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to Iran **2**



**Iran identifies**  
**290 CIA spies**  
across the world **2**



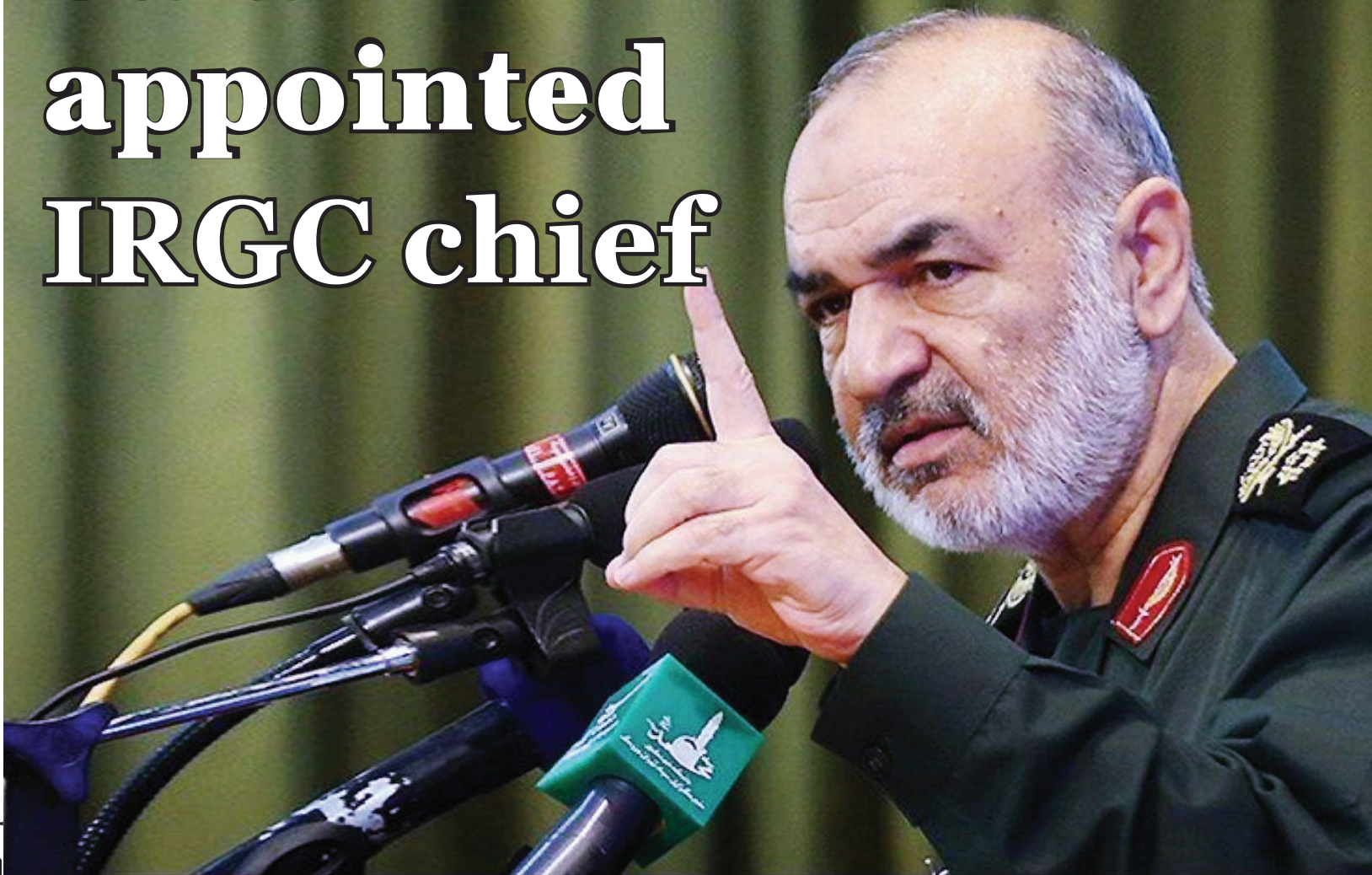
**Tehran denounces**  
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# Salami appointed IRGC chief

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© File photo

## Tehran, Baku to strengthen industrial relations

**TEHRAN** — During the trip of Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani to Azerbaijan, the two sides agreed to expand bilateral industry relations, IRNA reported.

In this due, the two neighbors inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the joint manufacturing of trailers in Hajigabul Industrial Estate,

113 kilometers far from Baku.

The MOU was signed on Friday by Mohammad Reza Rostami, the managing director of Iranian company Maral Sanat, and Emin Akhundov, the board of directors' chairman of Azerbaijani company AzerMash, in the presence of Rahmani and Azerbaijani Economy Minister Shahin Mustafayev. **→4**

## Iran opens its most advanced solid medicine factory

**TEHRAN**— Iran's most advanced factory for producing medicines in solid dosage form opened today, ISNA reported.

The factory, named Actover 2 has been built in cooperation with Germany's Merck & Co. Pharmaceutical Company and can produce up to 6 billion tablets and pills yearly.

The factory can completely satisfy the

needs of Iran and the region to the products of Merck Pharmaceuticals.

The Actover 2 factory is built on a 10,000 square meters land area, with 4200 square meters of clean room. It has three granulation lines, six lines for producing pills and tablets and five fast packaging lines.

The factory's trial production started late last year (ended March 20). **→11**

## Sri Lanka's bloody day

**TEHRAN** — Several explosions have hit three churches and three hotels in Sri Lanka, reportedly leaving at least 207 people dead and over 450 others wounded, police say.

The explosions hit St. Anthony's Church in Colombo and St. Sebastian's Church in the nearby city of Negombo as well as Zion Church in the eastern city of Batticaloa on Sunday, as worshipers were attending Easter services. The Shangri-La, Cinnamon

Grand, and Kingsbury hotels, which are situated in Colombo, were also targeted, Press TV reported.

Cinnamon Grand is located near the Sri Lankan prime minister's official residence.

Police officials confirmed the casualty tolls to AFP, adding that 35 foreigners were also among the dead. The news agency also cited hospital sources as saying that American, British, and Dutch citizens were among the foreign nationals killed in the blasts. **→3**



## ARTICLE

**Syed Zafar Mehdi**  
Journalist  
from New Delhi

## Setting the ground for the 'savior' of humanity

The idea of a messiah or savior or redeemer is common to all religious schools of thought, including Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity.

In the Islamic context, the concept of messianism, which is the belief in a messiah, revolves around an eschatological figure that is expected to rise and fill the earth with peace, justice and social order.

Holy Quran and Prophetic traditions have in unambiguous terms predicted the glorious triumph of the forces of right and the establishment of an Islamic society built on the foundations of justice, equality and righteousness. The wait and anticipation for that bright tomorrow continues.

Imam Sajjad (as) says: "The greatest success is to wait for the reappearance (of Imam)". (Al Ihtejaj vol.2 Pg.154. Kamaaluddin vol.1 Pg.320)

What does this 'wait' entail? If we dig little deeper in the subject of Mahdism, we come to understand that 'waiting' is primarily the result of two main conditions: not satisfied with the status quo and expecting things to turn around for good.

But, is merely being disgruntled with the status quo enough? Absolutely not. A person needs to step out of his comfort zone and set the ground for visible and productive 'change' to take place. More precisely, a person has to participate in the process of change, rather than be slothful and wait.

In the words of British historian Eric Hobsbawm, the concept of messianism, which we call Mahdism, can be broadly divided into two main categories: passive and active.

In the passive Mahdism, people immerse themselves in prayers and supplications and hope for the savior's early reappearance. In the active or revolutionary Mahdism, people go out of their way to make strenuous efforts and become active participants in the process of change.

We are witnessing social, political and cultural turmoil across the world today. Morals and ethics have degraded ominously. Grinding poverty has resulted in poor quality of life. Illiteracy and educational backwardness has sent people back to dark ages. **→7**

## Notre Dame false flag event

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Robert David Steele, a former Marine Corps infantry officer and CIA spy as well as an activist for Open Source Everything Engineering (OSEE), regularly answers questions for Tehran Times.

Q. In your earlier interview on the "New Zealand False Flag Event," (Tehran Times, 20 March 2019) you provided links from your CIA past with false flags and your publications about false flag events. Here today, we would ask, what is your high level understanding of the Notre Dame event?

A. I have published a lengthy post with graphics and links that is available to your readers at "Notre Dame Cathedral Burning False Flag, Complicity of Pope, Organized by Macron, Merkel, & May, Each a Satanist, Goal of Saving EU & Central Banks UPDATE 4," Phi Beta Iota Public Intelligence Blog, 16 April 2019. My primary source is the shadow foreign minister of France, but I also include information from multiple other sources.

I asked that the above photograph be used, instead of my face, to make the point that the entire roof was burned simultaneously so as to show this "burning cross" into the Heavens. This

was a Satanic ritual desecration of the "heart" of Christianity, a desecration equivalent to what the Zionists plan for Jerusalem by other means.

Let's start with the fact that Notre Dame is owned by the state, not the church; the fact that the building has been virtually condemned (as were the Twin Towers in New York from 1988); and the fact that the state has been refusing pleas from the Church to fund the renovations necessary to keep the site safe for citizens and tourists, while protecting the priceless artifacts. We have learned that Notre Dame is not insured by any commercial organization — the state of France "self-insures." **→7**

## Trump's one opportunity left to survive with any positive legacy: dumping his Neocon, Zionist advisors

By Martin Love

**NORTH CAROLINA** — Well, for sure, the designation by Trump of the IRGC as a "terrorist" organization is a foolish move, but not Iran's tit for tat response to it — designating the same for the U.S. central military command, or CENTCOM. This all can mostly present a warning for the remaining 5000 U.S. soldiers and diplomats in Iraq and the

2000 or so still lingering in Syria.

The Trump move is clearly because John Bolton and Mike Pompeo and some other de facto Zionist Neocons in his administration seek some kind of clear provocation for a military attack on Iran and not merely an attack on Iranian forces outside Iran.

But Trump, intellectual and strategic weakening that he truly has become, wants nothing

but fuel for his narcissism and popularity, which he is not going to get from the American voters by sparking another Middle Eastern war. None has gone as planned by the U.S. and Trump's tenure and any kind of positive legacy may be dependent on NOT starting any more wars in the Middle East and not in Venezuela, too. Will Trump understand this? Hard to know. **→6**

## The rise of Islamic Movement in Nigeria

By Abdullahi Junaidu

**NIGERIA/ KATSINA** — Hausa land was an empire in Africa where Islam ruled, it was an Islamic ruling system under the leadership of his eminence late Shehu Usman Bn Fodio, who struggled to reform and revive Islam and the way people live, to the extent Shehu Usman Bn Fodio accomplished his goals to live under the shadow of Islamic ruling system and thought.

Many years after the Jihad of Shehu Usman Bn Fodio people were living in peaceful and communal life until the British imperialists attacked this Hausa land, butchered the prominent Islamic scholars, destroyed many of their buildings and other historical artifacts, made any kind of inhumane and merciless brutal murder which is fault on the ground of humanity.

These western countries colonized the Hausa land and divided it into many portions, and gave

them names that they are called with till date. We, they called us Nigeria, some called Niger, some Chad, some Cameroon, etc.

After dominating and dividing the Hausa land by colonial powers, they brought what they called Democracy to those dominated countries, after abolishing the traditional theological system.

They made a system that those countries got an independence physically but the colonial powers are still the rulers via proxy. **→6**



© Tehran Times / Amin Berenjkar

## Iran celebrates Sadi National Day in Shiraz

**TEHRAN** — Persian literature aficionados and literati from across Iran came together at the mausoleum of Persian poet Sadi in Shiraz on Sunday to celebrate Sadi National Day.

The director of the Center for the Study of Sadi, Kurosh Kamali Sarvestani, delivered a speech, which was followed by recitations from Sadi's poetry.

Sadi enthusiasts also visited exhibits of photos and documents on Sadi, and calligraphy works that were organized at the mausoleum of Sadi. **→16**



## ARTICLE

**Ebrahim Fallahi**  
Tehran Times journalist

## Trump's dilemma with Iran: to extend waivers or not!

These days one of the major factors which is affecting the oil market is the U.S. President Donald Trump's actions and their consequences.

The imposition of sanctions on Venezuela, reimposition of sanctions on Iran, comments on Libya, the impact on Saudi Arabia and OPEC decision making, are just some of the scenarios in which Trump is the lead actor.

In November 2018, when the U.S. president announced withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear accord between the Islamic Republic and six world powers, he made another announcement saying that the U.S. is going to cut Iranian oil exports to zero!

The sanctions targeted Iran's oil sector, financial transactions and banks, as well as shipping and ship-building industries in order to cut off the country's revenue sources and to make Trump's announcement come true.

However, shortly after Trump's blatant remarks, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the United States has granted exemptions to eight countries allowing them to temporarily continue buying Iranian oil.

Clearly Trump hadn't included the importance of Iranian oil for the market balance in his calculations. In the absence of Iranian oil in the market, the prices skyrocketed and that unleashed a wave of panic among the U.S. gasoline consumers which were facing prices going up.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia which had been under Trump's tweet bombarding since April 2018, for cutting oil production, pushed back at him and went on with the plan for extending the OPEC+ cuts deal.

The market statistics were all against Trump's visions and that made him retreat for the time being, adjourning the execution of the "zero Iranian oil" for a six-month period.

Now, with the waivers expiration due nearing, once again Trump is facing a dilemma regarding his Iran policies.

Earlier in April, Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih noted that OPEC was leaning toward an extension of the production cuts after June. **→5**



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Salami appointed IRGC chief

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — In a decree issued on Sunday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as the commander in chief, promoted Hossein Salami to the rank of major general and appointed him to the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Salami replaced Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari who held the post since September 2007.

Salami acted as the IRGC second-in-command. The Leader also thanked general Jafari for his valuable and abundant services.

In part of his decree, Ayatollah Khamenei said based on the need for change in the IRGC commandership suggested by Major General Jafari and "in view of your competence and valuable experiences in top and different managerial posts in the revolutionary, jihadi, and popular institutes of the Guards... I appoint you, by granting the rank of major general, to the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps."



Cleric: Iran managed to humiliate U.S. in Iraq, Syria

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Kazem Seddiqi, the interim Friday prayer preacher of Tehran, has highlighted U.S. failures in the region, saying the Islamic Republic managed to discredit the U.S. in Iraq and Syria.

"With the help of neighboring countries of Iraq and Syria, we managed to ensure the security of these countries and trample over America's stature and will continue to do so," Seddiqi said, Tasnim reported.

He also denounced the U.S. designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organization, saying the move showed "their stupidity, shamelessness and wickedness."



IRGC Navy chief lauds Hashd al-Sha'bi's help in flood-hit areas

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy chief Alireza Tangsiri has defended the deployment of popular mobilization forces in Iran's flood-stricken areas in response to criticism by members of the parliament.

"Eight Iraqi Hashd al-Sha'bi vessels were sent to help us" with flood relief, Tangsiri told Fars news agency on Sunday.

The commanders of Hashd al-Sha'bi fought alongside the IRGC troops during the war that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein initiated against Iran in the 1980s, he said, adding, "They have had a major part in sorting out the problems caused by floods."

"Those who are against Hashd al-Sha'bi's presence in Khuzestan are either ill-informed or they are linked to outsiders," Tangsiri remarked.



Zarif to attend UN meeting on multilateralism

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is scheduled to leave Tehran for New York on Tuesday to attend a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on multilateralism.

The meeting, dubbed "the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace" will kick off in New York on Wednesday, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The UN General Assembly decided in December 2018 to declare April 24 as the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

Iran's newly named representative to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi will accompany Zarif during the visit.



Jomeiri named IRGC Intelligence Protection chief

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Fathollah Jomeiri has been appointed as the new commander of the Intelligence Protection Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Fars news agency reported on Saturday that IRGC Chief Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari has appointed Jomeiri to his new post. He replaced Ali Nasiri.

Jomeiri has served as commander of the IRGC's Imam Sadeq (AS) brigade in Bushehr Province and commander of the IRGC's al-Ghadir brigade in Yazd Province.

It came a week after the United States officially designated the IRGC as a "foreign terrorist organization".



Pakistani FM details plan to secure Iran borders

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has briefed the media on steps taken by his country to strengthen security along its porous border with Iran ahead of Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Iran.

Qureshi said on Saturday that Pakistan had already taken "six steps" to ensure stability along the Iran border as part of a project dubbed the "border of peace", Press TV reported.

He said a new command center has been formed in the Pakistani city of Turbat to improve the effectiveness of border guards' deployment in the area while a new Frontier Corps will be responsible for smooth management of the border.

# Imran Khan on official visit to Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Iran on Sunday for an official two-day tour on the invitation of President Hassan Rouhani.

This marks the first time Prime Minister Imran is visiting Iran after assuming office in August 2018.

The premier made a stopover in Mashhad before proceeding on to Tehran. Alireza Razm Hussein, the governor general of Khorasan Razavi province, received the prime minister upon arrival at the Shahid Hasheminejad International Airport.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Riffat Masood, officials of the Pakistan embassy in Tehran and Pakistan Consulate in Mashhad were also present at the airport.

According to a press release by the Prime Minister's Office, Khan is accompanied by Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari, Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Ali Haider Zaidi, Adviser to PM on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfikar Abbas Bukhari, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Zafarullah Mirza, and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Petroleum Nadeem Baber.

In his brief talks with the provincial governor, the prime minister called for cooperation to facilitate the pilgrimage of Pakistani



Imran Khan visits the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mahshad

nationals to the shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia imam, in Mashhad.

He also visited the Imam Reza shrine and met the custodian of the Astan Qods Rezavi.

The prime minister was initially scheduled to visit Iran in January, but the visit was postponed at the eleventh hour because of unexplained reasons.

## Iran identifies 290 CIA spies across the world: intelligence minister

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Agents from the Iranian Intelligence Ministry have succeeded to identify 290 CIA spies in Iran and other countries, Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi revealed on Friday.

"Our actions in identifying elements of this agency have caused disruptions in the CIA in a way that the U.S. formed committees and director of the CIA confirmed being harmed by Iran," he said during a speech to worshippers in Tehran on Friday.

He said that Yahoo News conducted interviews with 11 U.S. spy experts who admitted that identifying CIA spies by Iran has been a "disastrous defeat" for the U.S.

In an article published by Yahoo News in November 2018, it is claimed that Iranian intelligence had gained access

to a secret internet-based communications system of the U.S.

"When these types of compromises happen, it's so dark and bad," said a former official, speaking to Yahoo.

Alvai said, "Tens of spies who were employed by foreign intelligence services were identified in the country's sensitive centers and were arrested. Report on identifying these spies made all the ones who were informed about the Intelligence Ministry's performance surprised and also made the foreign services which employed the spies confused."

Alavi also said that Iran countered 114 Takfiri teams, 116 teams related to the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO), 44 anti-revolutionary teams, and 380 teams of drug trafficking during the past Iranian calendar year which ended on March 20, 2019.

## 'Iran to design mechanisms similar to INSTEX with Iraq, Syria, Turkey and China'

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian has said that Iran plans to design mechanism similar to the European Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) for financial transactions with Iraq, Syria, Turkey and China.

In an interview with ILNA published on Sunday, Nahavandia also said steps have been taken in line with implementing the INSTEX with the Europeans.

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



The mechanism was adopted after U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and ordered reimposition of sanctions against Iran. The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were snapped back on November 4.

## Rezaee says Leader wants structural changes in Expediency Council

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Mohsen Rezaee, secretary of the Expediency Council, said on Saturday that Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has called for structural and functional changes in the Expediency Council.

"Leader of the Revolution has called on us to make structural and functional changes in the council. (However) we have been bombarded by certain media outlets since we started to carry out the order," Tasnim news agency quoted him as saying during a ceremony.

He added, "There have been and will be differences within the front of the revolution.... Certain ones prevent airing all the voices and news within the front of the revolution because of personal differences. Let's pray that we remain revolutionary and die revolutionary."

the visit would also build strong political ties between Iranian and Pakistani leaders.

"As chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs I warmly welcome the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to the Islamic Republic of Iran which is our neighbor, which is our very traditionally close friend with whom we have mutuality of interest," the senator said.

He went on to say that the visit sends a very positive message from Pakistan, its government, its people and parliament to the people of Iran.

Pakistan rejects all kinds of negative propaganda against Iran, he pointed out.

"Pakistan has very strong strategic ties with Iran and we want to further strengthen those ties at the political level, at the economic level and at the security level," the senator said.

He said there are issues between Iran and Pakistan, particularly regarding security. "We have a common enemy in terms of terrorism and extremism and we will combat that enemy together because it is in the interest of both Iran and Pakistan."

Ambassador Masood also said on Sunday that her country is seeking to expand ties with Iran.

She highlighted the Pakistani prime minister's resolve to strengthen ties with neighboring countries.

"Iran is a neighboring, friendly and Muslim country, therefore we are seeking to expand relations with Iran," Ambassador Masood said, quoted by IRNA.

## Tehran denounces Sri Lanka Easter bombings

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Sunday denounced the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka which killed and injured hundreds of people.

In a statement, Mousavi extended his condolences to the families of victims as well as the Sri Lankan nation and government, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

An ongoing series of bomb blasts has struck luxury hotels and churches across Sri Lanka. At least 207 people were reportedly killed and 560 injured in the coordinated terror attacks.

"Today's crime once again showed that the despicable phenomenon of terrorism

has turned into a worldwide problem irrespective of border, race, nation and religion," Mousavi said, calling for serious efforts by all countries to root out terrorism.

Shortly after the Foreign Ministry's official announcement, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also took to twitter to express her sadness over the terrorist attacks.

"Terribly saddened by terrorist attacks on Sri Lankan worshippers during Easter. Condolences to friendly govt & people of Sri Lanka. Our thoughts & prayers with the victims & their families," Zarif wrote.

"Terrorism is a global menace with no religion: it must be condemned & confronted globally," he wrote.

## Iran attends parliamentary summit in Baghdad

Iranian MP blames U.S., Israel for chaos in the region

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran attended the parliamentary summit hosted by Iraq on Saturday.

