJ over the last 400 years using paleoclimate data and climate models. From that, they were able to assess the impact it had on California fires.

Findings showed that before the start of the 20th century, a very specific pattern of precipitation extremes emerged. In years when the NPJ brought extremely wet conditions, wildfire rates were low. When the jet stream brought dry conditions, wildfire rates were high. Essentially, wet conditions reduced fire risk, while dry ones exacerbated it. The relationship was found to be constant over the 300 years.

(Source: Newsweek)

Tyrannosaurus rex, the once and future king, scientists claim

Tyrannosaurus rex is still the biggest, baddest land predator of all time. It was the size of a city bus, with a head almost as long as Tom Cruise is tall and a smile every bit as devastating. Scientists are just as smitten as the rest of us.

After T. rex was first described in 1905, the world's most charismatic megafossil could have turned out to be a mere curiosity. There was no guarantee more would be found, nor could anyone anticipate how interesting its history would turn out to be. But for more than 100 years, T. rex has been an extraordinary gift to the study of dinosaurs, and perhaps to science in general.

Recently, the pace of discovery has quickened, and many of the findings about T. rex, the other tyrannosaurs who were its relatives and the prehistoric lives they led will be celebrated with "T. Rex: The Ultimate Predator," a new exhibit opening March 11 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

The curators of the exhibit in New York are two longtime researchers on T. rex and other dinosaurs: Mark Norrell, the curator of fossil amphibians, reptiles and birds at the museum; and Gregory Erickson, a paleobiologist at Florida State University.

In a joint interview, they were insistent that T. rex is far more than just a pretty, horrifyingly scary face. It's an astonishing evolutionary achievement and a scientific star.

Dr. Norrell said T. rex has helped foster a surge in dinosaur paleontology over the last 20 years, evident in the rising number of researchers and new fossils, and in the increasing sophistication of techniques to study the finds.

"In the last 30 years, the number of tyrannosaurs has increased threefold," he said. In terms of technology, "it's a different world."

Other researchers, like Philip J. Currie, a dinosaur paleobiologist at the University of Alberta in Canada, agreed that the field has exploded. "More is going on now than ever," he said. When he started in the 1970s, "there were probably only six of us in the world who were paid" specifically to study dinosaurs.

(Source: NYT)

Tehran Municipality’s next year budget set at \$4.5b

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Tehran City Council has approved Municipality’s budget amounting to 188 trillion rials (nearly \$4.5 billion) for the next Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), Mohsen Hashemi, Tehran City Council Chairman has said.



Some 182 trillion rials (about \$4.3 billion) had been proposed initially in the Municipality’s budget bill for the next year, which was increased to 188 trillion rials (around \$4.5 billion), he stated, Tasnim reported on Tuesday.

In the current Iranian calendar year, the Municipality received a budget of 175 trillion rials (approximately \$4.1 billion).

20,000 residential units to be constructed for the deprived

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Welfare Organization and the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct 20,000 housing units for the financially struggling families, Mehr reported.

Alireza Tabesh, the Foundation’s head, and Vahid Qobadi Dana, the Organization’s head, inked the MOU during a meeting held in Tehran on Monday.

As per the agreement, 20,000 housing units will be provided to persons with disabilities, breadwinner women, and the underprivileged under the Organization’s coverage residing in villages with a population of less than 25,000, he explained.

Loans amounting to 250 million rials (about \$6,000) will be granted to each family, he said, adding, the two entities will provide some 150 million rials (nearly \$3,500) as non-repayable loans to each family, he noted.

“Moreover, they will be granted free building plots and construction services. We hope to offer better services and funds to these individuals not capable of purchasing houses,” he highlighted.

LEARN ENGLISH

Buying Jewelry

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

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

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

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

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

Mark: That purple one. I’m sorry... I’ve bought many pieces of jewelry for her and this time I’m kind of nervous.

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

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

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

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

Shop assistant: Perhaps you could give her a ring?

Mark: Well...actually...I was thinking about giving her something similar to an engagement ring like the first time I asked Jess to marry me...

Shop assistant: Well sir, I believe your fifth anniversary is a great time to remind the old memories.

Mark: Okay, I’ve decided. I’m going to give her a diamond ring.

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

■ **Key vocabulary**

wedding anniversary: the date on which a wedding took place

mind: to be thinking of something

heart shaped: something in the shape of a heart

pendant: a piece of jewelry that hangs on a chain

gemstone: a stone that can be used in jewelry

amethyst: a clear purple or bluish-purple stone

bracelet: a piece of jewelry worn on the wrist

18K: contain 75% gold

blue topaz: a blue precious stone

platinum: a heavy, silver-colored metal

locket: a small ornamental case

■ **Supplementary vocabulary**

bling bling: a term used to describe shiny jewelry, usually with a lot of diamonds

carat: a unit of weight in gemstones

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

showstopper: something that is so interesting as to figuratively «stop the show»

gold-digger: someone who marries for money

Water flowing again into Zayandehrud river in Noruz

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Zayandehrud river, which was once flowing in central province of Isfahan, will be filled with water again in Noruz holidays (the Iranian New Year celebration, starting March 21), Tasnim news agency reported on Monday.

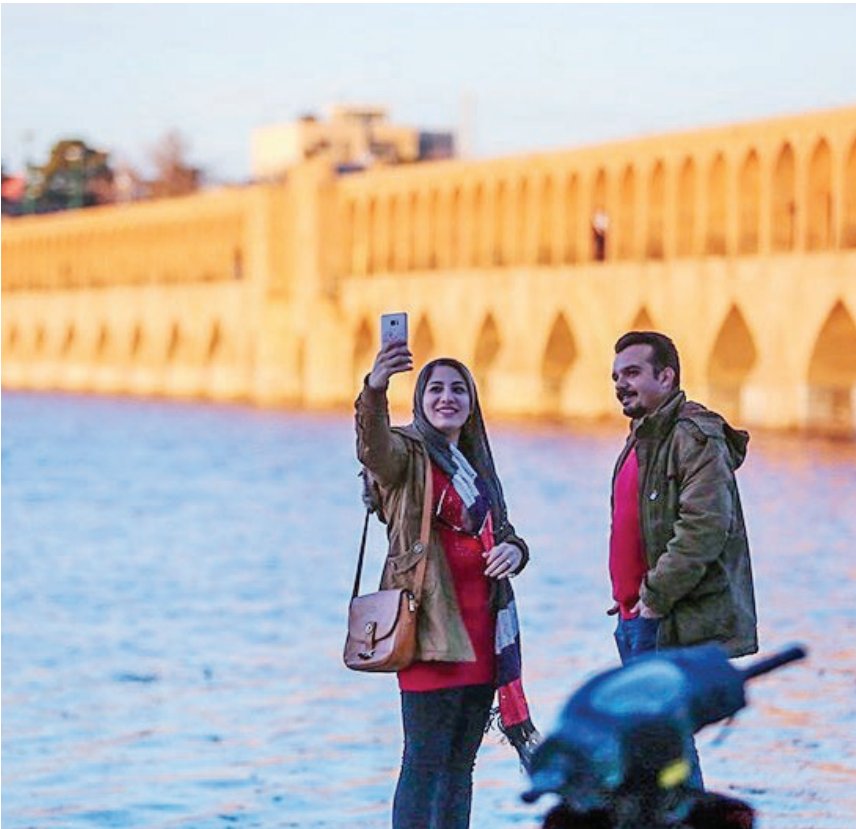
President Hassan Rouhani, sending a letter to Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, has ordered the Ministry to release water into the Zayandehrud river during the Noruz taking irrigation of farmlands into account.

