



Zarif urges counterparts to resist U.S. 'provocative' move on IRGC **2**



Iran to play June friendly against Syria **15**



Tehran Intl. Book Fair seeks to boost Iran's cultural diplomacy: organizer **16**

Congratulations on birthday of Imam Mahdi (AS)

Leader hails Army-IRGC brotherhood vs. U.S. 'ugly move'



See page 2

Over \$1.6b to be allocated for flood compensation

TEHRAN — Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization Mohammad Baqer Nobakht announced on Wednesday that at least 70 trillion rials (about \$1.66 billion) is going to be allocated for compensating losses incurred to those who have been affected by recent floods in the country. In late March, President Hassan Rouhani promised compensation to all those affected by flash floods.

Rouhani assured citizens, especially flood-affected farmers, that all losses will be compensated. About 1,900 cities and villages in Iran were affected by floods and exceptionally heavy rains since March 19. Iranian Ministry of Agriculture estimated the damages caused by the recent floods to the country's agricultural sector at 46.6 trillion rials (nearly \$1.1 billion).

Trump administration ignoring international law, Zarif says

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Wednesday that the Donald Trump government is ignoring international law. During a joint press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in Ankara, Zarif said that Iran and Turkey believe that law should be respected in all areas. According to Anadolu Agency, Cavu-

soglu said that Turkey will continue telling the U.S. that sanctions on Iran are "wrong". "Our ministers expressed Turkey's concerns to U.S. counterparts in a recent meeting," he said, referring to Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak and Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan, who visited Washington and met with top U.S. officials, including President Donald Trump, on Monday. **→2**

Trump vetoes resolution on ending U.S. involvement in Yemen war

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump has vetoed a congressional resolution to end American support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, which has so far claimed thousands of innocent lives and left the impoverished nation struggling with the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world.

Trump on Tuesday vetoed a bill passed by Congress to stop American military support for Saudi Arabia's aggression on Yemen, describing the resolution as an "unnecessary," and "dangerous attempt" to weaken his constitutional authorities, AP reported. **→13**



EDITORIAL
Mohammad Ghaderi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief
@ghaderi62

The dark fate of Trump in Yemen

The crimes of the United States are continuing in Yemen. These crimes began under President Barack Obama and Democrats in power, and continue to this day (during the Trump presidency). Recent events that took place at the U.S. Congress show that Washington plans to continue killing innocent people in Yemen and create a famine in the country.

U.S. President Donald Trump has vetoed a bill passed by Congress to end support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Trump described the resolution as an "unnecessary" and "dangerous" attempt to weaken his constitutional powers.

It is only the second time Trump has used his presidential veto since he took office in 2017. Opposition in Congress to his policy on Yemen grew last year after Saudi agents killed the journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

The resolution passed the House of Representatives in April and the Senate in March, the first time both chambers had supported a War Powers resolution, which limits the president's ability to send troops into action.

Yet, about four years have passed since the beginning of the Yemeni war, and the result of the presence of Mohammed bin Salman and his mercenaries in Yemen has been nothing but the defeat for Saudi Arabia. During the Yemeni war, the Democratic senators (who are now opposing to this war) said nothing against the killing of Yemeni children, but directly and indirectly supported it many times.

Without a doubt, the name of Trump will remain in the name of the murderer of the Yemeni people. This nickname will also be attributed to former U.S. President Barack Obama. American officials, both Democrat and Republican, have played a major role in killing the Yemeni people.

During the presidency of Donald Trump, he continued the same way which the Obama administration took in support for the war in Yemen. Meanwhile, some of Mohammed bin Salman's atrocities and Trump's excessive investments on the slaughterous prince of Saudi Arabia attracted the attention of the most Democrats and some American senators, such as Lindsay Graham. **→7**

New government formation in West Bank is great betrayal: al-Zahar

TEHRAN (MNA) — Co-founder of Hamas and member of the Hamas leadership Mahmoud al-Zahar stressed that the Palestinian Authority doesn't belong to the Palestinian people and also does not represent them.

The new Palestinian Authority cabinet, headed by Mohammad Shtayyeh, recently swore before Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Formation of the cabinet by Mahmoud Abbas's order and without the Palestinian National Consensus has been opposed by the majority of the Palestinian factions. In the new Palestinian Authority cabinet, 16 new ministers came to power

and five ministers from the former government headed by prime minister Rami Hamdallah remained in Power.

On the other hand, we witnessed the Knesset election 2019 in Israel and the victory of Likud party under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu which was also required to form a new cabinet of the regime.

Accordingly, Mehr News Agency had an interview with Mahmoud Al-Zahar, a senior member of the Hamas leadership as follows.

■ What is the effect of formation of a new administration in the West Bank on the internal

conflicts of Palestine?

A: The Palestinian Authority has not naturally belonged to Palestinian people and also does not represent them. The organization separated Gaza from the West Bank and the occupied territories from the Palestinian issue. In fact, this is a major project for betraying Palestine, which began with the Oslo Accords (a set of agreements between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): the Oslo I Accord, signed in Washington, D.C., in 1993; and the Oslo II Accord, signed in Taba, Egypt, in 1995) and led to the formation of this administration in the West Bank. **→7**

'Sanctions aimed at bringing Iran to negotiating table with U.S.'

TEHRAN (MNA) — The former Iranian ambassador to Norway and Hungary Abdulreza Farajirad has said that the US sanctions are aimed at bringing Iran to the negotiating table with the United States once again.

Speaking to Mehr News Agency (MNA) correspondent, Abdulreza Farajirad referred to the latest US move in designating the IRGC a terrorist organization, saying that the US seeks to impose maximum pressures on Iran to bring it to the negotiating table.

The former Iranian ambassador to Norway and Hungary said that as the US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said, the Amer-

icans want to change Iran's behavior.

The diplomat added that the US terrorism designation of IRGC was also aimed at helping the Israeli regime's prime minister be reelected in the general elections. He said that Trump attaches great importance to Netanyahu remaining in power, adding "the Zionist regime's prime minister was able to maintain relations with Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, but it was unclear whether someone else in his place could equally match the US hardliner policies."

Farajirad added that the US move against IRGC was not a symbolic move and the Amer-

icans sought to inflict losses on Iran economy by sanctioning IRGC and its related companies.

The diplomat added that the United States blacklisted the IRGC to limit its activities in the region and its relations with the Houthi, Iraqis, Lebanese and other nations of the region. He added that the IRGC has gained a lot of support among the nations of the region during the fight against terrorism.

At the end, he noted that the countries in the region have shown opposition to blacklisting IRGC because they are not so sure about their future and that whether the terrorist groups will threaten them again in the future.

Iraqi prime minister makes first visit to Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN — Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi has arrived in Saudi Arabia for his first visit since assuming the post six months ago.

The Iraqi premier is visiting Saudi Arabia just days after visiting Iran, earlier this month. He's insisted that Iraq wants good ties with Iran,

but also with the U.S. and its Arab neighbors, AP reported.

Abdel-Mahdi is expected to meet King Salman during his visit and discuss ways to improve security and trade ties between the two major oil producers.

Saudi Arabia is seeking to limit Iran's influence

in the region, reaching out to influential Shiite Iraqi figures to build relations.

This month, Saudi Arabia reopened a consulate in Baghdad for the first time in nearly 30 years and announced a \$1 billion aid package for Iraq.

Iraqi-Saudi relations were suspended following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. **→13**



© Tehran Times / Aryan Nasrollahi

Halparke Festival opens in Baneh

A group of revelers perform during the opening of the 3rd Halparke Festival in the northwestern Iranian town of Baneh, Kordestan Province, on April 16, 2019.

Over 15 groups are scheduled to perform during the three-day festival of Kurdish dance.

Trump's decisions only in favor of Israel: Syrian FM

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem condemned a recent decision by US President Donald Trump to blacklist Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and said Trump takes decisions only in favor of the Israeli regime.

Speaking to the Tasnim News Agency, Muallem decried the US move to label the IRGC as a terrorist group and said Trump knows nothing about "the law or geography". "Neither does he have any perception of the situation in the (Middle East) region," he said, adding, "He makes decisions only in favor of Israel."

Trump announced on April 8 that Washington is designating the IRGC a foreign "terrorist organization", marking the first time the US has formally labeled another country's military a terrorist group.

On the eve of the Israeli parliamentary elections last week, Prime Minister Netanyahu took credit for Trump's decision to blacklist IRGC. "Thank you, my dear friend, President Donald Trump," Netanyahu tweeted in Hebrew, "for answering another one of my important requests."

Responding to the move, Iran's Supreme National Security Council immediately declared the US as a state sponsor of terrorism and US forces in the region terrorists.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Syrian top diplomat hailed Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's recent trip to Damascus and said the visit was made at the right time to deepen bilateral relations between the two countries.

Muallem further pointed to Zarif's meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, describing it as "constructive and fruitful".

Heading a ranking diplomatic delegation, Zarif paid a visit to Damascus on Monday to attend meetings with top Syrian officials.

Later, he left for Turkey's Ankara to hold talks with senior officials of the country about issues relating to Syria and North Africa.

His two-day tour of Syria and Turkey is aimed at the coordination of policies on the regional and international developments in order to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Dear readers,
The next issue of the Tehran Times will be published on Monday, April 22.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani to visit flood-hit Khouzestan, Lorestan

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani will travel to Khouzestan and Lorestan provinces to personally look into the problems facing the two flood-hit provinces, presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said on Wednesday.

The president will meet local authorities and examine the problems so as to accelerate measures taken to remedy them, Vaezi said after a cabinet session, IRNA reported.

He added that during the cabinet session “very good decisions” were made regarding the flood-stricken areas, which include cities and villages.

Vaezi also said the government will soon take measures with regard to those who lost their homes in the floods.



Ill-wishers failed to turn floods into crisis: minister

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Tuesday that many of Iran’s ill-wishers and hostile media outlets tried but failed to turn the recent floods into a crisis.

“The crisis was managed well and everyone acted in a united, coherent and harmonious way,” Rahmani Fazli said, Mehr reported.

Earlier this month, Rahmani Fazli slammed the spread of fake news and disinformation campaign through social media about measures taken to cope with flooding.

He also criticized Mehran Modiri, the host of the Dorehami talk show, for “mocking” people and spreading “hopelessness” in his monologues. “Now that everyone’s in line to help, a person is mocking everyone in the name of art and others applaud him,” he said.



Zarif slams CENTCOM’s destabilizing activities in Yemen

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday slammed the United States Central Command (CENTCOM)’s destabilizing activities in Yemen, saying even Congress is opposed to CENTCOM’s action in Yemen but certain Arab countries intoxicated with petrol dollars are more powerful in entangling the U.S. in unending wars.

“Even the U.S. Congress wants to put an end to @CENTCOM’s destabilizing activities in #Yemen,” Zarif tweeted.

“But petrofinanced #NetanyahuFirsters and their enabler in the White House will continue—with American lives and against U.S. interests—to push for forever wars,” he added.

Earlier on Wednesday, Donald Trump vetoed a bill passed by Congress to end support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, describing the resolution as an “unnecessary” and “dangerous” attempt to weaken his constitutional powers.



Tehran urges Bahrain to end cruel verdicts against protesters

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Wednesday urged the Bahraini rulers to end their cruel verdicts against the protesters and instead base their security on confidence building.

It came after a Bahraini court handed down prison sentences to 139 activists and stripped almost all of them of their nationality in a mass trial, which was quickly denounced by rights groups as a tool of repression in the hands of the ruling Al Khalifah regime against dissidents.

It also charged the defendants with being linked to Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Mousavi also denounced the verdict’s claims against Iran as “baseless accusations.”



Royal Mail to re-establish post services to Iran, envoy says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baedinejad said on Wednesday that the Royal Mail Company has changed its decision to reject parcels to Iran after Tehran threatened to sue the company, and that it will soon re-start mail delivery to Iran.

Voicing satisfaction with the new development, Baedinejad said via Twitter that the Royal Mail Company has announced it will accept packages from the UK to send letters to destinations in Iran, Fars reported.

Last week, Britain’s Royal Mail confirmed suspending mail delivery services to recipient addresses in Iran, citing Washington’s sanctions against Tehran.



6 billion rials to be granted to authorized parties

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Hamid Molanouri, director general of the political department at the Interior Ministry, announced on Wednesday that the government has allocated 6 billion rials (nearly \$143,000) as subsidy for authorized parties. “Due to the decline in the number of parties, the subsidy requested for the year 97 (which began on March 21, 2018) was not realized,” IRNA quoted Molanouri as saying.

He said the allocated subsidy will be granted to the parties in the near future.

“We are also following up on the subsidy for the year 98 (which began on March 21) and we hope to receive better credit,” he added.

Trump administration ignoring international law, Zarif says

Zarif, Erdogan slam U.S. for blacklisting IRGC

1 → Later the day, Zarif met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. There they expressed their opposition to Washington’s unilateral sanctions as well as its recognition of the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

Trump sees no limit for his hostile approach toward Iran. In addition to withdrawing the U.S. from the international nuclear deal in May last year and illegally reimposing sanctions on Iran, his country has even prevented humanitarian aid to Iranian flood victims by freezing the accounts of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

This happened despite the fact that the UN Security Council adopted a resolution in July 2015 endorsing the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has been tasked to police

the implementation of the JCPOA, has also issued 14 reports each time confirming that Iran is fully abiding by the terms of the agreement.

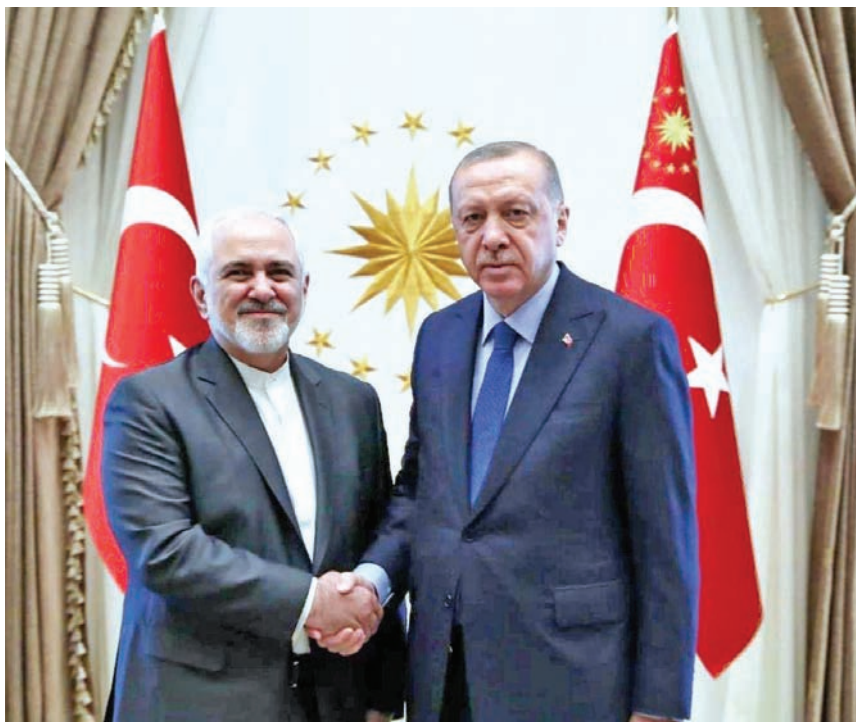
Asked on relations between Iran and Turkey, Zarif said the volume of economic interaction between the two countries should reach \$30 billion.

He noted that Tehran will not let the U.S. undermine Tehran’s economic interaction with other countries.

■ Kazakhstan to host next round of Syria talks

At the press conference with his Turkish counterpart, Zarif also pointed to his meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus on Tuesday, saying that efforts to promote peace and stability in Syria will continue unabated.

He said that next round of the Astana talks on the Syrian crisis will be held in the Kazakh city of Nur-Sultan.



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (L) shakes hands with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara, April 17.

Zarif says Tehran will not allow U.S. undermine Tehran’s economic interaction with other countries.

Leader hails Army-IRGC brotherhood vs. U.S. ‘ugly move’

‘Situation in the region would have been different if Army and the IRGC had not fought Daesh’

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday hailed the gesture of brotherhood shown by the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a “beautiful move” against the United States’ “ugly move”.

“Doing anything that makes the enemy angry is good and correct, and on the contrary, everyone should avoid doing anything that emboldens the enemy and boosts its morale,” the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with commanders and senior officials of the Army as well as a group of commanders and staff members of the Army Ground Force, ahead of National Army Day.

It came days after the United States officially designated

the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization, following U.S. President Donald Trump’s announcement of the designation a week earlier.

The Leader also dismissed as baseless remarks by certain U.S. officials who claimed Iran appeared weak and vulnerable to severe flash floods, saying such remarks are made to demoralize the public.

“America is struggling with thousands of billions [of dollars] of debt and numerous difficulties and despite passage of several years since the floods and storms in areas like Carolina, they still have not been able to deal with those problems..., but they’re talking nonsense in order to destroy the Iranian nation’s morale.”

He also praised the actions taken by the Iranian nation, Army, IRGC, Basij, clerics and students to help the

victims of the recent flooding in the immediate aftermath of the tragic incident.

“But the enemy does not deem it expedient to utter this greatness,” he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader said the fate of certain regional countries would have been different if the Army and the IRGC had not entered the war against ISIS also called Daesh in its Arabic acronym.

He asked: “How was the situation today in the region and neighboring countries and who would have ruled them if the Army and the Guards had not entered the war against Daesh,?”

However, Ayatollah Khamenei said each of the countries caught in the war against Daesh made sacrifices “but the role of the Iranian armed forces is not negligible.”

It is the U.S. regime which should change its nature: Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Wednesday that it is the U.S. regime which must change its nature and not Iran.

“It is the U.S. regime which must change nature and not Iran. Increasing opposition of the international community to the U.S. behavior and actions which violate international law has made change in the U.S. regime’s nature an international demand,” Mousavi said in a statement.

He noted that the U.S. regime resorts to “economic terrorism” and has taken the international trade hostage and threatens other countries to force them to follow its illegitimate policies and demands.

“This regime obstructs justice for those who commit war crimes and

murder journalists and supports them and does not respect environment, human rights and values of the international community. This regime which constantly threatens the international peace and stability must change nature,” he added.

In remarks on Monday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in Texas A&M University said, “We’re exerting maximum pressure to change the very nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran to make sure that that regime simply behaves like a normal country and does not spread terror throughout the world. Today as we stand here, Iran is engaged in conducting an assassination campaign throughout Europe. Our diplomats are working to push back against them so this will stop.”

Rouhani: Floods in Iran proved ‘worst historic test’ for U.S.

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the recent devastating floods in Iran have proven the “worst historic test” for the Trump administration.

“The U.S. regime’s rulers have revealed their nature. If they were wise, they would announce suspension of sanctions because of the flood incident. In that case, the Iranian people may have believed that they [the U.S. officials] are not against them (people) when 25 provinces of the country were hit by flood,” Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

He said that the U.S. move in blocking aid to flood-stricken people in Iran proved the “inhuman” nature of officials in Washington.

Since March 19, large parts of Iran have been inundated with flash floods. So far, about 76 people have lost their lives and hundreds of thousands have been displaced. Almost all provinces have been affected by the flood.

The Trump administration has been blocking the accounts of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, actually impeding transfer of money to the Iranian flood victims.

‘Recent floods show the need for unity’

Rouhani also said that the recent floods and the U.S.

behavior showed that it is necessary to maintain unity.

The president said joint efforts by the government and armed forces to help the flood victims “showed us that we should stand on our feet and join hands to solve problems and turn the problems into opportunity.”

Elsewhere, he thanked Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s response to a letter about withdrawing money from the National Development Fund to compensate for damages caused by floods.

“The government will use budget resources to compensate for the damages as far as possible and will report to the Leader about that and will use (resources from) the National Development Fund to the extent that is needed,” the president explained.

Rouhani said the Leader had told him that withdrawing money from the National Development Fund for the purpose is necessary. “In a meeting with the Leader, he said that he believed money should be withdrawn from the fund in line with compensating for the damages.”

In a letter published on Monday, the Leader asked the government to use the available financial resources to compensate for flood damages. The Leader suggested



the administration can withdraw money from the National Development Fund only if it is absolutely necessary.

Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli has said that floods have left nearly \$2.5 billion in damages.

Reportedly, flooding has damaged 110,000 houses in the provinces of Lorestan, Golestan and Mazandaran.

Zarif urges counterparts to stand against U.S. ‘provocative’ move on IRGC

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in a letter to his counterparts all around the world, called every government to adopt a principled, accurate and lawful stance against the United States’ recent measure against part of Iran’s armed forces, the Foreign Ministry reported on Wednesday.

U.S. President Donald Trump on April 8 designated the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist entity.

Zarif condemned the measure and warned

long-term and immediate repercussions of the “illegal and provocative” move.

Zarif said that labeling part of an official military force of an independent country which is a UN member and is also a member of international conventions on humanitarian law is a heresy.

Though different countries have different viewpoints on many international issues, the foreign minister said that after the World War II, all the world countries have agreed that any difference, which can endanger international peace and se-

curity, can be resolved peacefully within the framework of international law and the UN Charter.

Although the former U.S. administrations had often ignored the accepted international regulations and violated them, the incumbent one is setting dangerous precedents which will eventually devastate the entire global structure, Zarif warned.

The chief diplomat said the move against the IRGC, spurred by certain ideological elements in the current U.S. administration and a few regimes in the Middle East

region, was part of larger efforts to exacerbate tension between Iran and the United States.

He warned that the move would undermine all pathways to the easing of tensions through political solutions, noting it is likely that in the end there would remain no alternative to direct confrontation.

He added that the U.S. administration is trying to associate the IRGC with al-Qaeda as part of a campaign to prepare America’s public opinion for some new adventurism in West Asia.

Yemeni army unveils new domestically-built Badr-F ballistic missile

TEHRAN- The Yemeni army has unveiled a domestically designed and manufactured Badr-F ballistic missile intended to rain shrapnel over a vast area upon explosion in mid air to ensure maximum lethality against designated targets, amid Saudi Arabia's atrocious aerial bombardment campaign against impoverished Yemen.

Spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree said on Tuesday that their new Badr-F ballistic missile would have a range of 160 kilometers, which shows a nearly 30-kilometer increase from their old version of the Badr-IP missile, Press TV reported.

He added that the new missile would explode 20 meters above the center of the designated target and would scatter some 14,000 pieces of shrapnel in a circular area with a radius of 350 meters.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.



The Houthi fighters have been playing a significant role in aiding the Yemeni army in defending the country against the invading coalition since the onset of the bloody war, which according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization,

has so far claimed the lives of about 56,000 Yemenis.

The Yemeni army unveiled the Badr-F ballistic missile on the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Saleh Ali al-Samad, the former chairman of the Houthi movement.

Saree also showed videos, provided by the

media bureau of Yemen's Operations Command Center, of the new missile in action, adding that the Yemeni army had already used the missile to target camps belonging to Saudi-led Sudanese soldiers stationed on the Saudi-Yemeni border.

He also noted that Badr-F was designed primarily based on Russia's Tochka tactical ballistic missile.

The Yemeni army has designed and developed a number of missiles, including the high-precision Badr P-1 ballistic missile, during the past four years.

The Saudi-led war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN has already said that a record 22.2 million Yemenis are in dire need of food, including 8.4 million threatened by severe hunger. According to the world body, Yemen is suffering from the most severe famine in more than 100 years.

A number of Western countries, the US and Britain in particular, are also accused of being complicit in the ongoing aggression as they supply the Riyadh regime with advanced weapons and military equipment as well as logistical and intelligence assistance.

EU rejects Israeli claim to Golan, other occupied territory



TEHRAN — The European Union's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini has once again expressed the 28-nation bloc's disapproval of the Israeli regime's claim of "sovereignty" to Syria's Golan Heights and other Tel Aviv-occupied territories.

Speaking at the plenary session of the European Parliament in the French city of Strasbourg on Tuesday, Mogherini stressed that the EU's position on the status of Golan "has not changed." Press TV reported.

"The EU has a very simple and clear position," she said. "The EU does not recognize Israeli sovereignty over any of the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967, in line with international law and with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 497. And this also applies to the Golan Heights."

The EU's top diplomat also noted that she had already issued a declaration on behalf of all the 28 member states and clarified their stance on the Golan Heights.

Additionally, she said, the five EU member states of the UN Security Council – including the UK, France, Germany, Belgium and Poland – had expressed the bloc's common position on Golan in a joint stake-out.

Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria in the closing stages of its 1967 Six-Day War with Arab countries, which also saw the regime occupy the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem al-Quds and the Gaza Strip.

Tel Aviv unilaterally annexed the Golan Heights in 1981 in a move not recognized internationally.

Syria has repeatedly reaffirmed its sovereignty over the Golan Heights, saying the territory must be completely restored to its control.

On March 25, U.S. President Donald Trump signed a decree recognizing Israeli "sovereignty" over the occupied Golan at the start of a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington.

Trump's controversial policy shift came over a year after the hawkish U.S. president recognized Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel and transferred Washington's embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied Palestinian city.

Emboldened by Trump's highly anti-Palestine agenda, Netanyahu has talked of plans to annex the occupied Palestinian region of the West Bank.