The summit was attended by parliament speakers from countries neighboring Iraq including Iran, Turkey, Kuwait, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a distinguished lawmaker who headed Iran's national security and foreign policy committee, attended the summit on behalf of Iranian Speaker Ali Larijani.

Al Jazeera said the summit brought together regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran as part of a broader effort by Iraqi leaders to fashion the country's image as a friend among neighbors.

The one-day conference in the Iraqi capital focused on regional security, diplomacy and economic issues.

Iraqi Parliament speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi chaired the gathering.

"What binds us to our neighbors is our common geographical destiny and common interests," al-Halbousi said in a statement, Reuters reported.

"Today, Iraq is building a promising strategic partnership with all neighboring countries without any reservations or favoring any party," al Jazeera quoted al-Halbousi as saying.

The visiting officials pledged support for reconstruction and development efforts in Iraq and for the country's



Alaeddin Boroujerdi (L) meets Iraqi Parliament speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi in Baghdad, April 20, 2019.

continued stability following its victory over Daesh, after three years of war, the statement said.

The regional meeting followed months of high-profile diplomacy that has involved Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi and President Barham Salih to engage with the neighbors.

"The stability of Iraq is necessary in the stability of the region and contributes its return with all its political and economic weight and creative human resources to

its Arab and regional environment," the statement said.

It emphasized "the importance of supporting moderation and combating extremism in all its forms, especially as it is the people of the region who pay the price of extremism."

Iraq is spearheading a regional initiative to bring Syria - which was suspended in 2011 - back into the Arab League.

While Iraq remains a close ally of the U.S. in the Middle East, Iraqi leaders have made clear they will not be constrained by U.S. policy objectives to isolate Iran and Syria.

"Iraq is coming back to the neighborhood," President Salih told The Associated Press last month.

Addressing the summit, Boroujerdi blamed interference by the U.S. and sedition by the Zionist regime of Israel as the main culprits behind the chaos in the Middle East region.

Boroujerdi also met with Ammar al-Hakim, leader of the Iraqi National Wisdom Movement, discussing the latest political developments in the region.

Hakim said, "Iraq has adopted the policy of open doors to other countries."

Iraq seeks to have "balanced" relations with other countries based on mutual interests, he added.

On Sunday, Boroujerdi met with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi, reviewing expansion of relations in various areas.

Boroujerdi praised Iraq's efforts to hold the summit.



# Sri Lanka’s bloody day

## Hundreds of casualties in attacks on churches, hotels

➔ A post on the Facebook page of St. Sebastian’s Church said a “bomb attack” had targeted the premises.

■ **‘Body parts strewn all over’**  
Sri Lankan MP Harsha de Silva tweeted that there had been “foreigners” among the casualties. He said he had been to one of the churches and one of the hotels and seen “horrible scenes,” adding, “I saw many body parts strewn all over. Emergency crews are at all locations in full force.”

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena said he was shocked by the incidents and appealed for calm.

Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera tweeted that the attacks appeared to be a “well-coordinated attempt to create murder, mayhem & anarchy.”

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe condemned the “cowardly attacks” and urged Sri Lankans to remain “united and strong.”

Ranil also called for a national security council meeting at his residence later in the day.

■ **Seventh, eighth explosions reported hours later**

Several hours after the initial explosions, a seventh blast rocked Dehiwala, the largest suburb of Colombo, to the south, and an eighth hit the suburb of Orugodawatta, north of the capital, according to police.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said at least two people were killed in the Dehi-



wala explosion, which happened at a hotel.

Curfew enforced

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan government has imposed a curfew with immediate effect.

Education Minister Akila Viraj Kariyawasam announced that all schools would be closed on Monday and Tuesday.

The government has also blocked access to major social media platforms and messaging services.

■ **‘Culprits identified’**  
State Minister of Defense Ruwan Wijewardene said that investigators had identified

the perpetrators of the Sunday attacks.

“We believe that all the culprits who have been involved in this unfortunate terrorist incident will be taken into custody as soon as possible,” he said.

He did not name them.

■ **Muslim Council denounces attacks**

The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka (MCSL) issued a statement later in the day mourning “the loss of innocent lives due to extremist and violent elements who wish to create divides between religious and ethnic groups.”

■ **Iran condemns attacks**

In a post on his Twitter account later on Sunday, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that he was “terribly saddened” by the attacks in Sri Lanka, and said terrorism “is a global menace with no religion.”

Separately, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Moussavi strongly condemned the deadly attacks and expressed sympathy with the Sri Lankan government and nation.

“The crime today [in Sri Lanka] once again showed that the despicable phenomenon of terrorism has become a global problem that knows no border, ethnicity, nationality, or religion,” Moussavi said.

■ **The Sri Lankan civil war**

Sri Lanka is still rehabilitating from a 26-year civil war that ended in 2009 with an estimated 100,000 deaths. The strife was mainly between the so-called Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government, and ended when government forces defeated the rebels.

While there had been sporadic violence since 2009, an outbreak of violence against Muslim communities prompted the government to declare a state of emergency in March 2018.

Countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, have in the past witnessed similar attacks targeting their churches.

## Syrian president, Russian deputy PM discuss post-war economic revival

**TEHRAN-** Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov have discussed a constitutional committee meant to draft the Arab country’s new constitution as well as Moscow’s efforts to revive the war-ravaged nation’s economy.

During a meeting in the Syrian capital Damascus on Saturday, President Assad and Borisov exchanged views about ways to improve bilateral cooperation in all fields at different levels and the agreements signed between the two countries in the energy, industry, and trade sectors, the Syrian Arab News Agency SANA reported.

It added that the two sides also reviewed feasible mechanisms to overcome all the obstacles facing the implementation of the agreements, including the West’s sanctions on Syria, and to promote cooperation in new sectors in a way that would serve the interests of the two nations.

Borisov, who is also the chairman of the Joint Syrian-Russian Committee for Trade, Economy, Science and Technology Cooperation, briefed President Assad on the implementation of the agreements and the obstacles hindering their fulfillment.

He expressed his country’s intention to further support Syria against terrorism until the menace is totally eliminated and security and stability are fully restored to Syria.

Moscow is determined to play a role in Syria’s reconstruction process and to support it in difficult circumstances caused by the economic and terror wars against the country, the Russian envoy pointed out.

“After our meeting in December, we proceeded with in the [framework of the] reached agreements and so far expect no breakdowns of planned actions. I am convinced that all our efforts aimed at Syria’s economic revival will be successful,” Borisov said.

Back in December, Borisov’s office said that the diplomat had discussed industrial, medical, and energy cooperation with President Assad in Damascus.

“The range of questions discussed with the Syrian leader included political affairs, Russia’s participation in Syria’s postwar reconstruction and restoration of life to normal, and cooperation in industry, medicine, energy and other branches of the economy,” Borisov’s office said.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups wreaking havoc in the country.

Syria FM, Russia deputy PM discuss economic ties

Meanwhile, the Russian deputy prime minister and Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem also discussed the promotion of bilateral cooperation in different sectors.

They stressed the importance of enhancing economic cooperation in line with political and military ties until reaching a strategic partnership in a way that would benefit the two nations’ common interests.

During a meeting with the Russian president’s special envoy Alexander Lavrentiev in Damascus earlier on Satur-



day, President Assad called for progress in stalled talks on a so-called buffer zone around militant-held Idlib province in the country’s northwest.

The Syrian president also stressed his government’s determination to eliminate terrorist groups that are holed up in Idlib and attack civilians in neighboring areas.

According to Press TV, President Assad’s meeting with the Russian diplomat came ahead of fresh Syria talks aimed at ending the conflict in the war-torn country. The new round of Syria negotiations are scheduled to be held on April 25 and 26 in Kazakhstan.

## Oxfam warns of ‘massive resurgence of cholera’ in Yemen

**TEHRAN-** Oxfam International, a confederation of 20 independent charitable organizations, has warned of a “massive resurgence of cholera” amid an escalation of violence in the war-torn state, and ahead of the rainy season, which is expected to accelerate the spread of the disease.

“Fears that the world’s worst cholera outbreak could be set for a massive resurgence are growing,” the relief organization said.

According to Press TV, in a statement, Oxfam warned that fighting and restraints on access – including checkpoints and permit requirements imposed by the warring parties – are making it extremely difficult to reach some affected areas.

The upcoming rainy season is likely to accelerate the spread of the disease due to flooding and contamination of water sources, Oxfam said.

In the last two weeks of March, around 2,500 suspected cases were being reported every day, up from around 1,000 a day in February. That is more than 10 times higher than the number of reported cases and associated deaths during the same period in 2018.

The relief organization has recorded around 195,000 suspected cases of cholera so far this year.

According to Oxfam, the water-borne bacterial infection has claimed more than 3,000 lives in Yemen since the outbreak began in 2016.

At its height in June 2017, 7,000 suspected cases were being identified every day and the outbreak was described as the worst in human history by the World Health Organization.

Muhsin Siddiquey, Oxfam’s Yemen Country Director, said, “The people of Yemen have



already endured the worst cholera outbreak in history, amid more than four years of war and the collapse of the country’s economy.

“Allowing this disease to spread across the country again causing yet more unnecessary deaths would be a stain on the conscience of humanity. The international community

urgently needs to ensure safe, secure and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid for all people in need across the country.”

Yemen’s cholera outbreak is fueled by Saudi Arabia’s airstrikes and crippling blockade which have further choked the country’s health sector.

Cholera is an acute diarrheal infection that is spread through contaminated food or water. It can be effectively treated with the immediate replacement of lost fluids and salts, but without treatment it can be fatal.

The ongoing conflict has led to a deterioration in water and sanitation systems across Yemen. Clean water and proper sanitation are essential in preventing cholera. The UN estimates there are 17.8 million people in Yemen in need of help to get clean water.

## Blasts, airstrikes rock Libyan capital amid fierce fighting

**TEHRAN-** Several airstrikes and explosions have reportedly shaken the Libyan capital of Tripoli as fierce fighting continues between Libya’s UN-backed government troops and forces loyal to renegade general Khalifa Haftar.

Reuters cited Tripoli residents as saying late Saturday that they had seen and heard aircraft opening fire and launching missile strikes on the capital city.

At least one missile struck a military camp of a force allied to Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj’s Government of National Accord (GNA) in the capital’s southern al-Sabaa district, they said.

It was unclear if the strikes were conducted by a manned aircraft or a drone.

GNA’s military spokesman Colonel Mohammad Gnounou said at least seven airstrikes had been carried out earlier in the day against military positions held by forces loyal to Haftar’s Libyan National Army (LNA).

The strikes hit positions south of Gharian, 100 kilometers southwest of Tripoli, and also an airbase at al-Wotya, 50 kilometers further southwest.

Confirming the early Saturday attacks, the LNA claimed for its part that its forces were “taking control of several new

positions on the frontlines in Tripoli,” and that its fighters had made Serraj’s troops retreat “on all fronts.”

“Our air force is providing fire support to troops on the ground,” said Ahmed al-Mesmari, spokesman for Haftar’s forces. “The enemy is trying to flank our forces from the back, but they have failed in the face of the strength of our fighters and the experience of our fighters. It’s become a war of attrition.”

■ **Airport in Libya’s Tripoli reopens**

The report of clashes came as Libyan authorities said they had reopened Mitiga Airport, Tripoli’s only functioning airport, after hours of closure due to possible airstrikes.

The Libyan capital has another airport, Tripoli International, which is currently closed.

Libya has been divided between two rival governments – the House of Representatives based in the eastern city of Tobruk and the GNA headed by Serraj in Tripoli.

The 75-year-old Haftar who enjoys the loyalty of a group of armed militia and backing from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt has taken upon himself to protect the government in Tobruk.

Armed forces and militia loyal to the GNA have been

fighting back.

According to press TV, Haftar launched his deadly campaign on April 4 to invade and conquer Tripoli, the seat of the GNA, resulting in repeated fierce fighting on the southern edges of the capital.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the fighting has so far killed at least 205 people and wounded more than 900 others. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) also reported that more than 25,000 people have been displaced by the clashes.

The White House said on Friday that U.S. President Donald Trump had personally discussed the situation in Tripoli with Haftar on the phone earlier this week.

The disclosure of the call prompted thousands of people in Tripoli to hold a protest against the U.S. president.

Libya has been the scene of increasing violence since 2011, when former dictator Muammar Gaddafi was toppled from power after an uprising and a NATO military intervention.

His ouster created a huge power vacuum, leading to chaos and the emergence of numerous militant outfits, including the Daesh terrorist group.

## Pope urges return of refugees to Syria, peace in Libya

**TEHRAN-** Pope Francis Sunday urged world leaders to try again to bring peace to Libya and in Syria where millions of refugees and people displaced by conflict should be helped to return home.

In his traditional Easter Sunday address to the faithful at the Vatican, where some 70,000 were gathered in Saint Peter’s square, the pope also expressed his “sadness” at news of the deadly bomb attacks on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka < AP reported.

Francis noted how in Libya violence has flared up again as strongman Khalifa Haftar’s Libyan National Army attacked Tripoli, seat of the UN-backed government.

“May conflict and bloodshed cease in Libya, where defenseless people are once more dying in recent weeks,” Francis said.

“I urge the parties involved to choose dialogue over force and to avoid reopening wounds left by a decade of conflicts and political instability.”

In Syria, where President Bashar Al-Assad has recovered territory lost to rebel groups, the pope lamented the fate of “the beloved Syrian people, victims of an ongoing conflict to which we risk becoming ever more resigned and even indifferent.”

“Now is instead the time for a renewed commitment for a political solution able to respond to people’s legitimate hopes for freedom, peace and justice, confront the humanitarian crisis and favor the secure re-entry of the homeless, along with all those who have taken refuge in neighboring countries, especially Lebanon and Jordan.”

The pope noted how Easter, the holiest Christian festival, “makes us keep our eyes fixed on the Middle East, torn by continuing divisions and tensions.”

Turning to South Sudan, Pope Francis urged rival leaders President Salva Kiir and rebel chief Riek Machar -- who met recently at the Vatican -- to sink their differences to pursue national reconciliation.

On Saturday, Kiir called on Machar to return home “urgently” to help form a government of national unity.

## Afghan supreme court extends Ghani’s term until delayed elections

Afghanistan’s supreme court Sunday said it had extended the term of President Ashraf Ghani until elections, which have been delayed until September, can take place.

“The Afghan Supreme court has extended the service term of President Ghani until the re-election of a new president,” the court said in a statement.

Originally set for April 20, the elections were first delayed until July 20 and pushed back again to September 28.

(source: AFP)

## World’s Shias celebrate Imam Mahdi’s birth anniversary

Millions of Shia Muslims around the world, including in Iran, have joined celebrations to mark the birth anniversary of the Twelfth and last Shia Imam, Imam Mahdi (PBUH).

The celebrations are especially joyous and popular in Iran, where the anniversary fell on Sunday this year.

To mark the occasion, Iranians bedeck the streets, hang lights around villages, towns, and cities, attend festive events at mosques and religious centers, and distribute votive refreshments.

The occasion is one of the most important ones among Shia Muslims, who have a strong devotion to Imam Mahdi (PBUH).

Imam Mahdi (PBUH) was born on the 15th day of the month of Sha’ban on the lunar calendar around 1,200 years ago.

He is known as the Savior among Shias, who believe he will reappear on earth as per divine decree, establishing peace and ridding the world of injustice, discrimination, and other instances of evil.

Imam Mahdi (PBUH)’s father, Imam Hassan al-Askari, would keep his birth and identity from the tyrants of the time, who had learned about the divine prophecy concerning Imam Mahdi. Their efforts and ill intention, however, failed to either come in the way of the Imam’s birth or harm him afterwards.

Shias thus await the Imam’s reemergence, which is expected to transpire on a Friday, with enthusiasm.

(Source: Press TV)

## Foreign-backed terrorists kill over 60 soldiers east of Syria

**TEHRAN-** Foreign-backed terrorists have reportedly killed more than 60 Syrian soldiers in the eastern parts of the Arab country over the past 48 hours.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Statuary that Takfiri Daesh terrorists had killed some 35 soldiers in government-held parts of central and eastern Syria since Thursday, SANA reported.

This included some 27 troops, among them four Syrian army officers, who were killed in the desert east of the central province of Homs as well as eight others who died in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr, the group said.

The Britain-based monitoring group described the attack as the deadliest against Syrian government forces in recent months.

It also said that terrorists associated with Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly known as the Nusra Front, attacked Syrian forces outside the northwestern region of Idlib on Saturday, killing 26 of them.

Daesh, which once held large swaths of land in Syria and Iraq, has now been completely defeated in both Arab countries and has lost almost all of its occupied territories.

The terror group holds a tiny pocket of territory in the vast Syrian Desert, known as Badia, near the Iraq border. The terrorists use unpopulated areas of Badia as their hideouts to carry out hit-and-run attacks on Syrian troops.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	204375.3
IFX	2420.55

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,229 rials
GBP	54,584 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$71.97/b
WTI	\$64.07/b
OPEC Basket	\$70.81/b
Gold	\$1,276.30/oz
Silver	\$15.07/oz
Platinum	\$907.05/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran, Bulgaria discuss expansion of trade ties

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Bulgaria explored the ways to expand trade relations during the visit of an Iranian trade delegation to Sofia, the news portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) published on Saturday.

The Iranian delegates, included private sector's director led by ICCIMA Vice Chairman Hossein Selahvarzi, held B-2-B meetings with their Bulgarian counterparts during their stay in Bulgaria.

Concerns rise over Turkey's foreign reserves amid lira's devaluation

International investors are expressing their increasing scepticism over Turkey's international gold and currency reserves after a 2-percent plunge in the lira this past Thursday. The reluctance of the Turkish central bank to explain the actions it's taken in response to this latest development adds to the worries over the sustainability of Turkey's financial system.

According to Sputnik, the lira's latest round of devaluation happened on the heels of reports claiming the Turkish central bank was using the money it borrowed from commercial lenders to improve its foreign reserve balance sheet. The regulator has refrained from commenting on the speculation.



Turkey has faced mounting financial woes since mid-2018, when the lira was devalued after several rounds of interest rate hikes by the U.S. Federal Reserve, and amid the heightened geo-strategic tensions between NATO-member Turkey and other members of the alliance.

This year, the lira has dropped another 10 percent, as the Turkish government has delayed key economic reforms amid the rising political tensions within the country.

"There's a general unease about what's going on behind the scenes", Tim Ash of BlueBay Asset Management said.

Experts say this outgoing week's reports of Turkey's alleged purchases of foreign currencies have contributed to their concerns over the sustainability of the Turkish financial system.

"We can see with the Financial Times story that concerns regarding central bank reserves have increased", an anonymous Turkish currency trader said, as quoted by Reuters. "We cannot say that reserves are in a very good situation but contrasting stories and comments recently show the subject has not been well analyzed, explained, and calculated".

The Financial Times claimed that Turkey has increased its holdings of foreign currencies by several billion dollars, using short-borrowed money for that purpose. The report raised questions as to how the central bank will repay these loans — issued by Turkey's systemically important private banks.

If the central bank struggles to put that money back into the country's financial system or requests a restructuring deal from the banks, Turkey's ability to withstand another possible wave to the lira crisis could be significantly jeopardized, economists say.

"I don't think these are conventional operations and they are somewhat less than transparent", Julian Rimmer of Investec Bank said. "A central bank cannot risk being seen as economical with the truth".

The Turkish central bank, however, has confirmed it had borrowed the dollars that were subsequently added to its foreign currency reserves. Central bank officials said the borrowed money was recorded as an "off-balance sheet item" — raising further questions about the transaction's transparency.

Pre-dating the central bank's efforts, Ankara's foreign currency reserves contracted by \$9.4 billion in mid-March to \$19.5 billion — the lowest since 2007. By early April, the central bank's currency holdings rebounded to \$23.6 billion — which is still below the \$28.7 billion at the beginning of March.

Tehran, Baku to strengthen industrial relations

**1 →** Based on the MOU, each of the Iranian and Azeri companies will enjoy 50 percent share in the project.

The construction phase of the project is scheduled to get started next month.

Each side will invest €5 million for this project.

The factory will have the capacity of manufacturing 1200 trailers annually.

Rostami said that the project is aimed at supplying Central Asian market with trailers.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Mustafayev stressed the need to set up joint industrial estates in the borderlines of the two countries.

During his stay in Baku, Rahmani and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in a meeting pledged to increase the trade volume between the two countries, adding that the two sides will spare no efforts to boost joint industrial projects, Fars news agency reported.

Rahmani also inaugurated an Iranian trade center in Baku during his trip to Azerbaijan.



Iran and Azerbaijan inked an MOU on the joint manufacturing of trailers in Azerbaijan.

In his visit to Tehran in early March Mustafayev had discussed expansion of economic and energy ties between Iran and his country with his Iranian counterpart

Farhad Dejpasand and Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian.

In a meeting between Dejpasand and Mustafayev, which was held at the place

Expansion of bilateral banking ties stressed by Iran, Turkey

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — **d e s k** Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati in a meeting with Turkey's Ambassador to Iran Derya Ors on Thursday called for growing cooperation between banks of the two sides to facilitate trade activities between Iran and Turkey, IRNA reported.

He also appreciated the high volume of trade exchanges between the two countries and noted that Turkey's President Recep Teyyep Erdogan, in a meeting in presence of senior officials of the two countries, underlined increase in

cooperation level, facilitation in banking relations and removing obstacles in the way of trade between the two states.

Hemmati pointed to Turkey's trade and economic capacities and emphasized necessity to accelerate banking activities with Iranian businessmen.

He stressed that in spite of desirable trade exchange volume between the two countries, there are still far distances with drawing goal of \$30 billion and expressed the hope that exchange volume will be increased more in future regarding to mutual capabilities of the two states.

Japan's inflation edges higher but its central bank is still in a bind

Japan's core inflation picked up slightly in March from a year earlier, but remained distant from the Bank of Japan's ambitious two percent target in sign of rising pressure on the central bank, CNBC reported.