Also, Ali Asghar Mounesan, the head of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, has requested

Ardakanian to allow water flow into the Zayandehrud river during the New Year holidays to help flourish tourism in the region.

Zayanderud river starts in the Zard-Kuh subrange of the Zagros Mountains and flows 400 kilometers eastward before ending in the Gavkhouni swamp in southeast of Isfahan city.

Once wide and mighty, Zayanderud river has been coping with drought in recent years. The river drought has resulted in wide range of problems for people, particularly farmers, of the related regions.



Clean air days double for Tehraners this year

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Tehrani citizens have experienced a 2-fold rise in the number of clean air days since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2018) compared to the same period last year, an official with Department of Environment has said.

Since the aforementioned period, clean air stayed in the capital for 27 days, while last year, during the same period, Tehraners breathed clean air for only 14 days, IRNA quoted Shina Ansari as saying on Sunday.

Also, the air quality of the capital was healthy for 262 days, while being unhealthy for sensitive groups for 59 days, she said, adding that compared to the same period last year, Tehran’s air quality reached healthy levels for 229 days and 97 days of unhealthy for sensitive groups



has hit the capital.

Unfortunately, last year the citizens experienced 8 days of unhealthy air quality, Ansari concluded.

500,000 policemen ready to ensure road safety during Noruz

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Traffic police teams comprising 500,000 policemen will stand guard to confirm safety by monitoring road regulations during the new year holidays (Noruz, starting March 21), road traffic police chief Mohammad Hossein Hamidi has announced.

In this regard, coordination has been made with the related bodies to fully control the country’s roads and highly prevent the probable accidents, he added.

Given this year’s holiday period is longer, trips certainly increases compared to past years, so we decided to constantly monitor the highways, he stated.

Hamidi went on to say that to assure safety of the passengers, some 500,000 traffic police forces will be on duty from



March 16 to April 6.

He further called on passengers to take safety measures, inspect vehicles technically and stay conscious during trips.

Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20-May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran’s Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The three-month period starts from the last month of the current Iranian calendar year to the first two months of the next [Iranian calendar] year (beginning on March 21).

The country’s central part will meet normal rainfall amounts, and the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive minimum rainfall, ISNA quoted Iman Babaean as saying on Sunday.

This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second



month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

He went on to say that the country is predicted to

experience normal temperature or temperature rise of one Celsius degree over the aforementioned period.

Referring to rainfall averages since the beginning of the current crop year (starting on September 23, 2018), Babaeian stated that Iran has received 179 millimeters rainfall while the long-term averages are 143 millimeters, while the average precipitation levels have been recorded nearly 80 millimeters over the same period last year.

So, the country’s precipitation rate has raised by 25.5 and 123 percent compared to the long term mean and last year, respectively, he added.

Province of Kerman set the record high for the lowest precipitation rate being short of rain by 30 percent, after which provinces of Yazd, Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan, Fars and Hormozgan with 22.5, 20, 6, 6, 2 percent drop in rainfall respectively, has received the lowest rain, he explained.

\$3.5m earmarked for two flood-affected provinces

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The government has allocated 151 billion rials (nearly \$3.5 million) to compensate for flood damages in the two provinces of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari and Ardebil, Seyyed Salman Samani, spokesman of the Interior Ministry has said.

A budget of 114 billion rials (around \$2.7 million) have been provided to renovate and reconstruct flood-stricken housing units in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, he stated, ISNA reported on Monday.

Ardebil province also received a total budget of 37 billion rials (nearly \$900,000)

from the government to compensate for the losses resulting from floods and rehabilitating roads and other necessary infrastructures, he added.

Moreover, low-profit loans are to be granted to the flood- affected families, he concluded.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

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‘Only 15% of Tehran’s construction, demolition waste recycled’

While some 50,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is produced in Tehran daily, only 10 to 15 percent of which are recycled and the rest is dumped or disposed, Mohammad Hossein Bazgir, head of Tehran’s department of environment (DOE) has said.

“A good portion of construction wastes can still be usable with proper planning and their usage can be a solution itself to the burgeoning waste issues that the communities and the construction industry face,” Bazgir said.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ness”

■ **Meaning**: quality or condition

■ **For example**: I can adjust the **brightness** and contrast, but it will not save after the settings are adjusted

PHRASAL VERB

Move along

■ **Meaning**: if a process or situation is moving along, it continues and makes progress

■ **For example**: Construction of the bridge is moving along.

IDIOM

Cover your tracks

■ **Explanation**: to conceal or destroy evidence of what you have been doing or where you have been

■ **For example**: Charlie was sorry he hadn’t covered his tracks better when his boss discovered he had been corrupting.

تنها ۱۵ درصد نخاله های ساختمانی تولید شده در تهران بازیافت می شود

رییس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران با بیان اینکه در تهران روزانه ۵۰ هزار تن نخاله ساختمانی تولید می شود، گفت: متأسفانه تنها ۱۰ تا ۱۵ درصد این زباله ها بازیافت می شود و بیش از ۸۰ درصد آن دیو می شود.

محمد حسین بازگیر در گفت و گو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: بازیافت پسماندهای ساختمانی بخشی از فرایند مدیریت پسماند است که سبب می شود این نوع زباله ها دوباره به چرخه مصرف بازگردانده و بسیاری از مشکلاتی که که مردم و صنعت ساخت و ساز با آن روبرو هستند، برطرف شود.

Iran's intelligence body rolls out documentary on infiltrating France-based anti-Iran media

I→ A room in an intelligence organization of Iran is specified to the operation with changes in the decoration so that Nima would feel nothing suspicious. Alireza is still keeping in touch with Zam on a regular basis but this time under round-the-clock surveillance by cameras and microphones of the intelligence forces.

The operation is managed and commanded with a team of scenario writers of the intelligence body who are directing Alireza through this new chapter of his relations with Nima.

The intelligence experts conduct a series of gimmicks to find out more about the depth of Nima's character and the nuances of his personality.

At first they find out that Nima is thirsty for more attention with more surprising news. They concoct new stories to feed the attention-beggar with fake stuff to see how he would deal with weird stories.

Much to their surprise, the sky is the limit for him and Nima's obsession with astounding others has blinded him with stupidity. The con man likes fake news and the more fictional, the merrier.

In the film, you can see all the video dialogues of Alireza and Nima via Whatsapp recorded; in one of the scenes, Alireza is dictating a piece of fake news about travel ban to Iran's central deserts, and Amad News chief hesitates not for even a single moment to release the news immediately on November 22.

During the dialogue, Nima asks Alireza if it is OK to publish the news also on the Asharq Al-Awsat, which shows the close ties between the anti-Iran figure and Saudi-funded media.

However, it is not the first time that the links between anti-Iran elements and Saudi funds is disclosed and, earlier, there were reports about financial supports for the Amad News by entities linked to Saudi Arabia, Israeli intelligence service Mossad, and Turkey.

Seven days later, Nima is fed with another fake news which he again publishes on his outlet, supposing that he has insiders with access to highly classified documents.

This time, Nima surprises his audience with the news that Telegram will be replaced by Elegram by a British national Vasily Dorsiev, a name that you will find no bearer for it online, with zero results in Google. Nima even believes such a big lie, and reassures his followers that he has access to very high secretive information which no one else can verify but he himself.