■ Illegal settlement activities

Elsewhere in her speech, Mogherini complained that Israel's settlement construction activities in the occupied Palestinian lands were eroding any prospect of a two-state solution.

After a recent announcement by Israel to build 4,600 new settler units, the EU emphasized that it considered "all settlement activity illegal under international law, and that settlements erode the viability of the two-state solution," she said.

"And in fact, the two-state solution is not only fading away. It is being dismantled piece by piece," she added, warning that abandoning the solution would bring greater chaos, not only to the occupied territories but also to the entire Middle East.

Israel has over the past months stepped up its settlement construction activities in the occupied lands in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334.

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built illegally since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian lands.

Egypt's parliament votes to extend Sisi's rule until 2030

TEHRAN- Egypt's parliament has voted in favor of a number of constitutional amendments that would extend the rule of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and would allow him to stay in power until 2030.

The 596-seat legislature, which is dominated by Sisi loyalists, also backed other sweeping changes to the constitution on Tuesday, including giving the military greater influence in political life as well as granting Sisi more control over the judiciary.

"The president's current term shall expire at the end of six years from the date of his election as president in 2018," Arabic-language al-Ahram daily newspaper and public broadcaster Nile TV reported.

"He can be re-elected for another (six-year) term," they added.

Parliament speaker Ali Abdel Aal said 531 deputies voted for the amendments and 22 others against, AFP reported.

He added that amendments to the constitution were the outcome of dialogue sessions that had been in place over the past two months.

Abdel Aal, however, highlighted that a new constitution should be drafted within the next decade - signaling that Sisi may have another chance to extend his term beyond 2030.

"We need a new constitution; there is no way we will carry on without a brand new constitution within the next 10 years," the legislator said.

Mohamed Abu Hamed, a member of parliament who pushed for extension of Sisi's rule, asserted that changes were needed to allow the general-turned-president to complete political and economic reforms.

"The constitution in 2014 was written under tough ex-

ceptional circumstances," he commented.

He hailed Sisi as a president who "took important political, economic and security measures... (and) must continue with his reforms."

Earlier, opposition figures had called the proposals an "Arab Spring in reverse" and an "attempt to derail the movement towards a modern civil democratic state".

Egyptian authorities blocked more than 34,000 internet websites in an attempt to restrict the Void campaign, which had been launched to rally Egyptians against the amendments.

The campaign had collected more than 250,000 signatures and had established five new websites in an attempt to counter the ban.

Moreover, prominent dissident actors Khaled Abol Naga and Amr Waked had denounced the changes to the constitution as a power grab.

"These amendments would take us back to a dictatorship fit for the Middle Ages," Waked told a news conference in the Swiss city of Geneva.

His fellow actor criticized Sisi's narrative that his rule brought stability.

"Where is there stability in a country that jails children... that treats people badly or that kills?" he questioned.

Amnesty International said that by approving the amendments, the parliamentarians had shown a "complete disregard for human rights."

"These amendments aim to expand military trials for civilians, undermine the independence of the judiciary, and strengthen impunity for human rights violations by members of the security forces," Amnesty's deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, Magdalena Mughrabi, said.

Human Rights Watch had also criticized the amendments,



arguing they would "institutionalize authoritarianism."

According to Press TV, Sisi came to power in June 2014, one year after he led the military to oust the first democratically-elected president Mohamed Morsi in a coup.

He was re-elected in March 2018 with more than 97 percent of the vote, after standing virtually unopposed.

Human rights groups have regularly criticized Sisi's government for cracking down on opposition activists and supporters of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood movement, which has been banned in the country.

Earlier this year, Amnesty International warned that Egyptians were facing an unprecedented crackdown on freedom of expression under Sisi's administration, saying the North African state had turned into an "open-air prison" for dissidents.

HRW demands prominent Saudi human rights lawyer's release

TEHRAN- Human Rights Watch has called on Saudi authorities to immediately release prominent human rights lawyer Waleed Abu al-Khair, as a crackdown led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman against Muslim preachers, members of the press and intellectuals widens in the conservative oil-rich kingdom.

"Stifling peaceful dissent with outrageous sentences has shown the Saudi government's lack of commitment to serious political and civil reform," HRW's Middle East deputy director, Michael Page, said.

He added, "A serious reform campaign, no matter how Saudi-funded public relations propagandists spin it, doesn't entail locking up human rights defenders for 15 years for courageously speaking up."

In July 2014, Saudi Arabia's so-called Specialized Criminal Court convicted Abu al-Khair for his comments to media outlets and tweets criticizing Saudi Arabia's human rights record, and sentenced him to 15 years in prison.

The court also issued a 15-year travel ban



on him and imposed a fine of 200,000 Saudi riyals (US\$53,000).

"Saudi leaders should praise Walid Abu al-Khair for his commitment to defending fellow citizens' rights," Page noted.

"Every day Abu al-Khair remains behind bars, is a reminder that Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's 'reform' plan is meaningless," he pointed out.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia has

stepped up politically-motivated arrests, prosecution and conviction of peaceful dissident writers and human rights campaigners.

Saudi officials have also intensified crackdown in the country's Shia-populated Eastern Province.

Eastern Province has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011. Protesters have been demanding reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the oil-rich region.

The protests have been met with a heavy-handed crackdown by the regime, with regime forces increasing security measures across the province.

Over the past years, Riyadh has also redefined its anti-terrorism laws to target activism.

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

Macron hopes to rebuild Notre-Dame in five years

TEHRAN- Emmanuel Macron pledged on Tuesday that France would rebuild the fire-devastated Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral, saying he hoped the work would be done in five years and the French people would pull together to repair their national symbol.

Macron devoted a brief prime-time televised address to Monday's catastrophic blaze in the heart of the capital, again postponing planned remarks on his response to months of anti-government protests.

"We will rebuild Notre-Dame even more beautifully and I want it to be completed in five years, we can do it," Macron said.

"It is up to us to convert this disaster into an opportunity to come together, having deeply reflected on what we have been and what we have to be and become better than we are. It is up to us to find the thread of our national project." Reuters reported.

"This is not a time for politics," added Macron, who had cancelled a speech planned on Monday evening on the re-

sponse to the "yellow vest" protests.

He visited the site of the fire late on Monday and promised then to rebuild the cathedral, parts of which date to the 12th century.

The cathedral spire was destroyed and its roof gutted but the bell towers were still standing and many valuable art works were saved after more than 400 firemen worked to contain the blaze, finally quelling it 14 hours after it began.

As the city and the country grieved for a potent national symbol, billionaires, companies and local authorities were quick to offer donations.

Some 24 hours after the fire started, more than 750 million euros (\$845 million) had been pledged, including 500 million from the three billionaire families that own France's giant luxury goods empires: Kering, LVMH and L'Oreal.

Paris public prosecutor Remy Heitz said there was no obvious indication the fire was arson. Fifty people were working on what would be a long and complex investigation, officials said.

The fire swiftly ripped through the cathedral's oak roof supports, where workmen had been carrying out extensive renovations to the spire's timber-framed supports. Police began questioning the workers involved, the prosecutor's office said.

One firefighter was injured but no one else was hurt, with the fire starting at around 6:30 p.m. after the building was closed to the public for the evening.

Firefighters examined the facade, with its spectacular 10-metre filigreed stained-glass rose window still intact. They could be seen walking atop the belfries as police kept the area in lockdown.

Investigators will not be able to enter the cathedral's blackened nave until experts are satisfied its walls withstood the heat and the building is structurally sound.

"Yesterday we thought the whole cathedral would collapse. Yet this morning she is still standing, valiant, despite everything," said Sister Marie Aimee, a nun who had hurried to a nearby church to pray as the flames spread.

'Trump acting as al-Qaeda's big brother, fomenting bigotry against Muslims'

TEHRAN — Hawaii Representative Tulsi Gabbard has launched a Twitter attack against U.S. President Donald Trump, describing him as the "big brother and protector" of the Saudi-sponsored al-Qaeda terror group, while "fomenting bigotry against Muslims for political gain."

She made the comments in defense of fellow Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, who has been targeted by President Trump because of her recent remarks about the 9/11 terror attacks.

In a video posted on her Twitter account, Gabbard, also a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, said Trump's criticism of Minnesota Representative Omar was "complete hypocrisy."

According to Press TV, the Saudi kingdom is reported to have helped plan the 9/11 terror attacks in New York. Riyadh is also widely believed to be a key sponsor of Takfiri terrorist outfits operating in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Gabbard further blasted the Saudis for "spending billions of dollars spreading their exclusivist, radical" ideology around the world, "the very same ideology that has been inspiring al-Qaeda and ISIL (Daesh) and other terrorists to carry out their barbaric acts." Speaking at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) on Sunday, Omar said the body had been "founded after 9/11 because they recognized that some people did something and that all of us were starting to lose access to our civil liberties."

Following the remarks, Trump launched a Twitter attack against Omar, saying "WE WILL NEVER FORGET" and accusing her of diminishing 9/11.

Gabbard noted, "Trump says 'WE WILL NEVER FORGET (9/11)!' Yet it is Trump who's been acting as al-Qaeda's big brother and protector in Syria."

She also slammed the U.S. president for having turned "America into the prostitute of al-Qaeda's biggest supporter: the Saudis."

Other Democrats have also condemned the U.S. president for "inciting violence" against Omar.

CAIR said that Omar's words about the 9/11 attacks had been taken out of context. It also condemned Trump's "life-endangering" tweet, saying he uses "shocking imagery" to potentially incite violence against a Congresswoman while "exploiting a national tragedy" at the same time.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	199918.3
IFX	2414.15

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,468 rials
GBP	54,836 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$72.24/b
WTI	\$64.51/b
OPEC Basket	\$70.21/b
Gold	\$1,276.90/oz
Silver	\$15.06/oz
Platinum	\$889.75/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran transits over 45,000 tons of oil products overseas

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Islamic Republic of Iran transited 45,691 tons of various types of oil products overseas through oil terminals and ports of Hormozgan province (in south of Iran) in the last Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2019).

According to Mehr, director General of Hormozgan Ports and Maritime Organization Allah Morad Afifipour made the remarks on Tuesday and said, “fuel oil, bitumen, hydrocarbon and gas oil (diesel) were mainly exported to other countries in the same period.”

Statistics showed that 11,730,276 tons of non-oil products were exported to other countries in the previous Iranian calendar year, he said, adding, in addition, more than 2,558,430 tons of non-oil goods were transhipped.”



Of total 11,730,276 tons of non-oil products, 4,237,839 tons of which were transited, the director general stated.

Afifipour reiterated, “5,438,285 tons of non-oil goods were transported into Hormozgan province’s ports last year, registering a 46-percent slump as compared to its previous year.”

He also put the total volume of non-oil products exported from trade and business ports of this province in the past year at 36,193,000 tons.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he reiterated, “the volume of oil products exported from Persian Gulf Oil Port in Shahid Rajaei Port stood at 6,760,144 tons in 11 months of the past Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2018 – February 21, 2019).”

Persian Gulf Oil Port is equipped with nine oil quays and two service piers with the draft capacity of 7.5 meters on average as well as with the capability of berthing to vessels with maximum 10,000 tons of capacity, the director general of Hormozgan Province Ports and Maritime Organization stated.

UK wage growth at new decade high as employers hire in the face of Brexit

British workers’ pay grew at its joint fastest pace in over a decade, fuelled by further job creation, adding to suggestions that Brexit uncertainty is prompting firms to hire workers rather than make longer-term investment in equipment.

total earnings, including bonuses, rose by an annual 3.5 percent in the three months to February, the Office for National Statistics said, matching the median forecast in a Reuters poll of economists.

That was the joint highest rate since mid-2008 although in February alone the pace of wage growth slowed.

Average weekly earnings, excluding bonuses, rose by 3.4 percent on the year, also in line with the Reuters poll.

It was the first fall in that measure of pay growth since the middle of last year.

Britain’s labor market has defied the approach of Brexit, helping households whose spending drives the economy.

However, the surge in jobs could reflect nervousness among businesses who have cut investment, making them more likely to hire workers who can be sacked in the event of a downturn in the economy.

The ONS said employment grew by 179,000 in the three months to February, in line with the Reuters poll forecast.

“The jobs market remains robust, with the number of people in work continuing to grow,” ONS statistician Matt Hughes said. “The increase over the past year is all coming from full-timers, both employees and the self-employed.”

The strength of the labor market is pushing up the official measurement of wages more quickly than the Bank of England has forecast, leading some economists to think it might raise interest rates once the uncertainty about Brexit lifts.

The BoE forecast in February that wage growth would slow to 3.0 percent by the end of 2019 as the economy feels the drag of Brexit uncertainty and a global slowdown.

It also forecast that Britain’s economy will grow at its slowest rate in a decade this year, even if it avoids the shock of a no-deal Brexit.

The pace of wage rises remains slower than the 4 percent increases seen before the financial crisis.

Netherlands stresses expansion of agriculture co-op with Iran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Netherlands Ambassador to Iran Jacques Werner stressed expansion of cooperation with Iran in the field of agriculture, ILNA reported on Wednesday.

Saying that European Union is still trying for establishment of a special financial channel for trade with Iran, the envoy expressed hope that such channel would strengthen ties between his country and Iran.

Agriculture sector in the Netherlands enjoys advanced technology and innovation which could be transferred to Iran, he

said, adding, “We are trying to preserve our trade with Iran and share our experiences with this country.”

Referring to Iran’s potentials in agriculture sector, the ambassador said Iran is a big market with proper infrastructure for development of agriculture sector; so it is a good opportunity to set up joint activities between the two countries.

Werner also said that his country is ready to help Iran remove problems in terms of agricultural production and exports.

France, Germany and Britain announced on January 31 the creation of INSTEX, a

Several ECB policymakers doubt projected growth rebound: sources

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Several European Central Bank policymakers think the bank’s economic projections are too optimistic as growth weakness in China and trade tensions linger, four sources with direct knowledge of discussions said.

A “significant minority” of rate-setters in last week’s policy meeting expressed doubt that a long projected growth recovery is coming in the second half of the year and some even questioned the accuracy of the ECB’s projection models, given their long history of downward revisions, the sources said, Reuters reported.

With the ECB using the these projections as a key input into policy decision, more cuts in growth and inflation forecasts would raise the chance that the bank’s first post crisis rate, now seen next year, is delayed even longer.

An ECB spokesman declined to comment.

The central bank has so far maintained that many of the factors holding down growth are temporary, so the economy would rebound in the second half, after waning exports and eroding confidence nearly dragged Germany into recession late last year.

ECB President Mario Draghi said over

the weekend there were signs that these factors were waning, even if political uncertainty loomed large.

But some of his fellow Governing Council members were not as confident and argued that the growth hurdles were far from temporary, so there was no reason to project any significant rebound, the sources said.

While Germany’s vast car sector did take a one-off hit from an adjustment to new emissions-testing methods, more permanent factors could include shifting consumption habits, a move away from diesel and weak Chinese demand, some governors argued, according to the sources.

Weak growth, trade wars

The policymakers added that weak global trade growth also appears to be more permanent, trade wars now look to be the norm rather than the exception and even if Chinese growth looks to be stabilizing, demand from Beijing is unlikely to surge.

Some governors went as far as saying that the ECB’s forecasting methodology may need to be reviewed since projections are persistently too optimistic and are regularly cut quarter after quarter, the sources said.

China GDP grows faster than expected in first quarter

The Chinese economy grew at a faster-than-expected rate during the first quarter of this year, after US President Donald Trump last month backed down from a threat to escalate his trade war with Beijing and government stimulus measures began to take hold.

According to Financial Times, on Wednesday the National Bureau of Statistics estimated that the world’s second-largest economy expanded 6.4 per cent in the first quarter, compared to the same period last year and ahead of the 6.3 per cent expected according to a Reuters poll. The figure matched the 6.4 percent growth posted in the final quarter of 2018, but was significantly below last year’s first-quarter growth figure of 6.8 percent.

“Q1 is expected to mark the low point of China’s growth cycle,” said Tai Hui, chief Asia Pacific market strategist for JPMorgan Asset Management. “Recent data indicate that government policy to stabilize the economy is taking effect.”

Eswar Prasad, economist at Cornell University, took a similar view: “There are signs that policy-led stabilization of growth is beginning to take hold, aided by the abatement of trade tensions with the U.S.”

Surging industrial production in March provided a big boost to China’s economy, rising 8.5 percent year-on-year compared to just 5.3 percent in the January-February period.

Year-to-date fixed asset investment was also strong in the first quarter, rising 6.3 percent over the same period in 2018 and up from 5.3 percent last August.

The outlook for the world’s second-largest economy had appeared far gloomier as recently as February. Chinese industrial profits fell 14 percent in January and February compared to the same period last year, the largest drop in more than a decade.

But Trump’s decision not to increase the punitive tariff rate currently assessed on about half of all Chinese exports on March 1, as he had previously threatened, dissipated much of the negative sentiment that had been weighing heavily on China’s stock markets and private sector companies late last year.

“The national economy enjoyed stable performance and growing positive factors, stronger market expectations and confidence,” said NBS spokesman Mao Shengyong. “However, at the same time we should also be aware that ...the task of reform and development is arduous and downward economic pressures still persist.”

The CSI 300 Index, which tracks the biggest companies on the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges, has risen more than 35 percent this year.

China and other major regional stock indices were little changed on Wednesday after the release of the data. The renminbi and Australian dollar, however, strengthened while oil prices hit a 2019 high. The Australian dollar, which serves as a proxy for regional trade, climbed as much as 0.5 percent to a high of \$0.7174 against the dollar, swinging back from an earlier fall.



special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran.

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, French Foreign Min-

ister Jean-Yves Le Drian, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has said INSTEX will support legitimate European trade with Iran.

U.S. and Japan agree to accelerate trade talks

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Japan and the U.S. have agreed to accelerate their trade talks after an initial meeting in Washington suggested the two sides will stick to a narrow range of topics, Financial Times reported.

Toshimitsu Motegi, Japan’s economy minister, said he would meet U.S. trade representative Robert Lighthizer again next week after a day of “frank” discussions in Washington.

The tight focus of the initial negotiations, with the U.S. concentrating on agriculture rather than controversial issues such as pharmaceutical pricing or currency manipulation, suggests an early breakdown in the talks is unlikely.

But it remains unclear whether there is any path to a deal, with the U.S. pushing to reduce its bilateral trade deficit, but Japan unwilling to accept a one-sided deal where it cuts agriculture tariffs without getting anything in return.

“From the American side, [we heard] they want to reduce their deficit, and at the same time they have a lot of interest in the agricultural sector,” said Motegi. He added that the U.S. had not sought to raise issues that would take a long time to discuss.

The U.S. and Japan agreed last September to discuss a trade agreement following threats

by U.S. president Donald Trump to impose tariffs on Japanese automobiles. Japan sought to restrict the talks to goods, while the U.S. wanted a wider scope.

One of Trump’s first acts as president was to withdraw from the regional Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, which included Japan. That has left U.S. farmers disadvantaged relative to their competitors in TPP member countries such as Canada, increasing the pressure for a bilateral deal with Japan.

“The United States and Japan discussed trade issues involving goods, including agriculture, as well as the need to establish high standards in the area of digital trade,” the office of the U.S. trade representative (U.S. TR) said in a statement.

“In addition, the United States raised its very large trade deficit with Japan — \$67.6bn in goods in 2018.”

Motegi signaled that the addition of digital trade, such as rules on the cross-border flow of data, was an acceptable area of services for Japan to include in the talks.

The big challenge is likely to come in the automobile sector. Japan’s desire for lower U.S. tariffs on parts and finished cars, as agreed in the TPP, is at odds with the Trump administration’s wish for lower imports and more U.S. production.

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97/122-61/03

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender:
Broadcasting the TV Network of Alkawthar in DVB-S/MPEG2 Format with Constant Bit Rate of 3.5 Mbps on Eutelsat 7WA @ 7.3° West, 11392, V, 27500 5/6, MENA Beam /KU Band for three years in accordance with the technical specifications and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and How to Receive the Tender Documents:
From **Wednesday 17 April 2019 (1398/01/28)** by **04:00 p.m.** on **Saturday 27 April 2019 (1398/02/07)** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of Receiving the Tender Documents:
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept., 4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex, Hotel Esteghlal St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran Iran.

The Fee of the Tender Documents and How to Deposit it:
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account No. 4101029171204273 with BIC No. IR310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participation to Tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is **USD 32,400** fixed or its equivalent in 4,500,000,000 Rials which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and Place of Delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed packages/envelopes should be submitted no later than **4 p.m.** on **Saturday 1st of June 2019 (1398/03/11)** and at the address mentioned in the 4th clause.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes:
The date of opening the envelopes is on **Sunday 02 June 2019** at **03:00 p.m. (1398/03/12)** in the office of Financial Vice President. In case of complete content in the envelopes A, the envelope B including contract draft, Technical specifications and qualitative assessment analysis will be considered and opened. The Envelop C will be opened by only those eligible participants who meets the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee at the same time and place.

For more information, please see:
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and http://iets.mporg.ir/

Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept. of IRIB

Cutting overhaul period in SP refineries raises output by 7.4 bcm

By Ebrohim Fallahi

TEHRAN – The output of South Pars gas refineries (in southern Iran) is going to increase by over seven billion cubic meters (bcm) by cutting their overhauling period, Shana reported quoting the managing director of South Pars Gas Company (SPGC).

“Organized and precise planning has made it possible for us to reduce the overhauls period by 27 days in comparison to the last year,” Hadi Hashemzadeh Farhang said.

According to the official, every year during the first six months of the Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) the refineries of the giant South Pars field go through renovation and overhauling and consequently the output falls accordingly.

“This period was 201 days last year, which is scheduled to be 174 days this year. This means an increase of 7.4 billion cubic meters in the complexes’ refining capacity.”

South Pars refineries account for refining 74 percent of gas produced in Iran.

South Pars gas field is divided into 24 standard



phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, covers an area of 9,700

square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran’s territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar’s territorial waters.

According to Hashemzadeh, the field’s production rose 12 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019) from its previous year.

The rise came as the result of putting new development phases of the giant gas field into operation which also let Iran to overtake Qatar in gas extraction from the joint field, the official further highlighted.

He said South Pars has 14 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and 19 billion barrels of gas condensate, which is equivalent to 50 percent of the country’s overall reserves and 8 percent of the world’s gas reserves.

On March 17, 2019, phases 13, 22, 23 and 24 of developing South Pars gas field were officially inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani.

With the inauguration of these phases, for the first time Iran’s gas production from the giant South Pars exceeded that of Qatar.

Renewables generate 33 percent of Britain’s electricity in Q1

E N E R G Y New figures by energy consultancy EnAppSys have shown that renewable energy sources generated 33 percent of the total volume of Great Britain’s generated electricity over the first quarter of 2019, while clean energy technologies (including nuclear) accounted for nearly 50 percent.

As reported by Clean Technica, EnAppSys published first-quarter updates for both Great Britain and the European Union last week, in which it highlighted the continually increasing role of renewable energy in Britain’s energy mix and the increasingly dominant role of wind energy in Europe’s grid.

According to EnAppSys’ figures, a total of 27.2 terawatt-hours (TWh) of renewable electricity was generated over the first quarter of 2019 in Great Britain (as opposed to the United Kingdom, which includes the Republic of Ireland), 16.6 TWh of which came from wind farms (in line with previous quarters) while solar generated 2.7 TWh (up 43 percent from the previous quarter and up 46 percent from Q1 2018).

These figures from renewable generation compare favorably with the rest of Britain’s energy mix, where natural gas-fired power plants generated 32.2 TWh, or 39.5 percent of Britain’s total, while nuclear energy generated 13.1 TWh, or 16 percent.

The figures also highlight the continued decline of coal in Great Britain’s energy mix,



which produced only 2.9 TWh over the first quarter, down 37.2 percent from the previous quarter and down 65 percent from the same quarter a year earlier.

“The market continues to progress towards an increasingly green future and this evolution will be supported by news that National Grid is seeking to manage the system without any carbon emissions for a number of hours by 2025,” said Paul Verrill, director of EnAppSys. “Driving this progression is significant growth in levels of renewable generation which, on current trends, could overtake fossil fuels in the not-too-distant future.

“Wind farms were responsible for 60.8 percent of renewable generation in the quarter and this displaced conventional power stations from the market. Coal has effectively ceased to be a major fuel source in the market and now ranks below gas, nuclear, wind, imports and biomass as a fuel source of significance.”

Nigeria says debt repayments to foreign partners spurring rise in oil output

E N E R G Y Nigeria’s efforts to reduce debt owed to its foreign oil partners is progressing well and is helping the country bolster exploration and production, state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corp. said Tuesday.

As S&P Global Platts reported, “So far, we have repaid over \$1.5 billion out of the \$5.1 billion cash call arrears to date,” NNPC group managing director Maikanti Baru said in a statement. “This has not only restored the confidence of international oil companies and our joint venture partners, but has also led to improved reserves growth and crude oil production.”

The Nigerian government, through the NNPC, holds an average 57 percent equity in joint ventures with international oil companies including Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, Total and Eni. They account for between 85 percent and 90 percent of Nigeria’s 2 million bpd of oil production, including condensate.

Nigeria owed the foreign partner companies \$6.8 billion in counterpart funding -- known locally as cash calls -- as of 2016, forcing the government to renegotiate the debts and adopt a new funding mechanism for upstream ventures by late 2016.