Over the past year, policymakers have had to contend with a slowdown in global demand as the Sino-U.S. tariff war put a dent on world trade and hit Japanese exporters. This has made the Bank of Japan's task of generating inflation even more difficult.

Data on Friday showed a 0.8 percent increase in the nationwide core consumer price index (CPI), which includes oil products but excludes volatile fresh food costs, compared with

a median market forecast of 0.7 percent. In February, annual core consumer inflation hit 0.7 percent.

An index the BOJ focuses on - the so-called core-core CPI that strips away the effect of both volatile food and energy costs - rose 0.4 percent in March, matching the annual increase in February.

The central bank is in a bind. Years of heavy money printing have dried up bond market liquidity and hurt commercial banks' profits, stoking concerns that its massive easing program is not sustainable.

Subdued inflation has left the BOJ well behind its counterparts in dialing back stimulus, including the United States

where monetary policy had a bigger impact. Some economists also argue the BOJ has little ammunition left to fight another serious economic downturn.

There is also a growing view in markets that core consumer inflation may grind to a halt in coming months as recent oil price falls push down gas and electricity bills. Such a scenario could put the central bank under pressure to come up with some measures to buoy prices.

The BOJ is expected to forecast next week that inflation will remain below its target through the fiscal year that ends in March 2022, sources say.

China growth forecasts rise after surprise GDP numbers

China's better-than-expected first quarter economic growth has spurred some investment banks to raise their growth forecasts for this year, CNBC reported.

Economists at Barclays, ING and Citi have raised their China growth outlook for 2019 on Wednesday, though others may be holding off for now.

The Chinese government announced Wednesday that gross domestic product expanded by 6.4 percent year-on-year in the first three months of 2019. That was higher than the 6.3 percent predicted by analysts in a Reuters' poll.

By comparison, China's economy grew by 6.4 percent year-on-year in the fourth quarter of last year, and 6.8 percent in the first quarter of 2018.

The first-quarter figure came as investors watched closely to see if months of government efforts to stimulate the world's second-largest economy — hit by the trade war with the United States — were succeeding in putting a floor on slowing growth.

The general consensus was that it had, though opinions differed on whether the result was enough to justify altering forecasts.

Economists at Barclays raised their expectation for GDP expansion for this year to 6.5 percent from the previous 6.2 percent, citing the surprise first-quarter growth result.

In a note Wednesday, they said the figure was boosted by "greater impact" from government stimulus measures as well as factors including signs of improving housing and property markets and a better export outlook.

Citi also raised its annual GDP forecast to 6.6 percent from 6.2 percent on Wednesday, citing a more optimistic outlook for a U.S.-China trade deal and stronger domestic demand in China.

"Our new baseline scenario is that a framework trade deal between the U.S. and China will be reached in (the second quarter) and it will lift most, if not all, existing punitive tariffs," economists at the U.S. bank wrote.

Meanwhile, ING lifted its forecast to 6.5 percent from its previous 6.3 percent, calling stimulus-fueled infrastructure projects and 5G telecoms production the "real growth engine" in the first quarter.



Iris Pang, ING's Greater China economist, said in a note Wednesday, "We think the trend could continue for the rest of the year."

China is officially targeting growth of between 6.0 percent and 6.5 percent this year. And while its quarterly GDP data is widely watched as the key barometer for the state of the economy, experts have long questioned its accuracy.

Some analysts are looking at alternative indicators for evidence of the state of growth.

For instance, economist Christopher Balding — a professor at Fulbright University Vietnam — said he's looking at business electricity consumption, which shrank despite the official report that the economy grew. Writing on Twitter, Balding cited data from Wind and Groundwork Research showing declining energy consumption by businesses this year.

Other analysts saw positives in the first-quarter numbers but were more cautious in their outlook.

J.P. Morgan economists said they expect "solid growth momentum" in the second and third quarters as stimulus continues to bolster the economy. But they added that the impact will eventually weaken by the end of the year. They kept their overall forecast for this year at 6.4 percent.

Standard Chartered also kept its full-year prediction at 6.4 percent, cautioning against "risks of being over-optimistic about China's growth outlook."

Taimur Baig, Singapore-based DBS Group Research chief economist, said that the first-quarter showed "some degree of stabilization," citing data including retail sales, industrial production, manufacturing and non-oil imports. But he also cautioned against over-excitement.

ECB hopefuls offer policy remedies for bloc's stuttering economy

The Eurozone's economic downturn is proving a boon for policymakers who are jostling to succeed Mario Draghi at the bloc's central bank — offering them an opportunity to tout favored policy proposals and burnish their credentials for the job, Financial Times reported.

According to financial Times, the European Central Bank is preparing to respond to the slowdown with more monetary stimulus, most likely by extending its commitment to keeping interest rates at record lows past the end of 2019 and further into 2020 — well beyond Draghi's term in office.

But the hunt is on for additional policy options in case the stuttering growth persists — and those who would succeed Draghi as ECB president are keen to show they can provide them.

Since taking the helm at the Eurozone's monetary guardian in 2011, Draghi and members of his inner circle have acted aggressively to hold together an often disparate monetary union. The flipside of his dominance was that at times the heads of the region's central banks took a back-seat role in policymaking.

The impending departure of the man who has shaped Eurozone monetary policy for the past eight years gives the bank an opportunity on a search for fresh ideas.

With just a couple of months before the decision is expected to be made by EU heads of state at a summit in mid-June, some of the leading candidates are stepping out of the Italian's shadow to compete for the attention of national capitals.

Of the leading candidates, only Benoit Coeuré, a member of the bank's executive board, has been a key figure in the Draghi era's crisis response.

Coeuré, with a reputation for understanding the region's financial markets and the political dynamic between Berlin and Paris, is the preferred candidate of many ECB-watchers and would represent a continuation of Draghi's ideas.

The ECB board member "has been instrumental" in weighing in with ideas to help the bank combat the region's economic woes, said Frederik Ducrest, economist at Pictet Wealth Management.

of Iranian Ministry of Economy, the two sides agreed on signing monetary, financial and banking contacts, and also expanding economic cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan, especially on the completion of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) project.

Mustafayev also visited Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian at the place of Iranian Energy Ministry.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Ardakanian said that the next meeting of Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee would be held in Azerbaijani capital city, Baku, in the near future.

Mustafayev, for his part, said that besides their bilateral cooperation, Iran and Azerbaijan are trying to lay the ground for trilateral cooperation in a way to take the advantage of possible opportunities, adding, "In our today meeting we discussed trilateral cooperation between Iran-Azerbaijan-Russia, between Iran-Azerbaijan-Georgia, and between Iran-Azerbaijan-Turkey and we believe that there are many potentials in this due."

'Iran-Switzerland banking ties not to be limited by U.S. sanctions'

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — **d e s k** Switzerland's Ambassador to Tehran Marcos Lightner in a meeting with the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati on Thursday said that the U.S. sanctions could never cause limitations in banking relations between the two countries, IRNA reported.

The Swiss official underlined his country's intention to strengthen banking and financial relations with Iran and added that Switzerland has always had suitable banking ties with Iran so the U.S. sanctions should not limit the relations.

Swiss government is carrying out

necessary measures to strengthen trade and banking relations as well as reopening banking channel between Iran and Switzerland, he said, adding that banking transactions will increase soon between the two states.

The CBI governor, for his part, underscored the need for development of financial and trade relations in direction of interests of both sides and added that Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes such efforts.

Hemmati pointed out that Iran despite the U.S. pressures and upon its own national interests is following up development of its trade and banking relations with other states.



But he may not have the political support needed to override EU laws that prevent board members from serving more than eight years on the bank's executive board.

One of the main debates among policymakers is whether to compensate banks for charges associated with negative interest rates — an idea proposed this year by Banque de France governor François Villeroy de Galhau. His push for a tiering system for negative deposit rates — now at minus 0.4 percent — has attracted economists' attention.

By agreeing to hand back to banks some of the €7.5bn they pay each year on deposits with central banks in the single currency area, the ECB could have more room to cut interest rates, Villeroy de Galhau argues.

However the idea is unpopular with parts of the governing council, including some of Draghi's inner circle. Klaas Knot, the head of the Dutch central bank who is also in the running for the top job, has publicly criticized it.

Another stimulus option would be to let inflation run above its target of below but close to 2 percent for a limited period, a possibility that Draghi noted this month. This idea has been mooted by Bank of Finland head Olli Rehn.

Rehn's call for a review of how to keep prices stable follows a similar initiative by the US Federal Reserve.

"The most recent update of the ECB's monetary policy strategy took place in 2003 — before the financial crisis and other subsequent events and changes," the Bank of Finland governor said in March, adding that a review would not question why the bank targeted low levels of inflation and instead would focus on "guiding principles, key assumptions and tools used for the implementation of monetary policy".



# Japan is talking to U.S. to keep its Iranian oil supply steady: minister

By Ebrohim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** — Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry said his country is trying to convince U.S. to keep buying Iranian oil in order to maintain its energy supplies.

Hiroshige Seko said Japan is reliant on crude imports from Iran and the U.S. sanctions would heavily impact the country's economy and industry.

"Japan's relationship with Iran, as one of the world's leading oil producing countries, is important as the country (Japan) relies on almost all of its petroleum [needs] on imports," S&P Global Platts reported the official as saying in press conference in Tokyo on Friday.

Seko further noted that his country will take all necessary measures to avoid the negative impacts of U.S. actions on their energy supplies.

"We intend to have close discussions with the U.S. side in order to avoid having a harmful effect from the U.S. measures on Japan's stable energy supply and its



corporate activity," he said.

Japan is among the eight countries with the U.S.'s 180-day waivers allowing them to keep importing Iranian oil through May 4. Confusion surrounding shipping, insurance and banking rules under the U.S. sanctions

kept some of the countries from resuming imports for months after the U.S. granted waivers on November 5.

In February, Platts reported that Japan's largest refiner JXTG Nippon Oil & Energy was set to resume loading of Iranian crude

oil as early as Monday (February 4), almost three months after the U.S. sanctions waiver was granted.

The U.S. reimposed sanctions on Iran in November after withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear accord between the Islamic Republic and six world powers.

The sanctions targeted Iran's oil sector, financial transactions and banks, as well as shipping and ship-building industries in order to cut off the country's revenue sources.

The waivers are due to expire on May 2, and while Washington had previously said it would not extend the waivers to the eight countries again, it has recently adopted a more ambiguous tone about the matter. A separate waiver for Iraq, which imports both gas and oil from Iran, has been extended by America at least three times.

Iran exported 1.7 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in March, the highest since October last year, when shipments had fallen to 1.08 million bpd, data from shipping sources compiled by S&P Global Platts showed.

## Russia to pay oil companies to keep fuel prices low at home

**E N E R G Y** Russia is going to draw about 210 billion roubles (\$3.3 billion) from its National Wealth Fund this year to pay back oil firms as part of a deal to keep down domestic gasoline and diesel prices, Reuters reported quoting a senior finance ministry official as saying on Friday.

The government and oil firms agreed to cut wholesale domestic fuel prices last year as a temporary measure to keep a lid on petrol and diesel costs, a politically sensitive issue.

Under the deal, which runs from Nov. 1 until June 30, oil companies are allowed only to slowly increase petrol and diesel costs, which started to rise due to stronger global oil prices.

Russia is part of a global agreement to cut oil production aimed at propping up crude prices, a major source of state revenues. But that is hitting it back at home as the cost of gasoline is one of the key factors affecting inflation - and the central bank's main policy rate.

Alexei Sazanov, head of the finance ministry's tax department, told reporters that in February alone the state paid oil companies back 20-30 billion roubles for keeping fuel prices under control.

Russia is using the National Wealth Fund (NWF) as a buffer against po-



tential external shocks and to pay out pensions or support some important large projects at home. The spending rules are strict as the state wants to preserve the fund.

Sazanov said that for 2019 as a whole, the payout from the NWF to the oil firms was estimated at 210 billion roubles. "If we are paying the cash, we want to get a quality service in return. This service should result in the fact that the consumer should see prices at the fuel filling stations based on levels we pay back to the oil companies," Sazanov said.

Under a "fiscal rule", any revenue from oil prices higher than \$40 per barrel goes into the NWF, which is part of Russia's gold and foreign exchange reserves, held by the central bank.

The NWF currently stands at \$59 billion and is expected to quadruple to over \$200 billion, or 12 percent of gross domestic product, in 2021.

## Analysts believe Trump Libya shift is driven by oil price fears

**E N E R G Y** U.S. President Donald Trump's apparent signal of support for the Libyan National Army over the UN-backed Government of National Accord was motivated by the president's concerns over the impact another supply outage would have on oil and domestic gasoline prices, analysts said Friday.

According to a report by S&P Global Platts, After imposing sanctions on PDVSA, Venezuela's state-owned oil company, in January, and reimposing sanctions on Iranian crude exports in November, Trump likely fears that the loss of Libyan crude hike crude prices to politically unsustainable levels, these analysts said.

The White House Friday reported that Trump on Monday had a phone call with Khalifa Haftar, head of the Libyan National Army, and recognized his efforts in "securing Libya's oil resources." The U.S. had backed the Government of National Accord, but analysts said Trump may be switching allegiances in order to prevent a disruption to Libya's roughly 1.2 million bpd in oil output. Fighting has intensified as Haftar's LNA seeks to take over the capital Tripoli, where the GNA is based.

Trump, this month, has ramped up efforts to get Middle East producers to boost production in order to prevent a significant price hike this summer.



In addition to the Haftar call Monday, Trump on Thursday spoke with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan about the UAE's "contributions to the global energy markets as a reliable supplier of oil," and about the Trump administration's "sanctions on Iran," according to the White House. And, on April 9, Trump spoke by phone with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman about "maintaining maximum pressure against Iran," according to the White House. Analysts said Trump likely requested an increase in Saudi oil output during this call.

In addition to sanctions on PDVSA, which could reduce Venezuela's oil output to 500,000 bpd by the end of this year, the Trump administration in early May is expected to extend sanctions waivers, known as significant reduction exemptions, to some of Iran's biggest oil buyers, including China and India.

## U.S. refineries to go under major overhauls in Q2

U.S. oil refiners are planning a heavy slate of plant overhauls in the second quarter, with total production this month off 8.5 percent compared with the start of the year, Reuters reported citing data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Early spring and winter traditionally are heavy periods for U.S. refinery maintenance. But refiners are planning more upgrades than

usual in the first half of 2019 to avoid fall and winter shutdowns as they prepare to meet coming low-sulfur standards.

This year's maintenance schedule and higher crude prices helped push U.S. gasoline prices to a national average of \$2.83 a gallon last week, up 26 percent since the start of the year, according to data from the American Automobile Association. U.S. crude futures

rose 32 percent in the first quarter.

International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2020 is a standard for maritime diesel that takes effect on Jan. 1 and is designed to reduce air pollution. Refiners have been revamping their plants to make IMO 2020 compliant fuel.

"They will push (winter) turnarounds later into 2020 to take advantage of that margin bump from the switch to IMO 2020," said

Susan Bell, a senior associate at energy consultancy IHS Markit.

Most U.S. refiners typically ramp up production of motor fuel during the second quarter to build inventories for the summer driving season. But Bell said an average of 1 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil refining capacity could be offline through the second quarter.

## OPEC is gambling with success of production cuts 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, Bloomberg reported.

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 US 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.

If the group continues with its cutbacks, global oil inventories will contract by almost 1mn 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 US 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 has said 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.

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 US 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 US 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."

## SPGC to boost annual gas output by 7 bcm

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) plans to increase production of gas by seven billion cubic meters (bcm) in the current Iranian calendar year (which began on March 21, 2019), the managing director of company announced.



According to the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), Hadi Hashemizadeh Farhang said the boost is expected to be made possible by precise and targeted planning for reduction of overhaul time in the refineries during summer, Shana reported.

SPGC owns onshore refineries that process natural gas received from phases of the supergiant South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf.

He said based on the plans, overhaul time of the facilities are expected to decrease by 27 days this year.

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.

South Pars is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

## Trump's dilemma with Iran: to extend waivers or not!

**1 →** He also mentioned Trump's tweet from earlier that month in which he called on OPEC "to take it easy," al-Falih told CNBC on the sidelines of an OPEC symposium in Riyadh that "We are taking it easy."

The possibility of an extension on the OPEC+ cuts deal is very high and that means the traders would be expecting a much tighter market in the Q3 and Q4 2019. With the U.S. sanctions on Venezuela and disruptions in Libya added to the equation, the prices could go as high as \$100.

The situation has put Trump in a very difficult position, if he agrees to extend waivers on Iran; that would be a clear acceptance of defeat and admitting to the fact that Iranian oil could not be wiped out of the market without huge consequences.

On the other hand, if he doesn't allow the exempted countries to keep buying Iranian oil, he would actually be adding yet another factor to the oil market's already bullish nature.

A more likely scenario is that the waivers will be extended only for some of the exempted countries and most probably the European countries won't be included in the new round of waivers due to the current trade war between the U.S. and Europe.

Considering this scenario, Iranian oil exports won't fall much from their current levels, since most of the recent raises in the county's exports has been due to the increase in shippings to Asian buyers.

Trump has until early May to decide whether to grant new waivers to eight countries -- China, India, Japan, Turkey, Italy, Greece, South Korea and Taiwan -- that were exempted from sanctions on Iranian oil imports.

## Azerbaijan's ACG oil fields to add 100,000 bpd output platform by 2023: Inpex

Partners in Azerbaijan's Azeri-Chirag-Deepwater Gunashli, or ACG, oil fields sanctioned a final investment decision to install a new production platform with a maximum 100,000 bpd processing capacity by 2023, the companies announced.

According to S&P Global Platts, the Azeri Central East project, or ACE, is expected to achieve first production in 2023 and produce up to 300 million barrels over its lifetime, BP, one of the stakeholders in the project, said.

ACE is central to managing the long decline to maximize recovery and remaining value from the giant ACG fields.

"Production at Azerbaijan's oil elephant may have peaked back in 2010, but with 3 billion barrels yet to be produced it is just halfway through its long life," said Robert Morris, senior analyst, Caspian upstream at consultancy Wood Mackenzie.

"Complex logistics mean many projects in the Caspian cost more and take longer than elsewhere. However, BP's sharp delivery of Shah Deniz Phase Two, which started on schedule and under budget last year, gives us reason for optimism," Morris added.

The sanction is the first major investment decision by the ACG partnership since the extension of the ACG production sharing agreement to 2049 was agreed in 2017.

More than 3.5 billion barrels of oil have been produced from the ACG fields. The oil is exported to world markets, primarily via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Western Route Export pipelines. In 2018, total production from ACG averaged 584,000 bpd.

The new production platform will be added with an eye to increasing the volume of the ACG block's proven reserves and the value of the consortium's operations, Inpex, one of the partners in the deal, said.

"This strategic decision supports Azerbaijan's increasing role as an energy supplier for the regional and global markets," said Rovnag Abdullayev, president of SOCAR, one of the key partners in the agreement.

The ACE project is focused on production, drilling and quarters platform located mid-way between the existing Central Azeri and East Azeri platforms. The project will also include new infield pipelines to transfer oil and gas from the ACE platform to the existing ACG Phase 2 oil and gas export pipelines for transportation to the onshore Sangachal Terminal.

BP is the operator of Azerbaijan's two major projects, ACG, which allows for some 75 percent of the country's crude output, and the Shah Deniz gas project.

BP operates the development of the ACG oil fields with a 30.37 percent stake. Other partners are SOCAR (25 percent), Chevron (9.57 percent), Equinor (7.27 percent), ExxonMobil (6.79 percent), TPAO (5.73 percent), Itochu (3.65 percent) and ONGC (2.31 percent).



## Controversial conflict between two presidents!

By Omid Asadi

**TEHRAN** - Former President Barack Obama plans to play a bold role in confronting Trump in the presidential election of 2020. Over the past months, Obama has been trying to prevent the Republicans from re-emerging, especially during the mid-term elections in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Obama is also now struggling to play a tense role in the fight against Trump.

Donald Trump, in turn, tries to point to Obama's role in this equation. Anyway, as we approach the time of the 2020 presidential election, the current president's and former US president's conflict will become more serious.

In one of the most recent cases, Trump recently blamed Obama for a report by the Mueller. This is despite the fact that important parts of this report have not yet been published. In other words, in the future, Obama and Democrats might have new documents on the Mueller Inspector's report.

President Trump blamed former President Obama for Russian meddling in the 2016 election in the aftermath of special counsel Robert Mueller's report, saying the previous administration took insufficient action to prevent the interference.

"Anything the Russians did concerning the 2016 Election was done while Obama was President.

He was told about it and did nothing! Most importantly, the vote was not affected," Trump tweeted Thursday evening.

As The Hill reported, Mueller's report detailed a complex, two-pronged effort by Moscow in which Russian agents sought to exacerbate political fault lines on social media with divisive posts through the Kremlin-linked Internet Research Agency and hacked and sought to disseminate Democratic documents and emails in an effort to embarrass Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee.

The report also revealed that Russian officials made several outreaches to Trump campaign officials, though the special counsel could not prove any Trump associates coordinated with any efforts to interfere in the 2016 race.

"Although the investigation established that the Russian government perceived it would benefit from a Trump presidency and worked to secure that outcome, and that the Campaign expected it would benefit electorally from information stolen and released through Russian efforts, the investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities," Mueller wrote in his report.

Obama has faced some criticism for how his administration handled Russian interference once he was made aware of the efforts. "I think the [Obama] administration needed to call out Russia earlier, needed to act to deter and punish Russia earlier," Rep.

Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), then the ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, said in a 2017 CNN interview. Reports have emerged that Obama did not take public action against Moscow for fear of injecting further partisanship in the 2016 election.

However, Russian officials have explicitly stated they have not intervened in the 2016 presidential election. However, Trump and Obama's controversy seems to continue in the future on various issues. A dispute that may lead to defeat of Trump in the upcoming presidential election.