Little by little, the intelligence experts are more reassured with the fact that Nima is suffering from a malign level of delusions of grandeur.

At a time in the film you can see that Alireza has won Nima's trust and Zam discloses more of his inner feelings to him.

Once Zam tells Alireza that a Jewish astrologist has told a friend of him that Nima will surely become an important person by the future 22 months. He then calls himself as a sun-like god who is shining and kills those who approach him too much.

Gradually, Zam spins more stuff around this illusion and asks other friends to enquire his fortune from more palm readers and horoscopes.

Music to his ear, Nima hears more of this sort of flattery and is offered more mesmerizing soft soap by friends and manipulators.

With his mind-blowing pieces of news, now Zam has accumulated a high level of reputation for himself among the anti-Iran figures linked to Western intelligence services.

Accordingly, the intelligence commanders and experts involved in the operation decide to find out more about other anti-Iran



figures in touch with Zam who are mainly residing in France and the US. They decide to use the newly won fame of Nima, as bait to attract other anti-Iran people.

Alireza asks Nima to establish closer relations with former Iranian president Abolhassen Banisadr who was impeached by the Iranian legislature in June 1981 and fled to Paris the following month.

Nima calls Banisadr's office and an appointment is arranged. French security forces escort him to the venue and while he is in a bullet-proof vehicle, he tells Alireza through a video call that bodyguards with machine guns are accompanying him. With his cellphone, he films one of the machine guns and says, "The French intelligence service is perfect."

After meeting Baniasdr, Nima tells Alireza that guards protecting Baniasdr's place were shocked with the bodyguards in his company who all carried machine guns, and did not let Nima and his protectors to enter in till a call from superior French security ranks issues the permit. He adds that even Banisadr has lost his hope for regime change in Iran.

He adds that Banisadr has reassured him that the US will never attack Iran and Reza Pahlavi is a minor player with no significance. Reza Pahlavi, the son of Iran's last dictator who left the country along with his father in 1979, is another anti-Iran person Nima is asked to get in touch.

Nima downplays Reza Pahlavi, saying that Pahlavi is under total control of his mother, the widow of the toppled king of Iran, and is regarded as an unimportant pawn in this game.

"Reza Pahlavi is no good even for occupying the post of a governor in a village," Nima (Zam) says, despising the son of the deposed king.

"I have information from his close buddies, and I know that he even walks at home at nights imagining himself as reviewing Iran's army," Nima says, quoting a link named as Yasser.

Nima says that the heir to Iran's toppled throne has repetitively sent him messages through mediators to ask for help.

In another scene, Pahlavi and Zam are exchanging messages, and Nima asks Pahlavi what his rank and position will be in the post-coup government of the dreaming prince, hoping that the US will help for staging a coup in Iran.

Amir Abbas Fakhravar is another anti-Iran figure Nima talks about in his video calls with Alireza.

He says that Fakhravar is the most hated anti-Iran person among the US-backed fellows, adding that he is paid \$300,000 per annum for anti-Iran operation.

Zam recounts that a Jewish American is funding Fakhravar, adding that he squan-

ders the whole sum of money with luxurious travels to Washington and other cities with no accomplishment.

Zam brags about his contacts with all anti-Iran figures, and to prove his close ties to Alireza, Nima calls Ardashir Amir Arjmand - the top advisor of Mir-Hossein Mousavi the leader of the 2009 post-election unrests in Iran who is now under house arrest - telling him that he is in Paris and he wants to meet Amir Arjmand.

Amir Arjmand had a destructive role in post-election unrests of 2009 in Iran. Thanks to his brother's high rank in the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), also known as MEK, NCRI or PMOI), Amir Arjmand escaped to Iraqi Kurdistan and there he met with French security agents who took him to Paris.

About the status of MKO terrorist group among US-sponsored anti-Iran groups, Zam tells Alireza that Americans have an instrumental approach to the MKO. Nima says that if Americans manage to stage a coup in Iran, they would use MKO for a short period of reign of terror. "They will be tasked with carrying out a flash massacre to kill a few millions in the first phase, and then they will be eliminated," he adds.

Touching upon Masih Alinejad, Nima says that she is a sentimental and minor role player of no significance.

About his own source of finance, Zam says he and his family were given a bank account upon their arrival in France, adding that he is paid 12,000 euros a month through the bank account of his daughter Mahsa by French authorities.

In their long video talks, Alireza asks for Zam's opinion about other anti-Iran fellows like Nouredin Pirmoazzen, Fatemeh Haqiqatjou, Mohsen Sazgara, Farah Diba, Masih Alinejad, Davoud Kashi, and in most cases, Nima uses pejorative language to describe his fellows as foolhearted idiots, saying that all are his puppets looking up to him.

In another scene, Fakhravar, in a telephone call, tells him that he is looking forward to hearing the latest announcement of the Amad news.

Zam also talks about the network of Western-sponsored media run or presented by Mohammad Hosseini, Bijan Farhoudi, Hassan Shariatmadari, Ali Javanmardi, Hassan Etemadi, and Manouchehr Mohammadi, all the figures who claim to be the noteworthy and at times leader of the opposition of the Islamic Republic.

He boasts in most of the dialogues that all of the media people of anti-Iran networks are lower than him, manipulated by his news.

Early in December, Iranian intelligence experts make up another fake news, concocting that a top secret operation will kick off in Tel Aviv to revive a new monarchy in

Tehran with the new king named as Cyrus the Second.

Following that, Nima released the news about operation Cyrus the Second on December 09 with keywords like "Tehran's Conquest" and the "Big Operation of Restoring Cyrus the Great". The piece jolts the disintegrated opposition front like a powerful quake with many claiming to be the next king!!!

With the latest fake news on line, all the opposition of the Islamic Republic from Mohammad Hosseini, a TV host who has been nicknamed as the clown of opposition, to Farah Diba the widow of the deposed King Pahlavi and her son Reza Pahlavi start new programs to say that they are part of the operation, informed of it, and even claiming to be the Cyrus the Second.

Pressured to realize US National Security Adviser John Bolton's dream of preventing Iran from seeing the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Zam was awarded funds to join a big anti-Iran campaign, codenamed as the Hard Winter.

Zam knows himself as the spiritual father of riots in Iran and the leader of the last year's sporadic protests. He thinks that he can stage a second winter of protests.

In the operation Hard Winter, all anti-Iran people are formed in three ties and all the people involved are promised to be disclosed to the public in future episodes of this documentary by Iranian security bodies. The first tie is called the Council of Media Coordination with ten members.

The tie is comprised of the media people tasked with stirring discontent and unhappiness among the masses of people in Iran.

Ali Javanmardi, a reporter the Voice of America (VOA), is commissioned with stirring disruptions in Iran's foreign currencies exchange markets through fake news to stir anxiety among the Iranian public. He runs a Telegram channel with objectives to sabotage Iran's economy, and is stationed in one of Iran's neighboring countries.

Americans were hopeful to hold the Warsaw conference concurrent with the promised operations of people like Zam inside Iran.

But much to their dismay, all these efforts fruited nothing and the Western funders of the operation got angry.

Following the massive turnout of Iranians in the public rallies of February 11 to mark the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Zam tells Alireza that he is very disappointed and he will turn into husbandry to change his job.

Revealing more of his inner feelings, in another dialogue with Alireza, Nima says that the Islamic Republic of Iran is formidably strengthened.