According to Baru, Nigerian oil production has also been bolstered after NNPC



was able to reduce the contracting cycle for upstream operations from 24 months to nine months, “with a strong commitment to further reduce the process to less than six months in the months ahead.” Industry officials and analysts said apart from the relative peace in the Niger Delta, Nigeria’s commitment to settling its cash call debts in the last two years has helped to boost production.

“Certainly, because the government is meeting cash call payments regularly and paying up old debts owed to joint venture partners, oil companies are more confident now,” Nigeria-focused energy analyst Abiodun Adesanya said.

Nigerian oil output including condensates has rebounded to around 2 million bpd this year after the African producer received a timely boost with the startup of the offshore 200,000 bpd Egina Field. The country is aiming to push production to 2.3 million bpd in 2019.

China March refinery runs ease off record, crude output accelerates

Refinery output in China, the world’s second-largest oil consumer, eased from record highs in March after maintenance shutdowns offset production from a new mega refinery.

According to Reuters, Refinery throughput in March rose 3.2 percent from a year earlier to 53.04 million tons, or 12.49 million barrels per day (bpd), data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on

Wednesday.

For the first quarter, crude runs rose 4.4 percent on a year earlier to 155.37 million tons, or 12.6 million bpd.

March throughput was down from record rates in the January to February period at 12.68 million bpd.

A number of Chinese refineries, including China National Offshore Oil Corp’s Huizhou refinery and Sinopec Corp’s Changling refin-

ery, were closed last month for maintenance, which peaks during the second quarter before demand rises in the third quarter.

But privately-run Hengli Petrochemical’s new 400,000-bpd refinery in Dalian entered full commercial operations in late March, bolstering overall throughput.

For the month, China pumped 16.54 million tons of crude oil or 3.89 million barrels per day, up 2.1 percent from a year ago and

the highest daily level in at least a year.

The increases showed that efforts by state-run oil firms to accelerate domestic drilling paid off, halting the decline in the country’s output over the past three years.

Natural gas output last month rose 9.8 percent to 15.1 billion cubic meters (bcm), a touch below December’s record 15.3 bcm.

For the first quarter, gas production rose 9.4 percent to 44 bcm.

OPEC risks gambling away success again as \$80 oil looms

After managing to revive oil prices through production cutbacks, OPEC now risks squandering its victory again by letting crude surge too high.

According to Bloomberg, in the first quarter, coordinated production curbs by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies helped oil rally the most in almost a decade, restoring prices to over \$70 a barrel.

Saudi Arabia has made clear that it’s determined to keep supplies tight. That risks a repeat of 2018, when production cuts propelled oil to a four-year high, provoking a backlash from President Donald Trump and a hasty reversal by the kingdom.

“It appears that the producer group is over-tightening the market,” said Ed Morse, head of commodities research at Citigroup Inc. in New York.

OPEC and its partners launched a new round of output cuts at the beginning of the year when it looked like booming U.S. shale-oil production and fragile global demand growth would lead to a supply surplus. But as the group implements the curbs, and as supplies are squeezed further by crises in Venezuela and Iran, there’s now a greater risk of a shortage.

■ Supply contraction

If the group continues with its cutbacks, global oil inventories will contract by almost 1 million barrels a day in the third quarter, the steepest drop in nearly two years, data from the organization shows. However, the group won’t make a decision whether to extend until it meets in late June.

The strain on markets could go even deeper. A conflict is flaring in Libya, output is plunging in Venezuela because of a spiraling economic crisis, and the U.S. will soon decide whether to tighten sanctions on Iran’s oil exports.

“OPEC is one major shutdown -- Libya, say -- from a very damaging price surge that throws all the plans out the window,” said Derek Brower, a director at consultant RS Energy Group.



That could easily send crude prices to levels that prompt disapproval from the White House, the Saudis’ most important political ally.

“There’s no doubt that in a scenario where Brent crude heads to \$80, President Trump will voice his concern,” said Harry Tchilinguirian, head of commodity markets strategy at BNP Paribas SA.

Pursuing higher prices also risks straining the Saudis’ critical alliance with Russia, which is co-operating with OPEC in the pact to curtail supply. President Vladimir Putin said last week that he’s comfortable with current price levels, and that it’s too soon to decide whether output needs to be restrained in the second half.

To avoid a repeat of last year, Saudi Arabia could increase production slightly, stopping a surge in prices. The kingdom is cutting output by considerably more than required under the OPEC accord, and so it could raise supplies without breaching the pact.

■ The search for balance

On April 8, less than two weeks after President Trump urged OPEC to increase production, Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said that his priority of “bringing back inventories to a reasonable level remains unchanged.”

Saudi Arabia faces powerful domestic pressures to press on with the policy, from Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman’s plans for radical economic transformation to a government budget that hinges on oil prices of \$80 a barrel.

A year ago, Riyadh’s decision to let prices approach that level back-fired.

In April 2018, when oil was trading at about \$70, the Saudis signaled at an OPEC gathering in Jeddah they were comfortable allowing crude to climb even higher. Their stance provoked a furious response from President Trump, and though Riyadh initially brushed off his concerns, within two months they bowed to his wishes and raised production.

The kingdom subsequently bolstered output to record levels, flooding the market and sending prices crashing below \$50 a barrel. The move was strongly influenced by U.S. promises to choke off Iranian shipments using sanctions, a pledge the Trump administration reneged on at the last minute.

This time, the Saudis are probably holding off on any action while they await a U.S. decision early next month on how to proceed with sanctions on Iran’s exports, Tchilinguirian said.

Regardless of Trump’s decision on Iran, with inventories set to shrink and supply losses looming elsewhere, the Saudis could face the same boom-and-bust outcome seen last year.

“OPEC has been very good lately at getting the market moving in the direction it wants, but less good at steering the market once it nears the destination,” said Brower. “It’s never really understood when to call time on a rally for its own good.”

Ankara expects U.S. to extend waiver on Iran oil import

Ankara expects the United States to extend a waiver granted to Turkey on oil purchases from Iran, exempting Turkey from the U.S. sanctions, Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said in Washington on Tuesday.

According to IRNA, the United States granted Turkey and other countries import waivers in early November, after which Turkey resumed imports of Iranian crude oil after a one-month hiatus.

Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) last year and reimposed sanctions against Iran lifted under the deal.

However, despite its policy to bring Iran oil exports down to zero, Trump was forced to grant certain states, including Turkey waivers from sanctions on Iranian oil imports.

Iraq’s waiver has been extended and reportedly the U.S. intends to do the same with China, India and South Korea.

Oil hits 2019 high above \$72 on China growth, lower U.S. inventories

Brent oil hit a 2019 high above \$72 a barrel on Wednesday, propelled by steady economic growth in China and a fall in U.S. crude stocks which defied expectations and signaled firm demand, while global supply remained tight.

International benchmark Brent crude futures were up 28 cents, or 0.39 percent, at \$72 by 0910 GMT, having hit an intraday peak of \$72.24, Reuters reported.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$64.39 per barrel, up 34 cents or 0.53 percent and just shy of a 2019 high of \$64.79 hit last week.

China’s economy grew by 6.4 percent in the first quarter, official data showed, defying expectations for a further slowdown and assuaging global markets as a U.S.-China trade deal also appears near.

Refinery throughput in China - the world’s second-largest crude user - rose 3.2 percent in March from a year earlier to 12.49 million barrels per day (bpd).

“The demand side of the equation got a substantial fillip via today’s China data suggesting prices will continue to move higher on improving global growth and risk sentiment,” said Stephen Innes, head of trading at SPI Asset Management.

Prices have been supported this year by a pact reached by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies, including Russia, to limit their oil output by 1.2 million bpd.

Global supply has been tightened further by U.S. sanctions on OPEC members Venezuela and Iran.

In June, OPEC and its partners will decide whether to extend their agreement, but Russia’s willingness to stick with the cuts now looks less clear.

Gazprom Neft, the oil arm of Russian gas company Gazprom, expects the global oil deal to end in the first half of the year, a company official said on Tuesday.

An unexpected drop in U.S. crude inventories also supported oil prices. Stockpiles fell by 3.1 million barrels in the week ended April 12 to 452.7 million barrels, data from the American Petroleum Institute (API) showed.

Official data on U.S. inventories from the Energy Information Administration is due on Wednesday.

Oil could fall to \$40 if OPEC abandons its deal

In more proof that U.S. oil production is continuing to alter global oil markets, Russia’s finance minister Anton Siluanov said on Saturday that Russia and OPEC might decide to increase production to fight for market share with the U.S. His remarks were first covered by Russia’s Tass News Agency.

According to Oilprice, Siluanov said that lower oil prices would then have a negative impact on U.S. oil production, an argument that was also made as far back as late 2014 when the Saudis sought to drive U.S. producers out of business by opening the oil production spigots in spite of an already flooded global oil market.

“(If the deal is abandoned) the oil prices will go down, then the new investments will shrink, American output will be lower because the production cost for shale oil is higher than for traditional output.” He said that prices could drop to \$40 per barrel or even less for up to one full year, adding that there had been no decision on the deal yet and he did not know whether OPEC countries would be happy with this scenario.

Siluanov’s comments aren’t without precedent. Russia has hinted before that it could start to pump more oil, which would in effect cause the world’s second-largest oil producer to nullify its participation in the OPEC+ oil cut deal put in place at the start of the year to remove 1.2 million b/d of oil from the market for six months, with a review period after this time.

The OPEC+ deal, the second of its kind in three years, has been successful in reducing global oil supply, in addition to geopolitical developments, including reduced production from OPEC members Iran, Venezuela, and Libya. In lockstep, global oil prices have spiked to five-month highs, rising 30-40 percent on tightening supplies.

On Friday, London-traded, Brent crude futures rose 72 cents, 1 percent, to settle at \$71.55 per barrel. U.S. oil benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose 32 cents for the session, settling at \$53.89 per barrel - the sixth straight week of gains for WTI. And despite some bearish news at the beginning of the week, crude prices have held around these levels.

If Russia is waffling over its commitment to remain in the OPEC+ deal, Saudi Arabia is indicating that it will stand fast. Saudi Arabia’s Energy Minister, Khalid al-Falih, said two weeks ago that he was “optimistic” about the prospect of continued commitment to the OPEC+ production cuts. Earlier he said he expected other oil producers to “catch up very soon.”

However, the fact remains that other producers in the agreement, including Russia, aren’t as committed to the deal (with lower compliance rates) as the first OPEC+ agreement that was put in place in January 2017, which was successful in bringing OECD oil inventory levels to five year averages and boosting prices that had sunk below \$30 per barrel in January 2016.

If Russia does decide to increase production, the Saudis will be faced with a no-win situation. If the Kingdom keeps its part of the oil cut deal, it will cede market share to Russia, particularly in China and other parts of Asia.

If the Kingdom also forgoes the OPEC+ deal and ramps up production to fight for market share, though, it would put downward pressure on oil prices, especially as U.S. oil production continues to push ahead. However, whether oil prices would plunge to a dismal \$40 per barrel as Siluanov predicted remains to be seen.

Sen. Bernie Sanders: We need an economy and government that works for all, not just the 1 percent

By Bernie Sanders

In America today, we have more wealth and income inequality than any other major country on Earth and it is worse now than at any other time since the 1920s.

Unbelievably, while millions of American workers are forced to work two or three jobs to pay the bills and over half of our people live paycheck to paycheck, the three wealthiest families in our country now own more wealth than the bottom half of Americans – 160 million people.

Today, while hundreds of thousands of bright young people cannot afford to go to college and millions are struggling with high levels of student debt, the top 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 92 percent.

Today, while CEOs of major corporations make over 300 times what their average workers earn, thousands of veterans sleep out on the street and 20 percent of senior citizens are trying to survive on a paltry \$13,500 income or less.

For 40 years, under Democratic and Republican administrations, we have seen a massive redistribution of wealth and income from the working class of this country to the top one percent. In fact, if the distribution of income remained what it was 40 years ago the average household in America would have about \$11,000 more in income today.

Do you want to know why the American people are angry? Today, despite an explosion in technology and worker productivity, the average worker has seen his/her income go up by just 5 cents an hour over the last 43 years after adjusting for inflation.

■ Lower standard of living

And, if we don't turn the economy around, economists predict that the younger generation will have an even a lower standard of living than their parents.

This is not acceptable to me. We need an economy that expands the middle class and reduces poverty and not one that makes the very rich much richer.

When Donald Trump ran for president he made a lot of promises to working families. He told them that he would protect their interests while standing up to the Establishment. Unfortunately, he did not tell the truth.

During his campaign, Trump said he would provide "health insurance for everybody," but as president he has pushed to repeal the Affordable Care Act and throw 32 million Americans off of the health insurance they have. His efforts would also end the protections that are currently in existence for pre-existing conditions and end the ability of people under 26 to stay on their parents' insurance plans. Meanwhile, while 34 million Americans currently have no health insurance and even more are under-insured with high deductibles and co-payments, a handful of health care CEOs paid themselves more than \$1 billion last year.

In my view, at a time when we spend almost twice as much per capita on health care as do the people of any other nation, we should not be throwing millions of Americans off of health care they have. Quite the contrary! We should join every other major country on earth and guarantee health care to all people as a right through a Medicare for All, single-payer program. Medicare today is a popular and effective health insurance program for seniors. Over a 4-year period it should be expanded and improved to cover every man, woman and child in the country. And when we do that we significantly reduce the cost of health care for the average American family.

We are living in a pivotal moment in American history. Our goal must be to create good-paying jobs by rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, not give huge tax breaks to people who don't need them.

During his campaign, Trump said that he would stop the pharmaceutical companies from "getting away with murder." Well, that didn't happen. They're making more money than ever. During the first half of last year there were 96 drug price increases for every price cut. Today, in the United States, we pay by far the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, while the top ten pharmaceutical companies made \$69 billion in profits last year alone. Shockingly, one out of five Americans cannot afford to purchase the prescription drugs their doctors prescribe. That is insane.

As president, I will implement legislation I have introduced which would lower prescription drug prices by 50 percent so Americans no longer pay any more for their medicine than the people of other countries. During his campaign, Trump promised he would not cut Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. But the budget he proposed in March would cut \$1.5 trillion from Medicaid, \$845 billion from Medicare, and \$25 billion from Social Security. As president, at a time when so many seniors and people with disabilities are struggling, I will not cut Social Security. In fact, legislation that I have introduced would expand Social Security benefits while extending its solvency for over 50 years.

■ An unfair tax system

During his campaign, Trump promised that "the rich will not be gaining at all" under his tax plan. But the reality is that the plan that he helped pass provides 83 percent of the benefits to the top one percent by the end of the decade. Further, as a result of his tax plan, major profitable corporations like Amazon, General Motors, Chevron, IBM and Eli Lilly and dozens of other major corporations paid zero in federal income taxes after making billions in profits. That is a regressive and unfair tax system that must not be allowed to continue.

At a time when the very rich are getting much richer and when corporations are enjoying record-breaking profits, I believe that the wealthiest people in this country have got to start paying their fair share of taxes and that we must end the tax havens that exist in places like the Cayman Islands where corporations and the rich stash trillions of dollars to avoid paying their taxes.

During his campaign, Trump promised that he would substantially reduce the trade deficit, prevent the outsourcing of American jobs and protect good-paying jobs here at home. However, since Trump has been president the trade deficit in goods has hit a record high of \$891 billion and his own Labor Department says that 185,000 American jobs have been shipped overseas under his watch. He has also expanded the tax cut that rewards companies for replacing American workers with robots; created new tax incentives for his corporate allies to shift jobs overseas; and given out \$50 billion in government contracts to companies that are offshoring jobs.

We are living in a pivotal moment in American history. Our goal must be to create good-paying jobs by rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, not give huge tax breaks to people who don't need them. Our job must be to invest in public education and combat climate change, not spend trillions on never ending wars.

Our job must be to bring all Americans together – black, white, Latino, Native American, Asian American, gay and straight, native born and immigrant – and not allow ourselves to be divided up.

(Source: foxnews.com)

Macron vowed to change the EU – but his chance may have gone

The president's diplomatic mistakes, and his excessive reliance on the Franco-German alliance, have created opposition across Europe

By Shahin Vallée

'Macron's ill-judged focus on perceived bilateral interests with Germany has taken precedence over his own transformation agenda.'

Last week's European Union summit on Brexit may have looked like a unique case of Emmanuel Macron finding himself extremely isolated in Europe. Rather, it was the latest proof that the French president's European strategy needs a profound rethink.

Two years ago Macron took France and Europe by storm. For the first time, he had been elected on a staunchly pro-EU platform. This opened the door to potentially momentous changes in the EU.

Britain's vote to leave, the aftermath of the transatlantic financial crisis, and the failed 2005 French and Dutch referendums on the EU constitution project had already made clear that institutional reforms were needed.

In sweeping speeches, Macron set out a bold vision. But now that ambition has waned, and many hopes have evaporated. His European strategy contained important flaws, and he made mistakes in trying to deliver it.

In line with French diplomatic tradition, Macron thought early on that the key to turning Europe around was to prioritize and kick-start the Franco-German relationship. He sought to prove a commitment to fiscal rectitude and economic reforms, even though EU fiscal rules were inept and impossible to meet (France will breach the 3% deficit rule this year), but German skepticism was impossible to overcome.

■ Franco-German bilateralism

Obsessing with Franco-German bilateralism proved illusory because it ignored the profound changes that had taken place in the last decade, both in Germany and in Europe. While new coalitions emerged within the bloc, Macron failed to organize his own grouping.

Limiting a European strategy to securing a deal with the German chancellor hinged on the belief that European negotiations were exclusively Chêfsache (the realm of the boss).

It reflected a concept of power and influence that is rooted in France's centralized presidential system.

Germany's political culture, however, depends on party coalitions and gives trade unions, business leaders, think tanks and civil society a central role.

Even if you set aside Merkel's cautious-



In line with French diplomatic tradition, Macron thought early on that the key to turning Europe around was to prioritize and kick-start the Franco-German relationship. He sought to prove a commitment to fiscal rectitude and economic reforms, even though EU fiscal rules were inept and impossible to meet (France will breach the 3% deficit rule this year), but German skepticism was impossible to overcome.

ness, there was no chance she would take a leap outside Germany's comfort zone on her own, without a push from German opinion formers. Yet Macron failed to engage with them, let alone convince them.

When Macron did secure Franco-German agreements, they swiftly faced opposition from the rest of the EU.

■ Diplomatic prowess

Agreeing on paper to a eurozone budget and a move towards macroeconomic stability (the June 2018 Franco-German Meseberg declaration) did take diplomatic prowess.

But it was immediately shot down by a Dutch-led coalition and was never agreed by the European council. This episode illustrated how the euro crisis, EU enlargement and Brexit had profoundly changed Europe's internal dynamics, upending the notion of a Franco-German alliance capable of rallying others.

While new coalitions emerged within the bloc (the Visegrád 4 group in central Europe, and the Hanseatic League initiated by the Netherlands), Macron failed to organize his own grouping. He didn't respond to the reality that European politics had become fundamentally transnational.

While there was keen interest in his En Marche! movement's pledge to "Europeanise" itself, he repeatedly stuck to bilateral negotiations at the expense of a genuinely non-partisan, cross-border alliance that could have shaken Germany's dominance over EU politics.

His August 2017 tour of central Europe focused on getting separate governments to agree to his plans for cosmetic changes to EU rules for posted workers (those sent by an employer to work in another member state on a temporary basis). But little effort was put into building durable ties with liberal

political forces.

After Italy's traumatic March 2018 elections, Macron kept thinking Matteo Renzi, the marginalized former Italian prime minister, was a key interlocutor, and failed to support President Sergio Mattarella's calls to form a governing coalition that would have excluded the far-right League, and offered France a much more reliable partner.

In Spain, while pretending to speak with every progressive and pro-European force, En Marche! sealed an exclusive relationship with the center-right Ciudadanos, instead of turning prime minister Pedro Sánchez and his Socialist party into the allies they might have been.

■ Reaching out to Europeans

When Macron finally did decide to reach out to European citizens with his "renaissance" call, published in 28 countries last month, it was too late.

Europe's leaders had lost confidence in his sincerity, its citizens had moved on, and its parties had solidified their allegiances.

This all means the upcoming EU elections won't bring about the change we hoped to see in 2017. Macron will have little choice but to join the centrist and liberal group in the European parliament.

Once a beacon of hope for change, the president risks turning into a junior coalition partner in the management of a status quo in Europe.

Such mistakes could have been avoided if he'd genuinely embraced transnational politics, engaged with European civil society and spent time exporting his calls for renewal. But that would have required a sincere belief in horizontal, bottom-up politics.

Macron has missed his chance to secure a leadership position in Europe and be seen as a credible agent of change. This wouldn't have happened if he'd earlier on accepted some friction in the Franco-German relationship – for example, by challenging European fiscal rules or blocking the controversial Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia (the move would have earned him tremendous support in southern and Eastern Europe).

One opportunity he could still seize would be to refuse to back Germany and its scandal-ridden car industry in the tariffs row with the U.S. That could yet be a turning point.

So far, Macron's ill-judged focus on those perceived bilateral interests has taken precedence over his transformation agenda. That has cost him and the European project dearly. He needs to revamp his strategy.

(Source: The Guardian)

Is this the end of the line for nationalism in Australia?

If this political moment lasts, the country's conservative movement could be transformed.

By Waleed Aly

Just two months ago, Australia seemed destined for what the country's commentariat calls a "Tampa" election. That's local shorthand for a campaign characterized by race baiting and scare tactics about refugees – a term derived from the 2001 election a few months after the government of Prime Minister John Howard ordered Special Forces to board a Norwegian freight ship called the MV Tampa, carrying more than 400 rescued refugees, to prevent it from reaching Australia.

A new law that allows refugees on Nauru and Manus Island to come to Australia for necessary medical treatment promised to put refugees front and center in the upcoming general election, scheduled for May 18.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his coalition government saw this legislation passed against their will. They had rallied against it, warning that the law would allow "rapists" and "pedophiles" into Australia. An opinion poll around that time showed a significant bounce for the government.

How long ago that seems. In the wake of the Christchurch, New Zealand, terrorist attack on Muslims last month, the Morrison government now finds itself under pressure over issues that recently appeared to give it an advantage.

For the moment, this takes the form of relentless questioning about where the government plans to place the far-right, nationalist One Nation party on its "how to vote" cards in the election.

Those cards, which are a consequence of Australia's preferential voting system in which voters list all candidates on the ballot in order of preference, are often a matter of political gaming, designed to maximize a party's likelihood of success. Normally, they're of interest only to political buffs.

■ The racist politics

But every now and again, they come to be read as a declaration of ideological affinity and become a mainstream issue. This is the case following the horror in New Zealand, given One Nation's history of racist politics, recently expressed in its leader's declaration that "Islam is a disease; we need to vaccinate ourselves against that."

The question has dogged the government – becoming a staple of news conferences and interviews with parliamentarians – because the government hasn't provided a straightforward answer. After some hemming and hawing, there is still disagreement within the government about what to do.

One of its members spoke at a far-right, anti-Muslim Reclaim Australia rally in 2015. Earlier that year, Tony Ab-



Under the previous prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who would frequently celebrate Australia's success as a multicultural country, and contend that those peddling Islamophobia were helping the Islamic State.

bott, then the prime minister, suggested that Muslim leaders were insincere when they said Islam was a religion of peace.

Indeed, such was the hostility of numerous parliamentarians' rhetoric toward Islam that the head of Australia's top intelligence organization advised them to moderate their language. Perhaps the government's most committed member on this score is the Home Affairs minister, Peter Dutton, who recently asserted that people in Melbourne were "scared" to go to restaurants at night because of an epidemic of African gang violence – a supposed epidemic that even the state of Victoria, where Melbourne is located, says is overblown "hysteria."

■ Integrating into our society

By contrast, Mr. Dutton has argued that Australia should give "special attention" to white South African farmers, whom he regards as especially persecuted. He says they would "abide by our laws, integrate into our society, work hard, not lead a life on welfare." He is not the only politician expressing these sorts of views.

In October, senators voted in favor of a One Nation motion incorporating the white supremacist slogan "It's O.K. to be white." The government later blamed an administra-

tive error for the vote, after having initially trumpeted the move as evidence of its opposition to "racism of any kind."

The kindest interpretation of all this is that the coalition has been sloppy and inattentive to the problem of extremism, even under the previous prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who would frequently celebrate Australia's success as a multicultural country, and contend that those peddling Islamophobia were helping the Islamic State.

A more likely interpretation is that several of the coalition's members are prepared to play the politics of race, either cynically or as a matter of conviction, and that the rising prominence of One Nation has emboldened them.

And given that the government's natural areas of political strength are around the issue of border protection (especially asylum-seeker policy) and national security, there is every reason to suspect that the coalition profits when politics skirts xenophobic themes.

But the visceral reality of Christchurch has recast much of our politics in new light: not as straight-talking honesty about the threat of Islamism, but as contributing to a more polarized, extremist environment.

■ A way of getting votes

Polling in the aftermath of Christchurch found that a remarkable 63 percent of Australians agreed that "white extremism is every bit as dangerous as Muslim fundamentalism," while 42 percent agreed that politicians "have deliberately stirred up anti-Islamic sentiment as a way of getting votes."