## Japanese government's disregard for American occupation!

By Kamran Azimi

**TEHRAN** - Undoubtedly, the presence of U.S. troops in Japan, as the Japanese citizens are opposed to this issue, is a kind of occupation by Washington. Unfortunately, the government of Japan not only does not respect the wishes of its citizens, but also provides the ground for the continuation of this occupation.

Recently, The United States and Japan have reconfirmed their plans to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps base on Okinawa to a less populated area, the U.S. Department of State said in a press release on Friday.

"The Ministers... welcomed the significant progress on the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) and reconfirmed that the plan to construct the FRF at the Camp Schwab-Henokosaki area and adjacent waters is the only solution that avoids the continued use of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma," the release said. "The Ministers underscored their strong determination to achieve its completion as soon as possible."

Meanwhile, the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee 2019 Fact Sheet released by the State Department said that the U.S. and Japan are determined to start relocating U.S. forces from Okinawa to Guam in the first half of the next decade. "The Ministers welcomed progress in the steady implementation of the Guam International Agreement, and the planned relocation of approximately 9,000 U.S. Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to locations outside of Japan," the fact sheet said. "They reconfirmed the plan to begin the relocation to Guam in the first half of the 2020s."

As Sputnik reported, Earlier on Friday, the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee, which included U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Acting U.S. Secretary of Defence Patrick Shanahan, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Toru Kono, and Japanese Minister of Defence Takeshi Iwaya, convened in Washington, DC, the release added. The plan is to relocate the U.S. air base from the prefecture's city of Ginowan to a less populated area, Henoko Bay.

Denny Tamaki, the governor of Japan's southern Okinawa Prefecture, told Sputnik on April 10 that he was considering a visit to the United States in order to convey the opposition of the prefecture's residents to the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma expressed in the latest referendum. In a February referendum more than 72 percent of Okinawa residents voted against the plan to relocate the base. The referendum saw a 52 percent turnout.

Finally, the Japanese government's game on the White House shows that Tokyo does not yet understand the true demands of the Japanese citizens. The issue that the Japanese authorities must pay attention to.

# Trump's one opportunity left to survive with any positive legacy: dumping his Neocon, Zionist advisors

**1 →** And does Trump fully realize that Syria, Iraq, Iran and even Lebanon are beginning to bind themselves closer together in a mutual allegiance of some sort? And Egypt has just refused inclusion into the Arab "NATO" that the U.S. wants to create. Of course Trump knows all this, and it could be fuel for further U.S. aggression in the region, but to use it as such is a mistake of the first order.

At any rate, these countries along or near the northern edge of the Arab Mideast, and Iran, are talking about connecting and re-building their railways, providing Iraq and Iran, with Chinese assistance related to the Belt and Road initiative, a means to access ports on the Mediterranean. This project could take several years given that much railway infrastructure, which was in fair condition until 2011, has been destroyed in the wars.

If one stands back a bit and takes a look at the overall picture of U.S foreign policy currently, and not just in the Middle East, it is failing. Even while many, Iranians especially, suffer from it.

The Neocons have been stalled in Venezuela and a few hundred Russian and Chinese troops are there to help the stall stick. The Syrian government continues to consolidate its grip despite Israeli missile attacks and further attacks by terrorists in the Idlib area on Syrian civilians. Iraqis may be close to demanding the exit of U.S. troops. Most in the U.S. Congress want to deny the U.S. further support for the Saudi war on Yemen, but Trump just foolishly vetoed the legislation while the best of the Democratic challengers for the 2020 election for POTUS are pushing



harder for a full stop end to the foreign wars.

The most notable among them is the eloquent and attractive Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii whose consistency and vision is attracting more and more fans. She has the makings of the best possible female candidate ever to campaign to occupy the White House. But no question Trump has gotten a boost in the popularity polls by his apparent exoneraton from conspiring with the Russians in the 2016 election where he did not even win a plurality of the popular vote.

The long running and absurd "War on Terror" since the turn of the century, it is

clear, is in effect a war on Muslim countries that have foreign policies independent of Washington and especially the Zionists, with other targets like Venezuela under Maduro. The world knows, at least, who the real "terrorists" are. Iranians need to know this latter fact whether anything can be done about it immediately. There are some scattered positives appearing:

Executives at the IMF, for example, have allegedly voted NOT to recognize puppet Juan Guaido as president of Venezuela, realizing it may not be wise to condemn themselves to dealing with a bloc that lacks any sover-

eign authority. Jimmy Carter, the last U.S. President who could possibly claim to be attempting to adhere to moral principles was preaching in his hometown church in Georgia last Sunday pointing out that the U.S. in its 240 plus years has only been at peace for 16 years, making the U.S. "the most warlike nation in world history".

He went on to point out that China has been at war with no one for decades and enjoyed enormous economic benefits, including a growing infrastructure second to none, while the U.S. has spent itself towards moral and financial bankruptcy. Trump's MAGA plan: a very sick joke.

Perhaps best of all, some observers have noted that Trump's foreign policy advisors, notably John Bolton, whose prescriptions for decades have been disastrous for the U.S., ought to be fired immediately. Most of these advisors like Bolton have been shills for the Zionists and pushed Trump to make his number one foreign priority support for the Zionists, who by the day are more reviled than ever worldwide. But just as some Democrat presidential hopefuls have vowed, if elected, to push the U.S. to rejoin the JCPOA, the Zionists are pushing for attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities claiming that such would not lead to a wider war in the Mideast.

This latter is a complete lie, as Iranians well and rightfully know. Israel has been and remains the most self-serving, and corrupted country for over seven decades, and their traitorous U.S. servants, like Bolton and other Neocons, MUST be derailed somehow.

## The Rise of Islamic Movement in Nigeria

**1 →** Let me take Nigeria as example since my article will be over it. Physically citizens from Nigeria are the leaders of the country but they are given order from western powers, and they are taking our resources to them, looting our funds, anything these leaders would do will be ordered directly from these countries, any President that refuses to obey their rules will be eliminated from existence.

They often say we are independent country but we are still colonised under the neath.

Poverty started to raised, job opportunities to citizens became less, the country starts going into recession, our funds and resources are taken to the western countries.

Crises between different tribes and religious were initiated and sponsored by them in order not to let us live peacefully so that we will never remember that we were in Islamic ruling system before coming these western countries, we will be suffering on how to survive.

In that situation, Sheikh Ibrahim Yaqoub El-Zakzaky (H) started calling people to wake up and pushed this ruling system out and return to our main ruling system.

This voice emerged around 1979 when Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky (H) was an economic students at Ahmadu Bello University Zariya, Kaduna state of Nigeria.

The voice known as movement that fight against oppression and injustice.

Sheikh Zakzaky (H) has been arrested many time as the head of the Movement since when he was in University.

His first arrest was on May 1981 and be free on May 1984 by Shagari administration Secondly was 6 months later after his free from first arrest been re-arrested by Buhari administration on December 1984 when the Sheikh was just married.

The Sheikh gained freedom on August 1985 after Buhari administration was couped by General Babangida, it took the Sheikh 9 months long in the prison at that time.

The Sheikh was re-arrested by the same General Babangida on March 1987 released him on 1989\_ 2years longer in the prison.

The Sheikh was re-arrested during the tenure of General Sani Abacha on the year 1996 and be released after the passing away of the General on 1999 when Abdulsalam Abubakar was acting President.

From that time the Sheikh was free till 2015 when General Buhari ordered the killing of the Sheikh, but by God grace Sheikh has survived despite the abundant of bullet that is in his body and his wife's body, his 3 children were killed, his resident was demolished, crime against humanity was perpetrated against him.

He is still in illegal detention despite the court verdict to release him since September 2016, and despite his health condition that is deteriorating.

Sheikh Zakzaky has witnessed several arrest and detention by the Nigerian authorities, right from the time when the Sheikh was a student. The authorities made several attempts to assassinate him, during some of the lectures that he used to present to his students and by putting ambush on his way back to his resident.

These western countries used to eradicate anyone who seems to be threat to their proxy rule, they tried so against Sheikh Zakzaky because he used to expose their plot of initiating crisis among us so that they will be



able to loot our fund and resources.

Most of the Islamic scholars are silent about the British plans, some are because of fear, they were afraid to loose their lives, some are corrupted "they are given money to be silent" moreover they are traitors who incite innocent people to attack other people that they share different religious ideology, these scholars are normally the Wahhabi's agent of the savage Saudi regime and western countries.

Different Nigerian governments that happened to be in power come with a special policy to assassinate Sheikh Zakzaky but to the extent they had woefully failed.

In Nigeria after every 4 years {Tenure} there is a period to change a government by election. Democratically people are eligible to vote but in an ideal sense it is a selections by these Western countries, to choose who his power can be drain away from the individuals to feed vast reservoirs {Western Countries} in faroff places. Those who don't minds to shape our future from alienation of personal power.

Who agree to perpetrate the killing of innocent people and be watering the internal crisis? Who agree to assassinate whoever is seems to be a threat to them, "Sheikh Zakzaky is in the list"? Who agree to manage their position role in line with their conditions?

Even if people vote a President with populace marge, that person won't be declared as a winner if he doesn't agree to manage his role according to their conditions, they will follow all channels to rig the election and declare their intimate as the winner if he agree with their conditions.

Even in a situation where rigging is impossible, they will declare the popular winner as the winner and poison him later, this is the true image of Nigerian political system.

What happened recently in Kano state of Nigeria is an example, people are tired of the current Governor, they vote him out with highest marge, but because the western countries want him to remain in power to in other to continue the killing

of followers of Sheikh Zakzaky in the state, they declared the election as inconclusive and fixed a date for a re-run the election in some voting Units, on the day of re-running the election they dropped thugs to attack whoever came to vote for the

opposition party, they killed many people on that day and injured some, at the end of the day they declared the current Governor as the winner with highest marge that is out of sense, they showed insanity when presenting the result, they rigged the election by all means, just because western countries want him to remain in power, this happened recently during the previous election.

So, Sheikh Zakzaky used to exposed such kinds of heinous crimes and atrocities.

Sheikh Zakzaky taught his followers how to saves lives not to kill, during the election crises in 2011, Sheikh saved many Christians that were attacked by opposition party's members that were declared as the losers of the election, the losers used to attacked the winners, destroying their shops and looting their properties, demolishing their churches and beheading them, but Sheikh Zakzaky and his followers were saving these victims, giving them medical treatment and feed, this happened in 2011.

During the service strike of some medical staff at hospitals and clinics, Sheikh's followers used to attend the hospitals and clinics to give possible aid and treatments.

Islamic movement under the leadership of Sheikh Zakzaky have a programme that various Scholars from different school of thoughts, ideologies, tribes, and other religions were invited. Urging them to unite and don't allow someone to initiate crises in our name, to leave under the same shadow despite the personal differences, urging them to cooperate and go against any injustices and oppression.

Sheikh Zakzaky succeeded in this process of unity, many rationale people understand him and his initiative, millions of people became his followers, most people wake up and start realising that the so-called leaders are deceivers and traitors, they are only serving the western countries.

Western countries are scared of this great awakening of some Nigerians and the development of Sheikh Zakzaky's Movement.

They used all their power to eliminate Sheikh Zakzaky and his Movement from existence. The more Government attacks him the more his ideology and the movement develop rapidly

It's the time that other people start realising who is the oppressor and who is being

oppressed, It is the time that people start to support Sheikh and his followers. It is the time that people start to prove and make rational investigation about the movement and it's ideology, It is the time that people are paying much of their sympathy to him.

As the Sheikh said. "The more you touch us the more stronger we become"

On 12-12-2015 the convoy of Chief of Army staff arrived at Hussainiyyah, center of Islamic Movement and Gyallesu the resident of Sheikh Zakzaky, bombarded them, killed over 1000+ of the Sheikh's followers including his 3 biological children.

The soldiers;  
Murdered 548 Men  
Murdered 287 Women  
Murdered 197 Children  
Murdered 23 pregnant women  
39 family members wiped out from existence

2,189 children became orphans  
519 women became widows  
1,104 parent lost their children  
170 undergraduate students were murdered.

This heinous crime against humanity was perpetrated within 72 hours.

They used bombs, RPG, missiles that are not allowed even on external war between two different countries, but they used all such of weapons on Sheikh Zakzaky and his followers.

They shot the wife of Sheikh Zakzaky on many places on her body, there are bullets in her that are not yet removed till date.

They shot Sheikh Zakzaky on many places including his right side eye and now the left one is at risk.

They demolished the resident of Sheikh and detained him without trial.

Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife were kept incommunicado despite the bullets in their body.

Sheikh Zakzaky's followers are following all peaceful and legal channel to see their leader been Free, they also sued the Government into court, and be on the streets for demonstration demanding the release of the Sheikh since he did not commit any crime, still soldiers used to open fire on them during their demonstration, these bloodthirsty leaders that are puppet of Saudi barbarian used all opportunity to harm Sheikh and his followers.

They used some corrupted Islamic scholars to make campaign of calumny and demonizing against the Sheikh and his movement.

On September 2016 Nigerian government was woefully failed in the trial between Sheikh Zakzaky and Federal Government, the court made a verdict that Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife must be release and be given 25million each, also resident should provided to them by the federal Government since their main resident was demolished.

But unfortunately the Government refuse to obey court order and release the Sheikh because it is in the interest of western countries.

More over Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife need urgent medical treatment since 2015 but till date 2019 there is no any professional doctor that attend them.

Any peaceful and legal means are followed by the followers of Sheikh Zakzaky but the Government refused to release him. The world needs to know this.



# Notre Dame false flag event

**1 →** Now let's add to that the desperate situation of the Deep State and particularly the European Union (EU), the Central Banks, and the individual governments of France (Macron), Germany (Merkel), and the United Kingdom (May) – all three of the latter individuals are alleged Satanists and pedophiles, and very much in the service of the Deep State.

The coincidence of Notre Dame burning on the same date as the sinking of the Titanic – long said to be a Jesuit initiative to wipe out the leaders of the wealthiest families opposed to the creation of Central Banks – and the coincidence of Michelle Obama passing by Notre Dame on a river dinner cruise as it burns, were instantly noted in France. It is known that the Rothschilds had a suite overlooking 9/11 and took their breakfast on the balcony during that event; it is reported that Barack Obama was hired by the Rothschilds to represent them during the ongoing Global Currency Reset (GCR), and that is why he stayed in Washington rather than return to Chicago. The Rothschilds own the Obamas.

We have a Jesuit in France, citing the Church staff at Notre Dame, stating plainly that the fire was intentionally set; we have the fact of the police and fire departments making a pretense of saving France's most epic cultural – not just religious – monument while letting it burn; we have the unverified but reported and believed story of two people found dead inside, each with two bullets in each of their heads; and we have these two additional facts:

1) As a result of this contrived atrocity, Macron has been able to avoid public discussion of the unfavorable outcome to him of the recent debate with the Yellow Vests and is in the process of repressing further Yellow Vests demonstrations that are among other things demanding the exit of France from the EU; and

2) We have a European election coming up in May that the EU expected to lose – the EU is over, individual states are ready to follow the British out, and the Deep State is now desperate. This planned atrocity may delay the demise of the EU by a year.

In conclusion, here is what my French source is predicting: that Germany particularly, along with the British (and perhaps



against the will of their publics) will quickly offer to pay for the restoration of Notre Dame as a gesture of unity, and this “we are one with Notre Dame” campaign will be intended to save the positions of Macron, Merkel, and May, and to save the EU as well as the Central Banks.

The burning of Notre Dame is the Reichstag equivalent for France – a false flag intended to keep the criminal EU together for another year of looting and warmongering.

■ Is it possible to investigate such matters? How do you anticipate such an investigation might go?

A. There are early signs that the “investigation,” which will be totally controlled, will “blame” the restoration firm for being careless. My French source has already established there was no electricity in the area where the fire is alleged to have started. Looking at the manner in which the roof burned so quickly, what I see is a 13th century wooden rooftop that was sprayed lightly with incendiary fluid or powder. I attribute the two dead to an attempt to stop the initial deliberate fire setting.

Indeed, as I was responding to your question, the Chief Architect of Notre Dame publicly stated this was not an accident; that there was no welding or other possible cause; and that 800-year-old wood is like petrified rock, impossible to burn unless an accelerant is added. Others have commented on the possibility of a Directed Energy Weapon

(DEW) being used, in addition to pre-applied accelerants, to ensure the entire roof burned all at once in the shape of a cross visible from outer space. This was a Satanic false flag ritual burning of a holy site.

Any serious investigation would look at every minute of every day of Macron's last ninety days, every phone call, every text, every email, and quickly show the network of collaboration including the Pope, himself accused of being a Satanist, Merkel, and May, and probably very senior Freemasons and Knights of Malta as well as Jesuits, all of whom have sworn oaths of loyalty to the Deep State and against individual Republics or sovereign states such as Iran or the USA.

This will not be properly investigated. Like the assassination of John F. Kennedy, like 9/11, like Charlie Hedbo and other false flag events around the world, this atrocity will be covered up and used to serve the needs of the Satanists and the Deep State.

■ You say that you and Asian secret society sources believe the Pope is complicit. What is the context within which a Pope would want to collaborate in the destruction of the single most sacred Catholic monument in the world?

A. This event is connected to the recent release of Julian Assange from captivity. Although there are varying accounts of the degree to which Assange may have in the past been controlled by the Mossad and CIA,

all signs point to his having been rescued by order of President Donald Trump, for the purpose of coming to the USA where he will testify to Congress, receive a Presidential pardon, and be put into a very comfortable witness protection program. Assange will, apart from exonerating Russia in relation to SpyGate, bury the British, the Germans, and the Vatican. I am uncertain of what he has on Macron.

As best I can tell from my support for the writing of the book, Pedophilia & Empire: Satan, Sodomy, and the Deep State, by Joaquim Hagopian, and my related efforts as Chief Counsel serving the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Human Trafficking and Child Sex Abuse, and in light of the recent trial and incarceration of Vatican number two Cardinal Pell, it is increasingly obvious that the entire rank and file of the Vatican complex are variously complicit in high crimes and at a minimum in covering up for those committing atrocities against children. These high crimes include not just forced sexual abuse, but also the torture and murder of children in Satanic rituals not unique to the Catholic Church. Indeed, Mormons, Jews and Protestants also are reported to be abusing, torturing, and murdering children with impunity – and have done so for generations.

I believe that the wheels of history are finally bringing the Zionists as well as the Catholic Church down. The Mormons and others will be “collateral damage.” I heard testimony in London from former Netherlands banker Ronald Bernard, and I have formed two impressions: first, that the Catholic Church, the Rothschilds, and all the national secret intelligence services that are completely controlled by Freemasons and Knights of Malta and other more Satanic secret societies, are feeling very exposed with public awareness of their high crimes now spreading. They sense the end is near. More practically, here in the USA I am seeing a very sharp reduction in financial donations to the Catholic Church – they are in trouble financially and the day will come when victims begin going after the Papal Treasury and all of the priceless artifacts buried in the tunnels under the Vatican.

■ You say in your post that you prayed at Notre Dame. How do you feel about the state of the world and the meaning of the burning of Notre Dame for all of us?

(See the full text on *Tehran Times.com*)

## Setting the ground for the ‘savior’ of humanity

**1 →** The forces of colonialism and imperialism have become menacingly stronger than ever. Human rights violations have become frighteningly widespread. Corruption and social anarchy has assumed alarming proportions. Weak and voiceless continue to be oppressed and subjugated. Moral and ethical degradation has been normalized to the extent that it doesn't raise eyebrows anymore.

So, with moral bankruptcy, endemic corruption, grinding poverty, and scourge of illiteracy, ignorance, misrule and barbarism reaching the climax – what should a waiter wait for? What are the responsibilities of a person waiting for the change to happen?

Amidst the darkness of despair, there is an elixir of hope. The hope lies in the divine intervention. The hope is the divinely guided leader, the Mahdi (ajtf), who is expected to come out of the occultation and establish a system based on the divinely ordained laws. It will be an ultimate victory of truth, justice and righteousness.

A narration attributed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) makes it emphatically clear. “The world will not perish until a man among the Arabs appears whose name matches my name.” (Sahih al-Tirmidhi, V9, P74)

There is a clear instruction in Holy Quran for believers waiting for the change to take place. “And say to those who do not believe that you act as much as you can. We are also trying. You all wait and surely we all are waiting.” (Surah Hud).

Shaheed Baqir al Sadr in his book ‘An Inquiry Concerning Al Mahdi states that the Mahdi (ajtf) is no longer an idea waiting to be materialized nor a prophecy that needs to be substantiated.

“He is a living reality, a particular person, living among us in flesh and blood, who shares our hopes, suffering and sorrows and is waiting for the appropriate moment to stretch his hand to every oppressed and needy person and eliminate the tyrants,” he writes.

Allah (swt) says in Holy Quran: “O’ Muhammad (pbuh), you are but a warner, and for every community, there exists a guide.” (Surah Ra’d). There will always be a divinely gifted guide for people in every age and every time. For us, the people of this age, it is the Mahdi (ajtf).

Beside Holy Quran, there are numerous traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his progeny that have predicted the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (ajtf).

Imam Ali (as) quotes the Holy Prophet (pbuh) saying that the Mahdi (ajtf) is from his progeny who would come out of the occultation and establish a system based on justice and equity at a time when it would be fraught with injustice and repression, and through him the treasures of prophets would become apparent. (Yanabiu Mawaddah, P448)

Imam Hussain (as) is quoted as saying that the Mahdi (ajtf) is his ninth descendant and during the period of his occultation, one group will have doubts in him while another group will remain steadfast in their beliefs and prepare the ground for him, and their reward would be like those holy warriors who stood alongside the Holy Prophet (pbuh). (Kifayatul Athar)

Imam Mohammad Baqir (as) said the last of the infallible successors of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the one under whose leadership Hazrat Isa (Jesus) would perform the prayer. (Al-Ihtijaj)

Imam Reza (as) said even if a single day remains for this



world, Allah will prolong that day until the Mahdi (ajtf) reappears and fills the earth with justice and order. Quoting a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), Imam Reza (as) said the rise of the savior is akin to the Day of Judgment that only Allah knows about. (Ghayatul Maram, P696).