Angry and disappointed, he says that he was very dispirited how he was treated after he softly criticized Reza Pahlavi. "I found out that these people would hang all our mothers and fathers if they could claim the throne in Tehran."

Shocked with Iran's intelligence superiority in dealing with Western-backed groups, Maziar, the technician in charge of supporting anti-Iran media, tells Nima and Alireza that Iran has managed to gain access to all data transactions through Whatsapp and Instagram social media platforms saying that the Iranian security bodies have eventually broken the key codes of these two social media networks.

Disheartened and much concerned, Zam says that all their connection channels are leaked with holes and Iran is exercising surveillance over them.

The Iranian TV has already aired two episodes of the documentary and promised more in coming days.

Trump attack to the heart of Europe!

I→ But it seems that the EU and the Eurozone officials do not understand this simple truth, or maybe they intentionally close their eyes on it. Undoubtedly, this could bring economic, political and even hard security shocks to Europe in the future. Hence, Europe needs to get out of the phase of interacting with Trump as soon as possible, and take the policy of confronting with the President of the United States.

If the European Union delays in this regard and continue to be optimistic about its future relations with Washington, it will face repeated and synchronous security and economic tensions, which, of course, dealing those will be beyond the power of the European officials.

'Foreign forces withdrawal from Afghanistan to restore regional security'

I→ He highlighted that tolerance, accepting of others, and forgetting past mistakes are necessary for establishing peace, adding: "It is better to end war today than tomorrow because war inflicts more and more devastation and massacres every day."



"We have to admit that Taliban are part of Afghanistan and they have right to live in their own country like other people," he stressed.

He said history shows that all the foreign countries that have sent their troops to Afghanistan have failed and this is the reason why the military presence of these countries is said to be mistake.

"Perhaps the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan has had some benefits, but costs of their presence have been more. Experience has also shown that existence of foreigners does not create peace, security and order as the presence of foreign forces is not compatible with the mindset of the people of the country," he noted.

He believes that withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan will also create security in the region because different factions will agree to ceasefire after withdrawal of foreign troops and as a result regional countries will see no necessity to continue their military presence in Afghanistan.

"Stability in Afghanistan is not only beneficial for people of Afghanistan, but also for neighboring countries. The war in Afghanistan has a direct impact on neighboring countries because irregularities can directly affect the countries of the region and have negative impacts on them," he added.

He mentioned that although foreigners can help Afghanistan, but it would be better for people of Afghanistan to protect their own country themselves. He also added that once NATO member states withdraw their forces from Afghanistan it won't be necessary for other regional states to send their forces to Afghanistan.

In conclusion, he called on people of Afghanistan to unite and choose an appropriate leader, learn from the past and consider priority of their national interests to their own interests.

Pakistan 'wards off Indian submarine'

Pakistan says it has successfully thwarted an alleged attempt by an Indian submarine to enter its waters, amid heightened military tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

The Pakistani Navy said in a statement on Tuesday that the navy "used its specialized skills to ward off the submarine, successfully keeping it from entering Pakistani waters" on Monday night.

"This great feat is a testament of the Pakistan Navy's superior skills. The Navy will keep defending Pakistan's naval border. The force has the capability to respond to any aggression," it said.

The Navy said its forces did not target the submarine due to a government policy of maintaining peace with New Delhi.

India is yet to comment on the Pakistani allegation.

In another confrontation, Indian media cited unnamed sources as saying that an Indian Sukhoi-30 warplane had shot down a Pakistani drone near the city of Bikaner in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan on Monday.

If confirmed, the submarine incident would be the latest in a series of confrontations since last week, when India conducted "preemptive" airstrikes inside Pakistan against what was said to be a militant training camp belonging to the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militant group. The outfit had claimed responsibility for an attack on an Indian security convoy in Pulwama, Indian-administered Kashmir, on February 14. That attack killed more than 40 Indian troops.

Pakistan and India seem to have stepped back from the brink of a war following days of diplomatic tensions and deadly exchange of fire across their borders in the disputed region of Kashmir.

India claimed its airstrikes had killed some 300 militants. Pakistan, however, denied that the Indian raids had left any casualties or material damage. Pakistan retaliated last Wednesday, and also shot down two Indian fighter jets that violated its airspace. It also captured one of the pilots of the warplanes. Two days later, however, it released the pilot in a "peace gesture."

The two have long been engaged in a conflict over the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. They have fought four wars since their partition in 1947, three of them over Kashmir.

(Source: Press TV)



Houthis: UK's Hunt distorting terms of Hudaydah ceasefire deal

Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement has censured recent comments by British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt on the control of Hudaydah, saying the top UK diplomat is distorting the terms of a UN-mediated ceasefire deal reached between the Yemeni warring sides in Sweden over the strategic Red Sea port city.

During a visit to Yemen on Sunday, Hunt -- whose country has been a major supporter of the deadly Saudi-led war on Yemen -- claimed that Hudaydah "was supposed to be cleared of militia and left under neutral control by the beginning of January."

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, a spokesman for the Houthi movement, rejected the comments in a statement released on Monday, stressing that the Hudaydah truce had never mentioned handing over the port city to a "neutral" party.

The ceasefire, he added, had stipulated that after the withdrawal of the warring sides, Hudaydah would be patrolled by an unspecified "local force" with UN observers.

"We are prepared to carry out the redeployment in the first step, but the other party refused because they do not want to expose the aggression mercenaries and to lose the pretexts and justifications for continuing the aggression on the West Coast," Abdul-Salam said.

Representatives from the Houthi movement and the Riyadh-sponsored government of the ex-president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, agreed to cease

fighting in Hudaydah during peace talks in Sweden last December.

Under the agreement, the rival parties also agreed to the withdrawal of their troops and the deployment of UN monitors to the port city, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

However, the Houthis -- who control Hudaydah -- have repeatedly complained about ceasefire breaches by the Saudi-backed side.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Houthi spokesman said that the countries, which are involved in the bloody military campaign against Yemen, especially Britain are the ones violating the Hudaydah truce.

He also said the UN special envoy for Yemen -- a British national -- was relying on the UK in dealing with the Yemen issue.

"Martin Griffith appears not to be an envoy of the United Nations, but an English envoy representing Britain, especially after the British Foreign Office has made its objectives and position clear, which is in line with the obstruction of the agreement," the Houthi official added.

"Britain has clearly revealed that it manages the process of blocking the agreement through its envoy to Yemen under the cover of the United Nations," he pointed out.

Hudaydah, the entry point for most of Yemen's commercial goods and vital aid, has seen some of the heaviest fighting in the four-year Saudi war.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE launched the offensive



against Hudaydah in June 2018, but they have faced strong resistance put up by Yemeni armed forces -- led by the Houthis -- and the city's residents.

The Saudi-led coalition claims that the Houthis are using the port for weapons delivery, an allegation rejected by the fighters.

The UK has licensed over £4.7 billion worth of arms exports, including missiles and fighter jets, to Riyadh since the Saudi regime and its allies launched a broader military campaign against Yemen in early 2015.

Britain has also been providing combat intelligence and target data to Saudi Arabia over the course of the war.

(Source: Press TV)

Manchester United’s Sanchez out for up to two months

Manchester United forward Alexis Sanchez is facing up to an eight-week spell on the sidelines due to a knee ligament injury, according to the physiotherapist of the Chilean national team.