What was once a benefit has become a liability. What was once populist is eroding the government's political capital.

It is perhaps for this reason that we've seen the government pivot to an economic message, based mostly on the virtues of tax cuts. The Tampa route to retaining power seems to be shut off.

There's no guarantee this political moment will last. But if it does, it could be a truly transformative one for Australian conservative politics. Since at least the 1990s, Australian conservatism has offered a highly successful, if philosophically incongruent mix of free-market liberalism and increasingly strident cultural nationalism. But slowly these pillars have begun to erode.

As in much of the world, economic liberalism is losing some of its luster in Australia. But perhaps more so than elsewhere, nationalist anti-immigrant politics is running aground, too. The times would seem to demand a renewed Australian conservatism, attentive to economic and social inequality, and comfortable enough with cultural diversity to search for political capital elsewhere.

(Source: NYT)

Eurasia's great game and the future of the China-Russia alliance

By James M. Dorsey

MODERN DIPLOMACY — Addressing last year's Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, then U.S. defense secretary Jim Mattis dismissed fears first voiced in 1997 by Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of America's greatest 20th century strategists who advised U.S. presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Jimmy Carter, that long-term U.S. interests would be most threatened by a "grand coalition" of China and Russia "united not by ideology but by complimentary grievances."

On the contrary, Mr. Mattis suggested, China and Russia have a "natural non-convergence of interests" despite the fact that both countries have defined their relationship as a "comprehensive strategic partnership," Mr. Mattis argued.

"There may be short-term convergence in the event they want to contradict international tribunals or try muscling their way into certain circumstances but my view — I would not be wasting my time going to Beijing...if I really thought that's the only option between us and China. What would be the point of it? I've got more important things to do," Mr. Mattis argued.

Mr. Mattis predicted that in the longer term "China has more in common with Pacific Ocean nations and the United States and India than they have in common with Russia."

Mr. Mattis' prediction of a U.S.-China-India entente may seem even further away today than it did in Singapore a year ago, but his doubts about the sustainability of the Chinese-Russian alliance are being echoed by Chinese and Russian analysts and developments on the ground.

Shi Ze, a former Chinese diplomat in Moscow who is now a senior fellow at the China Institute of International Studies, a think tank affiliated with the country's foreign ministry, noted that "China and Russia have different attitudes. Russia wants to break the current international order. Russia thinks it is the victim of the current international system, in which its economy and its society do not develop. But China benefits from the current international system. We want to improve and modify it, not to break it."

Russian scholar Dmitry Zhelobov recently suggested that there was little confidence to cement the Chinese-Russian alliance. Mr. Zhelobov warned that China was gradually establishing military bases in Central Asia



to ensure that neither Russia nor the United States would be able to disrupt Chinese trade with the Middle East and Europe across the Eurasian heartland.

Add to that the fact that Chinese dependence on Russian military technology appears to be diminishing, potentially threatening a key Russian export market.

China in 2017 rolled out its fifth generation Chengdu J-20 fighter that is believed to be technologically superior to Russia's SU-57E.

Russian President Vladimir Putin appeared to signal greater awareness of potentially shifting sands in Central Asia by signing an agreement in March during a visit to Kyrgyzstan to expand by 60 hectares the Kant Air Base 20 kilometres east of the capital Bishkek that is used by the Russian Air Force. Mr. Putin also agreed to pay a higher rent for the base.

He further lavished his Kyrgyz hosts with U.S. \$6 billion in deals ranging from power, mineral resources and hydrocarbons to industry and agriculture.

Mr. Putin moreover allocated U.S. \$200 million for the upgrading of customs infrastructure and border equipment to put an end to the back-up of dozens of trucks on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border because Kyrgyzstan has so far been unable to comply with the technical requirements of the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Potential rivalry in Central Asia is not the only thing gnawing at the fundaments of a

Chinese-Russian alliance. So is anti-Chinese sentiment and Russian public suspicion of Chinese intentions and commercial and social practices, already pervasive in the region's former Soviet republics.

Increasingly, Russian leaders are facing mounting public anger in the Lake Baikal region and the country's Far East at their alleged connivance in perceived Chinese encroachment on the region's natural resources, including water.

A petition by prominent Russian show business personalities opposing Chinese plans to build a water bottling plant on the shores of Lake Baikal attracted more than 800,000 signatures, signalling the depth of popular resentment and pitfalls of the Russian alliance with China.

Protests have further erupted in multiple Russian cities against Chinese logging in the country's Far East that residents and environmentalists charge has spoilt Russian watersheds and is destroying the habitats of the endangered Siberian tiger and Amur leopard. The protesters, who denounced construction of housing for Chinese workers, are demanding a ban on Russian timber exports to China.

Russian fears of Chinese encroachment on its Far East go back to the mid-1800s and prompted Joseph Stalin to deport the region's Korean and Chinese populations. When Russia and China finally settled a border dispute in 2008 with a transfer of land

to China, Russian media raised the spectre of millions of Chinese migrants colonizing Siberia and the Far East.

Popular Russian fears diverge from official thinking that in recent years has discounted the threat of Chinese encroachment given that the trend is for Russians to seek opportunity in China where wages are high rather than the other way round.

The official Russian assessment would counter Mr. Mattis' thesis and support Mr. Brzezinski's fears that continue to have a significant following in Washington.

"China and Russia will present a wide variety of economic, political, counterintelligence, military, and diplomatic challenges to the United States and its allies. We anticipate that they will collaborate to counter U.S. objectives, taking advantage of rising doubts in some places about the liberal democratic model," said Director of National Intelligence Daniel R. Coats in the intelligence community's 2019 Worldwide Threat Assessment report to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

The report went on to say that China and Russia were "expanding cooperation with each other and through international bodies to shape global rules and standards to their benefit and present a counterweight to the United States and other Western countries."

The truth is that the jury is out. There is no shortage of evidence that China and Russia are joining forces in multiple theatres across the globe as well as in multilateral organizations like the United Nations and in Russian and Chinese efforts to drive wedges among Western allies and undermine public confidence in democratic institutions.

The question is how disruptive Chinese-Russian rivalry in Central Asia and mounting Russian public unease with Chinese advances will be and whether that could alter U.S. perceptions of Russia as an enemy rather than an ally.

The odds may well be that China and Russia will prove to be long-term U.S. rivals. However, it may just as well be that their alliance will prove to be more tactical than strategic with the China-Russia relationship resembling U.S.-Chinese ties: cooperation in an environment of divergence rather than convergence.

Said strategist Robert D. Kaplan: The "future has arrived, and it is nothing less than a new cold war."

Khalifa Haftar's military advance

By Giancarlo Elia Valori

MODERN DIPLOMACY — Khalifa Haftar's military advance started in Jufra on April 4 last — passed from the South, namely Fezzan, and partly from Central Libya, starting from the Westernmost point of the area of influence already gained by Haftar in the last military advances.

The support for his actions against Tripolitania, which stems from very old tensions (the Senussi King Idris boasted he never set foot in Tripoli), materialized with the support of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the Russian Federation, as well as France in particular. Other countries, however, are and will be the future friends of Haftar's forces, if the General wins throughout the Libyan territory.

Why so many allies? Firstly, Saudi Arabia regards Haftar as an opponent of Islamic terrorism, the first real danger of the Saudi Kingdom.

Also the United Arab Emirates, however, start from this first consideration and assessment.

Moreover, both the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have largely funded Al-Sisi's coup against the Muslim Brotherhood of the then President Mohammed Morsi in 2013.

The Emirates also participated in the secret negotiations held last summer to have Libyan oil exported through external channels other than the one approved by the UN, namely the National Oil Corporation of Tripoli.

Haftar's forces have already redirected oil shipments from the ports they control -to the tune of several thousand oil barrels.

Furthermore Saudi Arabia and the Emirates also funded the electoral campaigns of General Haftar's candidates. This is a problem close to us, because the upcoming elections announced by the UN envoy, Ghassam Salamé, at the Palermo Conference, scheduled for next spring, will anyway be decisive, whoever funds them.

In any case, they will be blocked indefinitely due to the now evident proxy civil war that is taking place in Libya.

In addition, General Haftar started the April 4 offensive after informing Emirate's Prince Mohammed bin Sayed al-Nayan on April 2 and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (but not the acting Prince) on March 27.

The penetration into Tripolitania had already been militarily planned by General Haftar with both the Saudi and Emirate leaders, with whom he had very secret contacts.

The political will of the two Arab States in the peninsula is to put al-Sarraj's government in Tripoli under such strong pressure as to make al-Sarraj accept the agreement that had been defined in the Abu Dhabi meetings with General Haftar himself on February 28 last.

In Abu Dhabi, the first issue to be discussed was the Sharara oil field, the most important one in Libya, held by General Haftar's forces, as well as the gradual unification of the two State structures.

The signing of that agreement, which reaffirmed — sine die — the bureaucratic union of the two parts of Libya was welcomed everywhere, but evidently that agreement had been written on the desert sand.

For the Sharara oil field, Prime Minister al-Sarraj accepted the sale of 300,000 barrels/day, managed by the Libyan NOC, the Spanish Repsol, Total, the Austrian OMV and the Norwegian Equinor. However, no progress has been made so far.

Nevertheless the "Libyan National Conference" that the previous Palermo Conference had scheduled for late January 2019 was never held, despite the passion and enthusiasm shown for it by the UN envoy for Libya, Ghassan Salamé.

France sent its DGSE operatives to Haftar's area in late 2015, encamped near the Benghazi airbase.

What does France want from General Haftar? It wants to close the Maghreb region to other countries' influence — especially Italy's — so as to create a large Francophone area from Central Africa to all Mediterranean African coasts except for Egypt, which is too big for the forces (of France and Great Britain) that even had to stop — for lack of ammunition — during the first phase of Gaddafi's Libya "conquest" and asked the United States to intervene.

Certainly France also wants all the Libyan oil, which is currently in General Haftar's hands.

What about the Russian Federation? It supports Haftar, although with a sui generis approach. In fact, while I am writing this article, Haftar is holding a talk with Vladimir Putin for two reasons: he wants to sell weapons to the Libyan National Army, but also to avoid competition from Saudi Arabia, which is also a major oil producer and could add the Libyan oil and gas to its own, thus quickly becoming the unparalleled top exporter of crude oil in the world.

Here — regardless of OPEC or not — the situation does not change: the price of the oil barrel would be set by Saudi Arabia.

Russia's allies on the field are not homogeneous in their alliances. Turkey and Algeria support al-Sarraj while — as already noted — the others support General Khalifa Haftar.

There is also the possibility of a Russian military base on Cyrenaica's coast, when General Haftar fully wins the game.

Nevertheless, rumours are already rife that the Russians of the Wagner Group, the main private military group used by Russia, are present in the Benghazi forces' area.

In late 2018, the Russian newspaper RBC reported that there were "Russian troops in Libya".

General Khalifa Haftar's forces, the Libyan National Army, moved from Fezzan — through the territories of the various local tribes — in two ways: with the good — and not only recent — good relations they had with that tribe world or with large cash payments.

The first military advance line of the Benghazi Free Army was between Bani Walid and Sabratha, towards Gharyan, the crossing point to Tripoli from the South.

In late March, many local, tribal and non-tribal brigades had changed sides, in favour of General Haftar, mainly thanks to the example of the Seventh Al Khaniat Brigade from Tarhouna, which started fighting with the Benghazi National Army that, in fact, advanced through the Southern districts of Tripoli.

The Seventh Brigade's attack probably had the opposite

effect, thus making some Tripoli's brigades remain loyal to al-Sarraj's government, although no one knows for how long.

Even the "moderates" of Misrata — led by the current Interior Minister of Tripoli, Fathi Bachaga — that until now have been open to future negotiations with General Haftar, have stiffened their stance in defence of Tripoli.

The troops of Misrata, the Libyan "Sparta", amount to 15,000 soldiers and would make the difference in any future confrontation.

However, Misrata has already mobilized its military forces, but for the time being there is only a small Misrata force alongside the other forces in Tripoli.

The Benghazi Defence Brigades, which also include some soldiers from Misrata, and the Halbous militia have instead agreed to be part of Tripoli's counteroffensive.

(Others') money counts.

The Forces of Zintan, another major military centre of Tripoli's armed forces, are divided between the group still loyal to Tripoli's GNA, led by Oussama al-Jouli and Emad al-Trabelsi, while all the others are now supporting General Haftar.

The latter, can still rely on a large amount of ammunition.

The Rada Militia, led by Abdelraouf Kara, has not yet made any choice.

It is currently called "Unit for the Prevention of Organized Crime and Terrorism" and controls Tripoli's nerve centres.

Hence if Haftar wins, the old Rada Militia will be on his side.

General Haftar has already had contacts with this organization, which is affiliated with the same Makhdalist Salafist movement that is already operating in favour of General Haftar in the East.

The strength of the African Salafist sect, which aims at an African and Libyan jihad, must certainly not be underestimated.

The strategy of forcedly re-proposing the Abu Dhabi agreement to al-Sarraj, who would obviously be weakened, is supported — on Haftar side — by Russia, which coincidentally voted a UN Security Council's motion condemning General Haftar's advance.

Egypt itself has some fears for the current advance of the Benghazi forces. It is afraid that this may have repercussions both on the many Egyptian workers still present in Libya and on the country's internal equilibria.

France has supported General Haftar's advance, also with its operatives — not only from the DGSE and its Service Action. France thinks that General Haftar's advance is the only barrier against terrorism, but also the way to reconquer Libya after the disastrous operations following Gaddafi's ousting in 2011.

General Haftar is openly pro-Gaddafi, as he demonstrated by having the Rais image portrayed on his banknotes printed in Russia.

Moreover France has greatly favoured Haftar's advance in Fezzan by collecting and assigning to the Benghazi General the intelligence gathered by a spy-plane provided by CAE Aviation, a company belonging to DGSE and to its Service Action, in particular.

The dark fate of Trump in Yemen

1 → In other hand, Over the past few days, whispers were heard about the "vague future" of Bin Salman, the young Saudi prince, in regional and international sources. The fact is that Bin Salman is extremely afraid of his political future, because there is no guarantee that his physical or political removal will not come true in the near future.

Ultimately, the United States and Saudi Arabia will have no destiny except to defeat Yemen. The recent move by Trump will further enhance the Yemeni's motivation for resistance to Saudi Arabia. Without doubt, in the near future, Washington and Riyadh will both become the biggest losers in Yemen's war.

New government formation in West Bank is great betrayal: al-Zahar

1 → This administration is not even dominant over the entire West Bank and does not manage areas that are becoming Zionist settlements.

■ What is your analysis of the outcome of the Israeli regime's parliamentary election and its impact on Gaza?

A: First of all, the enemy's nature is aggression, and this is the case with the criminal attacks of this regime over the past ten years, four consecutive wars on Gaza. Accordingly, in the future the occurrence of conflict and war is not unlikely between us and Israel. In particular, this spectrum of Zionists has taken place among Israeli citizens over the past four years so they are not concerned about the general or partial failure in the election. Of course, at the next stage, all Israeli regime parties will work on making coalition.

■ How do you evaluate the implementation process of the so-called 'Deal of the Century'?

A: When we reject this project, the project will actually be cancelled. They are going to solve the problem of Gaza in this way, which means that the West Bank has no problem?! or Occupied lands and camps of the Palestinian refugees in Syria and Lebanon don't make difficulties for them? Their problem is Gaza, and if Gaza opposes it, it will certainly not be implemented.

■ What is your position toward US designation of IRGC as a terrorist group?

A: Labeling an organization as a terrorist group is totally rejected by us. IRGC is part of the Iranian government. Is the Iranian government a terrorist?! If they are a terrorist, why did the former US administration (Barack Obama) agree with Iran on the nuclear issue?

So labeling IRGC as a terrorists group is a lie and it's for satisfying the Zionist regime. People and even some Europeans oppose this move. IRGC is a genuine part of the Iranian establishment and has challenged the Zionists' projects in the region.

Armed Europeans try to cross from Libya to Tunisia

Tunisian authorities have stopped more than 20 armed Europeans attempting to cross into the country from neighbouring Libya, officials said on Tuesday.

"An armed group consisting of 13 French nationals attempted to cross the border in 4x4 vehicles with diplomatic license plates at the Ras Jedir crossing on Sunday," said Defence Minister Abdelkareem Zubaidi.

The group tried to enter Tunisia on Sunday "under diplomatic cover, with arms and ammunition" he said.

According to the local Mosaïque FM radio station, the group was denied entry into Tunisia after failing to disclose the entirety of its arms inventory.

The French embassy in Tunis said the individuals were members of a security detail attached to the French diplomatic mission in Libya which is based in the Tunisian capital.

"[They were] members of the French protection team that provides security protection to the French ambassador for Libya."

"Given the current situation in Libya, one of the trips which the French embassy undertakes regularly between Tunis and Tripoli, was made by road," the embassy said, without mentioning any arms seized.

■ **Routine stop**

It said the stop at the border was routine, and after an inventory of equipment, the detachment continued on its route.

According to local media reports, the visitors had come from the Libyan city of Garyan where they had been advising forces led by renegade General Khalifa Haftar.

Haftar, who commands forces loyal to Libya's eastern-based government, launched an ambitious campaign in early April to capture Tripoli, where Libya's UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) is based.

Separately, Zubaidi said 11 people of different European nationalities - also diplomats - had recently tried to enter Tunisian waters from Libya in two rubber life boats.

"The Tunisian navy confiscated their weapons and handed them over to the National Guard," Zubaidi said, without saying when exactly the incident had occurred.

■ **Foreign meddling**

Ibrahim Fraihat, an associate professor of conflict resolution at the Doha Institute, told Al Jazeera that French support for Haftar has raised concerns about the extent to which foreign parties were involved in the conflict.

"French support for Haftar has taken on a new level. The presence of armed diplomats on Libyan soil suggests their backing is not only diplomatic," he said.

"The French explanation to this, that those are the security guards of the French ambassador actually made things worse because the French ambassador is based in Tunisia, not Libya."

Libya, which has been mired in chaos since the NATO-backed toppling of Gaddafi in 2011, has been split into rival eastern and western administrations since 2014.

Analysts say Haftar's push on the capital threatens to further destabilise the oil-rich country and reignite a full-blown civil war. (Source: al Jazeera)

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt in Fereshteh
brand new, different floors
90 sq.m to 150 sq.m, furn
parking
\$1400 to \$2200
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Jordan
1st floor, 246 sq.m, 4 Bdrs.
furn, spj, balcony
renovated, parking spot
\$3200
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Zafaranih
3rd floor, 400 sq.m with
4 Bdrs., unfurn, spj, parking
\$3500
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Niavaran
205 sq.m, fully furn, huge terrace,
nice view, storage BBQ, parking
\$3500
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Zafaranih
3rd floor, 190 sq.m, 3Bdrs. furn,
equipped kitchen, spj elevator,
storage, parking
\$2000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Soheil
almost new, 5th floor, 190 sq.m 3
Bdrs., fully furn, balcony Jacuzzi,
elevator, storage
parking
\$3000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa

Villa in Darband
triplex, 1800 sq.m land, 500 sq.m
built up, 5 Bdrs., unfurn outdoor
swimming, garden completely
renovated, parking
\$9000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Duplex Villa in Pasdaran
550 sq.m land, 630 sq.m built up, 4
Bdrs., unfurn, outdoor swimming
pool
renovated, parking
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Triplex Villa in Velenjak
1000 sq.m land, 700 sq.m built up,
5 Bdrs., unfurn, very clean sauna,
outdoor swimming pool
servant quarter, fire place
renovated, green yard
s storage, parking, **\$12000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

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

Modern Villa in Soheil
duplex, 1000 sq.m land
750 sq.m built up, 5 Bdrs.
fully furn, equipped kitchen
outdoor swimming pool, sauna
Jacuzzi, beautiful yard parking
\$12000 negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156



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

From Oxford Cert Universal

**Best Consultation
Best Services, Best Result**

Intl. Department Manager "Tina 09128103205"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

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

Building & Office

Whole building in Jordan
administrative office license
brand new, 6 floors, 6 apts
each apt 150 sq.m, elevator
gathering room, 6 parking spots
\$11000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in
Shariati - Soheil
2 floors, 600 sq.m totally
8 Bdrs., 6 bath rooms
one 40 sq.m suit, renovated
3 storages, 3-side entrances
12 parking spots, **\$6000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in Zafaranih
brand new, 5 floors, 5 apts each
apt 175 sq.m with 3 Bdrs.
10 parking spots, **\$10000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in Aqdasieh
2 apts, one apt 330 sq.m with
3 Bdrs., another apt 400 sq.m with
5 Bdrs., unfurn, storage parking
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Office in North Shirazi
administrative office license
brand new, 6 floors, 6 units
each unit 120 sq.m flat
5 parking spots, **\$12000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in Jordan
3 floors, 500 sq.m land, totally
650 sq.m built up, swimming pool
renovated, parking, **\$7000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Ideal Offers

Apt in Elahieh
1st floor, 70 sq.m, 1 Bdr.
unfurn, spj, gym, **\$800**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Zafaranih
ground floor, 150 sq.m
3 Bdrs., unfurn, spj, lobby
storage, parking
\$1800
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Jordan
sq.m with, 3 Bdrs 270
furn, parking, **\$1100**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Fereshteh
85 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., furn
spj, tennis court, elevator
parking, **\$1550**
Short term
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Andarzgoo blvd
3rd floor, 100 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
fully furn, parking
\$1200
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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

Apt in Jordan
2nd floor, 140 sq.m with
Bdrs., furn, parking 2
\$1000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

مالکین محترم

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

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

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

مالکین محترم

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

PARSIAN Real Estate
SHANON
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
+989121907875
Tel : 88745542

Darrous (\$1500)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, yard, F.F

Mahmoodieh (\$2500)
400sq.m, 4bdrs
S/pool, S, J

Velenjak Villa
1500sq.m, 6bdrs
S/p, S, J, & yard

Farmanieh (\$2100)
220sq.m, 3bdrs. S/pool
Sauna, Jacuzzi, pkg, F.F

balcony pkg

Parkway bldg (\$12000)
2000sq.m, 5storey, 15bdrs
green yard, S/pool, S, & J

Don't Waste Your Time
Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties
www.DeltaHOME.ir
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners
HOME
Real Estate
Member of DELTA Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865

Advertising Dept:
times1979@gmail.com

+9821 430 51 450
www.tehrantimes.com

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading
International Daily

Advertising Dept

Tel:
021 - 430 51 450

TEHRAN TIMES
Iran's Leading International Daily

ENGLISH PERSIAN GLOSSARY

واژه نامه اصطلاحات مطبوعات
انگلیسی - فارسی

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:

Tel: 021 - 430 51 450
times1979@gmail.com

Iran set to use homegrown plasma in producing hemophilia medicine

HEALTH DESK **TEHRAN** — Iran is set to produce Hemophilia medicines using domestically produced plasma by the Iranian year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), said the managing director of Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO).
Ali-Akbar Pour-Fathollah made the remarks on the occasion of World Hemophilia Day on April 17, YJC reported.
Plasma is the largest single component of blood, and makes up about 55% of total blood volume. It is a vital source material for a number of plasma-derived medications that treat and prevent life-threatening diseases, illnesses and conditions. Plasma can't be created in a laboratory; rather, it is usually derived from people donating

their plasma.
"Iran is among the top countries in treating Hemophilia, and even though we are a developing country, the lion share of medicine and medical care given to the patients are free of charge," said Pour-Fathollah.
"Annually, 400,000 units of plasma are produced in the country. Currently, IBTO separates plasma from the blood with standard international procedures and then sends it to European countries, so the required medicines are produced," he added.
"By using homegrown plasma in producing medicines, we can prevent the diseases caused by environmental change and emerging diseases; moreover, we can have confident in the safety and high-quality of the plasma we use," he further noted.



Iran is among the top countries in treating Hemophilia, and even though we are a developing country, the lion share of medicine and medical care given to the patients are free of charge.

Risk of malaria in flood-stricken areas



HEALTH DESK **TEHRAN** — There is a risk of malaria incidence in the near future in Hormozgan province and Sistan-Baluchestan province in the aftermath of the flash flood, said Ghasem Janbabai, the deputy health minister for medical care and education.
Sistan-Baluchestan lies in Iran's south-east and is the second largest province in the country. Hormozgan is located in the south of Iran and has fourteen islands in the Persian Gulf and 1,000 km (620 mi) of coastline.
Extreme rainfall, starting on March 19, has caused flooding in 28 out of 31 provinces

affecting 42,269,129 inhabitants in 253 cities and causing widespread damage to municipal facilities, including roads, sewage systems, health centers, hospitals, etc.
According to Janbabai, malaria is not endemic to Khuzestan province, so the major concern is for Hormozgan province and Sistan-Baluchestan province, IRNA reported on Wednesday.
Leishmaniasis incidence is another risk in such areas, he said, adding that the medical teams are doing all necessary preventive measures to control the diseases using insecticide and studying the insects.