Referring to a Quranic verse, Imam Reza (as) said when the Mahdi (ajf) reappears; a call will be heard from the sky, inviting people towards the truth. “And listen on the day when the caller shall call from a near place. The day when they shall hear the cry in truth is the day of coming forth.” (Surah Qaf)

So what are the signs of the Mahdi's (ajtf) reappearance? “There would be widespread injustice, oppression, fear, mischief, calamities, violence, despair and hopelessness,” says Imam Mohammad Baqir. (Qala'idud Durar)

Imam Jafar Sadiq says the signs include young insulting the elders, people spending their wealth in ways other than God, transgressors defended and praised, believers humiliated and degraded, people killed on the basis of mere allegations and doubts, telling truth becomes a difficult task, hearts of men become hard and eyes lose shame, earning through illegal means becomes acceptable. (Rauzatul Kafi, P 36-42)

Advent of Dajjal is also one of the signs of the Mahdi's (ajtf) reappearance. The grotesque man would deceive the gullible people with wealth and power and make illegal activities legal, before he is knocked down by the messiah of the humanity.

Looking at the state of affairs today, the discourse around the reappearance of the Mahdi (ajtf) and the responsibility of setting the ground for his reappearance has assumed enormous significance.

With the world sinking into the abyss of darkness and people across the world grappling with myriad woes, most of it self-inflicted, the responsibility on our shoulders has increased manifolds.

Imam's occultation, however, does not mean he has abandoned us or that we must despair about our present state of affairs. He presents hope to the hopeless.

Imam Ali (as) said: “Await for the reappearance (of the Mahdi) and do not despair of the divine mercy. Because the best deed in the eyes of Allah, the great and the mighty, is to wait for the reappearance (of Imam). It is the duty of those who are believers.” (Al Khisaal, vol2, Pg616)

What are our responsibilities as believers to prepare the ground for Imam's reappearance? A tradition attributed to Imam Hasan Askari (as) exhorts people to remain vigilant

and participate in the process of educational change.

“Be aware, if somebody teaches ignorant, guides a misguided, instills the teachings of Ahlulbayt (as), then on the Day of Judgment he will be with us. We will give him a seat next to us,” he says.

Hence, it is amply clear that during this period of Imam's occultation, among the biggest responsibilities on our shoulders is to bring about educational reformation in our society.

Such educational reformers enjoy supreme position in the eyes of Allah (swt). Imam Ali Naqi (as) extols the virtues of these reformers. “Had there not been such scholars in the period of occultation who call people towards the Ahlulbayt (as), guide towards them, defend their religion with the proofs of Allah, protect weak Muslims from the devilish designs, deception of the tyrants and tentacles of the enemies of Islam, then surely all would have deviated from the religion of Allah.” (Mahajjatul-Baizaa, P32)

It's important to enjoin others to pursue good deeds (amr bil maaruf) and advocate against sinful practices (nahi anil munkar). We must promote and propagate the divine message of Islam and develop scientific temper in our youth through education and reformation.

Spreading awareness about the sinister plots and conspiracies being hatched by the enemies of Islam is another important obligation. We must strive to expose the corrupt rulers and extend helping hand towards poor and needy in our society.

We must constantly try to polish our morals and ethics to be able to join Imam's army. Above all, we must raise our voice – individually and collectively – against corruption, injustice, terrorism, crime, immorality and other such menaces.

What is important is the right strategy and approach to pave the ground for educational awakening and social reformation. Grooming children from early stages, making them understand the purpose of existence and their responsibilities, explaining how Islam is not just a religion but a complete way of life, stressing on the need to analyze with a free mind, the need to debate and discuss passionately, and the need to exchange ideas generously.

The approach has to be thoughtful, progressive and result-oriented. It must ensure the gains of education are properly utilized to bring up children who are educated, informed, aware and enlightened.

Given that we are impatiently waiting for someone who is a righteous and virtuous messiah, it's important that we familiarize ourselves with the ideals of deliverance and act on them in letter and spirit. To prepare the ground for his reappearance, we have to develop a reformist spirit in ourselves and others so that the society undergoes change.

To protect society from social infirmities, ethical degeneration, cultural disorder, misrule and anarchy, it's important to educate ourselves and others around us. If we remain trapped in the vortex of ignorance; social anomalies, cultural dilemmas, and orthodox beliefs will continue to hinder our personal growth and that of the society.

As Allah (swt) says in Holy Quran, “You are the best nation brought forth for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah” (Surah Al-Imran).

The seeds of the promised rule of the Mahdi (as) shall soon sprout and our agonizing wait shall end.

## Beijing's meaningful message to Washington



By Saeid Sobhani

**TEHRAN** - Although Donald Trump, president of the United States, is trying to identify himself as a winner of the economic and security dispute with China, the evidence suggests that Beijing is still playing a powerful role in the conflict.

Of course, there were disagreements between Beijing and Washington over security and cyber-security issues at the time of Barack Obama, but the emergence of trade and economic disputes in their bilateral relations should be analyzed “beyond a simple controversy.”

In other words, from the beginning of 2017 and Trump's presence at the top of the political and executive equations of the United States, we have witnessed the emergence of constant crises and challenges in the relations between Washington and Beijing. Many international affairs analysts rightly believe that the conflict is not limited to economic and commercial issues, and it will also affect the political, security and regional spheres.

The fact is that the president of the United States has not yet been able to take any measures to curb China's economy, since Beijing stands firmly against the White House's supportive policies. In other hand, Evaluating the consequences and effects of Trump's policies (in the long run) on the international economy and the domestic economy of the United States has become the concern of many experts in the field of international economics in recent months. This issue has also shown itself in the trade war between the United States and China.

The story here does not end there! The Chinese authorities have shown that they are not willing to compromise with the Trump government by sending significant signals to the United States. As New York Times reported, An American scholar who has advised President Trump on China said late Wednesday that he was not given a visa he sought to attend a recent conference in Beijing, in what he called apparent retaliation for American restrictions on visas for visiting Chinese scholars.

The scholar, Michael Pillsbury, director for Chinese strategy at the Hudson Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington, said he applied for a visa with the Chinese Embassy in Washington on March 22 but failed to get approval to attend the conference last Sunday, which was organized by a research institute in Beijing.

Mr. Pillsbury said that when he raised the issue with a Chinese Communist Party official he knows, the official pointed to a recent New York Times article that said counterintelligence officials at the F.B.I. had been canceling the long-term visas of some Chinese scholars. Mr. Pillsbury said he took that to imply that his visa application had been stymied in reprisal for the new restrictions.

## Is Biden's nightmare construed?

By Ali Sahebi

**TEHRAN** - Biden still does not feel good about Sanders' presence in the U.S. presidential election race! The former vice president of the United States is well aware that Sanders is the strongest rival to him. He is not afraid of anyone like Sen. Elizabeth Warren, because polls show Biden can easily defeat other Democratic rivals in the election.

The fact is that Biden is entering a major political gamut! About three months ago, when Biden had indirectly announced his entry to the U.S. presidential election, many polls showed his absolute victory. However, Bernie Sanders has managed to win many Democrats in their favor for the last three months. Recent polls in the United States show that Biden's sense of concern over Sanders's presence in the Democratic primaries is completely logical!

As Usatoday reported, Sen. Bernie Sanders finished ahead of Joe Biden in the first major national poll of the year that did not find the former vice president leading the pack of potential 2020 Democratic presidential candidates. When asked whom they would support from a list of 20 candidates – including “someone else” – 29% named Sanders, and 24% named Biden in an Emerson College poll released Monday. They were trailed by South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, who was the pick of 9% of likely Democratic primary voters.

California Sen. Kamala Harris and former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke each came in at 8%, and 7% picked Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro got 3%, as did entrepreneur Andrew Yang. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker got 2%, and the rest of the field got 1% or less.

The fact is that Joe Biden has not gotten two more choices now! First, he officially announced his presence in the presidential elections of 2020. In this case, Biden's defeat at Sanders would mean his political death in the Democratic Party. New polls show Biden has no easy way to beat Sanders. Biden is well aware that if Sanders in Iowa (where the first Democratic party elections are held) and New Hampshire (the second state in which Democratic elections are held) will win, Sanders' ultimate victory in The Democratic Party is rising. In this case, Biden will become a defeated and loser in the Democratic Party.

The second option is to abandon Biden's participation in the 2020 presidential election. Although this choice will reduce Biden's political credibility with Democrat supporters, he will not be able to face his political death! Biden can then maintain his position with the Democrat leaders.

Ultimately, Biden has been left with a hard time! He is confronted with polls that today reflect the rise of Barney Sanders and an increase in his votes with Democratic voters. Biden knows that his defeat to Bernie Sanders is a nightmare, a nightmare that Biden sees in polls.



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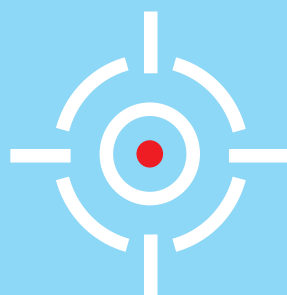
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# The first molecule that was possible in the universe has been seen in space

It takes a rich and diverse set of complex molecules for things like stars, galaxies, planets and lifeforms like us to exist. But before humans and all the complex molecules we're made of could exist, there had to be that first primordial molecule that started a long chain of chemical events that led to everything you see around you today.

Though it's been long theorized to exist, the lack of observational evidence for that molecule was problematic for scientists. Now they've found it and those scientists can rest easy. Their predictive theory wins!

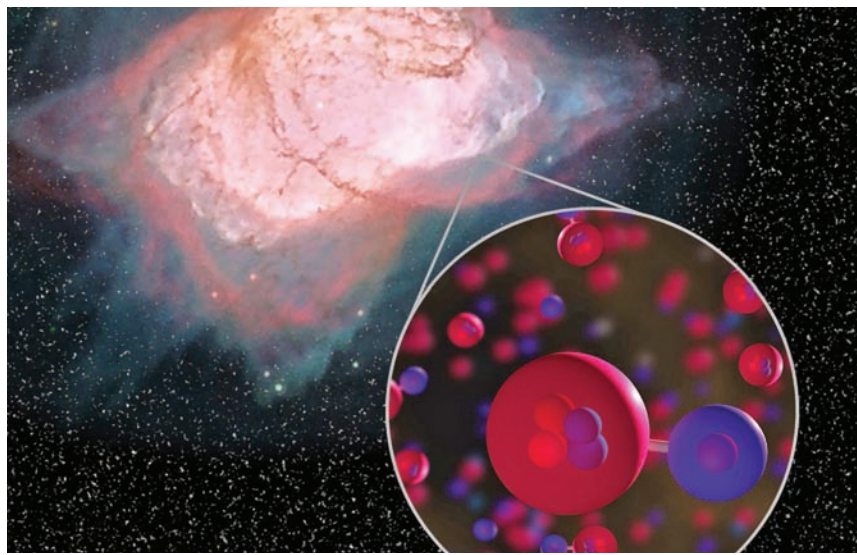
In the very early days of the universe, there were only two or three types of atoms. Hydrogen, helium, and tiny amounts of lithium were created by Big Bang Nucleosynthesis. All the other elements were forged later, in stars.

Stars are mostly hydrogen, but stars couldn't form from the simple hydrogen atoms created in the Big Bang. They form from what's called molecular hydrogen.

## ■ Molecular hydrogen

And molecular hydrogen couldn't form without the so-called "first molecule," a combination of helium and hydrogen called helium hydride. Theory says that helium hydride was created about 100,000 years after the Big Bang.

You can picture a snap shot of the early Universe, somewhere around 100,000 years after the Big Bang. It was very hot, and was populated by only hydrogen, helium, and that tiny bit of lithium. Before the atomic population of the universe could diversify,



**Stars are mostly hydrogen, but stars couldn't form from the simple hydrogen atoms created in the Big Bang. They form from what's called molecular hydrogen.**

stars had to form. Once it began to cool, conditions were starting to get ripe for stars to form.

But something else had to happen, too. The cooling of the Universe wasn't enough for stars to form. Molecular hydrogen had to

be created, since stars are made largely from molecular hydrogen rather than the simple atomic hydrogen created by the Big Bang. (Scientists don't call it simple hydrogen, they call it just a hydrogen atom.)

But a single hydrogen atom is rare in

today's universe, because it's a free radical and is really reactive. Molecular hydrogen is a molecule in which two hydrogen atoms are bonded together. It consists of two protons and two electrons and is very stable. There are massive clouds of molecular hydrogen out there in space, and stars form from those clouds.

## ■ In the early universe

The problem in the early Universe was, even though things were cooling down, molecular hydrogen couldn't form on its own. According to theory, simple hydrogen needed to interact with a specific molecule before it could form, and that molecule was helium hydride. This interaction was the first step in the chemistry of the universe.

Even though theory said that helium hydride had to exist, and even though it had been created in a lab in 1925, it had never been seen in space. It's a very pickle molecule, because one of its constituent atoms is helium, a noble gas. And noble gases are very reluctant to react with other atoms.

SOFIA is a converted Boeing 747SP which flies at high altitudes, above atmospheric interference, to make observations.

Ever since the 1970s, scientists thought that NGC 7027 had the necessary conditions for helium hydride to exist. Using SOFIA, and the German GREAT instrument (German Receiver at Terahertz Frequencies) they probed NGC 7027, searching for the elusive molecule.

(Source: universetoday.com)

## Cygnus spacecraft heads to space station with 40 mice, satellites



A new cargo mission is en route to the International Space Station (ISS). The Northrop Grumman Antares rocket lifted off on Wednesday, delivering the uncrewed Cygnus vessel to space. Although, this Cygnus does have a crew of sorts — a crew composed of several dozen mice. The remote-operated spacecraft usually has a quick trip to and back from the ISS, but this one will spend more time in space to get things done.

You might be familiar with the Antares rocket and Cygnus spacecraft from the 2014 rocket explosion when Orbital ATK was an independent company. Now, it's part of Northrop Grumman Innovation Systems, and there haven't been any major incidents since the 2014 incident. So, the 40 mice strapped into the rocket were safe and sound on their journey into space.

Around half of the cargo on the Cygnus is scientific equipment and materials, including the mice. The rodents are part of a study on a tetanus vaccine. The mice are split into two groups, one that will get the vaccine and another that won't.

These are smaller and simpler than CubeSats, carrying various electromagnetic, radiation, and inertial sensors. Students will be able to collect real-time data from the satellites. There's also one NASA CubeSat (SASSI 2) built by university students. That satellite and all the ThinSats were released by Cygnus shortly after it separated from the upper stage on Wednesday.

The next order of business is to dock with the ISS. Typically, Cygnus spacecraft spend a couple of months docked at the ISS before dropping into the atmosphere where they burn up. This time, Cygnus will head on to another task after leaving the station behind in June.

During this extra-long tour of duty, Cygnus will deploy even more satellites. Engineers have mounted numerous CubeSats around the exterior of the vessel to deploy over the summer. Another Cygnus spacecraft will launch later this year, so the mission will also demonstrate the team's ability to keep two missions going at the same time.

(Source: extremetech.com)

## In a major breakthrough scientists revive cells in brains from dead pigs



In a study that raises profound questions about the line between life and death, researchers have restored some cellular activity to brains removed from slaughtered pigs.

The brains did not regain anything resembling consciousness: There were no signs indicating coordinated electrical signaling, necessary for higher functions like awareness and intelligence.

But in an experimental treatment, blood vessels in the pigs' brains began functioning, flowing with a blood substitute, and certain brain cells regained metabolic activity, even responding to drugs. When the researchers tested slices of treated brain tissue, they discovered electrical activity in some neurons.

The work is very preliminary and has no immediate implications for treatment of brain injuries in humans. But the idea that parts of the brain may be recoverable after death, as conventionally defined, contradicts everything medical science believes about the organ and poses metaphysical riddles.

"We had clear lines between 'this is alive' and 'this is dead,'" said Nita A. Farahany, a bioethicist and law professor at Duke University. "How do we now think about this middle category of 'partly alive'? We didn't think it could exist."

For decades, doctors and grieving family members have wondered if it might ever be possible to restore function to a person who suffered extensive brain injury because of a severe stroke or heart attack. Were these brains really beyond salvage?

The new research confirms how little we know about the injured brain and so-called brain death. Bioethicists like Dr. Farahany were stunned and intrigued by the findings, published on Wednesday in the journal Nature.

"This is wild," said Jonathan Moreno, a bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania. "If ever there was an issue that merited big public deliberation on the ethics of science and medicine, this is one."

Until now, it has been assumed that the brain declines quickly when its blood supply is cut off.

Researchers at Yale University acquired the heads of 32 pigs killed for their meat. The scientists sawed into the skulls and removed the brains. By the time the experiment started, the brains had been without blood and at room temperature for four hours.

(Source: NYT)

## Scientists uncover a link between RNA editing and chloroplast-to-nucleus communication

What will a three-degree-warmer world look like? How will plants fare in more extreme weather conditions? When experiencing stress or damage from various sources, plants use chloroplast-to-nucleus communication to regulate gene expression and help them cope.

Now, Salk Institute researchers have found that GUN1 — a gene that integrates numerous chloroplast-to-nucleus retrograde signaling pathways — also plays an important role in how proteins are made in damaged chloroplasts, which provides a new insight into how plants respond to stress. The paper was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) on April 15, 2019, and may help biologists breed plants that can better withstand environmental stressors.

"Climate change holds the potential to affect our food system dramatically. When plants are stressed, like in a drought, they produce lower crop yields. If we understand how plants respond to stress, then perhaps we can develop a way to increase their resistance and keep food production high," says Salk Professor Joanne Chory, director of the Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology Laboratory and senior author of the paper.

## ■ Steady energy production

In plant cells, structures called chloroplasts convert energy from sunlight into chemical energy (photosynthesis). Normally, the nucleus of the cell transmits information to

the chloroplasts to maintain steady energy production. However, in a stressful environment, chloroplasts send an alarm back to the cell nucleus using retrograde signaling (creating a chloroplast-to-nucleus communication feedback loop). This SOS prompts a response that helps regulate gene expression in the chloroplasts and the nucleus to optimize energy production from sunlight.

Previously, the Chory lab identified a group of genes, including GUN1 that influence other genes' expression in the cell when the plant experiences stress. GUN1 accumulates under stressful conditions but the exact molecular function of GUN1 has been difficult to decipher, until now.

"Plants often experience environmental stressors, so there must be a chloroplast-to-nucleus communication pathway that helps the plant know when to conserve energy when injury occurs," says Xiaobo Zhao, first author and postdoctoral fellow in Chory's lab. "GUN1 turns out to play a big role in this."

## ■ RNA editing in chloroplasts

To understand how GUN1 regulates chloroplast-to-nucleus communication, the scientists observed plants with functional and nonfunctional GUN1 under pharmacological treatments that could damage chloroplasts. In plants without GUN1, gene expression changed, as did RNA editing in chloroplasts.

RNA editing is a modification of the RNA that changes the



identity of nucleotides, so that the information in the mature RNA differs from that defined in the genome, altering the instructions for making proteins. Some areas of RNA had more editing and other locations had less editing — suggesting that GUN1 plays a role in regulating chloroplast RNA editing.

After further analysis, the team unexpectedly found that GUN1 partners with another protein, MORF2 (an essential component of the plant RNA editing complex), to affect the efficiency of RNA editing during chloroplast-to-nucleus communication in damaged chloroplasts. Greater activity of MORF2 led to widespread editing changes as well as defects in chloroplast and leaf development even under normal growth conditions.

(Source: phys.org)

## Researchers identify almost 2 million previously 'hidden' earthquakes

Pouring through 10 years' worth of Southern California seismic data with the scientific equivalent of a fine-tooth comb, Caltech seismologists have identified nearly two million previously unidentified tiny earthquakes that occurred between 2008 and 2017. Their efforts, published online by the journal Science on April 18, expand the earthquake catalog for that region and period of time by a factor of 10 — growing it from about 180,000 recorded earthquakes to more than 1.81 million.

The new data reveal that there are about 495 earthquakes daily across Southern California occurring at an average of roughly three minutes apart. Previous earthquake cataloging had suggested that approximately 30 minutes would elapse between seismic events.

This 10-fold increase in the number of recorded earthquakes represents the cataloging of tiny tremors, between negative magnitude 2.0 (-2.0) and 1.7, made possible by the broad application of a labor-intensive identification technique that is typically only employed on small scales.



## ■ In seismic data

These quakes are so small that they can be difficult to spot amid the background noise that appears in seismic data, such as shaking from automobile traffic or building construction.

"It's not that we didn't know these small earthquakes were occurring. The problem is that they can be very difficult to spot amid all of the noise," says Zachary Ross, lead author of the study and postdoctoral scholar in geophysics, who will join the Caltech faculty in June as an assistant professor of geophysics.

ics. Ross collaborated with Egill Hauksson, research professor of geophysics at Caltech, as well as Daniel Trugman of Los Alamos National Laboratory and Peter Shearer of Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego.

To overcome the low signal-to-noise ratio, the team turned to a technique known as "template matching," in which slightly larger and more easily identifiable earthquakes are used as templates to illustrate what an earthquake's signal at a given location should, in general, look like.

When a likely candidate with the matching waveform was identified, the researchers then scanned records from nearby seismometers to see whether the earthquake's signal had been recorded elsewhere and could be independently verified.

## ■ Template matching works

Template matching works best in regions with closely spaced seismometers, since events generally only cross-correlate well with other earthquakes within a radius of about 1 to 2 miles, according to the researchers.

In addition, because the process is com-

putationally intensive, it has been limited to much smaller data sets in the past. For the present work, the researchers relied on an array of 200 powerful graphics processing units (GPUs) that worked for weeks on end to scan the catalog, detect new earthquakes, and verify their findings.

However, the findings were worth the effort, Hauksson says. "Seismicity along one fault affects faults and quakes around it, and this newly fleshed-out picture of seismicity in Southern California will give us new insights into how that works," he says.