Sanchez, 30, injured the medial ligament in his right knee during United’s 3-2 Premier League victory over Southampton on Saturday but is expected to be fit to represent Chile at the Copa American, which starts on June 14, physio Pedro Onate told Chilean newspaper El Mercurio.

Sanchez could return for United’s last two league games against Huddersfield Town and Cardiff City, but any setback in his rehabilitation would mean he has played his last match this season.

United are already without a host of players for Wednesday’s Champions League last 16 second leg at Paris St Germain due to injury, while midfielder Paul Pogba is suspended for the tie.

They trail PSG 2-0 on aggregate after losing the first leg at Old Trafford.

(Source: Reuters)

FIFA recommends use of VAR at 2019 Women’s World Cup

FIFA has recommended the use of video assistant referee (VAR) technology for the 2019 Women’s World Cup in France this year.

The organising committee of world soccer’s governing body met on Monday and backed the use of VAR at the tournament after it was introduced at the men’s World Cup last year in Russia.

The FIFA council will make a final decision on whether the technology will be used at this year’s women’s event, which runs from June 7-July 7, when it meets in Miami later this month.

“I can’t see them not having (VAR), I think it would be a little bit insulting if we weren’t afforded the same opportunity (as the men),” U.S. coach Jill Ellis said in July.

The technology, which is operating in most of the leading European soccer leagues, has been used in the Champions League knockout stage for the first time this season.

The English Premier League plans to use VAR next season.

(Source: Mirror)

Man City owners keen to invest in Indian club this year

The owners of Premier League champions Manchester City are considering investing in a club in India as part of an effort to increase their presence in Asia, chief executive Ferran Soriano has said.

City Football Group (CFG), which owns seven clubs including Major League Soccer’s New York City FC, Spanish side Girona, Japan’s Yokohama F Marinos and A-League’s Melbourne City, hope to complete a deal for a club in India by the end of the year.

“We have some interest in some markets and countries where there is a genuine football passion and opportunities, like China, but also India,” Soriano was quoted as saying by the BBC.

“There might be other opportunities in Asia. We’ve been looking at India for nearly two years now. I’d say this year we’ll end up doing an investment in India.”

Soriano attended the Indian Super League (ISL) match between Jamshedpur FC against Mumbai City FC in early 2018. He was invited by Tata Steel, who own the Jamshedpur club.

ISL side Mumbai City FC have been in touch with CFG since last season, a club source told Reuters.

“Preliminary talks were held with Mumbai but Manchester City are in discussions with couple of clubs in India,” the source added.

Mumbai City, which is co-owned by Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor, had the likes of Freddie Ljungberg, Nicolas Anelka and Diego Forlan as their marquee players in the past.

(Source: Eurosport)

Murray will put ‘heart and soul’ into return, says mum Judy

Andy Murray will put his “heart and soul” into trying to return to professional tennis, his mother Judy has said, although she admitted the player’s future is unclear.

The 31-year-old underwent hip resurfacing surgery at the end of January in a final throw of the dice to try to overcome the problem that first became a serious issue in 2017.

The operation was performed primarily to improve his quality of life, with Murray revealing that he struggled simply to put on his socks and shoes, but also offered a potential route back to the sport.

“He is doing pretty well. It is not that long since he had the operation and time will tell,” Judy Murray told Sky Sports.

“Nobody knows how he is going to recover in the longer term. He is in a good place mentally and we just keep our fingers crossed.

“But I tell you, if anybody can do it he can because he will put his heart and soul into it like he does with everything.”

The former world number one announced at an emotional press conference ahead of the Australian Open in January that he planned to retire after Wimbledon but was more hopeful following a remarkable five-set defeat by Roberto Bautista Agut in the first round.

No player has come back from the same operation to play singles but American Bob Bryan recently returned in doubles and won an ATP Tour title in Delray Beach last month with his brother Mike.

Bryan said in Australia that he no longer felt any pain and backed Murray to follow him by making a comeback.

(Source: AFP)

LeBron’s first season in Los Angeles has become a disaster



It was the fall of 1981 and Magic Johnson was not happy. The Los Angeles Lakers had just won five in a row, but Johnson was feeling constrained by the new offense head coach Paul Westhead had installed.

Westhead met with his star point guard over what he called a “lack of concentration,” according to a Sports Illustrated report. It didn’t go well. Because in the locker room after that meeting, Johnson told the media he couldn’t play under Westhead’s system anymore and wanted to be traded.

John Rockwell, a close friend of Lakers owner Dr. Jerry Buss, was dispatched to find a solution that didn’t involve trading the conductor of Showtime.

“I go to Jerry and he says, ‘Well, that’s not a problem at all,’” Rockwell recalled in a recent interview with ESPN. “He said, ‘Just fire the coach.’ So, that’s what he did. I was really surprised, but Magic was very important to the team.”

There is perhaps no greater articulation of the Lakers’ unwavering commitment to the star system than the clarity Buss showed in choosing Johnson over Westhead.

There was no hesitation. Westhead was fired the next morning when the team returned to Los Angeles with three years and more than \$1 million remaining on his contract. Pat Riley took over as head coach, and the rest is history.

The rest is history because Johnson performed and won championships. That’s the other side of giving stars whatever they want,

or think they want, in order to be happy. You better win enough to make all the special consideration worth it.

Kobe Bryant could dictate when and how much he was going to play, practice or pass to his teammates because he would go out and will the team to wins. And as he aged, Buss’ kids rewarded Bryant for the five championships he won the franchise with a two-year, \$48.5 million contract as he was coming off a torn Achilles’ tendon, just as Buss had rewarded Johnson.

Quarter-finals or the exit door for Di Francesco?



AS Roma coach Eusebio Di Francesco could lead his team into the Champions League quarter-finals or be shown the exit door depending on the outcome of their round of 16 match at Porto on Wednesday.

After a season of remarkable inconsistency, Italian media have reported that Di Francesco’s job will be at stake when they defend a 2-1 lead away to the Portuguese champions at the Estadio do Dragao in Wednesday’s second leg.

Former Fiorentina coach Paulo Sousa is the favourite to replace Di Francesco should he be fired, according to Italian media, who said the Portuguese will be in the stands on Wednesday.

Another possibility for a replacement is former Roma defender Christian Panucci, who is currently coach of the Albanian national side. The club has not made any official comment on the coach’s situation.

Roma had just got over their 7-1 Coppa Italia drubbing by Fiorentina in January when they were thumped 3-0 by neighbours Lazio in their derby on Saturday, further stretching the patience of the fans and the club directors.

Di Francesco himself admitted it was not good enough and was especially angry at Lazio’s first goal, scored from a move which began with a throw-in.

(Source: Reuters)

“You can’t concede a goal through the middle from a throw-in – it was all too easy for them. We got our marking wrong,” he said. “It can happen to anyone but it’s been happening a bit too often to us this season.

“We really must work on the mental side of things. We seem to be on and off.”

The 49-year-old led Roma to third place in Serie A and the Champions League semi-finals last season - his first at the club - was rewarded with a new two-year contract.

Although there have been some impressive performances this season, especially from 19-year-old midfielder Nicolò Zaniolo, they have been overshadowed by Roma’s tendency to collapse.

Roma have been beaten by Bologna, SPAL and Udinese - all teams in the lower half of the table - and also managed to blow a two-goal lead at home to bottom-of-the-table Chievo, when they were held 2-2.