Free health care for flood-hit families



HEALTH DESK **TEHRAN** — The families struck by the flood will receive free medical care by the end of the crisis, announced Mohammad Esmail Motlaq, the director general for risk management at the Ministry of Health.
According to Motlaq, the flood-affected families can acquire the medicines and supplements they need at no cost, they can also receive free care in primary-level hospitals, Fars news agency reported on Sunday.
"500,000 people in Khuzestan prov-

ince were affected by the flood or were at risk of facing it. They are now receiving medical care and health supervision and many of them are settled in temporary camps," said Motlaq.
"The elderly, pregnant women and children under the age of ten receive special care in the camps," he added.
According to Motlaq, three mobile hospitals have been set up in Khuzestan province, so that the patients who need to be hospitalized can be transferred to them.

Road accidents, top cause of death among youth: official

HEALTH DESK **TEHRAN** — Road accidents is the leading cause of death in Iranian youth, accounting for 30% of deaths among them, said the head of community, family and schools health department in the Ministry of Health.
Hamed Barakati made the announcement on Tuesday during a conference to mark the National Youth Day, IRNA reported.
"Of course, road accidents is a major cause of death in all age groups, but it is more widespread among the young," said Barakati.
In October, Iran's Emergency Medical Services director Pir Hossein Kulivand said some 7,000 individuals were killed in traffic-related accidents in the past eight month, adding that road crashes are the third and fourth leading cause of death among children aged 10 to 14 and 5 to 9 years old respectively.
According to Barakati, Other causes of death in young people are suicide (6.5%), violence (5.9%), cardiovascular diseases (5%) and substance abuse.



Hamed Barakati, the head of community, family and schools department in the Ministry of Health speaking on the occasion of National Youth Day.

Barakati added that the young, that is people aged between 18 to 29 years old, make up 20% of the country's population.

■ Insufficient physical activity
Over the conference, Gelayol Ardalan, the head of the youth, teenagers and schools department at the Ministry of Health, called for plans to increase physical activity among the young people.
According to Ardalan, 47% of the Iranian youth has less than 1.5 hours of daily physical activity.
based on the surveys in 1392 [March 2013-March 2014], 7% of the Iranian youth has a fatty liver disease, said Ardalan, adding that the problem is 5 million of the young population are university students that might have an unhealthy diet or consume too much fast foods.
"1.5% of the young population in Iran suffer from depression, 0.5% have bipolar disorder, 0.7% have Epilepsy, 4% have used some type of tobacco products, 0.7% have used some kind of Opioids, 2% have used tranquilizers and 0.3% have consumed alcoholic drinks," she said.
In February, Deputy Health Minister Baqer Larjani announced that 57% of the total population have insufficient physical activity.

Can purple corn reduce inflammation, diabetes?

New research suggests that chemicals in purple corn can reduce inflammation and insulin resistance in a mouse cell model. Can researchers harness the chemicals in purple corn to improve diabetes?
Eating a healthful diet is a cornerstone of the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes. Fruit, nonstarchy vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes are all on the list of foods that the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommend.
There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and the latest ADA recommendations advise that individuals work with a healthcare professional to determine which foods help them control their blood sugar levels.
Corn may not be the most obvious choice when looking at managing diabetes. However, this grain comes in a variety of shades and colors, and it is these pigment chemicals that might hold the key to unlocking its potential benefits for people living with diabetes.
A 2017 study showed that rats that ate extracts from a strain of blue corn alongside a Western-style diet had less abdominal fat, better blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and lower blood pressure than rats that ate only the Western-style diet.
A research team from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who worked with collaborators at Northeast Agricultural University and Zhejiang University, both in China, now presents data showing that

the complex phytochemicals in a variety of new purple corn strains may reduce inflammation and improve insulin sensitivity in a mouse cell model.
■ Managing inflammation and obesity
Elvira Gonzalez de Mejia, corresponding author and a professor of food science, led the research, and the team published the findings in the journal Food Chemistry.
For the study, the researchers spent 4 years growing 20 new varieties of corn, which they derived from Apache red maize. They then used water to extract the chemical compounds present in the outer layer of the corn kernels, called the pericarp.
Each pericarp extract had a unique profile of anthocyanins, the pigments that create a corn strain's particular shade of red-purple, as well as other phytochemicals or phenolic compounds, including caffeic acid, vanillic acid, luteolin, and quercetin among others.
To test the potency of each strain's pericarp extract, the researchers took to the laboratory and used mouse cell models of inflammation and obesity — two critical drivers of diabetes — as well as insulin resistance.
When they exposed macrophages to the extracts, they saw a reduction in pro-inflammatory molecules. Macrophages are immune cells that play a role in inflammation.



They also found that some of the extracts were mildly toxic to fat cells but were able to dampen the conversion of precursor cells into mature fat cells called adipocytes, which accumulate fat and drive obesity.
■ Reducing insulin resistance
The researchers also tested their pericarp extracts on adipocytes that they had artificially induced to develop insulin resistance, a hallmark of diabetes.
The extracts reduced the levels of oxidative stress in the cells, which is a measure of insulin resistance.
Glucose uptake increased to varying degrees in the presence of the extracts, according to the study paper, and this demonstrates a reduction in insulin resistance.
The purple corn extracts may provide some additional benefits.
Alpha-amylase is an enzyme that plays a

role in the process of breaking down complex carbohydrates into simple sugars. Inhibition of the protein in people with diabetes can lead to lower blood sugar levels. The pericarp extracts had a potent inhibitory effect on alpha-amylase.
The extracts also inhibited another enzyme called dipeptidyl-peptidase 4 (DPP-4), which activates hormones that regulate insulin secretion in turn. Pharmaceutical DPP-4 inhibitors are a relatively new class of drug that doctors use to treat type 2 diabetes.
"We observed very important changes in molecules that reduced oxidative stress and inflammation in the insulin-resistant adipocytes. We also found important changes in pro-inflammatory molecules in the immune cells," says Diego Luna-Vital, postdoctoral researcher and study co-author
MNT asked de Mejia whether she foresees people with diabetes making use of purple corn by including it in their diet or by taking pericarp extracts.
"Both approaches are important," she explained, "the consumption of the whole colored corn as part of the diet, and also, the utilization as ingredient of the current pericarp coproduct from the dry milling corn processing."
The researchers are continuing their work with the aim of breeding corn hybrids that combine the phytochemicals that showed the most potential in the study.
(source: medical news today)

Alternative therapies for cancer: Do they do more harm than good?

New research finds that one-third of people living with cancer use complementary and alternative therapies. Medical professionals raise concerns about the safety of these practices, suggesting that they may interfere with conventional cancer treatment.
New research suggests that yoga may be one of the few nonconventional therapies that may help people living with cancer.
In 2018, the National Cancer Institute estimated that 1,735,350 people in the United States would receive a diagnosis of cancer by the end of that year and that 609,640 people would die from the condition.



Coping with the distressing news of a cancer diagnosis can be challenging.
As Dany Bell, a specialist advisor on cancer treatment and recovery at Macmillan Cancer Support in the United Kingdom, put it, "Being diagnosed with cancer can be a big shock, even if you already suspected you might have it."
Once they receive a diagnosis, many people turn to complementary and alternative therapies in search of a cure.
But new research cautions that such an approach may be misguided. Dr. Nina Sanford, from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, in Dallas, led an analysis of data from a comprehensive national survey to find out exactly how many people living with cancer also use complementary and alternative medicines.
Dr. Sanford — an assistant professor of radiation oncology — and colleagues published their findings in the journal JAMA Oncology.
■ One-third of patients use alternative medicines
Some have expressed concern that people who use complementary therapies — such as yoga, meditation, acupuncture, herbal medication, and supplements — do not inform their physicians.
Dr. Sanford and colleagues refer to these concerns in their paper, as well as a study suggesting that a small subgroup of people who used complementary medicines had a poorer outlook than those who did not.
In light of these worries, Dr. Sanford and the team analyzed data from the National Health Interview Survey of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The researchers carried out a cross-sectional study in an attempt to estimate the proportion of people with cancer who use complementary therapies.
Dr. Sanford's analysis revealed that one-third of people with a cancer diagnosis take complementary and alternative medicines. Herbal supplements were the most popular alternative therapy. Chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation were a close second.

Furthermore, Dr. Sanford's analysis revealed that 29 percent of those who use complementary treatments do not tell their physicians about it. Among the reasons that participants gave were that the doctor did not ask or that they thought their physician did not need to know.
"Younger patients are more likely to use complementary and alternative medicines and women were more likely to, but I would have thought more people would tell their doctors," comments Dr. Sanford.
■ Why herbal supplements may be harmful
"You don't know what's in them," the lead investigator continues, referring to herbal supplements. "Some of these supplements are kind of a mishmash of different things."
"Unless we know what's in [the herbal supplements], I would recommend patients avoid using them during radiation because [certain supplements] could interfere with treatment," said Dr. Nina Sanford
"With radiation specifically, there is concern that very high levels of antioxidants could make radiation less effective," she adds.
Dr. David Gerber, a lung cancer specialist and professor of internal medicine and population and data sciences at the university — who was not involved in the study — also comments on the clinical relevance of the findings.
"[Supplements] may interact with the medicines we're giving them, and through that interaction [they] could alter the level of the medicine in the patient," he says, adding, "If the levels get too high, then toxicities increase, and if the levels get too low, the efficacy would drop."
■ Yoga, meditation may help
Although physicians are concerned about the effects of supplements, they suggest that yoga and meditation may be beneficial for coping with a cancer diagnosis.
"We strongly advise patients to stay active and engage in exercise during treatment," Dr. Sanford says.
"A common side effect of radiation is fatigue. I let the patients know that the patients who feel the most fatigue are the ones who are the most sedentary and that those who are doing exercise are the ones who frequently have the most energy," says Dr. Nina Sanford.
People living with cancer have also recently shared some of their experiences with yoga. One perspective comes from Belindy Sarembock, who is 53 years old, lives in Dallas, and has received a breast cancer diagnosis. She speaks of the tremendous benefits that this type of exercise has for her.
"I was one who would have laughed at yoga before breast cancer, but now it just helps me so much," she says. "It's just so relaxing, I just feel so good after I leave. It's just so peaceful. For your body, I can't think of anything better than that."
Sarembock adds that yoga helped relieve chemo-induced neuropathy — nerve damage — almost immediately.
"I couldn't get onto my toes. After the second time of going to yoga, I was able to go onto my toes [...] I wish I would have known about the yoga earlier. It was just such a benefit and helped me so much. I highly recommend it to anyone," Said Belindy Sarembock.
(source: medical news today)

Iran highlighting tourist attractions in Beijing

TOURISM d e s k TEHRAN — Iran has joined the 25th China tourism exhibition, which opened to the public on Tuesday, with an eye on attracting more Chinese travelers to the Islamic Republic.

“This year’s exhibition is one of the most important tourism exhibitions in the world, which is held annually in Beijing late April,” IRNA quoted Farhad Baqerzadeh, a representative of Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization in Beijing, as saying.



Beijing exhibit has been set up in an area of 4,000 square meters and is attended by travel associates from 85 countries, he said. “The Chinese are interested in traveling to Iran and understanding our country, and this exhibition could have such a capacity to introduce Iran to them,” Hossein Khalifi, CHHTO representative in Shanghai, was quoted by IRNA as saying.

In 2017, over 100 million Chinese tourists traveled abroad, with Japan, Hong Kong, the U.S., South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, and France among their top destinations. However, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Iran fell short of expectations as just 80,000 tourists visited the country in the same year.

Insignificant numbers of Chinese restaurants, Chinese-language guides or even inappropriate lodging facilities are deemed to be among the main reasons behind the low number of Chinese tourist arrivals.

Some experts believe that part of this failure comes from inside Iran, because Chinese restaurants are scanty across the country while the cuisine is of high importance for majority of the Chinese people.

Notre-Dame fire: Paris surveys aftermath of cathedral blaze

Parisians are examining the full extent of a massive fire at Notre-Dame cathedral.

The fire, which brought down the spire and roof, was declared under control almost nine hours after it started.

President Emmanuel Macron has vowed to rebuild the 12th Century cathedral, describing the blaze as a “terrible tragedy”. Hundreds of millions of euros have already been pledged.

(Source: BBC)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley

The Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley, a natural property of outstanding beauty, comprises three inter-linked relatively shallow lakes (Lake Bogoria, Lake Nakuru and Lake Elementaita) in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya and covers a total area of 32,034 hectares.

These lakes are found on the floor of the Great Rift Valley where major tectonic and/or volcanic events have shaped a distinctive landscape.



Some of the world’s greatest diversities and concentrations of bird species are recorded within these relatively small lake systems. For most of the year, up to 4 million Lesser Flamingos move between the three shallow lakes in an outstanding wildlife spectacle.

Surrounded by hot springs, geysers and the steep escarpment of the Rift Valley with its volcanic outcrops, the natural setting of the lakes provides an exceptional experience of nature.

The Kenya Lake System presents an exceptional range of geological and biological processes of exceptional natural beauty, including falls, geysers, hot springs, open waters and marshes, forests and open grasslands concentrated in a relatively small area and set among the landscape backdrop of the Great Rift Valley.

The massed congregations of birds on the shores of the lakes including up to 4 million Lesser Flamingos which move between the three lakes is an outstanding wildlife spectacle. The natural setting of all three lakes surrounded by the steep escarpment of the Rift Valley and associated volcanic features provides an exceptional experience of nature.

(Source: UNESCO)

Tehran intl. conference to explore human origins across Zagros

HERITAGE d e s k TEHRAN — Iranology Foundation will host an international conference on Zagros in order to explore human origins, archaeology, geography, ancient rituals and myths across the mountain range.

Titled “Investigations on Origins of Human Life in the Zagros Mountains”, the event will also explore archaeological genetics, importance and advantage of anthropology studies, structural geology, and burial ceremonies in prehistorical times, as well as religion and culture scenes in the region.

The northwest-southeast mountain range is extending from the border areas of eastern Turkey and northern Iraq to the Strait of Hormuz. It is about 1,600 km long and more than 240 km wide.

According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the oldest rocks in Zagros date to Precambrian time (that is, before 541 million years ago), and the Paleozoic Era rocks that date to between 541 million and 252 million years ago are found at or near the highest peaks.

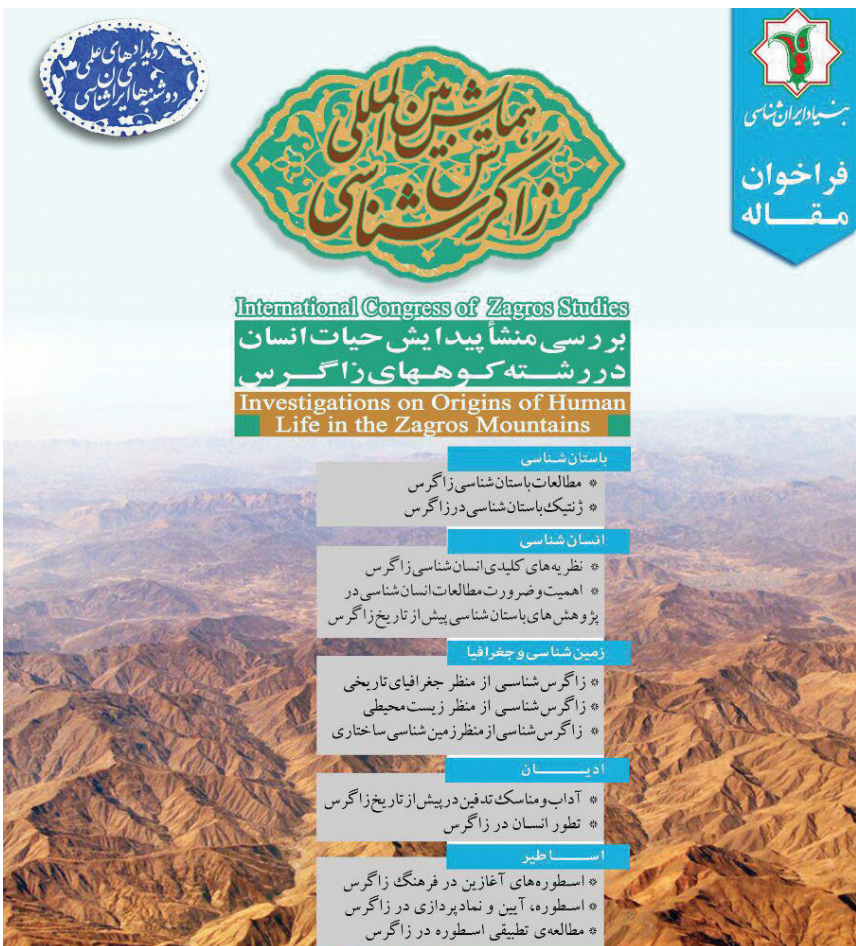
Most of the rocks in the mountain range, however, are limestone and shale from the Mesozoic Era (252 million to 66 million years ago) and the Paleogene Period (66 million to 23 million years ago).

The mountains are an imposing natural barrier and have traditionally provided the boundary between cultural and political entities, including the early Mesopotamian and Median cultures, the Parthian and Roman empires, and, more recently, the Persian and Ottoman empires.

The mountains and foothills that approach the range are home to a significant portion of Iran’s population, including, in addition to ethnic Persians, significant numbers of Assyrian Christians, Kurds, and Turks as well as Lurs, Bakhtyari, and Qashqaei tribal groups.

The traditional economy is based largely on animal breeding, and the production of high-quality rugs and carpets has long been a mainstay of the region.

University of Tehran, Shahid Beheshti



University, University of Cambridge and the Neanderthal Museum are amongst contributors to the event, which will be held on April 29.

Iran to host 2nd ECO conference, exhibit on health tourism

TOURISM d e s k TEHRAN — Iran will be playing host to the 2nd International Health Tourism Conference of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which will be held in Ardebil from June 18 to 20, Mehr reported.

“Representatives from 10 ECO member states, representatives and ambassadors of 15 countries and some 100 foreign guests will be attending the inaugural ceremony of this prestigious conference,” said Mohammad Reza Karbasi, the deputy director of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) for international affairs.

Expansion and promotion of cooperation among ECO member states in the field of health tourism, demonstration of high capabilities and potentials of Ardebil province are amongst the main objectives of the conference, he stated addressing a press conference.

“Ministers of ECO member states, ambassadors residing



in Tehran and also 25 official representatives of various countries have also been invited to attend the event.”

Old gravestone found in northeast Iran



HERITAGE d e s k TEHRAN — An old gravestone that bears some inscriptions has recently been found in a flood-hit rural district in Chenaran country, Khorasan Razavi province, northeast Iran.

“Following recent rainfalls, a tombstone which is 180 centimeters in length, was found in Dowlatabad village,” CHTN quoted Chenaran’s tourism chief Mohammad Taherian Moqaddam as saying on Wednesday.

“It was discovered after the flood destroyed a nearby bridge,” the official added, but declined to provide further information including an estimated date for the object.

An ancient cemetery is situated within 600 meters where the gravestone was spotted, Moqaddam noted.

Located 45 kilometers west of Mashhad, the provincial capital, Dowlatabad is a mountainous destination for local holidaymakers.

Was your European flight delayed or canceled? You may be entitled to cash

By Victoria M. Walker

You may have to sit on the tarmac for a few hours or crash at an airport hotel, but if your flight was delayed or canceled, you could get up to \$700.

With school out of session and those vacation plans to Europe tentatively approved by the boss, summer is a prime season for international travel.

Travel to the European Union by U.S. citizens increased significantly between May 2017 and June 2018, according to the National Travel and Tourism Office. But as travel into and out of Europe surges during the summer months, the likelihood of a delay at major hubs such as London Gatwick and Manchester also increases.

If that happens on your next trip, you might be able to take advantage of a little-known policy, Flight Compensation Regulation 261/2004. It offers all travelers, regardless of nationality, reimbursement in the event of a flight delay, denied boarding or cancellation. If your airline approves the claim, you are entitled to compensation between €250 and €600 (\$281 and \$676) per person for your inconvenience.

But before you call the airline or type out a tersely worded tweet, you should know that your trip may not be covered by the regulation. “If an airline is able to put you on a connecting flight or another nonstop flight under the threshold, then technically they don’t owe you anything,” said Jamie Larounis, founder of travel blog The Forward Cabin.

Here’s what you should know:

■ **How can I file a claim for compensation?**

First, it’s helpful to know that the type of compensation you can receive depends on the nature of your delay

or cancellation. If your flight was delayed by fewer than three hours, then you aren’t covered under the rule. Also, if your flight was delayed or canceled for “extraordinary circumstances,” like severe weather or political unrest, then it isn’t covered either.

Airlines generally have flight compensation information located on their websites (though you may have to look closely to find it). The airlines, according to the legislation, are required to inform passengers of their rights.

When you file the claim with your airline or through a watchdog agency such as FlightRight, you will be asked to provide your flight number and booking reference, as well as information about why your flight was delayed or canceled, so it’s helpful to have that information handy.

■ **Does the regulation apply only to airlines with headquarters in E.U. countries?**

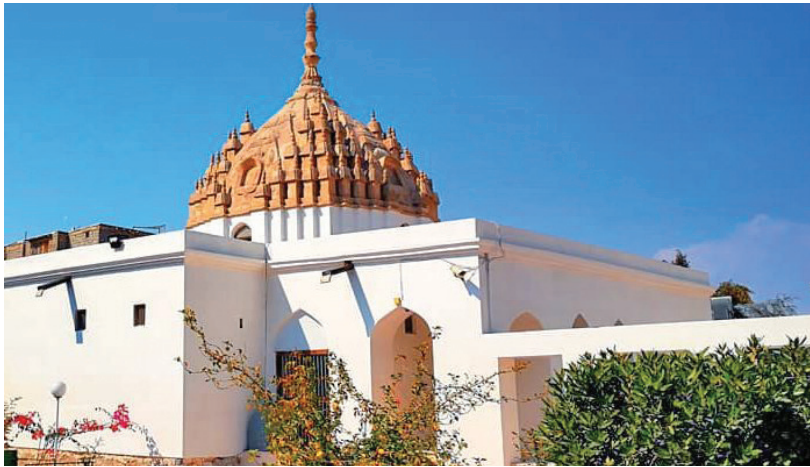
To be eligible for compensation, your flight must be on an E.U. airline only if you’re flying into an E.U. country. But if your flight originated in, or if you’re traveling within, the E.U., then you are also covered under the regulation regardless of the airline.

For example, if Air France canceled your flight from Paris to Chicago for mechanical issues, then you would be covered under the regulation because the trip originated in an E.U. country and the flight is on an E.U. airline. However, if your American Airlines flight traveling from Dallas to Rome was delayed, then it wouldn’t be considered eligible for compensation because American isn’t an E.U. carrier, even though the flight terminated in an E.U. country.

■ **How long does it take to get compensated?**

Technically, you’re entitled to be reimbursed for your

Fresh restorations to begin on Hindu Temple



HERITAGE d e s k TEHRAN — A fresh round of restoration work is to commence on the Hindu Temple in Bandar Abbas, southern Iran, ISNA quoted a local tourism official as saying on Wednesday.

“Cracks running in the dome, anti-termite treatment, and fixing electrical installations are on agenda for this phase of restoration, which will be carried out by the private section,”

Abbas Noruzi said.

The modest temple was built in the early 20th century to serve the Indian community working for the British East India Company.

Its architecture features are a combination of Persian and Hindi architecture, which is one of the historical monuments in Hormozgan province. However, it lacks the vivid colors that are usually associated with Hindu temples.

journey within seven days. But patience is key — you might have to follow up with your airline by calling or sending a message on Twitter or Facebook.

Before filing for compensation, airlines may also offer you perks like free miles or travel vouchers instead of what they are legally obligated to provide you — money. Ultimately, you should decide what’s best for you and your travel plans. You’re entitled to cash, but you may be able to receive airline miles or upgrades to business or first class, depending on availability, for the inconvenience. Once the reimbursement has been processed, the airline will pay you in cash, check or by bank transfer.

■ **Will Brexit complicate filing a claim?**

AirHelp, a website that helps passengers file compensation claims, says British passengers alone received almost €800 million in compensation between 2017 and 2018.

Until Britain formally exits the European Union, the country — and its airlines — is still subject to the E.U. 261 legislation. Flights on U.K. carriers including British Airways and Virgin Atlantic must comply with the rule until Britain leaves the E.U., but it’s unclear what will happen after the Brexit deadline.

■ **Can I file a claim through a third party?**

Third-party companies like Refund. Me and FlightRight.com can do much of the heavy lifting of filing your claim with an airline — but they don’t do it because they are nice people who understand the frustration of canceled flights. Some companies charge steep fees to file a claim for you.

“The airline has to verify the flight, verify why it was delayed and verify that you were on it. The intermediaries have some legal power to expedite that process,” said Mr. Larounis. (Source: The New York Times)

How long do neutrons live? Physicists close in on decades-old puzzle

Neutrons are electrically neutral particles that usually combine with protons to make up atomic nuclei. Some neutrons are not bound up in atoms; these free-floating neutrons decay radioactively into other particles in a matter of minutes.

But physicists can't agree on precisely how long it takes a neutron to die. Using one laboratory approach, they measure the average neutron lifetime as 14 minutes 39 seconds. Using a different approach, they get 8 seconds longer. The discrepancy has bedeviled researchers for nearly 15 years.