The expanded earthquake catalog reveals previously undetected foreshocks that precede major earthquakes as well as the evolution of swarms of earthquakes. The richer data set will allow scientists to gain a clearer picture of how seismic events affect and move through the region, Ross says.

The "advance Zach Ross and colleagues has made fundamentally changes the way we detect earthquakes within a dense seismic network like the one Caltech operates with the USGS.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

## Team records conversations of mysterious, 'solitary' river dolphin from Brazil

The rare Araguaian river dolphin is a mysterious creature, native to Brazil that researchers have long thought to be solitary. Because of this assumption, it was believed that the animals would not be capable of complex communication, given that their social structure does not require it.

But now, scientists from the University of Vermont have discovered that the dolphins do interact with one another and can make hundreds of different sounds for the purposes of communication, according to a study published in the journal PeerJ.

"We found that they do interact socially and are making more sounds than previously thought," Laura May Collado, a biologist at the University of Vermont, said in a statement. "Their vocal repertoire is very diverse."

Little is known about the Araguaian dolphins, also known

as botos, because they are hard to find as well as difficult to approach. Thus, studies about them are limited. They live only in the waters of the Araguaia and Tocantins rivers, and their numbers likely do not exceed more than one and a half thousand in total.

## ■ Dolphins often visit

Fortunately, the research team was able to find a fish market in the town of Mocajuba where the dolphins often visit because people give them food.

Here, the team used underwater cameras and microphones to record the sounds and interactions between the dolphins at the market. In addition, they took some DNA samples from the animals.

Overall, they captured around 20 hours of recordings, identifying 237 different types of sounds. But even with

nearly an entire day of material, the team speculated that the dolphins can produce more sounds than they recorded. Many of the sounds were short, two-part calls, which baby dolphins made when approaching their mothers.

"It's exciting. Marine dolphins like the bottlenose use signature whistles for contact, and here we have a different sound used by river dolphins for the same purpose," Collado said.

The scientists also recorded the dolphins making longer calls and whistles, but these were not so frequent, and it is unclear what their purpose is. In bottlenose dolphin communication, longer whistles are used to boost group cohesion. But the researchers think the botos may use them for the opposite reason — to maintain distance.

(Source: Newsweek)



## Notre Dame fire started at the center of the cathedral’s roof, says police source

Investigators have pinpointed the start of the fire that ripped through Notre Dame Cathedral on Monday, a police source told CNN.

After police reviewed a cache of amateur video and photos from local residences, investigators believe the fire started at the center of the cathedral’s roof towards the base of the iconic spiral, the police source said.



The police source also told CNN that investigators are focusing on two potential problems relating to the outbreak of the fire. One issue under investigation is a possible problem with the fire alarm system sensors.

Investigators’ second line of inquiry, the source said, relates to the elevators that were built for the construction workers. The source provided no additional details on that.

Two security guards at the cathedral told police they noticed the flames for the first time only when the flames were already almost 3 meters high ?at 6:43 p.m. local time (12:43 p.m. ET), indicating the fire alarm sensors might not have been working properly, the police source told CNN.

The first alarm rang ?at 6:15 p.m. local time. An alert flashed on the Notre Dame security control screens showing which sensor was sending the alert.

According to the police source, the two security agents went to check the location but didn’t see anything at that time. When the second alarm rang ?at 6:43 p.m. local time, the two security agents followed the alarm system instructions and went to another location at the top of the cathedral, where they then saw the flames.

Paris prosecutors are investigating if an electrical short-circuit caused the fire that ripped through the cathedral.

A judicial source told CNN on Thursday that “we are not excluding any hypothesis at this stage,” saying that this is not their only line of inquiry.

The cathedral was undergoing renovations at the time of the fire. Some scrutiny has fallen on the firms undertaking work on the 150-year-old spire, which collapsed Monday as the flames raged around it.

Of the four companies contracted to carry out renovations at Notre Dame, two companies -- scaffolding firm Europe Echafaudage and art conservationists Socra -- had work in progress there at the time of the fire. Neither company had workers on site when the fire broke out.

The fire devastated large parts of the 850-year-old building before it was finally extinguished after a nine-hour battle.

Scores of priceless artifacts were rescued from the flames, and were taken to the Louvre museum for safekeeping. The bees that live on the roof of Notre Dame also survived the devastating fire, beekeeper Nicolas Geant told CNN.

The Paris fire service said the operation was one of the most complex it had ever undertaken, and at one point, it was feared that the entire structure might be lost.

(Source: CNN)



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Minaret and archaeological remains of Jam

At 1,900 m above sea level and far from any town in Afghanistan, the 65m-tall Minaret of Jam located in Afghanistan is a graceful, soaring structure, which dates back to the 12th century.

The minaret, which has been inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list, rises within a rugged valley along the Hari-rud River at its junction with the river Jam around 215km-east of Herat.



A view of the 12th-century Minaret of Jam in Afghanistan

It is covered in elaborate brickwork with a blue tile inscription at the top, it is noteworthy for the quality of its architecture and decoration, which represent the culmination of an architectural and artistic tradition in this region.

Its impact is heightened by its dramatic setting, a deep river valley between towering mountains in the heart of Ghur Province.

Built in 1194 by the great Ghurid Sultan Ghiyas-od-din (1153-1203), its emplacement probably marks the site of the ancient city of Firuzkuh, believed to have been the summer capital of the Ghurid dynasty.

Surrounding remains include a group of stones with Hebrew inscriptions from the 11th to 12th centuries on the Kushkak hill, and vestiges of castles and towers of the Ghurid settlements on the banks of the Hari River as well as to the east of the Minaret.

The Minaret of Jam is one of the few well-preserved monuments representing the exceptional artistic creativity and mastery of structural engineering of the time.

Its architecture and ornamentation are outstanding from the point of view of art history, fusing together elements from earlier developments in the region in an exceptional way and exerting a strong influence on later architecture in the region.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Tehran Municipality negotiating to restore Taq Kasra in Iraq

**HERITAGE DESK** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Municipality is in talks with Baghdad’s urban planners and authorities to restore a number of aging monuments in Iraq including Taq Kasra, which is an architecturally-important Sasanian-era Persian monument.

Tehran Mayor Pirouz Hanachi arrived in Baghdad on Wednesday evening upon an official invitation from his Iraqi counterpart to exchange views for deepening cooperation in various areas, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Tehran Municipality has showed its readiness for restoring historical monuments in Iraq, particularly Ivan Madaen (Taq Kasra) in collaboration with Iranian companies, which was welcomed by Baghdad, the report added.

“Skills of Iranian experts in the arena of restoring Iraq’s historical and ancient monuments were discussed in various meetings with Iraqi officials, and it was

decided to follow up on future meetings and negotiations,” IRNA quoted Hanachi as saying.

“We had very good and successful talks with Iraqi officials and we hope to have a follow-up session after the holy month of Ramadan (June 5 onwards).”

Taq Kasra, also called Ivan Madaen or the Archway of Ctesiphon, are names given to the remains of a circa 3rd–6th-century Sasanian-era Persian monument, which is located near the modern town of Salman Pak, a city located approximately 15 miles (24 km) south of Baghdad.

The arch was part of the imperial palace complex, however, an exact time of its construction is not known with certainty. Some historians believe the founder is Shapur I who ruled Persia from 242 to 272 CE and some other believe that construction possibly began during the reign of Anushirwan the Just (Khosrow I) after a campaign against the Byzantines in 540 CE.



Travelers visit Taq Kasra in an undated photo.

## “Iran, Cradle of Civilizations” attracts thousands of Spaniards

**HERITAGE DESK** **TEHRAN** — Over 20,000 people have so far visited “Iran, Cradle of Civilizations”, an enormous loan exhibit from the National Museum of Iran, which officially inaugurated on March 14 at the Archeological Museum of Alicante (MARQ) in southeastern Spain.

“The figure is announced by the organizers (authorities of the Spanish museum) who regard it as a successful performance of the exhibition,” Mehr quoted Jebrael Nokandeh, director of the National Museum of Iran, as saying on Saturday.

“Iran, Cradle of Civilizations” has previously earned from Drents Museum an audience prize at the prestigious Global Fine Art Awards and it is expected to take giant steps

towards introducing “a true face” of the Islamic Republic internationally , he said.

The exhibit features a select of 196 valuable historical pieces of a large span of Iranian history, starting from pre-historical era to the Islamic period.

It turns the spotlight on the earliest developments of agriculture and livestock farming from the very beginning to cuneiform clay tablets, gold beakers and ornaments, bronze weapons and beautifully painted ceramics associated with successive Iranian kingdoms.

“Iran, Cradle of Civilization” was previously on show at Drents Museum, Assen, the Netherlands, where it was well received by museumgoers from June to November 2018.

## 8 airplanes converted into restaurants



El Avion restaurant, Manuel Antonio Costa Rica

still available, the under-the-table leg room is much improved.

While the food served may not put La Tante DC10 in line for a Michelin star any time soon, this is the place to be for those keen on an airplane restaurant experience in Africa.

### ■ Hawai Adda, Ludhiana, India

While most airplane restaurants milk the novelty factor for all it’s worth, sticking to (mostly) original interiors, Hawai Adda has gone for all-out luxury.

This retired Airbus 320 and former Air India plane now has fuselage lined with swanky booths, while vegetarian dishes dominate the menu.

Inspired by the Maharaja Express, India’s most luxurious train, Hawai Adda proves a worthy rival for the railed experience and was the first of its kind in the South Asian country.

### ■ Steaks on a Plane, Bolton, United Kingdom

Picture your average British takeaway reimagined inside an airplane and you’ll probably conjure up something similar to the fantastically named Steaks on a Plane.

Made up of the wingless front end of a

butchered Boeing 737, Steaks on a Plane is glamorous in neither location nor execution, yet there’s still something charming about its polystyrene-plated grub.

You can even order to go from a hatch in the fuselage.

If you decided to dine in, make sure to take advantage of the cockpit photo opp.

### ■ Runway 1, Haryana, India

The father and son duo behind Runway 1 clearly witnessed India’s first airplane restaurant, Hawai Adda, take off and wanted in on the action.

Opened in late 2017, this establishment leans heavily on the whole novelty concept.

Would-be diners are required to collect a boarding pass before heading to their table, while the cockpit houses what the owners claim is India’s only 3D flight simulation game.

However, once you move through to the cabin, the revamped interior of this former Air India Airbus A320 looks decidedly plusher than your standard economy experience.

### ■ The Airplane Restaurant, Colorado Springs

Within the U.S. Air Force-emblazoned

fuselage of this hefty 1953 Boeing KC-97 tanker, 42 lucky diners can now enjoy an insight into aviation history while chowing down on seafood or a sandwich.

The owners opened the Airplane Restaurant for business way back in 2002, making it something of a U.S. pioneer as far as on-the-ground airplane dining is concerned.

You’ll have to book ahead to guarantee a spot on the plane itself, but guests can also eat in the so-called “terminal” section of the property.

While that area isn’t an actual airplane, it still features plenty of aviation memorabilia.

### ■ McDonald’s, Taupo, New Zealand

One of the coolest attractions in Taupo, New Zealand, is a McDonald’s (yes, really) although we doubt visitors flock here for the food.

It’s the decommissioned Douglas DC-3, now painted silver with a red racing stripe and the famous McDonald’s font that surely grabs their attention.

While the former South Pacific Airlines plane flew throughout the ‘60s, it found a new lease of life in the ‘90s when it was remodeled with room for some 20 diners.

As for the food... Well, it’s still a McDonald’s.

### ■ Space Shuttle Cafe, New York

Confusingly, the peculiar Space Shuttle Café is not a space shuttle. It’s actually made of a chop shop selection of Douglas DC3 parts, meaning it’s far more airplane than rocket ship.

Good luck trying to get a burger from this so-called food truck though -- the Space Shuttle Café has passed through several hands over the years.

In fact, its current owner is apparently yet to dish up a single menu item. But if you’re really keen to dine there, you could just buy it outright.

The Space Shuttle Cafe is currently on sale with an asking price of \$230,000.

(Source: CNN)

## Tunisia tourism sector makes flying start to 2019

Tunisia wooed more tourists in the first quarter of this year, which saw a 17.4 percent increase in arrivals compared to the same period in 2018, according to Tunisian Ministry of Tourism data quoted by Asharq Al-Awsat.

The tourism sector saw an influx of up to 787.8 million dinars (\$262.6 million) of hard currency revenues — an increase of 35.1 percent on last year, the newspaper reported.

Minister of Tourism Rene Trabelsi said that the tourism sector was boosted by arrivals from Europe, which rose around 22.3 percent.

After several years of shunning Tunisia in the wake of a gun attack on a beach in Sousse that killed 39 tourists and one at the Bardo National Museum in Tunis that killed 21, major European tour operators have started to return.



Arrivals from France increased 24.7 percent, while the Dutch market developed around 13.5 percent, it was reported.

Trabelsi expects more positive growth in the coming period, based on the bookings of global travel agencies.

Tunisia seeks to attract 1 million French tourists, 640,000 Russian tourists, and 390,000 German tourists this season. It forecasts that it will host around 9 million tourists overall this year.

In 2018, Tunisia’s tourism revenues jumped to \$1.36 billion as the country saw the arrival of a record 8.3 million visitors, according to data from the ministry.

The sector generates about 400,000 jobs and accounts for 8 percent of Tunisia’s gross domestic product (GDP).

(Source: Arab News)



# Iran opens its most advanced solid medicine factory

**1 →** Actover 2 produces more than 190 medicines in 14 different medical fields, including cardiovascular diseases, cancers, organ transplants, multiple sclerosis (MS), neurological disorders, rare diseases, gynecology and obstetrics as well as general medicine. The new factory also has the capacity for producing more than seven billion tablets and

pill, 100 million syringes and needles, pre-filled syringes, injection vials, and lyophilizer. The production and transfer lines of the factory are closely monitored and all the parameters including the temperature and pressure difference are controlled by the most advanced up-to date systems in the world.

**The factory can completely satisfy the needs of Iran and the region to the products of Merck Pharmaceuticals.**



## Your life span may be foretold in your heart beats

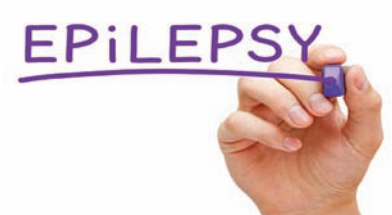
Where your resting heart rate goes, so goes your health. That's the suggestion of a new study that found older Swedish men with a resting heart rate of 75 beats per minute had a doubled risk of an early death, even though that rate is well within the normal range of 50 to 100 beats per minute. That increase in risk held for both death from any cause and death linked to heart disease. What's more, every additional heart beat per minute increased a person's overall risk of early death by 3% and their risk of heart disease by 2%. Based on these results, doctors might want to keep an eye on a person's resting heart rate, said American Heart



Association expert Dr. Vincent Bufalino. A gradual rise in heart rate could mean trouble ahead for your heart health. Rather, a rising heart rate probably is a red flag for other well-established heart risk factors, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking and a family history of heart problems, he explained. (source: webmd)

## 8 new drugs for epilepsy go in production

**HEALTH DESK** TEHRAN — For the very first time, eight new drugs with modified-release dosage forms were produced in the country, announced a knowledge-based company. Modified-release dosage and its variants are mechanisms used in tablets (pills) and capsules to dissolve a drug over time in order to be released slower and steadier into the bloodstream while having the advantage of being taken at less frequent intervals than immediate-release formulations of the same drug. According to Gholamreza Akhavan-Farid, the new medicines are mainly targeted at treating Epilepsy and can substantially reduce the disease side effects, IRNA reported on Saturday. Producing this medicine will save the



country \$30 million yearly and can partially meet the local needs to such drugs. "We have already produced two medicines with modified-release dosage forms, Sodium valproate and Carbamazepine which have had an annual sales of about 500 billion rials (\$11.9 million)," said Akhavan-Farid, adding that the sales will further increase in new [Iranian calendar] year (started on March 21) since new medicines are added.

## UN to run disaster reduction workshop in Tehran

**HEALTH DESK** TEHRAN — The United Nations will run a training workshop titled "Monitoring the Sendai Framework and Assessing Losses in Disasters and Incidents" in Iran from April 22 to 24. The workshop is organized by UN Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) in cooperation with UN office in Tehran. The United Nations Information Center in Iran has announced that the workshop will be held on disaster reduction and within the framework of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) is an international document which was adopted by UN member states in March 2015.



It aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets

of persons, businesses, communities and countries over the next 15 years. According to the report, experts from the Planning and Budget Organization, the National Crisis Management Organization and other relevant ministries and government organizations will attend the three-day workshop. The workshop is running at a time that the efforts are joined all over the country to reduce the damages caused by recent flash flood. 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.

## What are the signs of early-onset Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia typically associated with older adults. However, early-onset Alzheimer's disease occurs before the age of 65. Alzheimer's causes memory problems and a variety of related symptoms. It is a degenerative disease, which means the symptoms will get worse over time. According to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 60 to 80 percent of all known dementia cases. Though there is no cure, there are some treatments available to ease symptoms and slow the disease's progression. **■ Signs and symptoms** There are several distinct signs and symptoms of memory loss that may indicate Alzheimer's. If a person experiences one or more of the following signs or symptoms, they should speak to their doctor. 1. Memory loss that impedes daily activities Lady writing notes because of memory loss due to early onset alzheimer's Reliance on memory aids may be a sign of early-onset Alzheimer's. The most common symptom of Alzheimer's is memory loss. A person experiencing memory loss may: \* forget recently learned information \* ask for same information repeatedly \* have a higher reliance on memory aids, such as calendars and notes \* forget important events or dates As a person ages, it is not uncommon to forget things from time to time. Typical, non-Alzheimer's memory loss may include forgetting an acquaintance's name but remembering it later on. A person with early-onset Alzheimer's will have more noticeable memory loss and may repeatedly forget the same information. 2. Trouble completing everyday tasks Another common early sign of Alzheimer's is when a person has difficulty completing an otherwise familiar task. A person with early-onset Alzheimer's may: \* forget how to get to a grocery store, restaurant, or place of employment \* have problems balancing a home or work budget \* forget the rules of a familiar game Sometimes, natural aging may cause a person to need help with new or unfamiliar things. For example, helping an older loved one figure out the settings on their new phone is not uncommon and does not necessarily indicate a problem.

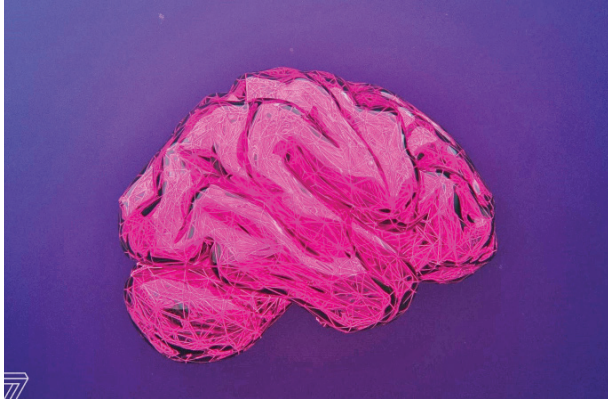
By contrast, if a person has used the same phone for years and suddenly cannot remember how to make a phone call, they may be experiencing Alzheimer's-related memory loss. 3. Problem-solving or planning difficulties Some people with early-onset Alzheimer's find they have trouble following directions, solving problems, and focusing. It may be hard for a person to follow a recipe or directions written on a product. They may also have trouble keeping track of monthly bills or expenses. 4. Problems with vision and spatial awareness Alzheimer's can sometimes cause vision problems, which may make it difficult for a person to judge distances between objects. It may also cause a person to have difficulty distinguishing contrast and colors. These vision problems combined can make it difficult or impossible to drive. Normal aging also affects eyesight, so it is essential to have regular checkups with an eye doctor. 5. Confusion about location and time Another common sign of early-onset Alzheimer's is getting confused about places or time. A person may have trouble keeping track of seasons, months, or time of day. A person may occasionally be unable to recognize where they are or have no memory of how they got there. 6. Frequently misplacing items and not being able to retrace steps Most people will lose items at some time but are usually able to locate them again by searching in logical locations and retracing their steps. A person with Alzheimer's may forget where they placed an item, especially if they put it in an unusual place. Alzheimer's also makes it difficult for a person to retrace their steps to find the missing item. This can be distressing and may cause the person to believe someone is stealing from them. 7. Problems writing or speaking A person may have trouble keeping up in a conversation or may repeat themselves. A person may also have trouble writing down their thoughts. The person may stop in the middle of a conversation, unable to figure out what to say next. They may struggle to find the right word or label things incorrectly. It is not uncommon for a person to occasionally struggle to find the right word. Typically, they eventually remember it and do not experience the problem frequently. 8. Showing signs of poor judgment Everyone makes bad decisions at times. People with



early-onset Alzheimer's, however, may display a marked change in their ability to make good decisions. Signs of poor judgment include: \* spending too much on unnecessary items \* showing inattention to personal grooming \* not showering or cleaning themselves regularly 9. Mood or personality changes A person with Alzheimer's may start to become confused, anxious, suspicious, or depressed. They may show these signs in a variety of settings, including at work, at home, and in unfamiliar places. They may become frustrated with their symptoms or feel unable to understand the changes taking place. This may present as aggression or irritability towards others. 10. Stepping away from social or work activities As Alzheimer's develops, a person may stop participating in the social or work activities they used to enjoy. **■ Risk factors** According to the Alzheimer's Association, age is the primary risk factor for developing Alzheimer's. From the age of 65, the risk of developing Alzheimer's doubles every 5 years. By age 85, a person has a 50 percent chance of developing Alzheimer's. Another risk factor is family history or genetics. A person is more likely to develop Alzheimer's if they have an immediate family member with the disease. If more than one person in the family has had Alzheimer's, the genetic risk increases. Researchers are still unsure why Alzheimer's develops at an early age in some people. However, they have identified rare genes in some people who experience Alzheimer's in their 30s, 40s, and 50s. (source: medical news today)