Then, in the space of four days in January, they squandered a three-goal lead at Atalanta to be held 3-3 before suffering their seven-goal mauling at the hands of Fiorentina. Di Francesco has been left fishing for explanations and there have been some unusual ones, such as the suggestion he made earlier in the season that striker Edin Dzeko is less effective in daylight.

(Source: Reuters)

Because of their experience with superstars and everything they bring along with them, there was perhaps no better franchise for LeBron James to play out his golden years than the Lakers.

They knew how to handle superstars. And at this stage in James’ career, with three championships, eight consecutive NBA Finals appearances to his name and an equally burgeoning business and political profile off the court, James is a transcendent star. So, the Lakers were prepared to do whatever he

needed to be happy. He didn’t want to have a media conference in Los Angeles before he opened his Promise School back in Akron, Ohio. The Lakers said OK.

He talked with Johnson about finding playmakers and guys known for their toughness, which effectively resulted in a roster lacking in shooting and floor spacing. The Lakers went out and got players who fit that description -- who were willing to play on one-year deals.

Johnson said the Lakers didn’t want to make the team like the Cleveland Cavaliers all over again for James. But sure enough, James found himself back in a ball-dominant role; though he didn’t have the shooters surrounding him to space the floor and open driving lanes to capitalize on his pinpoint passing, like he did in Miami and Cleveland.

Magic was right. It wasn’t like Cleveland all over again: Los Angeles is ranked 22nd in offensive efficiency this season with the roster he put together.

But it all could have worked if James hadn’t gotten hurt on Christmas Day and missed 18 of the next 19 games. James was just starting to find his footing with this new cast in Los Angeles. The team was starting to get healthy and find enough consistency to develop an identity.

Of course, James did get hurt. And pretty much everything since then has been a disaster.

(Source: ESPN)

F1 implementing Brexit ‘contingency plans’



Formula 1 is implementing “contingency plans” to deal with the consequences of Brexit, including possibly basing more material on mainland Europe, its chief executive Chase Carey said Tuesday.

Several F1 teams have warned that Britain’s departure from the European Union, especially if it comes without a withdrawal agreement, will create logistical nightmares for an industry that relies on international staff and specialised goods moving in and out of Britain.

Mercedes team CEO Toto Wolff said Brexit could trigger “the mother of all messes” for his Northamptonshire-based team. Six of the 10 teams taking in the 2019 grand prix series are based in Britain.

Carey told reporters at the Geneva International Motor Show that F1 was trying to make plans despite the uncertainty surrounding the timing and nature of Brexit.

“We are making contingency plans for trying to make sure we are prepared to deal with the issues that possibly arise that would make getting people and things in and out of the UK more difficult,” Carey said.

He added that he considered complications surrounding the movement of goods more problematic than possible visa issues for international staffers with British-based teams.

Currently, F1 supports teams by transferring goods predominately from Britain to various European sites.

“We bring them in and out of the UK now. We obviously can bring them in and out of somewhere else,” Carey said.

Some F1 teams have suggested that teams based on the continent would have an advantage if new rules complicated the import of products into Britain, especially since teams typically work on tight deadlines.

Carey declined to comment on “speculation” about competitive imbalance. “We don’t know what is going to happen anymore than anyone else,” he said.

Britain is scheduled to leave the EU on March 29 but Prime Minister Theresa May’s divorce deal has not yet been approved by parliament, raising the prospect of Brexit being delayed.

The alternative is Britain leaving on time without an agreement, a doomsday option both sides would like to avoid.

EU and UK officials were trying to negotiate a compromise in Brussels on Tuesday that could win parliamentary support.

After purchasing F1 in 2017, US-based Liberty Media has sought to reform the business, in part through investments to reach new audiences.

(Source: France 24)

‘Put the egos to one side’ - Dani Alves and PSG’s drive for Champions League glory



Dani Alves jokes that Paris Saint-Germain are still Champions League “virgins”, but the presence of players like the decorated Brazilian only helps make them more credible contenders to win the coveted trophy.

In a glittering career, Alves has won the Champions League three times with Barcelona and reached another final with Juventus.

He is a veteran now, his 36th birthday falling several weeks before this season’s final, and he is conscious of what players like him and goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, now 41, can add to a PSG squad already featuring Neymar and Kylian Mbappe.

“We know how to win and how to lose. What we try to transmit to the others is that either we all go together in the same direction, or we leave the doors open to a defeat,” Alves tells AFP in an exclusive interview.

He is speaking at the club’s training ground in the up-market Paris suburb of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 48 hours before their last 16, second leg at home to Manchester United.

The mood is relaxed, with confidence high in Paris that Thomas Tuchel’s side will make good their 2-0 first-leg win last month, achieved without Neymar and Edinson Cavani, the two superstars both out injured.

“This is not a competition that depends only on one player having a spectacular day,” he insists. “When you have experienced players, you don’t tremble when it comes to playing in a hostile atmosphere, or under pressure.”

■ ‘The right side dishes’

In his first campaign at PSG last season, they were knocked out at this stage by Real Madrid, the first time Alves had

not been involved in the quarter-finals of the Champions League in a decade.

It was an enormous disappointment for Paris and their Qatari owners, who had just paid the two biggest transfer fees in history for Neymar and Mbappe.

“I always talk about how we have special players here, like ‘Ney’, like Kylian, like ‘Edi’, who at some point can make the difference, and we have to help them,” Alves says.

“Otherwise it would be like having a big meal without the right side dishes, and it wouldn’t have the same flavour.” But what dish would he be?

“I’d be the fish, with the calm head, but at the same time...”

He uses his hands to motion a fish swimming through the water, the gesture suggesting a playful element, a touch

of madness mixed with the intelligence.

Alves, a brilliant full-back with limitless energy, has recently been reinvented as a midfielder, fully recovered from the knee injury which saw him miss last year’s World Cup.

■ A great year?

He is happy in Paris, and the happiness is infectious.

“I like to get on with everyone. I ask myself how I can get on with this guy, with that guy. Because what happens on the pitch sort of reflects how things are off it,” he says as he discusses getting along with a squad full of big names.

“We spend more time here than we do with our families, so you need to get on with people, have fun, and that is reflected on the pitch.

“We try to put the egos to one side -- because like it or not people have egos. “We need to not let that show through, because then you stop thinking about being happy, and life is not about being right, it’s about being happy!”

It is certainly easy to see how he might be happier now in Paris under Tuchel, a warmer, more charismatic coach than his predecessor, Unai Emery.

PSG don’t just want to get past United -- they want to go beyond the last eight, something they have not managed since the Qatari takeover in 2011.

“We are lucky this year to have a management team that is liked, respected by everyone, that there is an incredible atmosphere,” he says.

“Everything has been put in place to make this a great year for us.”

(Source: AFP)

Not good enough for Iranian teams at 2019 ACL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis were held to a 1-1 draw against Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan, while Esteghlal suffered a 3-0 defeat against Al Duhail of Qatar in their 2019 AFC Champions League openers on Tuesday.

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Marat Bikmaev stunned the crowd after opening the goal with a header in the 5th minute.

Last year's finalists drew level in the 25th minute after Bashar Resan found Mario Budimir inside the box.

The Croatian advanced and drilled one into the bottom corner of Sanjar Kuvvatov's net.

Pakhtakor defended resiliently and looked to strike on the counter, but there were no clear-cut chances on either side, and the two teams went into the break level.

In the second half, Resan, Kamal Kamy-

binia and Siamak Nematy attempted their own luck but failed to find the goal.