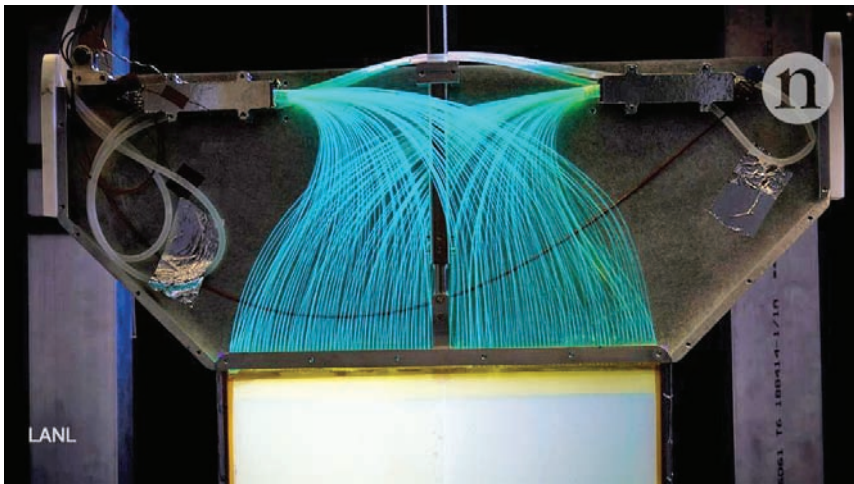
"We don't know why they're different," says Shannon Hoogerheide, a physicist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland. "We really need to understand and eliminate this discrepancy." She and other scientists debated new ways to solve the problem on 13 and 14 April at a meeting of the American Physical Society in Denver, Colorado.

Other light elements

Pinpointing the lifetime of a neutron is important for understanding how much hydrogen, helium and other light elements formed in the first few minutes after the Universe was born in the Big Bang, 13.8 billion years ago.

Scientists also think they can hunt for new types of physics if they can better pin down the neutron's lifetime, because that would help to constrain measurements of other subatomic particles.

James Chadwick discovered the neutron in 1932, but it wasn't until 1951 that researchers



first reported measuring the particle's lifetime, using nuclear reactors that manufactured free neutrons and tracked how they decayed.

Physicists kept working their way closer to the answer — until 2005, when their measurements became precise enough to reveal

the puzzling eight-second difference. Then scientists got worried.

One way of clocking the neutron's lifetime is to put some of the particles in a bottle and count how many are left after a period of time. This 'bottle' method has been tried at several

laboratories, including the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico and the Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL) in Grenoble, France. On average, they come up with a neutron lifetime of 14 minutes 39 seconds.

Seen in the bottle method

The other way is to feed neutrons into a detector that counts the protons created as the neutrons decay. This 'beam' method has been used at NIST and the Japan Proton Accelerator Research Complex in Tokai. The Japanese work has just got under way, but the NIST collaboration reported in 2013 that their neutrons live eight seconds longer, on average, than seen in the bottle method.

One possibility is that one of the two methods is doing something wrong. In that case, researchers might want to combine beam and bottle in a single device. At the meeting, physicist Zhaoen Tang of the Los Alamos lab described how researchers could put a particle detector inside a bottle neutron trap and count neutrons using both methods. His team has acquired funding to start building the device.

Another possibility is that the beam and bottle approaches have been measuring the neutron lifetime correctly, but that some unseen factor accounts for the discrepancy between the two.

A leading idea is that neutrons might occasionally decay into not just protons but also dark matter, the mysterious unseen material that makes up much of the Universe's matter. (Source: [scientificamerican.com](#))

James Chadwick discovered the neutron in 1932, but it wasn't until 1951 that researchers first reported measuring the particle's lifetime, using nuclear reactors that manufactured free neutrons and tracked how they decayed.

Six-decade plankton study charts rise of ocean plastic waste

A trove of data showing when the Atlantic began choking with plastic has been uncovered in the handwritten logbooks of a little-known but doggedly persistent plankton study dating back to the middle of the last century.

From fishing twine found in the ocean in the 50s, then a first carrier bag in 1965, it reflects how the marine refuse problem grew from small, largely ignored incidents to become a matter of global concern.

The unique dataset, published in *Nature Communications*, is based on records from the continuous plankton recorder, a torpedo-shaped marine sampling device that has been towed across more than 6,500 nautical miles of ocean over the past 60 years.

Based firstly in Hull, then Edinburgh and Plymouth, the long-running program was initially designed to collect pelagic plankton, which are an indicator of water quality and also a source of food for whales and other marine life.

Data on plastic waste

But the operators have also kept a chart-and-counter track of entanglements that disrupted their work: what snared the equipment, where it happened and when. This has proved a valuable source of data on plastic waste, according to contemporary researchers.

"This consistent time series provides some of the earliest records of plastic entanglement, and is the first to confirm a significant increase in open ocean plastics in recent decades," the paper notes.

The start of the problem was so slow it was barely noticed. The log shows strands of fishing twine found off the east coast of Iceland in 1957, then a carrier bag in waters to the north-west of Ireland eight years later. The paper states this was a couple of years before the first reports of turtles and seabirds becoming ensnared in plastic.

Almost half of the interruptions are caused by discarded nets, lines and other fishing equipment. Other plastic objects account for the rest. The paper said this highlighted the dangers to sea life because



the sampling device was towed by ferries and container ships at a depth of about 7 meters, where many fish and marine mammals can be found. The number of entanglements was particularly high in the southern North Sea, but the authors said the problem was evident across a very wide range of ocean.

Other parts of the Arctic

Clare Ostle, of the Plymouth-based Marine Biological Association, said: the "message is that marine plastic has increased significantly and we are seeing it all over the world, even in places where you would not want to, like the Northwest Passage and other parts of the Arctic."

She was encouraged that the number of carrier bags snagged by the equipment appeared to have stabilized in recent years, and speculated that this may be a result of increased consumer awareness. But she cautioned that the data did not have a precise correlation with the amount of plastic in the ocean and was better seen as a guide to broad trends.

At this critical time for humanity and our planet, we are determined to inform readers about threats, consequences and solutions based on scientific facts, not political prejudice or business interests. But we need your support to grow our coverage, to travel to the remote frontlines of change and to cover vital conferences that affect us all.

More people are reading and supporting our independent, investigative reporting than ever before. And unlike many news organizations, we have chosen an approach that allows us to keep our journalism accessible to all, regardless of where they live or what they can afford.

(Source: [The Guardian](#))

Solar evaporator offers a fresh route to fresh water, researchers find

About a billion people around the world lack access to safe drinking water. Desalinating salty water into drinkable water can help to fill this dangerous gap. But traditional desalination systems are far too expensive to install and operate in many locations, especially in low-income countries and remote areas.

Now researchers at the University of Maryland's A. James Clark School of Engineering have demonstrated a successful prototype of one critical component for affordable small-scale desalination: an inexpensive solar evaporator, made of wood. The evaporator generates steam with high efficiency and minimal need for maintenance, says Liangbing Hu, associate professor of materials science and engineering and affiliate of the Maryland Energy Innovation Institute.

The design employs a technique known as interfacial evaporation, "which shows great potential in response to global water scarcity because of its high solar-to-vapor efficiency, low environmental impact, and portable device design with low cost," Hu says. "These features make it suitable for off-grid water generation and purification, especially for low-income countries."

Absorbing solar heat

Interfacial evaporators are made of thin materials that float on saline water. Absorbing solar heat on top, the evaporators continuously pull up the saline water from below and convert it to steam on their top surface, leaving behind the salt, explains Hu, who is senior author on a paper describing the work in *Advanced Materials*.

However, over time salt can build up on this evaporative surface, gradually degrading performance until it is removed, he says.

Hu and his colleagues minimized the need for this maintenance with a device made out of basswood that exploits the wood's natural structure of the micron-wide channels that carry water and nutrients up the tree.

The researchers supplement these natural channels by drilling a second array of millimeter-wide channels through a thin cross-section of the wood, says Yudi Kuang,



a visiting scholar and lead author on the paper. The investigators then briefly expose the top surface to high heat, which carbonizes the surface for greater solar absorption.

In operation, as the device absorbs solar energy, it draws up salty water through the wood's natural micron-wide channels. Salt is spontaneously exchanged from these tiny channels through natural openings along their sides to the vastly wider drilled channels, and then easily dissolves back into the water below.

"In the lab, we have successfully demonstrated excellent anti-fouling in a wide range of salt concentrations, with stable steam generation with about 75% efficiency," says Kuang.

"Using natural wood as the only starting material, the salt-rejecting solar evaporator is expected to be low-cost," adds research associate Chaoyi Chen. The evaporator approach also is effective in other types of wood with similar natural channels. The researchers now are optimizing their system for higher efficiency, lower capital cost, and integration with a steam condenser to complete the desalination cycle.

Carbonized wood material

Hu's lab also recently developed another solar-heated prototype device that takes advantage of carbonized wood's ability to absorb and distribute solar energy -- this one created to help clean up spills of hard-to-collect heavy oils. "Our carbonized wood material demonstrates rapid and efficient crude oil absorption, as well as low cost and scalable manufacturing potential," says Kuang, lead author on a paper about the research in *Advanced Functional Materials*.

(Source: [eurekalert.org](#))

New scientific device creates electricity from snowfall

UCLA researchers and colleagues have designed a new device that creates electricity from falling snow. The first of its kind, this device is inexpensive, small, thin and flexible like a sheet of plastic.

The "device can work in remote areas because it provides its own power and does not need batteries," said senior author Richard Kaner, who holds UCLA's Dr. Myung Ki Hong Endowed Chair in Materials Innovation. "It's a very clever device -- a weather station that can tell you how much snow is falling, the direction the snow is falling, and the direction and speed of the wind."

The researchers call it a snow-based triboelectric nanogenerator, or snow TENG. A triboelectric nanogenerator, which generates charge through static electricity, produces energy from the exchange of electrons.

"Static electricity occurs from the interaction of one material that captures electrons and another that gives up electrons," said Kaner, who is also a distinguished professor of chemistry and biochemistry, and of materials science and engineering, and a member of the California NanoSystems Institute at UCLA. "You separate the charges and create electricity out of essentially nothing."

Snow is positively charged and gives up electrons. Silicone -- a synthetic rubber-like material that is composed of silicon atoms and oxygen atoms, combined with carbon, hydrogen and other elements -- is negatively charged. When falling snow contacts the surface of silicone, that produces a charge that the device captures, creating electricity.

"Snow is already charged, so we thought, why not bring another material with the opposite charge and extract the charge to create electricity?" said co-author Maher El-Kady, a UCLA postdoctoral researcher of chemistry and biochemistry.

"While snow likes to give up electrons, the performance of the device depends on the efficiency of the other material at extracting these electrons," he added. "After testing a large number of materials including aluminum foils and Teflon, we found that silicone produces more charge than any other material."

(Source: [sciencedaily.com](#))

Harvard scientists say Earth was struck by an interstellar object 5 years ago

It was unprecedented. In 2017, astronomers discovered the first known interstellar object in our Solar System: 'Oumuamua, a mysterious cigar-shaped enigma, identified as our first visitor from outer, outer space.

But just because 'Oumuamua was the first detected interstellar object, doesn't mean it was the first ever. Just five years ago, in fact, Earth's atmosphere was struck by something that may have originated far outside our own Solar System -- and we never even realized it.

In a new paper, a pair of Harvard researchers propose that a meteor that collided with Earth's atmosphere in January 2014 was actually another interstellar traveler with distant, mysterious origins.



But unlike the hurtling 'Oumuamua -- which is on a 20,000-year trajectory that will see it eventually exit our Solar System -- this meteor's long journey was fated to be a one-way ticket, ending with a fiery finale five years ago, as the object burnt up in the skies above Papua New Guinea.

While 'Oumuamua is a large object, and was detected very far from Earth, the team behind the meteor hypothesis says much smaller interstellar immigrants could be far more commonplace, and potentially exist a lot closer to home.

"Instead of looking far out into space, and given the fact that there should be a higher abundance of interstellar objects smaller than 'Oumuamua, we thought, 'Why not look locally and find these smaller interstellar objects as they collide with the Earth's atmosphere?'" first author, astronomer Amir Siraj told Newsweek.

Hidden in the CNEOS data, there lurked a remarkable outlier: a 2014 fireball that rushed Earthwards at a velocity of around 60 kilometers per second (37mps) as it passed the Sun.

(Source: [sciencealert.com](#))

Help NASA's laser-scanning satellite by measuring trees with your phone

NASA launched a laser-powered planetary scanning satellite last year, and you can help the project along with a smartphone and a few minutes of your time. ICESat-2 measures elevation from orbit as part of NASA's climate research, but the agency would like some data from the ground to verify those readings. So, it's rolled out a new tool in the GLOBE Observer app for iPhone and Android.

ICESat-2 uses an instrument called the Advanced Topographic Laser Altimeter System (ATLAS) to measure elevation from its position 300 miles (500 kilometers) above our heads. ATLAS flashes a 532nm beam of light 10,000 times per second, measuring how long it takes those samples to rebound. That lets NASA, for example, track changes in ice coverage. ICESat-2 isn't only about ice, though. The name stands for Ice, Cloud, and Land Elevation Satellite-2. The latest GLOBE app update focuses on the "land" part.

One of ICESat-2's missions is to estimate the health of the world's forests by tracking the height of the canopy. This is a vital piece of the puzzle because healthy forests soak up a lot of the carbon humans release into the atmosphere. Tom Neumann, a project scientist for ICESat-2 at NASA says it's an open question how accurate the tree height measurements are from space.

To get involved, install the GLOBE Observer app on your phone. This isn't a new app, and it contains tools for several different projects. After creating an account, just find the "GLOBE Trees" tool in the list.

NASA recommends finding a tree that is standing straight up with an easily identifiable top. You should stand 7-25 meters away (25-75 feet) from your chosen tree. The phone will guide you through the process of pointing the phone at the top and base of the tree. Next, count your steps to the base of the tree and input that. The app uses simple geometry from the sensors in your phone to work out the height of the tree.

(Source: [extremetech.com](#))

Researchers measure puncture performance of viper fangs

A team that studies how biological structures such as cactus spines and mantis shrimp appendages puncture living tissue has turned its attention to viper fangs.

Specifically, the scientists wanted to know, what physical characteristics contribute to fangs' sharpness and ability to puncture.

Like most venomous snakes, vipers have fangs that function primarily as hypodermic needles, said University of Illinois postdoctoral researcher Stephanie Crofts, who conducted the analysis of viper fangs with U. of I. animal biology professor Philip Anderson. But vipers -- a group that includes rattlesnakes, aspids and puff adders -- tend to have hinged jaws that fold the fangs up into their mouths for storage.

"They typically don't have to hold on very long," he said. "They sink their fangs in and out, and they're done."

The researchers wanted to know which characteristics of the fangs made them good at puncturing.

The "question was: How do we measure sharpness?" Crofts said. "Intuitively, we think we know what is sharp and what isn't, but in biology, we have to measure specific morphological traits."

Like other vipers, puff adder skulls have hinged jaws that deploy the fangs when the animal opens its mouth to strike.



The Field Museum in Chicago lent the researchers fangs from a variety of species. The team used 28 viper fangs for its tests.

For each fang, the researchers measured the angle of the tip (was it wide or narrow?), how rounded the tip is, and its surface area. They mounted each fang to a machine that can apply and measure the force required to puncture something -- in this case, cubes of ballistics gel of uniform size and density.

A series of metal punches

Mechanical engineers on the team also manufactured a

series of metal punches with varying tip angles, degrees of bluntness and surface areas, and the team also tested those using the same methods.

"With the punches, we could very tightly control the different parameters," Crofts said. "It was a way of isolating those different metrics."

University of Illinois postdoctoral researcher Stephanie Crofts and animal biology professor Philip Anderson studied the puncture performance of viper fangs.

The tests revealed that the angle of a fang's tip contributed the most to sharpness. Even a narrow fang with a rounded tip tended to perform better than a wider fang that was intact -- not rounded or dulled -- at its end.

The "narrowness of the tip angle is what's really important," Crofts said. "I found that a little surprising, because most measures of sharpness focus on the roundedness of the tip. That does come into play, but it's secondary to that overall angle."

"This study tells us what aspect of shape to measure when we want to measure sharpness," Anderson said. "Whether we're looking at biological systems or other systems, the tip angle appears to be the primary factor driving sharpness."

(Source: [phys.org](#))

Land subsidence an overlooked threat to the country: expert

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Although land subsidence is too subtle to be detected, it must be tackled before incurring great loss, which has been proved to be more destructive than flood and earthquake, deputy director for Iran National Cartographic Center has said.



Land subsidence, a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the Earth's surface due to subsurface movement of earth materials is mainly caused by aquifer-system compaction, drainage and decomposition of organic soils, underground mining, oil and gas extraction, hydrocompaction, natural compaction, sinkholes, and thawing permafrost.

Recent floods were not the first natural disasters and definitely will not be the last, so we must be prepared before the incidents, IRNA quoted Yahya Jamour as saying on Tuesday.

Earthquake, land subsidence, landslide, and floods are the common natural disasters in Iran, while volcanoes can be considered a potential disaster in the country, he said.

Referring to the National Cartographic Center role in disaster management in the country, he noted that “we should not just refer to the data made by the center only after an incident happens, but we must rely on them in crisis management.”

Speaking of land subsidence as the largest known man-made changes in the physical environment, he explained that causing land to sink in some parts is sometimes overlooked as it normally takes place gradually, while almost bringing the land a permanent change resulting from massive withdrawal of underground water, oil or gas from wells.

Jamour further explained that in order to actually prevent land subsidence, having a proper knowledge of the phenomenon is a must.

“We try to have satellite data to measure the subsidence rate using a GPS network in the country's plains, however satellite tools with high-tech capability is not affordable for Iran and what is available here are old,” he concluded.

Earlier in September 2018, geologist Mohammad Javad Bolourchi said that over 300 plains in Iran are at high risk of experiencing land subsidence, and as long as there is virtually no reduction in illegal overuse of groundwater resources, curbing subsidence will coincide with depletion of aquifers.

Studies in the Iranian calendar years 1388 (March 2009-March 2010), 1390 (March 2011-March 2012), and 1392 (March 2013-March 2014), indicated that the plains in southern Tehran are subsiding by an average of one millimeter a day (36 centimeters a year).

In the Iranian calendar year 1384 (March 2005-March 2006), the subsidence rate in Tehran plain has been measured at 17 centimeters a year, it has been measured 12 centimeters in Varamin county, in southern Tehran.

This is while the run-down in plains of Mashhad or Rafsanjan, which has set the record high for this phenomenon since the Iranian calendar year 1345 (March 1966-March 1967), is certainly higher, regarding the reduction in precipitation rate.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Anti drink-driving law in New York

(February 25, 1999)

New York introduced a controversial new law to deter **drink-driving**. Anybody caught drink-driving will now have their car confiscated. Jane Hughes, BBC correspondent in New York, reported. New York's new anti drink-driving measures have been ushered in with a **fanfare**. **Dozens** of teams of officers have been out on the streets of the city carrying out random checks on motorists and at least one car has already been **seized**. It's been **confiscated** under the provisions of old laws which allow the government to seize vehicles used in crimes. The driver will only get it back if he or she is subsequently **cleared** of drink-driving. Otherwise, it'll be auctioned, with the proceeds going into **city coffers**. This **zero-tolerance** of drink-driving is the latest initiative introduced **in the wake** of New York's highly successful zero tolerance crime policy under which even the most minor crimes are prosecuted. More than six thousand people were arrested for drink-driving in New York last year. If that means six thousand cars are seized in 1999, this could prove a lucrative policy for the city. But in a nation where the car is many people's **most prized** possession, it could also prove deeply unpopular.

Words

drink-driving: a compound noun describing driving a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol

fanfare: literally, a short ceremonial tune played on a trumpet. Here it means with a lot of noise and publicity

dozens: journalists' use of dozens is a concise way of implying large numbers

seized: here means taken forcibly. It can also mean arrested

confiscated: officially to seize somebody's property, usually on a temporary basis

cleared: in this context, found innocent

city coffers: coffers is another word for money chests. Here the meaning is money going into the city's bank account

zero-tolerance: another compound noun used to imply that even minor crimes will be punished

in the wake of: following, as a wake follows a ship as it moves

most prized: most prized is an example this time of a compound adjective, in this case describing possession

(Source: BBC)

Majlis to pass rangers' protection bill by next 2 months

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A long-awaited bill to uphold the rights of rangers will be approved by Majlis [Iranian parliament] by the next two months, Asghar Daneshian, deputy director for parliamentary affairs of the Department of Environment (DOE) has said.

The bill was drafted in July 2016 by the DOE following the death of two rangers, Mohammad Dehqani and Parviz Hormozi, who were killed in June 2016 during an armed conflict with poachers in Hormozgan province. It has been approved by the judiciary committee of Majlis in September 2018.

As per the proposed bill the rangers would not face charges in case of involuntarily manslaughter while on duty and would be compensated for the losses they suffer while trying to protect the environment and the biodiversity, the government is required to allocate budget to help those rangers who might be obliged to pay out blood money or other sort of money-penalty



compensation for murder or any injuries trespassers may suffer in armed conflicts with them, and the rangers will be provided with regular insurance coverage and are entitled to compensation for the losses they suffer while doing their job.

Daneshian pointed out that “we must protect the environment in respect of 138 dedicated rangers who lost their lives while trying to safeguard the environment and wildlife,” ISNA reported on Wednesday.

The main reason behind recent flood devastations causing many residents heavy financial losses, was environmental ignorance along with destruction of forests and degradation of pastures, all of which are the result of our misconduct and inappropriate behavior toward the environment, he further lamented.

So, first promoting the environmental protection culture among the citizens and paying attention to the rangers' rights are of great importance, he highlighted, adding that without these factors no environment will remain protected.

Relief foundation to create 5,000 job plans in flood-stricken areas

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation will open up a total of 5,000 job plans for those financially struggling affected by flood, Parviz Fattah, the Foundation's head has announced.

He further highlighted that “we will compensate for losses business owners covered by the foundation have suffered.

The loans to each flood hit job seeker not having adequate income will increase up to 500 million rials (nearly \$12,000), he also noted.

Last year, 112,000 job facilitation loans have been grant-



ed to individuals by Mehr-e-Iran Bank, he said, adding that the bank will also provide flood victims with 5,000 loans each amounting to 50 million rials (around \$1,200).

Referring to this year's plan for job creation in deprived areas, he stated that a total budget of 60 trillion rials (about \$1.5 billion) will be earmarked as low-interest loans for facilitating job creation.

This is while, the loans have been 200 million rials (approximately \$5,000) for each of the individual under the Foundation's coverage, which demonstrates a 3-fold increase compared to the past year, he concluded.

Wetter-than-normal year not to make up for prolonged drought



ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Hassan Sasani, an official with Isfahan regional water company, emphasized the urgency to tackle water scarcity in central parts of the country, noting that longstanding drought will not be eased by a year of above-normal precipitations.

“Severe decline in surface and underground water resources in central part of the country over the recent years is a major challenge, which requires sustainable use of water and efficient managing policies,” he lamented.

The long-term unfavorable conditions and water shortages seldom seems to be addressed by one year of above-normal precipitations, especially in the province of Isfahan, he added, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

According to IRNA, 5.5 percent of the region is battling mild drought, 33.2 percent is suffering from moderate drought and 6 percent of the area is affected by severe drought.

According to the latest data published on Tuesday by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center since the start of the

current water year (September 23, 2018), the province received some 180.9 millimeters of rain which demonstrates a 261 percent increase compared to the same period last year amounting to 50.1 millimeters.

Comparing the rainfall rates with the long term means, rainfall in current water year was also 33.7 percent more than the long term averages of 135.3.

However, it cannot ensure that the water shortages are eased, he stated, emphasizing, volumetric meters must be installed for legal wells and illegal wells in the region must be shut down this year.

The water rights of farmers were initially allocated for 20 days by releasing water from Zayandehrud dam in late February last year, so about 25,000 hectares of agricultural lands in the east and about 15,000 hectares in the west of Isfahan province were cultivated, he added.

President Hassan Rouhani has recently ordered the Energy Ministry to release water into the Zayandehrud river taking irrigation of farmlands into account, which is still filled with water due to recent rainfall, fortunately, he stated.

75% of natural disasters linked with climate: expert



ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Mostafa Mohaqeq, senior coordinator for Asia and Pacific Centre for Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) said that some 75 percent of natural disasters happening in the world are associated with weather and climate.

Disasters are becoming more complex, often tending to affect multiple countries, many of which are transboundary in nature, so, their risks and scale will be heightened and reshaped by climate change, he noted.

Iran is also moving towards risk accumulation and intensive risks, he further explained. Accumulation refers to the risk that arises when a large number of individual risks are correlated (geographically or otherwise) such that a single event will affect many or all of these risks simultaneously.

Intensive risks are risks associated with the exposure of large concentrations of people and economic activities to intense hazard events such as high intensity earthquakes, severe floods and cyclones, etc., which can lead to potentially catastrophic disaster impacts involving high mortality and asset loss.

Asia and the Pacific facing widespread

climate induced disasters such as storms, floods, droughts, sand and dust storms, is the most disaster prone region in the world, which demonstrates highest risk accumulation, he stated, adding, so there must be a link between the scientific community of the country and the policy-making sector.