## That mental health app might share your data without telling you

Free apps marketed to people with depression or who want to quit smoking are hemorrhaging user data to third parties like Facebook and Google — but often don't admit it in their privacy policies, a new study reports. This study is the latest to highlight the potential risks of entrusting sensitive health information to our phones. Though most of the easily-found depression or smoking cessation apps in the Android and iOS stores share data, only a fraction of them actually disclose this. The findings add to a string of worrying revelations about what apps are doing with the health information we entrust to them. For instance, a Wall Street Journal investigation recently revealed the period tracking app Flo shared users' period dates and pregnancy plans with Facebook. And previous studies have reported health apps with security flaws or that shared data with advertisers and analytics companies. In this new study, published Friday in the journal JAMA Network Open, researchers searched for apps using the keywords "depression" and "smoking cessation." Then they downloaded the apps and checked to see whether the data put into them was shared by intercepting the app's traffic. Much of the data the apps shared didn't immediately identify the user or was even strictly medical. But 33 of the 36 apps shared information that could give advertisers or data analytics companies insights into people's digital behavior. And a few shared very sensitive information, like health diary entries, self reports about substance use, and usernames. **■ "It's important to trust but verify"** Those kinds of details, plus the name or type of app, could give third parties information about someone's mental health that the person might want to keep private. "Even knowing



that a user has a mental health or smoking cessation app downloaded on their phone is valuable 'health-related' data," Quinn Grundy, an assistant professor at the University of Toronto who studies corporate influences on health and was not involved in the study, tells The Verge in an email. The fact that people might not know how their apps are sharing their data worried John Torous, director of digital psychiatry at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and a co-author on the new study. "It's really hard to make an informed decision about using an app if you don't even know who's going to get access to some information about you," he says. That's why he and a team at the University of New South Wales in Sydney ran this study. "It's important to trust but verify — to say where is your healthcare data going," Torous says. **■ "They're basically lying"** By intercepting the data transmissions, they discovered that 92 percent of the 36 apps shared the data with at least one third party — mostly Facebook- and Google-run services that help with marketing, advertising, or data analytics. (Facebook and Google did not immediately respond to requests for comment.) But about half of those apps didn't disclose that third-party data sharing, for a few different reasons: nine apps didn't have a privacy policy at all; five apps did but didn't say the data would be shared this way; and three apps actively said that this kind of data sharing wouldn't happen. Those last three are the ones that stood out to Steven Chan, a physician at Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, who has collaborated with Torous in the past but wasn't involved in the new study. "They're basically lying," he says of the apps. The researchers don't know what these third-party sites were doing with this user data. "We live in an age where, with enough breadcrumbs, it's possible to reidentify people," Torous says. It's also possible the breadcrumbs just sit there, he says — but for now, they just don't know. "What happens to this digital data is kind of a mystery." But Chan worries about the potential, invisible risks. "Potentially advertisers could use this to compromise someone's privacy and sway their treatment decisions," he says. For example, what if an advertiser discovers someone is trying to quit smoking? "Maybe if someone is interested in smoking, would they be interested in electronic cigarettes?" Chan says. "Or could they potentially introduce them to other similar products, like alcohol?" **■ "What happens to this digital data is kind of a mystery"** Part of the problem is the business model for free apps, the study authors write: since insurance might not pay for an app that helps users quit smoking, for example, the only ways for free app developer to stay afloat is to either sell subscriptions or sell data. And if that app is branded as a wellness tool, the developers can skirt laws intended to keep medical information private. So Torous recommends caution before sharing sensitive information with an app. The potential for mental health apps to help people is exciting, Torous says. "But I think it does mean you want to pause twice and say, 'Do I trust the person who made the app, and do I understand where this data is going?'" A few quick gut checks could include making sure that the app has a privacy policy, that it's been updated recently, and that the app comes from a trustworthy source like a medical center or the government. "None of those questions are going to guarantee you a good result, but they're going to probably help you screen," he says. Long-term, one way to protect people who want to use health and wellness apps could be to form a group that can give a stamp of approval to responsible mental health apps, Chan says. "Kind of like having the FDA's approval on things, or the FAA certifying a particular aircraft for safety," he says. But for now, it's app-user beware. "When there are no such institutions or the institutions themselves aren't doing a good job, it means we need to invest more as a public good." (Source: theverge.com)



## TEHRAN

### Tehran sees longest streak of clean air in a decade

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Tehran has just experienced its longest streak of clear air for the past decade, acting director of Tehran Air Quality Control Company has said.

During the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 20) Tehran air measured by air quality index (AQI) indicated 21 days of excellent air quality and 10 days of good air quality which is unprecedented over the past 10 years, Hossein Shahidzadeh highlighted.



AQI is used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become. The index categorizes conditions according to a measure of polluting matters into excellent (0-50), good (51-100), lightly polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150), moderately polluted (151-200), heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

Owing to the spring downpours now many deserts surrounding Tehran are covered in vegetation and they have stopped sand and dust particles from forming, Mehr news agency quoted Shahidzadeh as saying on Saturday.

Data released on National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center website on Sunday shows that Tehran has received 308.5 millimeters of rain since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2018) which reveals a 139 percent rise compared to last water year.

Moreover the amount indicates a 46.8 percent increase compared to long-term mean.

Shahidzadeh went on to say that in addition to recent rainfalls the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) scheme which is underway in the capital has played a significant role in cutting air pollution in Tehran.

LEZ scheme, mandating vehicle inspection to reduce emissions went into effect in the capital in the beginning of autumn.

LEZ is a defined area where access by certain polluting vehicles is restricted or deterred with the aim of improving the air quality. This may favor vehicles such as hybrid electric vehicles, or zero-emission vehicles such as all-electric vehicles. To bring LEZ scheme into effect all the vehicles in Tehran are required to get inspection stickers indicating the level of emission they produce which are easy to track down by the traffic cameras.

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### The Resignation of the European Commission

(March 18, 1999)

All the members of the European Commission resigned after a report criticized their work. BBC Correspondent William Horsley reported.

The Commission resigned in response to the **indictment** made by the five independent experts appointed by the European parliament. They found that widespread fraud and mismanagement had been **tolerated** by this commission and all its members should be held responsible. But Jacques Santer, the Commission President for the past four years, had **struck back**, saying he himself was **whiter than white** and that the reports findings were quite unjustified. The **low key** political response to the dramatic resignation of the whole commission is **bound** to raise questions about the EU's will to **put right** the failings of the Commission which have been exposed. Britain's Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has called for **root and branch** reform in Europe to take account of these events but other member states, including the German Presidency, have yet **to show the stomach** to make the outgoing Commission really do what it said it had done and resign.

■ **Words**

**indictment:** a formal way of saying how bad a situation is

**tolerated:** allowed a situation to happen

**struck back:** hit back at someone who has hurt you- here, verbally

**whiter than white:** phrase which exaggerates how innocent a person is (can also be used negatively)

**low key:** a limited or weak response

**is bound to:** phrase used when you are certain that something will happen

**put right:** to correct something

**root and branch:** phrase that suggests that changes need to be made at all levels

**to show the stomach:** a polite way to say someone doesn't have the strength or courage to follow something through

(Source: BBC)



# Locusts threaten 300,000 ha of farming lands in Iran

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Some 300,000 hectares of farming lands are threatened by desert locusts' breakout, Iran's Crisis Management Organization spokesperson has said.

According to Behnam Sa'edi, desert locusts from Saudi Arabia have so far penetrated into the provinces of Bushehr, Fars, Hormozgan, Kerman, Khuzestan, and Sistan-Baluchestan and not fighting them would result in a major loss on farming lands and gardens in southern Iran.

So far in order to bring the situation under control aerial spraying of chemical insecticides has been carried out on 45,000 hectares of farming lands, YJC quoted Sa'edi as saying on Sunday.

Iran Plant Protection Organization, as well as Agriculture Ministry, are mainly tasked with fighting the pests, he said, adding that, Iran's Crisis Management Organization will also play its part in controlling the outbreak.

Sa'edi went on to regret that had Saudi Arabia taken necessary measures to fight desert locusts timely, the number of swarms hitting Iran would have been much less.

In mid-February, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) sounded alarm on desert locust outbreak in northeast Africa and Saudi Arabia triggered by heavy rains.

According to FAO's latest update released on April 3, desert locust situation is improving along both sides of the Red Sea due to intensive control operations that treated more than 80,000 ha during March and due to drying conditions.

However, second-generation breeding



is still in progress in some coastal areas of Sudan and Saudi Arabia where ecological conditions remain favorable, causing additional hopper and adult groups, bands and a few swarms to form.

The report adds that some adult groups moved to the spring breeding areas in the interior of Saudi Arabia and laid eggs in March.

In southwest Asia, adult groups and a few swarms are breeding on the southern coast of Iran and hatching commenced at the end of March, the report added, highlighting that adult groups and at least one swarm appeared in adjacent areas of southwest Pakistan in mid-March where they laid eggs, but control operations were in progress in both countries.

The UN agency warns that during April, locust numbers will decline along both sides of the Red Sea but will increase in the spring breeding areas in the interior of Saudi Arabia, and coastal and interior areas of southern

Iran and southwest Pakistan where hatching will occur and hopper groups and bands are expected to form. Some of these could eventually form adult groups and perhaps a few small swarms by late May.

The UN agency urged all the affected countries to step up vigilance and control measures to contain the destructive infestations and protect crops from the world's most dangerous migratory pest.

■ **\$2.4m needed to fight locusts**

According to IRNA news agency Iran Plant Protection Organization director also said on April 17 that the necessary budget for fighting desert locusts is estimated at 100 billion rials (nearly \$2.4 million).

So far the pests have not brought any serious loss at farming lands, however, they must be controlled as failure in controlling the locusts will endanger 1,250 trillion rials (nearly \$30 billion) of agricultural products.

In case of proper budget allocation the desert locus threat will be eliminated by the end of the [Iranian calendar] month of Tir (June 22-July 22), he added.

■ **Desert locusts, serious threat to crop production, food safety**

Desert locusts are short-horned grasshoppers that can form large swarms and pose a major threat to agricultural production, livelihoods, food security, and the environment and economic development.

FAO explains that adult locust swarms can fly up to 150 km a day with the wind. Female locusts can lay 300 eggs within their lifetime while an adult insect can consume roughly its own weight in fresh food per day - about two grams every day. A very small swarm eats the same amount of food in one day as about 35,000 people and the devastating impact locusts can have on crops poses a major threat to food security, especially in already vulnerable areas.

■ **Countries affected by desert locusts**

During quiet periods (known as recessions) desert locusts are usually restricted to the semi-arid and arid deserts of Africa, the Near East and South-West Asia that receive less than 200 mm of rain annually. This is an area of about 16 million square kilometers, consisting of about 30 countries.

During plagues, desert locusts may spread over an enormous area of some 29 million square kilometers, extending over or into parts of 60 countries. This is more than 20% of the total land surface of the world. During plagues, the Desert Locust has the potential to damage the livelihood of a tenth of the world's population.

## 7 things to do when your coworker is being mean

By Sadaf Abbassi, M.A student of Career Counseling

Workplace is just like a mini-world, you can find every type of people there: the nice ones and of course the difficult ones! Sometimes you may realize that your coworker is not cooperative, maybe he/she rolls his/her eyes on you when talking to you or has told your boss that you haven't delivered the project on time, which of course you have had!

Or even so simply, your gut is telling you that with no reason, she or he doesn't like you! It's a pain in the neck, isn't it? What would you do in such situations? I admit it's the last thing you expect from a good coworker but you have to face the reality, your coworker is being mean to you! Here is what you should do to win the invisible ongoing fight:

■ **1. Do your job flawlessly**

Make sure you do your job well. It gives you a comfort against any possible accusation. Showing your best at work not only makes you a good and trustworthy employee, but also leaves your mean coworker with no alibi to say that you have done a mistake or he or she can't destroy your career in any way or point the finger on you that you are rightfully guilty.

■ **2. Don't forget about being assertive**

Assertiveness is a skill that allows you to defend your rights while you do not hurt others feelings. Don't be shy and speak your mind about the work and do not be afraid of being judged. There are so many sources on assertiveness you can find. Practice it in real life step by step and measure your improvement.

■ **3. Don't let your anger leads you to a fight**

I know! Your coworker made you lose your temper! You want to shout and tell him/her such an idiot he/she is to blame you for a mistake or sabotaging your work. But please calm down and do not let emotions take over you. Take a deep breath, drink water or do whatever gives you pleasure. Tell yourself that you will respond to your coworker's action with your right mind!

■ **4. Disarm him/her with your kindness**

Sometimes people are mean to you because they think you are better than them in so many ways. Maybe your coworker is jealous of you, maybe she or he is having tough times in his or her personal life and is not able to keep the mental balance. Considering these possibilities helps you to hate him or her less and take easy on what is going on. I know it

is difficult but take the initiative to treat him or her nicely to make your coworker drop his or her guard.

■ **5. Be careful about your insecurities**

Sometimes your coworker is mean, yes, but this is your insecurity that magnifies his or her acts and causes you so much suffering. Take some time to be fair and realistic about what is happening inside you. Are you really mad at your coworker because of what he or she does or says or it is your bitter memories that he or she awakes? Maybe you need to see a psychologist to discuss your issues.

■ **6. Mindfulness is your best friend at work**

Again and again stay mindful! Be aware of what is going on inside and outside of you. You better be present at the moment to give the appropriate response. You also need to keep yourself from screaming at work or doing any rude or stupid act by getting angry.

■ **7. Look closer, maybe she/he's not that mean!**

And finally, you have to look closer! Some people have problem interacting with others. They are not evil but it is not easy for them to act friendly. Maybe all you need is time to find out who he or she really is and to know his or her intentions.

### ‘Projecting 100 years of wet spell unscientific’



**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Projecting the start of 100 years of wet spell in Iran is scientifically inaccurate, former director of the Atmospheric Science and Meteorological Research Center has said.

According to the latest data published on Sunday by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization since the start of the current water year (September 23, 2018) the whole country received 289.4 millimeters of rain.

The number amounted to 112.9 millimeters in the previous water year and 197.5 millimeters in the long-term, the data indicated. The numbers show a drastic increase of 156.3 percent compared to last water year. It also reveals a 46.5 percent increase compared to long-term means.

This is while last water year's precipitations shows a dramatic decrease of 42.8 percent compared to long-term averages.

Considering the torrential rainfall the country has received over the past few months, many speculate that the prolonged drought spell has come to an end in Iran and some even have carried it to extremes believing that a 100 years of wet spell is ahead of us.

"Deciding whether a wet spell has started or not depends on the fact that if precipitations will continue in the coming years," Fars news agency quoted Mohammad Taqi Zamanian as saying on Tuesday.

"We can call this year a wet year, however, in order to claim a wet spell has begun above normal precipitations must be recorded for some consecutive years," Zamanian explained.

Moreover, increased precipitations are nor recorded in some regions of the country, so that not all provinces have experienced above-normal precipitations, he added.

He went on to highlight that it is impossible to predict weather precipitations will be above-normal in the next water year let alone for the next 100 years.

He also denied claims of cloud seeding causing recent rainfalls, stating that recent precipitations were all natural.

First Announcement



Khuzestan Steel Company

IN THE NAME OF GOD

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER

No.:401975

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE

6000 MT FERRO SILICO MANGANESE

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

Si	16 %	Min
Mn	65 %	Min
S	0.03 %	Max
C	2.0 %	Max
P	0.25 %	Max
Size Of Pieces	20-60 mm	Min 90 %
	<20 mm	Max 10 %
Packing	Bulk in Container	
Delivery Date	July	August
2019	(2000 MT)	(2000 MT)

INTRESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF:

EUR 50 "FIFTY EURO" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

1) ACCOUNT No.0100013543943 AT "EXPORT DEVELOPMENT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ CENTRAL BRANCH"

2) ACCOUNT No.1902-750-4019644-1 AT "EGHTESAD NOVIN BANK- OF IRAN AHVAZ SHARIATI BRANCH" OR

Rials 2,000,000,"TWO MILION RIALS" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

1) ACCOUNT No.0102513186002 AT "MELLI BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"

2) ACCOUNT No.0100304453001 AT "SADERAT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"

AND PRESENT THE PAYMENT RECEIPT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

RAW MATERIAL & ENERGY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY (KSC)

KM 10 AHVAZ – BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI ROAD

P.O.BOX: 1378

POST CODE: 61397-31398

AHVAZ- IRAN

Note1: BIDDER SHALL SUBMIT WITH TENDER A BID BOND ISSUED BY AN IRANIAN BANK OR BY A EUROPEAN FIRST CLASS BANK , IN THE AMOUNT OF 110,880 Euro OR 16,964,640,000 Rials FOR 6000 MT FERRO SILICO MANGANESE AND MAY REDUSED IN PROPORTION WITH THE QUANTITY OF BIDDERS OFFER.

Note2: ALL BIDS MUST BE INFORMED US WHICH PARTICIPATE IN OUR TENDER UP TO 4\*May, 2019. WHEN YOUR COMPANY IS CONFIRMED AND THE TENDER DOCUMENT IS SENT TO YOU, YOU MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE AFORESAID ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE 18\*May,2019.THE OPENING DATE OF ENVELOPES WILL BE AT 10 AM ON THE 19\*May,2019 IN THE BUYER'S CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHVAZ-IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER.

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Fax No. : +98 61 32908115

Mr.M.FARZINEJAD EMAIL : m.farzinejad @ksc.ir OR VISIT:http://WWW.KSC.IR



# What are main aims of Imran khan's Iran visit?

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

**TEHRAN (MNA)** – Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan is slated to undertake an official visit to Iran on April 21 and there are different speculations about the aims of this visit.

The two-day visit will be made upon the official invitation of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and can start a new era of ties between Tehran and Islamabad.

This will be Khan's first official visit to the western neighbor after assuming power. He has already paid official visits to some regional countries, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates but his visit to Tehran was reportedly postponed after border security issues, including the abduction of Iranian border guards in Mirjaveh and also terrorist attack near Zahedan which killed 27 IRGC personnel.

On March 21, Iran announced that four other abducted guards had been released with the efforts of the Pakistani Army. Islamabad has vowed to gear up the fight against terrorism and its measures to provide western borders with increased security can have a significant effect on the development of ties with Iran.

Certainly, one of the main topics of Iran-Pakistan discussions during the upcoming PM's visit will be ways to enhance border security which is essentially required if the states are determined to boost cooperation in different political,



economic, and cultural spheres.

There are also reports which point to Pakistan's close relationship with Saudi Arabia, saying that Imran Khan may try to mediate between Tehran and Riyadh. In a meeting with Iranian ambassador to Pakistan Mehdi Honardoost in early August 2018, Imran Khan said that Pakistan is ready to play a constructive and positive role between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Experts believe that the much-awaited Iran-Pakistan pipeline project will also be

on the agenda of negotiations. Pakistan has not adhered to its commitments to complete the pipeline on its side with the excuse of international sanctions and pressures from countries such as US.

Some reports also speculate that the two sides will also confer on the future of Afghanistan, as well as inking probable economic agreements.

Imran Khan has proved to be courageous in supporting Iran. He and his party are among the defenders of Iran's peaceful

nuclear activity. He also, alongside Iran, strongly condemned Trump's measure to ban Muslim's immigration to the United States.

Cementing ties with Pakistan will also be beneficial for Iran since this leads to a decrease in security threats in the south-east of the country, furthermore, paving the way for an enhanced economic presence of Iran in Pakistan and benefit from its great potential market.

Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan as an independent state in 1947 and two years later, they signed a treaty of friendship. The two countries have always maintained good and friendly relations based on mutual respect for each other's sovereignty. Some experts believe Iran-Pakistan ties can be a model for relations between other regional countries.

In a statement, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry announced that the country's "relations with Iran are marked by close historic and cultural linkages and strong people to people exchanges," adding that PM's visit to Iran will further enhance the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Imran Khan will meet with Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei besides holding 'detailed consultations' with President Rouhani, reads the statement, noting that the PM will be accompanied by a host of high-ranking officials and ministers.

## Congress power 'Effectively Diminished' in relation to Trump: analyst

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — A member of the Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War said the power of the U.S. Congress has been "effectively diminished" as it failed to override President Trump's veto of a bipartisan bill to end U.S. military involvement in Saudi Arabia's murderous war against Yemen.

"U.S. Senator (and presidential candidate) Bernie Sanders and other senators succeeded in passing through the U.S. Senate the Yemen War Powers Resolution, which was, in turn, passed as well in the House of Representatives and sent to President Trump to sign into law. However, he used his veto to kill the bill and, unfortunately, there was not the 66% majority of legislators in Congress to over-ride Trump's veto. There are two results: one is that the war in Yemen will go on for a while yet; the other is that the power of Congress has been effectively diminished in relation to the U.S. president," Ken Stone told Tasnim in an interview.

Ken Stone has been a leader of the anti-racist movement in Hamilton for three decades, having been a member of the Mayor's Committee Against Racism and Discrimination for about ten years and chair of its Mediation Subcommittee for three. Ken was also a director of the Social Planning and Research Council and member of its race relations committee. He chaired for a number of years the Human Rights Committee of the Hamilton and District Labour Council and initiated the first ever survey of racial compositions of trade union executive bodies in Canada. Ken was a founding member of the Community Coalition Against Racism in 1989 and was a candidate for alderman for Ward 6 in the 1988 municipal election.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday vetoed a bill Congress passed to end U.S. military assistance in the Saudi Arabia-led war on Yemen. What's your take on the veto by Trump?

A: I agree with my colleagues in the U.S. peace movement who argue that U.S. participation in the illegal and brutal Saudi war on Yemen is unconstitutional according to the U.S. Constitution and the War Powers Act of 1973. They argue that, unless the U.S. has been directly attacked, the U.S. president can only make war on another country with the explicit prior consent of Congress. Yemen has not attacked the U.S. Exactly the opposite is the case. So U.S. peace activists lobbied their elected representatives to invoke the War Powers Act of 1973 to force President Trump to stop aiding and abetting the Saudi Coalition in waging its illegal and very brutal war on Yemen. U.S. Senator (and presidential candidate) Bernie Sanders and other senators succeeded in passing through the U.S. Senate the Yemen War Powers Resolution, which was, in turn, passed as well in the House of Representatives and sent to President Trump to sign into law. However, he used his veto to kill the bill and, unfortunately, there was not the 66% majority of legislators in Congress to over-ride Trump's veto. There are two results: one is that the war in Yemen will go on for a while yet; the other is that the power of Congress has been effectively diminished in relation to the U.S. president.