Persepolis will travel to Doha for a repeat of last year's semi-final against Al Sadd next week in Group D, while Pakhtakor's Matchday Two encounter sees them host Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli.

In Doha, Esteghlal suffered a heavy 3-0 defeat against star-studded Al Duhail. Medhi Benatia opened the scoring for the Qatari giants with a header at the Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium.

Youssef El-Arabi made it 2-0 in the 73rd minute and Karim Boudiaf was on target in the 89th minute.

Esteghlal will host Al-Ain of the UAE next week and Al-Duhail travel to Riyadh to meet Al Hilal.

On Monday, another Iranian team Zob Ahan were held to a goalless draw against Al-Zawraa.



Iran crowned champions at Fajr Weightlifting Cup



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran claimed the title of the fourth International Fajr Weightlifting Cup held in Tehran, Iran.

On Monday, the Iranian team claimed three gold and two silver medals in the competition held at the Azadi Hall.

Kianoush Rostami took a gold medal in the 96kg for a total of 392kg.

Ali Hashemi won a gold medal in the 109kg after lifting a total of 404kg and Kia Ghadami snatched a silver medal with the

same lift in this category.

Also, Ali Davoudi claimed the title with a total of 421kg in the +109kg and Alireza Soleymani won the silver with 382kg in the weight class.

Iran won the title with 461.7 points, followed by Germany (362.5) and Iraq (283.5).

The Fajr Weightlifting Cup served as the 2020 Summer Olympics qualifiers.

The international competition had seven men's weight categories — 61kg, 67kg, 73kg, 81kg, 96kg, 109kg and +109kg.

of relief heading into the dressing room without conceding, as Hassan came to the rescue one more time before the break, denying Vahid Mohammadzadeh's looping header in the 41st minute.

The Iranian crowd at Fooladshahr Stadium thought their team had fallen behind when Alaa Abbas took Mohammed Abdulzahra's cross first-time at the far post, but the ball ended up hitting the side netting.

Amir Mottahari nearly snatched the three points for Zob Ahan at the death, capitalising on a defensive mix-up to break free and fire into the bottom corner, but the Al Zawraa goalkeeper had the angle covered and parried the ball behind.

Al Zawraa play their first-ever AFC Champions League match on home soil against Al Wasl next week in Karbala, while Zob Ahan travel to Dubai to face Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr in the group's second Matchday Two fixture.

(Source: the-afc)

participating teams of the 2019 AFC U-16 Women's Championship.

A total of eight teams qualify to play in the final tournament held in Thailand, four of which are decided by qualification.

(Source: the-afc)

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A sleep which is based on certainty, is better than a prayer which is performed with doubt.

Imam Ali (AS)

Novels from Western literature comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Four novels from Western literature have recently been published in Persian in Iran.

All the four books have been published by the Tehran-based Cheshmeh Publications.



Front covers of the Persian versions of the books published by Cheshmeh Publications in Tehran.

Italian writer Antonio Tabucchi's "The Black Angel" rendered into Persian by Asmar Musavinia is one of the books.

It contains six short stories, which are held together by a single theme of evil that is shown as a black angel.

Another highlight of the books is Victor Hugo's novella "The Last Day of a Condemned Man" translated by Banafsheh Farisabadi.

The story is about a man who has been condemned to death by the guillotine in 19th-century France. He writes down his feelings and fears while awaiting his execution.

French novelist Olivier Adam's "In the Shelter of Nothing", about a married woman and mother, Marie, who dedicated her life to immigrants at the refugee camps, is another book, which has been translated into Persian by Maral Didari.

Translated by Erfan Mojib, "Flaubert's Parrot" by English writer Julian Barnes is also among the books. It is about Geoffrey Braithwaite, a widowed, retired English doctor, who is visiting France and Flaubert locations.

The book was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1984 and won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize the following year.

Cheshmeh has also recently published "Red Sorghum" by Chinese writer Mo Yan. Translated by Nasser Kuhgilani, the story revolves around three generations of the Shandong family's struggles for living and earning money between 1923 and 1976.

Conference named "Talan" director Cultural Figure of the Year

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Mohammad-Sadeq Dehqani was selected as the Cultural Figure of the Year on Monday during the National Water Day Conference for his documentary "Talan".

The documentary, which is about underground waters, went on screen during the conference organized by the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture and Iran Water Resources Management Company.

The film has been acclaimed at several events, including the Iran Cinema Celebration.

"Talan" is currently on screen at the Art and Experience Cinemas, which are dedicated to screening documentary and art films.

A poster for Iranian filmmaker Mohammad-Sadeq Dehqani's documentary "Talan".

"Corpse Bride" musical to go on stage in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Omidreza Sepeshi and his troupe plan to stage a musical adaptation of American director Tim Burton's 2005 animation "Corpse Bride" at Tehran's Espinas Palace Hotel during May.

Composer Milad Mahdavi and the Istgah Orchestra under the direction of conductor Mehdi Noruzi will be collaborating on the project, a public relations team announced on Tuesday.

"Corpse Bride" tells the story of Victor and Victoria, who are preparing for their arranged marriage. When Victor practices his wedding vows in the inadvertent presence of a deceased young woman, she rises from the grave assuming he has married her.

The film was nominated for the 78th Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature.

Maestro Farhad Fakhreddini's book "Under Heaven" unveiled in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Maestro Farhad Fakhreddini's book "Under Heaven" was unveiled during a ceremony in Tehran on Monday.

The book that reviews the relations between different arts and also contains his notes and interviews was published by Moin Publications.

The ceremony attended by a number of veteran musicians and art elites was organized at the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Cultural Institute (ECI).

Speaking at the meeting, Music House director Hamidreza Nurbakhsh said, "We need more unity and kindness, and Fakhreddini is one of the forerunners of this unity."

"Fakhreddini has no need to be introduced. Every individual remembers him well; he has composed precious and lasting compositions for decades," he added.

As a co-founder of the Music House, Fakhreddini presides over the high council

of the organization. He is also the founder and the former conductor of the National Orchestra.

Tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh next talked about Fakhreddini. He said, "When we say Fakhreddini, it is equal to spirituality. We are full of love and affection, and whoever we adore, he/she becomes a world for us. When we get together for Fakhreddini, it is as if spring is on the way."

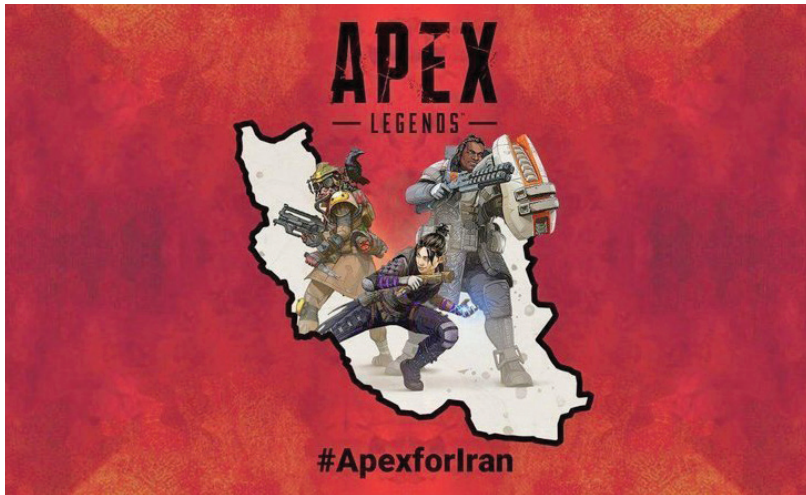
However, he regretted that the society has been void of personalities like Fakhreddini, and said that if there had been more persons like him, the society would have already reached excellence.