Of 40 natural disasters known in the world, 30 of them occurred in our country, the most important and frequent of which is earthquake. To overcome such risks from causing catastrophic losses to the country, three factors of science, policy-making and taking action must be employed concurrently, he highlighted.

In May 2015, Asian and Pacific Centre for the development of disaster information management (APDIM) was established in Iran as a regional institution of the Commission by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

In January 2018, ESCAP and Iran signed an agreement to establish the APDIM in Tehran, in order to strengthen regional cooperation in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and promote effective policies for inclusive, sustainable and resilient development in the region.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads

Some 90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads in Iran, an official with traffic police has said.

The old taxis are being used 8 times more than private cars, YJC quoted Mohammad Tarahhomi as saying on Monday. There are 1.5 million clunker vehicles and 9 million clunker motorcycles in Iran, he regretted, adding that unfortunately scrappage of old, high-emission vehicles is linked with importation of vehicles which is now banned.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dia-”

■ **Meaning:** through or across

■ **For example:** This lesson is designed to help students identify and measure the **diameter** of a circle.

PHRASAL VERB

Tell of somebody/something

■ **Meaning:** to describe an event or person

■ **For example:** The poem tells of the deeds of a famous warrior.

IDIOM

Find (one's) feet

■ **Explanation:** to reach a level of comfort in a new situation

■ **For example:** It took a while, but I've finally found my feet in my job.

۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در جاده‌های کشور تردد می‌کنند

رئیس اداره حقوقی پلیس راه گفت: ۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در ایران وجود دارد. به گزارش باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان سرهنگ محمد ترحمی گفت: میزان تردد این تاکسی‌ها هشت برابر خودروهای عادی است. وی افزود: یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار خودروی فرسوده و ۹ میلیون موتورسیکلت فرسوده در کشور وجود دارد. متأسفانه حیات اسقاط به واردات گره خورده است و از آنجا که واردات ممنوع شده است، اسقاط نیز صورت نمی‌گیرد.

Trump vetoes resolution on ending U.S. involvement in Yemen war

1→ The U.S. president also claimed that the attempt by Congress would endanger the lives of American citizens and troops.

The Tuesday's move was the second veto of Trump's presidency.

The legislation was originally introduced in the Senate and co-sponsored by presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders, invoking the War Powers resolution, a federal law that gives Congress the power to check the American head of state when committing the country to an armed conflict.

Backers of the resolution argued that U.S. involvement in Yemen violated the constitutional requirement that Congress, not the president, should determine when the country goes to war.

Trump had earlier vowed to veto the bill despite appeals by congressmen to send a strong message to Riyadh. Congress passed the resolution following strong criticism of Saudi Arabia's deadly air raids on civilian targets in Yemen.



The U.S. has provided billions of dollars of arms to the Saudi-led coalition waging a devastating war in Yemen.

Members of Congress have expressed concern about the thousands of civilians killed in coalition airstrikes since the

conflict began nearly four years ago.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the aim of bringing the former Saudi-sponsored government back to power. Riyadh has failed to fulfill its objectives.

According to a new report by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, the Saudi-led war has so far claimed the lives of about 56,000 Yemenis.

The Saudi-led war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories.

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

Satellite images may show reprocessing activity at N. Korea nuclear site

TEHRAN — Satellite images from last week show movement at North Korea's main nuclear site that could be associated with the reprocessing of radioactive material into bomb fuel, a U.S. think tank said.

Any new reprocessing activity would underscore the failure of a second summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi in late February to make progress toward North Korea's denuclearization.

According to Press TV, Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies said in a report that satellite imagery of North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear site from April 12 showed five specialized railcars near its Uranium Enrichment Facility and Radiochemistry Laboratory.

It said their movement could indicate the transfer of radioactive material.

"In the past, these specialized railcars appear to have been associated with the movement of radioactive material or reprocessing campaigns," the report said. "The current activity, along with their configurations, does not rule out their possible involvement in such activity, either before or after a reprocessing campaign."

The U.S. State Department declined to comment on intelligence matters, but a source familiar with U.S. government assessments said that while U.S. experts thought the movements could possibly be related to reprocessing, they were doubtful it was significant nuclear activity.

Jenny Town, a North Korea expert at the Stimson Center think tank, said that if reprocessing was taking place, it would be a significant given U.S.-North Korean talks in

the past year and the failure to reach an agreement on the future of Yongbyon in Hanoi.

"Because there wasn't an agreement with North Korea on Yongbyon, it would be interesting timing if they were to have started something so quickly after Hanoi," she said.

Trump has met Kim twice in the past year to try to persuade him to abandon a nuclear weapons program that threatens the United States, but progress so far has been scant.

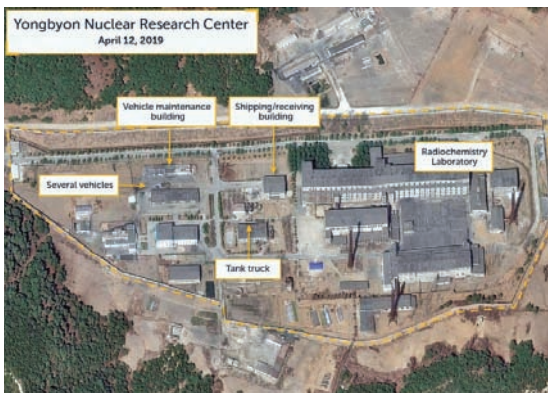
The Hanoi talks collapsed after Trump proposed a "big deal" in which sanctions on North Korea would be lifted if it handed over all its nuclear weapons and fissile material to the United States. He rejected partial denuclearization steps offered by Kim, which included an offer to dismantle Yongbyon.

Although Kim has maintained a freeze in missile and nuclear tests since 2017, U.S. officials say North Korea has continued to produce fissile material that can be processed for use in bombs.

Last month, a senior North Korean official warned that Kim might rethink the test freeze unless Washington made concessions.

Last week, Kim said the Hanoi breakdown raised the risks of reviving tensions, adding that he was only interested in meeting Trump again if the United States came with the right attitude.

Kim said he would wait "till the end of this year" for the United States to decide to be more flexible. On Monday, Trump and his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo brushed aside this demand with Pompeo saying Kim should keep his promise to give up his nuclear weapons before then.



Town said any new reprocessing work at Yongbyon would emphasize the importance of the facility in North Korea's nuclear program.

"It would underscore that it is an active facility that does increase North Korea's fissile material stocks to increase its arsenal."

A study by Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation released ahead of the Hanoi summit said North Korea had continued to produce bomb fuel in 2018 and may have produced enough in the past year to add as many as seven nuclear weapons to its arsenal.

Experts have estimated the size of North Korea's nuclear arsenal at anywhere between 20 and 60 warheads.

India cancels polling in southern constituency over 'vote buying'

Indian election authorities have cancelled voting in a constituency in the southern state of Tamil Nadu after seizing more than 110 million rupees (\$1.6m) they believe was meant to influence the outcome.

It is the first time a ballot has been cancelled in a national election over attempted vote-buying, officials said on Wednesday.

The decision comes as Indians vote in a mammoth national election being held over several phases. The next phase of voting is scheduled for Thursday.

But voters in the Vellore constituency in coastal Tamil Nadu will not be going to the polls as scheduled after the Election Com-

mission of India (ECI) ruled there were fears of a "systematic design to influence voters".

The ruling came after authorities seized over 110 million rupees cash from a candidate in the run-up to the vote.

The ECI said late on Tuesday that the environment in Vellore was no longer conducive to "free and ethical" elections.

No fresh date has been announced for polling in the constituency.

Now, the second phase of polling will be held in 96 constituencies in 13 states on Thursday. The first round of polling in the seven-phase election was held on April 11.

Almost 900 million voters are eligible to

cast their votes to elect 543 members to the lower house of parliament - the Lok Sabha. The counting of votes would be done on May 23.

Attempts to secure votes in return for cash, liquor, electronic gadgets and even goats have been reported across Tamil Nadu in the run-up to voting.

More than 1.3 billion rupees (\$18.7m) cash and one tonne of gold worth about \$43m has been seized in the state since the polling dates were announced on March 10.

■ Polling deferred in Tripura

Elsewhere in the country, polling was

delayed by five days for one constituency in the northeastern state of Tripura over security fears. Polls will be held there on April 23 instead of Thursday.

Voting for the Tripura (East) Lok Sabha seat will be held in the third phase of polling, scheduled on April 23, the ECI announced on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, in the country's east, the famed Bangladeshi actor Ferdous Ahmed has been forced to leave India after he was found campaigning for a candidate from the opposition Congress party, officials at the Bangladesh High Commission in Kolkata said. (Source: Al-Jazeera)

Turkish opposition candidate formally declared Istanbul mayor

TEHRAN — Turkey's main opposition candidate was declared Istanbul's mayor Wednesday after election recounts were finally completed, despite an appeal still pending by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AK Party to re-run the vote in the country's largest city.

Initial results from the March 31 local elections gave a narrow victory to the main opposition Republican People's Party in Turkey's commercial hub, ending 25 years of control by the AK Party and its Islamic predecessors.

New CHP mayor Ekrem Imamoglu was handed a paper, mounted in a gold frame, which formally granted his mandate as city mayor in a ceremony at an Istanbul court which was surrounded by a throng of supporters, Reuters reported.

The party said on Twitter that Imamoglu was due to take office at 6 pm (1500 GMT).

The loss is especially hard for Erdogan, who launched his political career in Istanbul as mayor in the 1990s. The Turkish lira, which has dipped since the election, firmed Wednesday.

On Tuesday, after 16 days of appeals and recounts, the AK



Party asked the High Election Board to annul and re-run the election in Istanbul over what it said were irregularities. Its nationalist MHP allies made a similar request Wednesday.

The AKP had also urged officials to block Imamoglu

from taking office until a ruling on their appeal was made.

The repeated challenges by the AK Party and MHP have fuelled frustration among opposition supporters which spilled over into football stadiums at the weekend when fans chanted at top Istanbul derby matches for the mayoral mandate to be given to their candidate.

"There are way too many irregularities," AKP Deputy Chairman Ali Ihsan Yavuz said, presenting the party's justification for its demand for a new vote. "We are saying that organised fraud, unlawfulness and crimes were committed."

CHP Deputy Chairman Muharrem Erkek responded that there were "no concrete documents, information or evidence in the AKP appeal for an annulment."

"There is no legitimate reason at all. You are using your right [to appeal] to damage the will of Istanbul," he said.

While the AK Party appears to have lost control of the mayorship in Istanbul, initial results showed the party had won most seats in its municipal councils. The AK Party's re-run appeal applies only to the mayoral elections, not those for municipal councils.

Indonesia's Widodo looks set for election victory

TEHRAN — Indonesian President Joko Widodo appeared set for a second term as "quick count" results from Wednesday's election rolled in, but his challenger claimed that he had won the popular vote and urged supporters not to let his victory be snatched away.

Data from private pollsters were in line with opinion polls that had predicted a win for Widodo, a former furniture businessman and low-key reformist, Reuters reported.

They showed him winning the popular

vote with about 54 percent, with a lead of between 7.1 and 11.6 percentage points over former general Prabowo Subianto, who was narrowly defeated when he took Widodo on in the last election five years ago.

Prabowo, a former son-in-law of military strongman Suharto who was overthrown in 1998, told a news conference that - based on internal exit polls and "quick count" numbers - his campaign believed his share of the vote was in a 52-54 percent range.

"We have noted several incidents that have harmed the supporters of this tick-

et," he said, without giving detail. "Our volunteers should focus on safeguarding the ballot boxes because they are key to our victory."

Widodo said the results indicated he had regained the presidency of the world's fourth-most-populous nation, but urged supporters to wait for the election commission to announce official results.

Kevin O'Rourke, a political analyst and author of the Indonesia-focused newsletter Reformasi Weekly, said that Widodo's re-election was now clear but his victory over

67-year-old Prabowo was not resounding.

"He failed to attain the psychological 60 percent level that had seemed within reach," O'Rourke said. "Prabowo performed better than expected, which may embolden him to run yet again in 2024, if he is sufficiently fit."

Widodo grew up in a riverside slum and was the first national leader to come from outside the political and military elite. Popularly known as Jokowi, his everyman image resonated in 2014 with voters tired of the old guard.

Iraqi prime minister makes first visit to Saudi Arabia

1→ They were restored after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, but Baghdad's continued close ties with Iran served to keep relations frosty.

Iraqi-Saudi relations picked up, however, during former Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's period in office from 2014 to 2018.

■ Abdul-Mahdi rejects U.S. claim about IRGC

Iraq has resolutely refuted a recent U.S. claim that Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) plays a part in the Arab country's economic affairs, saying Washington is lying about the role of the elite military force, which in fact helped the Baghdad government defeat the terror group Daesh.

Speaking at a weekly presser on Wednesday, Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi of Iraq rejected as mere "lies" U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's allegations that "some 20 percent of the Iraqi economy is controlled by the IRGC."

The Iraqi premier expressed surprise at the U.S. top diplomat's claim and asserted that the elite Iranian defense force was not engaged in any economic activity in Iraq.

The Americans speak of "20 percent, 10 percent, five percent or whatever other proportion...I don't know how they have calculated these figures," Abdul-Mahdi told reporters.

"We enjoy advanced economic ties and business transactions with Iran, but this is different from maintaining economic relations with the Corps," he added.

Last week, the United States designated the IRGC as a "foreign terrorist organization."

The move - the first of its kind in U.S. history - sparked global criticism, with several states arguing that targeting another country's military forces is against international regulations.

Al-Bashir 'moved to Khartoum's Kobar prison' Uganda says it is willing to consider asylum for Sudan's Bashir

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has been removed by the military after months of anti-government protests against his three-decade rule.



A military council led by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan is now in power and says it will oversee a transitional period that will last a maximum of two years.

Demonstrators, however, are demanding that the country's military ruler immediately hand over power to a civilian-led government.

According to Reuters, Uganda will consider offering asylum to ousted Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir despite his indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC), a foreign affairs minister said on Wednesday.

"Uganda would not be apologetic at all for considering an application by Bashir," Okello Oryem, Uganda's state minister for foreign affairs, told Reuters in Kampala.

Bashir, 75, who had ruled Sudan for 30 years after seizing power in a military coup, was toppled by the military last week after months of street protests.

Bashir faces an International Criminal Court arrest warrant over the death of an estimated 300,000 people during an insurgency in Sudan's western Darfur region over a decade ago.

Oryem said Bashir had yet to contact Kampala for possible refuge, but added that there was no harm in considering the fallen Sudanese leader for political asylum.

There was no immediate comment from the ICC in The Hague. ICC member states, which include Uganda, are obligated to hand over inductees who enter their territory.

Though Bashir is under ICC indictment for suspected genocide in Darfur, the transitional military government in Khartoum has said it will not hand him over and instead may try him in Sudan.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has in the past criticized the ICC, describing it as a tool of Western justice against Africans, and he once vowed to mobilize African countries to pull out of the court's founding treaty.

Oryem said the ICC indictment would not be deemed an obstacle to any application for political asylum in Uganda by Bashir.

Relations between Sudan and Uganda, where Museveni has in power since 1986, were frosty in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Uganda accused Bashir-led Sudan at the time of supporting warlord Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) while Sudan alleged Uganda was offering assistance to an anti-Khartoum rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

The SPLA later led South Sudan to independence from Khartoum while the LRA, still undefeated but mostly dormant, is believed to be hiding out in a patch of jungle between the borders of Uganda, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo.

After South Sudan's independence in 2011, Museveni and Bashir gradually reconciled and have since jointly championed efforts to end fighting in the newest African country.

Japan’s Nishikori knocked out in Monte Carlo

Japan’s Kei Nishikori lost his opening match of the clay season on Wednesday, with Asia’s top player crashing to a 7-5, 6-3 defeat to Pierre-Hugues Herbert at the Monte Carlo Masters.

Fifth seed Nishikori reached the final here last year but will lose a chunk of ranking points after he hit 25 unforced errors and just 14 winners in succumbing to Frenchman Herbert.

Nishikori will now move on to Barcelona next week, where he owns two titles as he works on his clay form as the run-up to Roland Garros intensifies. Herbert, who overcame Fernando Verdasco in the first round, struck 31 winners in his upset to avenge a three-set loss to Nishikori in Rotterdam earlier this season.

“I’m very happy to finally beat Kei,” the 49th-ranked Herbert said. “I was very confident with my defence.

“I came to the match with good feelings after the first round.”

Nishikori lost the Monte Carlo final a year ago to 11-time champion Rafael Nadal.

(Source: AFP)

Another lawsuit comes David Beckham’s way



Since Beckham’s franchise was unveiled, the lawsuits against him have not stopped, and this time FXE Futbol wants to halt the demolition of Lockhart Stadium.

The lawsuits against David Beckham and Inter Miami are proving endless, with at least six claims now made against the franchise. This time FXE Futbol, a Fort Lauderdale football and entertainment company, has filed a lawsuit against theMLS franchise and the city.

In the lawsuit, FXE is alleging that the city violated state laws during the selection process between the two bids (Inter Miami and FXE Futbol) made for the land at Lockhart Stadium.

The indictment states that representatives of Inter Miami gave a false statementregarding the amount of asbestos/mould at Lockhart Stadium, testimony that marked the course in favour of Beckham’s group in the process that grants them permission for the demolition of the venue.

In March, Fort Lauderdale commissioners gave the green light to Beckham and Jorge Mass’ project, which will see the construction of a new sports complex with an 18,000-seat capacity.

FXE Managing Director John Paul Reynal argued that they worked on their process and project for two years, and after the bid by Beckham’s group was approved, they felt undermined, stating that the commissioners rushed their decision.

Mayor Dean Trantalis said of this issue that FXE Futbol had not obtained the same commitment from their league that Beckham’s franchise had, which is why it was hard for them not to accept the English former player’s proposal.

(Source: AS)

Kerber out of Fed Cup play-off with infection

Reigning Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber will miss Germany’s Fed Cup play-off tie against Latvia this weekend because of an illness, the German Tennis Federation confirmed Wednesday.

Germany hope to retain their World Group status in an indoor hard-court play-off in Riga on Friday and Saturday, but they will have to do so without their star player.

Kerber had been struggling to recover from a protracted bout of flu and confirmed that she was under doctor’s orders not to play this weekend.

“I am disappointed and sad to miss the Latvia tie,” Kerber, ranked fifth in the world, said in a statement.

“Even though I can’t be there with them, I am in contact with the team and I am sure that the girls will triumph in the play-off.”

Team captain Jens Gerlach has nominated Mona Barthel, ranked 85 places below Kerber, as the replacement on the German team.

“The whole team wishes Angie a quick recovery and we hope to see her on court again soon,” said Gerlach.

(Source: Eurosport)

Joshua opponent Miller fails drugs test

Heavyweight contender Jarrell “Big Baby” Miller has tested positive for the banned substance GW1516 ahead of his scheduled challenge of unified world titleholder Anthony Joshua, three sources with knowledge of the results told ESPN on Tuesday.

The fight is scheduled to take place on June 1 (DAZN) at Madison Square Garden in New York and to serve as the American debut for England’s Joshua, but it is now in jeopardy because of Miller’s positive test.

The test results, which came to light on Tuesday, were from a random Voluntary Anti-Doping Association-conducted urine test Miller submitted to on March 20.

Miller (23-0-1, 20 KOs), 30, had accused Joshua of using PEDs during their media tour to announce the fight in February.

“We are in the process of obtaining further information about VADA’s finding and will have more to say soon on this developing situation,” Dmitry Salita, Miller’s co-promoter with Greg Cohen, told ESPN after he was informed of the positive test result.

“In the meantime, Jarrell continues to train for his June 1 fight against Anthony Joshua.”

Matchroom Boxing promoter Eddie Hearn, who represents Joshua, also acknowledged the positive test.

(Source: ESPN)

Juventus back to the drawing board after painful lesson

Juventus have been sent back to the drawing board after their Champions League ambitions were shattered by an Ajax Amsterdam side whose transfer spending this season has been roughly one fifth of their own.

The Turin club have dominated Italian football, winning Serie A for the last seven seasons, and their signing of five-times World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo in July was interpreted as a bold statement of their European intentions.

But those dreams were left in tatters after Juventus were beaten 2-1 at home in their quarter-final second leg on Tuesday, going out 3-2 on aggregate.

Not only were Juventus beaten but they were outclassed by a team whose fluid, geometric passing left them chasing shadows and who possessed something Juventus lacked — a clear playing style.

The current Juventus side is arguably the least appealing since Massimiliano Allegri took over in 2014, depending largely on the talent of Ronaldo to unlock matches.

Playmaker Paulo Dybala, in particular, seems to have been inhibited by Ronaldo’s presence and the Argentine’s season took another frustrating turn on Tuesday when he was taken off at halftime with a thigh injury.

Allegri, however, said that Juventus were “absolutely not” over-dependent on Ronaldo. “He has given us a lot over the course of the campaign, but when you reach the quarter-final, you need every player,” he said.



Instead he blamed injuries to players such as key defender Giorgio Chiellini, winger Douglas Costa and forward Mario Mandzukic, previously described by Allegri as Ronaldo’s ideal striking partner.

“It’s better to have as many options as possible, because these ties are decided by details, substitutions and options off the bench,” he said.

Those complaints may sound hollow,

however, when the transfer spending of the respective sides is compared.

According to the specialist website Transfermarkt, Ajax have spent just over 51 million euros (£45 million) this season while Juventus have splashed out 261 million.

Of that, around 100 million euros was on Ronaldo, 40 million each on Joao Cancelo and Costa, 35 million euros on bringing Leonardo Bonucci back from AC Milan and 12 million on reserve goalkeeper Mattia Perin.

Fans of other Serie A sides are unlikely to be sympathetic, either, after seeing Juventus snap up their top players.

Examples include Miralem Pjanic and Gonzalo Higuain, who joined from AS Roma and Napoli respectively in 2016, and Federico Bernardeschi from Fiorentina.

But, rather like Paris St Germain in France, Juve’s dominance of Serie A appeared to leave them unprepared for the European challenge.

Ajax took the game to Juventus in a way that none of their domestic rivals would have dared, and Allegri’s team were incapable of dealing with it.

“Football can be brutal, we conceded an unlucky goal and after that, we became afraid and we were stretched in the second half,” he said.

“There are many young players in the squad who need to play and gain experience. Some might have paid for having two such big matches in the space of a week.”

(Source: The Star)

Paul Scholes charged by FA for allegedly placing 140 bets on football matches



Paul Scholes has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association for allegedly breaking its rules on betting.

The former Manchester United and England midfielder is alleged to have placed 140 bets on football matches over a four-year period ending in January this year, during which time he was a co-owner of Salford City, presently in the National League.

There is no suggestion that he was betting on the outcome of Salford matches, and no bets were placed by Scholes during the short time he was manager of Oldham Athletic. The FA tightened up its rules on gambling in 2014, effectively bringing in a blanket ban on any betting on any level of football for anyone involved in the game throughout the league pyramid.

Scholes has until 26 April to respond to the charge, and is thought likely to be fined if found guilty rather than suspended.

It is a less clear-cut issue than with players when owners, directors and shareholders place bets on football matches; the extent of their involvement is not always as apparent.

An FA spokesman explained the distinction now used is whether someone

is a participant in football, a catch-all description intended to include players, managers, owners, agents and anyone working within the game. “The rule of thumb is that if you work in football you cannot bet on football,” the spokesman said. “It doesn’t matter if it is a bet on a different club or a different country. If you are a participant in football, all bets are off.”

West Ham’s Robert Snodgrass has been given a one-match ban after an independent regulatory commission found him guilty of misconduct towards UK Anti-Doping officials, the FA has announced.

The FA said: “It was alleged that his language and/or behaviour towards UK Anti-Doping officials, who were visiting West Ham United’s training ground on 6 February 2019, was abusive and/or insulting and/or improper. The player has been given a one-match suspension, which is not currently active whilst he considers his right of appeal, and fined £30,000.”

It is understood Snodgrass was not scheduled to be tested nor did he refuse to take a test.

(Source: Guardian)

Injured Neuer dismisses retirement rumors, eyes return



Injured Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer on Wednesday quashed rumors of his imminent retirement and says he wants to return in time to face RB Leipzig on the penultimate day of the Bundesliga season.

“It is difficult to say when I will be back but I think Leipzig is a realistic target,” he said at a press conference, with league leaders Bayern away to third-placed Leipzig on May 5.

Neuer, 33, was substituted off during Bayern’s 4-1 win over Fortuna Duesseldorf last Sunday after aggravating a recurring calf injury.

The knock sees him sidelined at a crucial phase of the season, with Bayern seeking to stay a point ahead of Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga title race and bidding to reach the German Cup final.

Neuer has had a relentless struggle with injury in recent years, and after the club announced that he would give a press conference on Wednesday, there was some speculation that he might be about to end his career.

“We smiled about that,” Neuer admitted when asked about the rumors.

The Bayern shot-stopper insists he

is taking this latest setback in his stride after twice breaking a bone in his foot in 2017.

“I was out for a whole year last season when I broke my metatarsal and I was on crutches for a long time,” he said.

“When you are out for that long, your body has to adapt so you expect to have smaller muscle injuries afterwards.”

“I actually expected to have a muscle injury earlier this season.”