Alizadeh also expressed his thanks to the Music House for organizing such events, creating a chance to experience more democracy.

Fakhreddini also thanked the organizers and said that he always has tried to promote unity and solidarity.

"We live with our memories. When Mr.

Iranian gamers launch campaign against sanctions targeting Apex Legends



A poster for Iranian gamers' campaign #apexforiran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian gamers who have been having problems with playing Apex Legends have launched a campaign against the U.S. sanctions targeting web services for the free-to-play Battle Royale game.

Speaking to the Persian service of MNS on Tuesday, Ali Fakhar, an official from the National Foundation for Computer Games (NFCG), said that Amazon Web Services (AWS) provides the facilities for Apex Legends gamers.

The foundation has investigated the issue and found the problems have been produced as a result of participation by Amazon Web Services in the sanctions against Iran, he added.

Over 33,000 Iranian gamers are participating in the campaign, which is being supported by the foundation, he said.

Many other users have also joined the campaign with #apexforiran on Twitter, he added.

Developed by Respawn Entertainment and published by Electronic Arts, Apex Legends was released for Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One on February 4, 2019.

According to Gamesopt, Apex Legends had reached 25 million players in one week after its release with over 2 million peak concurrent players, and by the end of its first month, it had reached 50 million players.

British museum to return royal hair seized in Ethiopia 150 years ago

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters) — A museum in Britain has agreed to return a ruler's locks of hair cut from his corpse by a British soldier more than 150 years ago, Ethiopia said on Monday.

Emperor Tewodros II took his own life after his defeat by British troops at the Battle of Magdala in northern Ethiopia in 1868. His son, Prince Alemayehu, was subsequently taken to Britain, where he died in 1879 aged 18.

The locks, cut as a souvenir by an army artist, have been part of The National Army Museum's collection in London since 1959, donated by the family of an artist who painted the emperor on his deathbed, the museum said.

It had agreed to repatriate the items from its collection, considered to be human remains, after a request from Ethiopia's minister of culture and tourism in April last year, the museum said in a statement.

"The objects are considered significant to the Museum's collection for their historical connection to a major and unique campaign fought by the British Army in 1868 and were collected in good faith," it said.

"The National Army Museum remains in discussions with the Embassy of Ethiopia in London on arrangements for formally returning the items."

The Ethiopian Embassy in Britain "welcomes and commends the unanimous decision by the Trustees of the National Army Museum to return locks of hair belonging to Ethiopia's Emperor Tewodros II," it said in a statement.

"For Ethiopians everywhere, as the locks of hair represent the remains of one of the country's most revered and beloved leaders, a display of jubilant euphoria is



A traditionally-dressed Ethiopian woman walks past a mural depicting Ethiopia's Emperor Tewodros II in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 1, 2007. (Reuters/Andrew Heavens)

to be expected when it is returned to its rightful home in Ethiopia," it said.

Emperor Tewodros II claimed a bloodline dating back to the biblical King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. His demise came after a British force stormed his mountaintop fortress to free European diplomats, missionaries and adventurers he had jailed.

The return of his hair follows a string of requests by Ethiopia for the repatriation of human remains and hundreds of illuminated manuscripts, gold crowns and other artifacts it says were stolen in 1868.

The Horn of Africa country has also been campaigning for the return of Prince Alemayehu's bones. The young royal was buried in the crypt of St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

Britain - also embroiled in a dispute with Greece over the return of the Parthenon Marbles - has so far resisted the campaigns, citing legislation that bans its museums from permanently disposing of their collections.

Palme d'Or winner Shahab Hosseini lends voice to "Shekarestan"



Shahab Hosseini poses during a photocall after accepting the Palme d'Or for best actor for his role in "The Salesman" at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France on May 22, 2016. (Photo by Reuters)

A R T **TEHRAN** — Palme d'Or winning actor Shahab Hosseini has lent his voice to the storyteller in the new season of the popular Iranian animated series, "Shekarestan".

He has replaced actor Morteza Ahamdi who died in 2014.

The new season is being produced at Tehran's Saba Art and Cultural Institute, producer Masud Safavi told the Persian service of MNA on Tuesday.

He added that the season is composed of 100 episodes, 13 of which will be preparing for broadcast on IRIB Channel

2 during the Noruz holiday in March.

Hosseini is mostly famous for his role in Asghar Farhadi's "The Salesman", which brought him the Palme d'Or for best actor at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016.

"Shekarestan" features stories inspired by ancient Persian proverbs and anecdotes.

Veteran actor Ahmadi gave his voice to the storyteller in the previous seasons of "Shekarestan". He appeared in over 30 films and also voiced many animation characters over his 65-year career. He was famous for his voice of the sly fox that tricks Pinocchio.

Ex "Beverly Hills, 90210" star Luke Perry dead at 52 after stroke

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Actor Luke Perry, who rose to superstardom on the teen-oriented 1990s U.S. television drama "Beverly Hills 90210" and then aged into a fatherly role on comic-based "Riverdale," died on Monday at the age of 52 after suffering a "massive" stroke last week, his publicist said.

Publicist Arnold Robinson said Perry died in a Los Angeles area hospital surrounded by his family and close friends, including his former wife Minnie Sharp, his two children, and his fiancée Wendy Madison Bauer.

"The family appreciates the outpouring of support and prayers that have been extended to Luke from around the world, and respectfully request privacy in this time of great mourning. No further details will be released at this time," Robinson said in a statement.

Perry was rushed to a Los Angeles hospital on Wednesday after suffering the stroke at his home, celebrity website TMZ.com reported last week. TMZ said on Monday that Perry never recovered consciousness.

Perry was taken ill the same day that Fox television announced it was reviving the "Beverly Hills 90210" series with many of the original cast, including Jason Priestley, Jennie Garth and Tori Spelling. Perry was not among those announced as returning for the limited run of six new episodes this summer.

Since 2016, Perry had played Fred Andrews, father of Archie Andrews, in the television series "Riverdale," a dark twist on the Archie comic books, but more than 20 years earlier the actor had been a heartthrob who adorned the cover of scores of magazines aimed at adolescent girls, thanks to "Beverly Hills 90210."

"Riverdale" producers in a statement called Perry an "incredibly caring, consum-



U.S. actor Luke Perry poses during a photocall to promote his television series "Goodnight For Justice" at the annual MIPCOM television program market in Cannes, southeastern France, October 5, 2010. (Reuters/Eric Gaillard)

mate professional." Molly Ringwald, one of his co-stars on the show, said on Twitter, "My heart is broken."

"Beverly Hills, 90210," which aired on the Fox network, was about a group of attractive high school students living the sweet life amid Southern California affluence while dealing with teen angst, as well as a raft of more serious issues such as AIDS.

Perry was in his mid-20s when he started playing high schooler Dylan McKay, a brooding loner on a motorcycle with prominent sideburns and bad-boy tendencies. An avalanche of comparisons to the late James Dean soon followed.

"Beverly Hills 90210" got off to a slow start in the ratings in 1990 but built a cult following that grew to become a cultural phenomenon with its target demographic. One of the key plot lines was Perry's character developing a romance with Brenda, a wholesome Midwestern transplant to Beverly Hills, played by Shannen Doherty, before moving on to her best friend, Kelly, played by Garth.