Neuer said he knew instinctively that he had suffered a muscle fibre tear when he pulled up during the Duesseldorf game.

The Bayern goalkeeper praised his understudy Sven Ulreich and wants to support the team in the coming weeks.

“Even if I can’t play I want to be around the team,” he said.

Bayern face back-to-back games against in-form Werder Bremen in the next week.

They host Bremen in the league on Saturday before travelling north for a German Cup semi-final tie on Tuesday.

Neuer described both games as “finals” and warned his teammates not to underestimate Bremen, who currently sit seventh in the Bundesliga.

(Source: AFP)

Messi urges Barca to show more early focus after climbing quarter-final barrier

There was a huge sense of relief in Barcelona after brushing aside their recent Champions League quarter-final failures by beating Manchester United, but Lionel Messi still criticised his side’s shaky start to the game.

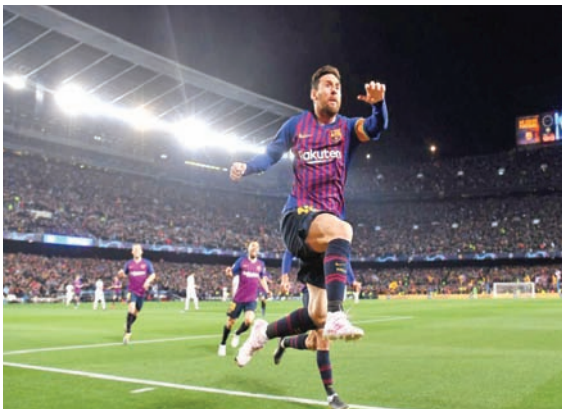
Barca conceded two early chances in Tuesday’s second leg before Messi set them on their way to a comfortable 3-0 victory with two quick-fire strikes before Philippe Coutinho scored to make it 4-0 on aggregate.

United forward Marcus Rashford rattled the bar in the second minute and then hit a tame shot at goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, while Scott McTominay burst into the area but lost control of the ball before he could shoot.

Barca had suffered a humiliating quarter-final exit at AS Roma last year after conceding early goals and Messi urged his team mates to show more concentration in their next European outing, warning that other sides might not be so forgiving.

That message is even more pertinent as Barca’s semi-final opponents are likely to be Liverpool, who hold a 2-0 lead in their quarter-final tie with Porto and have a reputation for overwhelming teams early on.

“We cannot start like this in any Champions League



game,” Messi told reporters.

“We said that from the start, we had the experience of Roma, you can’t afford to make life hard for yourself because one mistake can knock you out of this competition. We have to be aware of that.”

After surviving the early scares, Barca exhibited their new-found defensive steel and earned a third clean sheet in four Champions League knockout games.

“We have become much more solid, over the season we struggled a little bit at the back but the whole team is making a huge effort and that makes it far harder for opponents to attack us,” Messi added.

“We had been three years without making the semi-finals but we didn’t have any negative feelings. We knew we had a good scoreline, we’re happy to be in the semis but we must continue.”

Barca have not won Europe’s biggest prize since 2015 despite dominating the domestic scene in Spain and have had to look on enviously as arch-rivals Real Madrid romped to three consecutive Champions League triumphs.

But there is now a sense in the Spanish media that everything is falling into place for Barca to reach the final at Atletico Madrid’s Wanda Metropolitano stadium in the Spanish capital on June 1.

“This is the year,” proclaimed Barcelona-based newspaper Sport, while Marca said “Messi flies towards the Wanda”.

(Source: Reuters)

IPL leaders Persepolis held by Zob Ahan

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Zob Ahan and Persepolis football teams played out a goalless draw in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday.

In the match held in Isfahan's Fooladshahr Stadium, Persepolis failed to defeat Zob Ahan and the draw gives the other teams a chance to reduce the gap at the top of the table.

Persepolis controlled the majority of possession and could have scored in the second half but their strikers wasted their chances.

Persepolis defender Mohammad Naderi missed the best chance of his team, heading the ball over the bar in the 90th minute.

Zob Ahan Nigerian striker Christian Osaguona also had a chance of opening Persepolis's goal with a header in the second half but Alireza Beiranvand cleared the ball away.

On Thursday, Sepahan can reduce the gap to five points in case of winning over Saipa in Tehran, while Tractor Sazi will meet Paykan on Friday and will reach three points adrift of Persepolis if they beat their opponents in Tabriz.

With Four weeks remaining, Persepolis sit top of the table with 55 points.

Tractor Sazi are second with 49 points and one game in hands.

Esteghlal and Sepahan are third and fourth with 47 points.

Padideh also remain in fifth place with 46 pints.



Iran to play June friendly against Syria

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team will face Syria in a friendly match in June. Iran football federation have yet to announce Team Melli new coach after parting company with Carlos Queiroz at the end of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

The warm-up match against Syria has been scheduled for Jan. 6 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium. With less than five months until the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification, the Football Federation of Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) faces a real dilemma over selecting the next coach.

The Iran Football Federation is under pressure since football-mad Iranians are worried about missing the friendlies.

Queiroz spent eight years with Iran and helped Team Melli qualify for back-to-back FIFA World Cups.



Ali Gholizadeh undergoes successful surgery

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Charleroi Iranian winger Ali Gholizadeh has undergone a successful injury in France on his injured foot.

The 23-year-old player, who had picked up groin strain, underwent surgery and missed the rest of Jupiler Pro League play-offs.

"Thank you everyone for all your messages of support. I'm feeling much better now and I will be back soon," Gholizadeh posted on his Instagram.

Gholizadeh had also missed the 2019 AFC Asian Cup after suffering an ankle sprain in early December.

Gholizadeh joined Charleroi on May 30, 2018 from Saipa and scored his first goal for the club on Nov. 25, 2018 in a league match against Lokeren.



Road to Qatar 2022: Asian teams discover Round 1 opponents

The draw for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 Qualifiers - Preliminary Joint Qualification Round 1 took place at the AFC House in the Malaysian capital on Wednesday.

Seeded teams Malaysia, Cambodia, Macau, Laos, Bhutan and Mongolia were handed challenging fixtures for a place in the next qualifying round.

Mongolia, who edged Timor-Leste in the previous edition to earn their place in the second round, will face a Brunei Darussalam side who were defeated 3-1 on aggregate by Chinese Taipei in the 2018 Qualifiers.

The match-up between Macau and Sri Lanka will be a rematch of their 2016 AFC Solidarity tie, where both

teams settled for a 1-1 draw with Macau going on to top the group and finish runners-up behind eventual winners Nepal.

Laos and Bangladesh will add spice to the mix when they face each other for a place in the second round. Both teams are beginning their qualifying campaign in Round 1 for the first time after usually starting from Round 2.

Malaysia will face a familiar foe when they take on Timor-Leste, a team they beat in the previous edition in the second round group stage.

Cambodia defeated Macau 4-1 in the previous edition and will face Pakistan, who lost 3-1 Yemen in the first round in the 2018 Qualifiers. Bhutan will face tough op-

ponents in Guam.

The first leg of the Preliminary Joint Qualification Round 1 will take place on June 6 with the return leg scheduled for June 11. The six winners will join Asia's top 34 teams in the Preliminary Joint Qualification Round 2, which will commence in September.

Note: Timor Leste are ineligible to participate in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, after the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee expelled the Federacao Futebol Timor-Leste from the tournament in January 20, 2017, for fielding ineligible players. Their participation in Wednesday's draw was for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 only.

(Source: the-afc)

Shahrdari Varamin to represent Iran at Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship

Despite the sudden withdrawal of Iraq and Kuwait teams ahead of the competition, all is still set for the 2019 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship from April 18 to 26 at the University of Taipei (Tianmu) Gymnasium and the National Taipei University of Education Gymnasium, with 14 strong teams ready to challenge each other in this top-fight competition.

Taipei is hosting the championship for the second time following their memorable success in hosting the 2015 edition, which saw Taichung Bank on their cloud nine after handing the host country their first-ever Asian Men's Club title.

A total of 16 teams initially informed AVC and the organizers to compete in the nine-day event and all participating teams have already been drawn into four pools of four teams apiece. Taichung Bank (Chinese Taipei), Queensland Pirates (Australia), unconfirmed team (Kuwait) and Club Singapore (Singapore) are in Pool A, with Cultural and Sports Club of Shahrdari Varamin (Iran), Sri Lanka Ports Authority Sports Club (Sri Lanka), Galkan (Turkmenistan) and Polri Samator Indonesia (Indonesia) in Pool B.

Pool C comprises TNC Kazchrome VC (Kazakhstan), Est Cola (Thailand), Al-Rayyan Club (Qatar) and Chennai Spartans (India), while Hochiminh City (Vietnam) take on Panasonic Panthers (Japan), unconfirmed team (Iraq) and Dragon Team (Hong Kong China) in Pool D.

After the pool round-robin preliminaries, only top two teams from each pool will advance to the next round of top eight, with the remaining two from each pool being relegated to the 9th-16th classifi-



cation. However, though requested, Iraq and Kuwait did not submit their O-2 form and relevant documents to the organizers in time, resulting only 14 teams to vie for the top honours in Taipei.

Due to the withdrawal of teams from Iraq and Kuwait, the revised match schedule on Thursday, April 18, the very first day of the 2019 Asian Men's Club Championship in Taipei, sees TNC Kazchrome VC (Kazakhstan) and Chennai Spartans (India) compete in the curtain-raising match at the main hall University of Taipei (Tianmu) Gymnasium at 13.30pm local time, followed by the match between Est Cola (Thailand) and Al-Rayyan Club (Qatar) at 16.00pm. The last match between Queensland Pirates (Australia) and Club Singapore (Singapore) will be held at 18.30pm.

At the second hall NTUE Gymnasium, Hochiminh City (Vietnam) are due to take on Dragon Team (Hong Kong China) in the first match at 13.30pm, with Cultural and Sports Club of Varamin Municipality (Iran) challenging Polri Samator Indonesia (Indonesia) and Sri Lanka Ports Authority Sports Club (Sri Lanka) pitted against Galkan (Turkmenistan) at 16.00pm and 18.30pm respectively on April 18.

(Source: asianvolleyball)

Iran's female weightlifters in China for fierce contest

IRNA — Iranian female athletes are taking part in Asian Weightlifting Championship in China in a breathtaking contest in hope of making headway to the Olympic Games.

The championship to be hosted by the Chinese eastern coastal city of Ningbo, Zhejiang province from April 17 to 29, which serves as the qualifying event for 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Iranian women will be participating in the contest of seven weightlifters.

The first competition of Iranian women athletes was held in Urgench, Uzbekistan in 2018 in the context of Asian Junior Women Weightlifting Championship.

The taboo of Iranian women's participating in weightlifting competitions was definitely broken at the games, and the athletes proved that they can win medals, like men, in every sport fields in an Islamic clothing.

IRNA sports correspondent said that they have a long way to go for landmark success in Asia, the world and the Olympic Games.

The Iranian junior female weightlifters with 234 scores in Uzbekistan were ranked 9th in Asia. Now, in addition to the importance of their presence in international competitions, the team and individual rankings can be considered a ground to build on for more hits in the global and Olympic Games.

Iran will have two Olympic quota places for women, and given that the number of quota places for male weightlifters in the games has been decreased to two, the federation should



take measures for women's progress in the field.

Therefore, the presence of Iranian athletes to the Asian Championship, as their first Olympic qualifying event, is of great importance and can be regarded as a starting point for the Iranian female weightlifters

Vice President of Iran's Weightlifting Federation for women affairs Bahar Bahrami has said that the deficiency of budget to build infrastructures required for women weightlifters in provincial towns deprived them of training as they have to work with men's equipment that might endanger their health.

She said that coaches must help develop talents of the female athletes as per programs of Iran's Ministry of Sport.

She assured that other provinces have already launched investment in younger talents so that they would be discovered and invited to national training camps.

She pledged that in cooperation with the ministry, the talented athletes from across the country would have access to training facilities in their own hometowns after returning from the camps.

Queiroz takes wage claims against Iran to FIFA

Carlos Queiroz has lodged a complaint to FIFA against the Iranian Football Federation (FFIRI) for unpaid wages when working as their head coach, a spokesperson for the Portuguese boss said on Tuesday.



The former Real Madrid and Manchester United assistant's claims reach back to his two final contracts at the helm of Iran where he spent eight years leading them to two World Cups.

He extended his deal after the competition last year but left his position following a defeat in the semi-finals of the Asia Cup.

"Unfortunately, Carlos Queiroz has no other choice than to ask his lawyers to complain to FIFA's legal department," the spokesperson said.

Queiroz, 66, took over at Colombia following the continental tournament with the aim of qualifying for the 2022 World Cup.

The Iran Federation told semi-official news agency ISNA, the non-payment was due to sanctions which restrict bank transfers.

FFIRI added they had invited FIFA to play an intermediary role in the legal matters and also filed a complaint against Queiroz to the world governing body's ethics committee.

(Source: AFP)

Iran 3rd at AVC Beach Volleyball Tour "20th Samila Open"

TEHRAN — Iran finished in third place at the AVC Beach Volleyball Tour "20th Samila Open" in Songkhla, Thailand on Tuesday.

The Iranian team consists of Rahman Raoufi and Abolhamed Mirzaali, who won a silver medal at the last week's FIVB World Tour Satun 1-star, came back from the semi-final loss to the eventual winners Peng and Yang to beat Japan's Ishijima Yusuke and Ageba Yuya 2-0 (22-20, 21-13) in the third-place playoff.

"We felt refreshed and had a good win against Japan. We lost to them 1-2 in the pool play and I am very happy that we beat them in straight sets. We will play the 2019 Asian Senior Beach Volleyball Championships in China in our next tournament and hope that we will do a great job out there," Raoufi said.

(Source: asianvolleyball)

Yahya Golmohammadi candidate to coach Iran's U-23

TASNIM — Padideh coach Yahya Golmohammadi has been nominated to replace Zlatko Kranjcar in Iran's U-23 football team.

The Football Federation of Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) will reportedly part company with Iran U-23 football coach Kranjcar.

Under guidance of the Croat, the Iranian team earned a spot in the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 Finals as one of the best second placed teams.

Now, the Iranian federation will reportedly part ways with the coach following poor result in the competition held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Iraq qualified as the first team after playing out a goalless draw with Iran.

Golmohammadi, who has shown a good performance with Padideh in the current Iran football season, is a nominee to replace the Croat.

With five weeks remaining, Padideh sit fifth in the table and also have a chance of winning the title for the first time.

Firouzja runner-up at Reykjavik Open 2019

MNA — Iranian chess prodigy Alireza Firouzja finished runner-up at the 2019 edition of Reykjavik Open in Iceland.

According to the Iranian Chess Federation website, the Iranian grandmaster managed to defeat Iceland's Hjartarson Johann in the ninth and final round of the games on Tuesday night, collecting a total of seven points.

Firouzja, with FIDE rating of 2669, won six games, had two draws and admitted one defeat in the competition. His only defeat came from Constantin Lupulescu (rating 2634) who eventually grabbed the event title.

The 34th edition of GAMMA Reykjavik Open was held from April 8 to 16 in the Icelandic capital with the participation of 249 chess players from different countries.

ACL MD4: Hyung-jin to officiate Zob Ahan v Al Wasl

IRNA — South Korean referee Ko Hyung-jin has been chosen to officiate the match between Zob Ahan of Iran and Al Wasl of the UAE.

The 37-year-old referee has already officiated two matches for Zob Ahan.

He refereed a match between Zob Ahan and Al Ahli of the Saudi Arabia in 2017 AFC Champions League and a match between the Iranian team with Lokomotiv Tashkent last year.

Ali Mansourian's side, who moved to seven points in Group A, will welcome Al Wasl to Isfahan for the reverse fixture on April 23.

Leader's commendation for "Waiting for the Red Rose" published

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has written a commendation for "Waiting for the Red Rose", Mohsen Momeni-Sharif's biography of martyr Ali Sayyad Shirazi, a regular military officer who served as commander of Ground Forces during the Iran-Iraq war.

The commendation was unveiled at Tehran's Behesht Zahra Cemetery on Tuesday during a special ceremony attended by Momeni-Sharif and a number of army officers.

Sayyad Shirazi was assassinated by the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in 1999 while serving as the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff, the second-highest military office in Iran.

"This is an exceptional and interesting example of a report on the war while it is a sweet story of one of its characters," the Leader wrote.

"I read the entire book thoroughly; it has been written beautifully and artistically. I am quite familiar with many of its incidents," he added.

"Of course, many other events of that era and many other words about this dear martyr have remained untold. And this is natural, because the prominence of martyr Sayyad Shirazi cannot be showcased in a book. He was truly an example of a brave and devoted army officer. God bless his soul," he stated.

Sureh-Mehr is the publisher of the book, which has been republished 22 times.

Sayyad Shirazi led a counter-offensive called Operation Mersad against the MKO militants, who, with the help of Saddam Hussein, launched an attack in the summer of 1988 to capture the western Iranian city of Kermanshah.

He was assassinated on April 10, 1999, outside his house while on his way to work. The MKO claimed responsibility for the attack, which, it said the act was in revenge for Operation Mersad.



این نمونه‌ی جانب و بی‌سابقه‌ی است از گزارش جنگ در زمین داستان شیرین زندگی آن رایت‌گرسر مطالعه‌ی کردم (۸۶/۶۷) زیبا و هنرمندانه نوشته شده است، با بسیاری از حوادث آن کاملاً آشنایم. البته بسیاری دیگر از حوادث آن دوران و نیز مطالب بسیاری از آنچه مربوط به این شهید عزیز است ناگفته مانده است، و این طبیعی است. البته برجسته‌گی‌های شخصیت شهید هیداد شیرازی را در نوشته و کتاب به درستی نمایان نشان داد. او حقا نمونه‌ای از یک دانشمومن و شجاع و فداکار بود. رحمت خدا بر او

در این طبیعت است
بسته به جست‌وجوی شخصیت برده‌ها را در دست و کتاب به درستی نشان داد
ادعای نمونه‌ای از یک دانشمومن و شجاع
دندان‌ها بود، رحمت خدا بر او

KHAMENEI.IR

Combination photo shows a copy of "Waiting for the Red Rose" and the Leader's recommendation for the book.

متن تقریظ رهبر انقلاب بر کتاب
(در کمین گل سرخ)، نوشته محسن مؤمنی

این نمونه‌ی جانب و بی‌سابقه‌ی است از گزارش جنگ در زمین داستان شیرین زندگی آن رایت‌گرسر مطالعه‌ی کردم (۸۶/۶۷) زیبا و هنرمندانه نوشته شده است، با بسیاری از حوادث آن کاملاً آشنایم. البته بسیاری دیگر از حوادث آن دوران و نیز مطالب بسیاری از آنچه مربوط به این شهید عزیز است ناگفته مانده است، و این طبیعی است. البته برجسته‌گی‌های شخصیت شهید هیداد شیرازی را در نوشته و کتاب به درستی نمایان نشان داد. او حقا نمونه‌ای از یک دانشمومن و شجاع و فداکار بود. رحمت خدا بر او

در این طبیعت است
بسته به جست‌وجوی شخصیت برده‌ها را در دست و کتاب به درستی نشان داد
ادعای نمونه‌ای از یک دانشمومن و شجاع
دندان‌ها بود، رحمت خدا بر او



INTERNATIONAL DAILY

www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Hamshahri No. 3 - ISSN: 1017-94



Tehrantimes79



Tehrantimesdaily

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

O Adam's son, beware of God when you see that He grants you His gifts repeatedly, while you persist on disobeying Him.

Imam Ali (AS)

Tehran Intl. Book Fair seeks to boost Iran's cultural diplomacy: organizer

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The director of the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair said on Wednesday that the fair seeks to improve Iran's cultural diplomacy.

"The main goal of the book fair is to improve Iran's cultural diplomacy and relations with other countries," Mohsen Javadi, who is also the deputy culture minister for cultural affairs, said in a press conference held at the Iran Cultural Fairs Institute (ICFI).



The director of the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair, Mohsen Javadi, attends a press conference in Tehran on April 17, 2019 to brief the media about the event. (Mehr/Maryam Kamyab)

Over 800 publishers from about 30 countries, including Japan, Germany, India, Russia, Serbia, Lebanon and Armenia, are scheduled to attend the book fair, which will open on April 24 and will run until May 4.

China, which is the special guest of the event this year, will participate in the Tehran book fair with 78 publishers and a number of writers, translators and book illustrators.

Iranian movies line up for Sofia animation festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Nine short movies by Iranian animators will be competing in the 10th Golden Kuker International Animation Festival in Sofia, Bulgaria.

"Hard Way" by Behnam Asadollahi, "Beyond the Black" by Saeid Sodagar, "Blows with the Wind" by Hazhir As'adi, and "Cyber Cage" by Ali Khorramzadeh are among the films.



A scene from "The Sixth String" by Bahram Azimi.

"In a Framework" by Jafar Sayyadi, "Once upon a Time" by Mahin Javaherian, "The Sixth String" by Bahram Azimi, "Am I a Wolf?" by Amir-Hushang Moein and "Mother" by Nasim Eyni will be also screened at the festival, which will be held from May 7 to 12.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Slawomir Mrozek's "Tailor" coming to Tehran theater

A R T **TEHRAN** — Mohammadreza Khaki plans to stage a reading performance of Polish dramatist Slawomir Mrozek's "The Tailor" in Tehran on Saturday.

Theater experts Mansur Ebrahimi and Reza Sarvar will attend a session scheduled to be held after the performance at the Qashqai Hall of the City Theater Complex at 5 pm.

In "The Tailor", a half-savage conqueror of Rome gradually loses his brutal nobility among the satin comforts of civilization, slipping softly from barbarism directly into decadence.

Tehran Book City to host session on German literature



A poster for "Three Lands, One Language".

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Contemporary German literature will be scrutinized during a session titled "Three Lands, One Language" at the Book City Institute in Tehran on April 23.

Christopher Kloeble from Germany, Robert Prosser from Austria and Raphael Urweider from Switzerland will be attending the session, the institute announced on

Wednesday.

A number of Iranian writers and poets are also expected to attend the session, which will be followed by the writers' readings from their books.

The session is annually organized in collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Forum Tehran (OKFT) concurrent with the Tehran International Book Fair.

Cartoonists to raise funds for Iran flood survivors



A poster for "The Image of Kindness".

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Iranian House of Cartoon will organize an exhibition to raise funds for victims of Iran's recent floods.

Works by 42 prominent cartoonists, including Kambiz Derambakhsh, Javad Alizadeh, Mohammad-Ali Baniasadi, Ahmad Arabani, Bozorgmehr Hosseinpur and Bahram Azimi, will be showcased at the exhibition, which will open on April 22.

The exhibit entitled "The Role of Kindness" will continue until May 2.

The recent heavy rainfall in Fars, Golestan, Mazandaran, Lorestan, Khuzestan and several other provinces in western, southwestern and northeastern Iran led to severe flooding, which struck and damaged many cities and villages and left 78 people dead and hundreds displaced and injured.

Armenian-language drama "Yeva" to hit silver screens in Tehran



A scene from "Yeva", a co-production between Iran and Armenia by Iranian director Anahid Abad.

A R T **TEHRAN** — A number of Tehran theaters will begin today screening Iranian director Anahid Abad's Armenian-language drama "Yeva" in the original language with Persian subtitles.

The film is about Yeva, a young woman who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh after her husband's

tragic death, and takes refuge in one of the villages of Karabakh. Yeva is a complete stranger in this ballgame and is obliged to live her daily life in disguise.

The film has been awarded in several international festivals, including the Arpa International Film Festival and Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival.

Iran launches video news agency



CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has launched an English-Arabic video news agency titled "Iran Press", which covers stories in Iran and the Middle East.

The launch of the video new agency was announced during a ceremony held at IRIB International Conference Hall. Speaking at the ceremony, IRIB World

Service director Peyman Jebelli said that the agency has been established to give a proper image of the country.

He called Iran a victim of the misinformation spread by Western media and added that Iran Press is planned to cover the successes the country has achieved over the past four decades.

Viewers can watch the news videos free of charge on iranpress.com.

Elton John biopic "Rocketman" to premiere at Cannes

NEW YORK (AP) — The Elton John biopic "Rocketman" will premiere at the Cannes Film Festival next month.

"Rocketman" will screen May 16 at the French Riviera festival, two weeks before it's to be released in the United States. Paramount Pictures on Tuesday confirmed the premiere, which Variety first reported.

The film stars Taron Egerton as the British singer and

pianist. It's directed by Dexter Fletcher, who stepped in to helm the Freddie Mercury biopic "Bohemian Rhapsody" after Bryan Singer was fired. "Rocketman" is more of a musical-biopic hybrid. John is himself a producer on the movie.

The 72nd annual Cannes Film Festival runs May 14-25. Its full slate is to be announced Thursday. As previously announced, Jim Jarmusch's zombie comedy

"The Dead Don't Die" will open the festival.

Photo: This April 4, 2019, file photo shows Taron Egerton, who plays singer Elton John in the upcoming film "Rocketman," discussing the film during the Paramount Pictures presentation at CinemaCon 2019, the official convention of the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) at Caesars Palace, in Las Vegas. (Photo by Chris Pizzello/Invision/AP, File)