In our anti-war activities, we recognize the participation of the USA in the Saudi war on Yemen is significant. U.S. (and UK) military officers sit in the command room of the Saudi Coalition. They sell and service the military aircraft and other military equipment. They provide the bombs and the intelligence to plot missions. They rescue downed pilots from the sea. U.S. ships help the Saudis enforce an illegal embargo of food and humanitarian aid that has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis in Yemen. It is, in effect, a U.S.-Saudi war on the people on Yemen.

The situation in Yemen is indeed so dire – according to UNICEF, a Yemeni child dies on the average every ten

minutes due to malnutrition and lack of medicine - that, a few days ago, an official of the UK government (whose hands are also stained with the blood of Yemeni children) called on the United Nations to put more pressure on Saudi Arabia to live up to the truce it signed on January 7, 2019, brokered by the UN, to withdraw from Hudaydah, the port through which most of the humanitarian aid, destined for Yemen, enters the country. There are, in fact, several ways that the UN could increase pressure on Saudi Arabia to abide by the terms of the January 7 truce and indeed to end its war on Yemen, both through the Security Council and the General Assembly. It remains to be seen if anything will come of the UK initiative. Up to now, with the war entering its fifth year, the UN has been relatively ineffective in stopping the naked aggression by Saudi Arabia, the richest state in the Arab world, against Yemen, the poorest.

Here's the thing. When the organs of governments and international organizations fail to do the job for which they were created, it's incumbent on ordinary people around the world to step up to the plate. The USA, like Canada and other NATO countries, shamefully sells massive amounts of arms to Saudi Arabia. These sales are like a license to kill Yemeni men, women, and children. We, ordinary folks in all these NATO countries, need to do more to urge our governments to end these arms sales and effectively remove from the despotic Saudi regime its license to kill Yemenis. I note that Germany banned arms to Saudi Arabia last year following the Khashoggi Affair, followed by Denmark, which also cited the war on Yemen, and Finland, which cited ONLY the war on Yemen. Momentum to end the war on Yemen is building.

Peace movements in the West should redouble our efforts to stop these arms sales through lobbying our elected officials, demonstrating, waging social media campaigns, making the sales an election issue, and so on. This is what ordinary people can do to end the US-Saudi war on Yemen.

■ According to media reports, the US Congress has grown uneasy with the president's close relationship with Saudi Arabia. The lawmakers have criticized Trump for not condemning Riyadh for the killing of Jamal Khashoggi. What is the reason behind this close relationship?

A: The U.S. empire, like the British empire before it, has always maintained close relations with the Saudi regime. In fact, the British empire put the dissolute Saudi family in power in Riyadh in the first place to manage the oil fields in its interest. And it's unlikely that the anti-democratic and barbaric Saudi regime would have remained in power this long were it not for the solid support of the USA. The Saudi regime provides many services for its present imperial masters: it banks its billions in New York and London financial institutions; it buys lavish arms systems it doesn't have the capability to operate; it supplies bribes and loans to western politicians; it provides funding and terrorist mercenaries as the foot soldiers in western regime change operations from Libya to Syria to Afghanistan. The Saudi government is one of the pillars - the other is Israel – by which the USA seeks to dominate the Middle East (and the world).

During the Obama years, in which the U.S.-Saudi war on Yemen began, the U.S. Congress mounted no significant opposition to President Obama over this murderous and illegal aggression. This was because Obama was a Democrat and his co-partisans in the U.S. Congress were in agreement with their Republican colleagues that the war on Yemen coincided with U.S. interests.

However, once the killing of Khashoggi was widely reported in the media, there was widespread public revulsion, fanned by the mainstream media, among the electorate that the U.S. government was in bed with such a despotic Saudi regime, which showed no respect even for its own

of terrorist groups."

"We condemn the reception by French President Emmanuel Macron of a delegation of so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)," he added. He said Macron's meeting with SDF representatives did not sit well with the French-Turkish alliance, warning, "Turkey will not hesitate to take measures deemed necessary to protect its national security."



domestic laws. In effect, the people of the USA were led to sympathize more with the murder of one man than the whole Yemeni nation.

President Trump stuck by his Saudi friends, however, for the same old reasons. The class of billionaires he represents makes trillions of dollars through arms sales and war and through exploiting the resources of all the countries in the U.S. sphere of influence. Trump even managed to squeeze more out of the compliant Saudi client state since the Khashoggi Affair.

But the Democrats now hold a slim majority in Congress and now the president is a Republican. In the cynical world of U.S. politics, the same people who previously supported or were silent on the U.S.-Saudi war on Yemen are today more vocal against it and against President Trump.

In the meantime, public opinion has turned massively against the slaughter in Yemen. And so it's time that anti-war activists took advantage of the public's growing awareness of Yemen to push for an end to arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the war on Yemen itself.

■ Sen. Tim Kaine, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a statement that the veto was "part of an alarming pattern of Trump turning a blind eye to Saudi Arabia's actions that fly in the face of American values" and accused the administration of "deference to Saudi Arabia at the expense of American security interests." Do you believe so?

A: Senator Kaine's statement of April 16 makes some good points. He notes the humanitarian crisis created by the U.S.-Saudi war. He mentions the murder of Khashoggi, the jailing of women's right activists, and the acquisition of nuclear technology by the Saudi regime, "despite the Saudi regime's threats to create a nuclear program and refusal to agree to nonproliferation rules that would prevent the development of nuclear weapons."

However, it's difficult to ascertain for certain what are "American values" today. The U.S. government, whether under a Democratic or Republican administration, shows no regard for international law and uses its domestic law increasingly to pauperize and jail its own citizens. It's increasingly an oligarchy run by the 1%.

As for U.S. security interests, the Saudis fit in perfectly with the increasingly anarchic world order in which rogue states such as the USA and its client regimes such as Israel and Saudi Arabia run amok all over the planet, threatening the peace with military bases, nuclear weapons, and regime change operations.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is not the body that will address the increasing insecurity of the USA or all the other nations of the world. I think that's the job ultimately of the people of the world in demanding a new, non-nuclear peaceful world order.

During the meeting, Macron assured the SDF of "active support" and financial aid to "respond to the humanitarian needs and the socio-economic stabilization of civilian populations in Syria."

Last December U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of all 2,000 American forces from Syria, but France pledged to keep its forces in the country's north.

## On Trump's shameful decision for Yemen

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — The database tracker from the Armed Conflict and Location Event Data Project has issued a new data on Yemen, showing more than 70,000 have been killed in the U.S.-backed, Saudi-led war just since January 2016.

This is a huge amount of deaths, and if there is some decrease in fighting in Hodeida because of UN talks, it's not like the war is slowing much. At least 10,000 people were killed just in the past five months.

It begs the question: When will the warmongers stop bombing Yemen? U.S. President Donald Trump answered that earlier this week when he vetoed a bill passed by Congress to end war in Yemen. This is not what the United Nations and the long-suffering people of the poorest country in the Arab world would like to see.

The war-torn nation has been suffering for more than four years because no one shows any trust to stop glorifying the violence, pull back from the port city of Hodeida, and move on from the protracted conflict - despite a ceasefire agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council.

There was no need for Saudi Arabia to make a rash decision, assemble a coalition, and launch an air campaign against the country in March 2015 to try to restore the toppled government of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

As well, the United States and its NATO allies had the chance to be a champion of peace in the Arabian Peninsula, yet they erroneously provided logistical support for the Saudi-led campaign of air raids and henceforth became complicit with Saudis in war crimes and in the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe.

It is because of the deliberate actions and mistakes of the Saudis and allies that tens of thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, have been killed, millions of poor families have lost their homes, and the blockaded country is on the brink of famine and mass starvation. What else did they expect? This was predictable right from the outset.

The Saudis and their allies are mistaken to assume that risking the lives of millions of civilians to famine, blockade and airstrikes is a price worth for the pointless war to restore to power President Hadi. President Trump is dead wrong to think his veto could help win the battle and protect America's security and interests in the region.

Far from it, the battle cannot be won and it's a fantasy to insist otherwise. The warmongers should realize the vision of UN-brokered ceasefire agreement instead, and work for a solution to the humanitarian crisis. They should attend peace talks in good faith and without preconditions, and stick to any agreement reached there.

Overwhelmed by four years of attacks, counter-attacks, carnage and death, a majority of people in Yemen want an immediate end to the war and the blockade. They expect all powerful groupings to represent this point of view at the United Nations. They expect the international civil society to help the invaders and their disparate regional, tribal and sectarian elements realise the importance of ending the violence, lifting the blockade, and the pressing need for humanitarian relief.

To put that in perspective, the European states should stop perverting facts. They must face their ambitions and realize that they are not saving Yemen. They are disintegrating the country and bringing it to heel. This should give them the chills and leave them with enough determination to bring the war to an unconditional end.

The time to face their modern ignorance, selfishness and exceptionalism is here and now. They shouldn't suppress hope, or justify war and betray their own conscience. The biggest crime is to step back and not confront and correct their past mistakes. They must refuse to be in the same ill-fated position. They must deal with their impulses and stop peeping into the looking glass.

Whichever way one looks at this deliberate humanitarian disaster, there is no need to rebrand or double down on their doomed obsession with blockade, vetoes and escalation. It won't help restore their dented prestige, nor will it help dictate policy and determine a self-serving conclusion.

The Saudis and partners should stop the campaign to ravish Yemen and reject any glorification of this immoral violence. Just like the people of Yemen, the international civil society should also support the continuation of the current political process, the ceasefire agreement in Hodeida, and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the battle-torn country.

## Saudi journalist sentenced to 5 years in jail in secret

**TEHRAN** — Saudi authorities have secretly tried prominent journalist Al Al-Dhafiri and handed him a five-year prison sentence as a crackdown led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman against rights campaigners and intellectuals widens in the conservative kingdom.

Social media activists reported that Saudi officials had also banned Dhafiri – a former presenter for Doha-based Al Jazeera television news network, from traveling for ten years on charges of "communication with Qatar."

According to Press TV, the activists noted that the journalist's funds were confiscated, and his family was forced to pledge that they would not talk about the issue to any media outlet. They were also warned that their devices were being closely monitored.

Dhafiri resigned from Al Jazeera TV two weeks after Saudi Arabia together with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5, 2017, after officially accusing it of "sponsoring terrorism."

Qatar's Foreign Ministry later announced that the decision to cut diplomatic ties was unjustified and based on false claims and assumptions.

On June 9, 2017, Qatar strongly dismissed allegations of supporting terrorism after the Saudi regime and its allies blacklisted dozens of individuals and entities purportedly associated with Doha.

Later that month, Saudi Arabia and its allies released a 13-point list of demands, including the closure of Al Jazeera television network and downgrade of relations with Iran, in return for the normalization of diplomatic relations with Doha.

The document also asked Qatar to sever all ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement.

Qatar rejected the demands as "unreasonable."

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

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

## Turkey warns France after Macron hosts Syria's Kurdish militants

**TEHRAN** — Turkey has censured French President Emmanuel Macron for hosting a delegation of Syrian Kurdish militants, accusing Paris of attempting to give legitimacy to a "terrorist" group.

Macron hosted representatives of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a U.S.-backed anti-Damascus alliance of mainly Kurdish militants, in Paris, Press TV reported.

This is while Ankara regards the SDF as a terrorist organization and an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has been waging a bloody war against Turkey for decades.

In a statement released on Friday, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said the French president was "seeking to confer artificial legitimacy on a faction



## ‘England, Spain or Portugal’ - Sanches wants to leave Bayern

One-time wonderkid Renato Sanches has repeated his desire to leave Bayern Munich after another year in which he has struggled to break into the first team.

“I have to play more, five minutes are not enough,” said Sanches, 21, after he was substituted onto the field in the 87th minute during Bayern’s 1-0 win over Werder Bremen on Saturday.

“A loan would be an option. I just want to play, whether in England, Spain or Portugal,” he said.

Sanches joined Bayern as a teenager in 2016, just weeks after winning the European Championships with Portugal and being named Young Player of the Tournament.

Bayern paid 35 million euros (\$39.3m) for the much-hyped midfielder, but he failed to break into the first team in his first year in Munich.

An attempt to reboot his career on loan at Swansea City proved disastrous, and Sanches returned to Bayern last summer in the hope that he could make an impact under new coach Niko Kovac.

Yet after a promising start to the season, Sanches has made only six starts in all competitions this term, and is now openly angling for a move away.

“I am not happy here, I am working hard but not playing,” he told Kicker magazine last month.

Yet on Saturday, he also insisted that he had no problem with Bayern coach Kovac.

“I have a normal relationship with Kovac. I respect him, he and my team mates see how hard I work in training,” he said.

(Source: AFP)

## Coutinho whistled at the Camp Nou after his midweek celebration

There was controversy in midweek when Philippe Coutinho put fingers in his ears after scoring against Manchester United, a gesture that some have interpreted as a message to his critics.

With this fresh in the memory, some fans at the Camp Nou whistled the Brazilian as he was substituted on in the second half of Barcelona’s 2-1 victory over Real Sociedad on Saturday night.

Ernesto Valverde had tried to play down the celebration in his pre-match press conference on Friday, but some supporters seemed to still be upset about it.

(Source: Marca)

## Paul Pogba’s salary, a potential stumbling block for Madrid move

Real Madrid head coach Zinedine Zidane is interested in securing Paul Pogba’s services and has alluded to this fact on a number of time in press conferences. Any potential move to the Spanish capital for the French capital however, would need to see three current impediments to be negotiated: Manchester United, Mino Raiola and the player’s salary.

Real Madrid have always been cautious about ensuring a degree of harmony in the salary hierarchy at the club and the Frenchman’s current wage could be a potential issue.

AS understands that Pogba currently earns a net salary of 17 million euro per annum with the English side.

If Real Madrid were to match this sum, this would jet-tison Pogba to the top of the highest earners at the LaLiga club ahead of the likes of Gareth Bale (currently earning 15 million euro per season) and Sergio Ramos on 11.8 million euro per campaign.

Despite the positive disposition from the 26-year-old to move to the Santiago Bernabéu, the midfielder would be reluctant to accept a deduction in his current level of income.

The economic factor is not the only impediment for Zidane in his quest to sign Pogba, Manchester United are aware that after an indifferent season for the Red Devils, the club need to inject a new sense of belief and hope into a jaded fan base and selling one of the club’s key assets and biggest names is likely to further frustrate the Old Trafford faithful.

Madrid’s final obstacle in this situation is agent Mino Raiola. The relationship between the Dutch born representative and Real Madrid is tense and it’s widely anticipated that at the time of any potential negotiation between both sides that Raiola would drive the hardest bargain possible, defending both his interests and that of his player.

(Source: AS)

## Roger Federer: ‘We tennis players are like rock stars’

In an interview, Roger Federer spoke about the challenges of being a tennis player, The Swiss travels around the globe with his wife Mirka and their four children. “It’s sometimes hard because we are like rock stars in some ways, we do world tour every year, but I got used to it.

I have to do a lot of prevention training, stretching, massage, staying healthy”, said Federer. On what his thoughts during the main moments of a match, the 37-year-old added: “When a match point comes around or a few points before that, I think, Oh my god, I am probably going to make it again.

Sometimes you think, how is the whole picture going to look like when I win. My god, do not think about it. You do not want to think about it. I just want to lie down and give myself two seconds on the ground I can relax. It’s just an incredible emotion to sit down on the chair and say, It’s all over now.

It’s great. I am so happy all the hard work paid off. It’s this kind of feeling.” Federer also admitted his career overcame his expectations: “When I was young I could have never thought I could play tennis the way I am playing right now.

(Source: Tennis World)

# Juventus clinch eighth Serie A title in a row



Juventus overcame their European blues when they fought back to beat Fiorentina 2-1 at home on Saturday and claim the Serie A title for a remarkable eighth season in a row.

Knocked out of the Champions League by Ajax in the quarter-finals on Tuesday, Juventus fell behind to a Nikola Milenkovic goal in the sixth minute and survived two Federico Chiesa shots against the woodwork before halftime.

But an Alex Sandro header and a German Pezzella own goal either side of the break wrapped up a record-extending 35th scudetto crown and allowed Cristiano Ronaldo to add to the English and Spanish titles he won with Manchester United and Real Madrid at the first attempt.

Juve’s 28th win in 33 league games this season left them with 87 points, 20 more than second-placed Napoli who have six games to play. They are the first team to win any of Europe’s top five leagues — England, Spain, France, Italy and Germany — eight times in a row.

“To win the championship with five matches to spare is testimony to the great season we have had,” said coach Massimiliano Allegri who has been in charge for the last five campaigns and also won Serie A with AC Milan in 2011.

Ronaldo, scorer of 19 goals in the campaign, said: “I’m really happy to have won the Italian title in my first season here. It has been a great season for this Juventus, we also won the Italian Supercup. We didn’t do so well in the Champions League but there is always next year.”

However, it still had the air of the consolation prize after their failure to progress in the Champions League which they had high hopes of winning following the signing of Ronaldo in July.

Juventus have won Europe’s premier club competition twice, compared to seven

times for AC Milan and Inter Milan’s three.

### ■ AJAX LOSS

The Turin side appeared to be suffering the after-effects of Tuesday’s 2-1 home defeat by Ajax, when they were outclassed by the Dutch side, in the opening half hour.

Fiorentina were without a win in their

previous eight Serie A games but Milenkovic put them ahead, firing into the roof of the net from close range after goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny diverted Chiesa’s cross into his path.

Chiesa curled a shot against the post as Juventus continued to struggle before Sandro came to the rescue as he got away from the Fiorentina defence to score with a low near-post header from a corner in the 37th minute.

Juventus had another escape before half-time as Chiesa rattled the underside of the crossbar with a rasping drive.

But a moment of brilliance from Ronaldo ended Juve’s suffering as the Portuguese forward produced a devastating burst of speed to reach the byline and his low cross was turned into his own goal by Fiorentina defender Pezzella.

“We don’t think it’s really sunk in that we are re-writing history,” said defender Giorgio Chiellini, who has taken part in all eight campaigns but is currently sidelined with injury.

“I don’t know if anyone will ever repeat this in football, above all in Italy — eight titles in a row.”

Juve’s total of 35 Serie A titles is nearly double the number won by nearest rivals AC Milan and Inter Milan who have 18 apiece.

Juventus claim to have lifted the trophy 37 times, refusing to recognize the decision to strip them of the 2004-05 and 2005-06 titles following the so-called Calciopoli match-fixing scandal. That also saw them relegated and they bounced back at the first attempt.

(Source: Reuters)

## Nadal blown away by Fognini in Monte Carlo



Rafa Nadal suffered a shock 6-4 6-2 semi-final defeat against flamboyant Italian Fabio Fognini at the Monte Carlo Masters on Saturday, showing rare signs of weakness five weeks before the French Open.

The 11-time champion’s loss in tricky conditions ended a series of 25 consecutive sets won on his favourite clay as Fognini set up a final showdown against Serbian Dusan Lajovic.

“It was a tough day and he was a difficult opponent,” said Nadal, who has a 71-5 record in the principality. “I am coming from low moments in terms of injuries, and in terms of the mental side it has not been easy to accept all the things that have been going on.

“It was this kind of day that everything was wrong.”

In windy conditions at the Monte Carlo Country Club Nadal, who has also won 11 French Open titles, was overwhelmed by Fognini, who entered centre court with all guns blazing.

The Italian was on a five-match losing streak when he entered the tournament

but Fognini’s unpredictability, added to the weather conditions, were eventually too much for the Spanish world number two who bowed out on the fourth match point.

It was world number 18 Fognini’s fourth career win against Nadal in 15 encounters and his third on tennis’ slowest surface.

Nadal had been bidding to match Roger Federer’s record of 50 Masters finals.

Earlier, Lajovic reached his first Masters final when he mastered the wind to beat Russian Daniil Medvedev 7-5 6-1.

Lajovic trailed 3-0 and 5-1 in the opening set before going through the gears.

The 10th-seeded Medvedev could not respond as wind gusts swept across centre court and Lajovic quickly moved 4-0 up in the second set against a frustrated opponent, who bowed out on the second match point.

“It was an incredible match today,” said world number 48 Lajovic, the lowest-ranked player to reach the final here since Hicham Arazi in 2001.

(Source: Reuters)

## Van Dijk, Mane, Sterling among PFA award contenders but no Salah



Manchester City and Liverpool dominate the Professional Footballers’ Association Player of the Year award with Raheem Sterling and Virgil van Dijk among those shortlisted.

Sergio Aguerro, Sadio Mane, Bernardo Silva and Eden Hazard join Sterling and Van Dijk on the six-man list, with last year’s winner Mohamed Salah failing to make the cut. There is also no place for Kevin De Bruyne, who lost out to Salah last term.

Van Dijk, a £75 million signing from Southampton in January 2018, is the favourite to take the trophy following a fine season at Liverpool, with the club battling City for the Premier League title and also in the Champions League semifinals. Van Dijk and Liverpool have the best defensive record in the Premier League this season, with just 20 goals conceded in 34 matches.

Mane, with 10 goals in his past 11 matches in all competitions for club and country, joins his Liverpool teammate and with 18 goals, is one behind Aguerro in the leading scorers’ chart.

Sterling has scored 23 goals and provided

16 assists so far, with City looking to put their Champions League disappointment behind them and win the Premier League for the second season in succession.

Chelsea’s Hazard is the only non-Manchester City or Liverpool player in contention and sources have told ESPN that the Blues fear there’s nothing they can do to prevent him joining Real Madrid in the summer. Silva and Sterling also feature on the Young Player of the Year shortlist along with Liverpool’s Trent Alexander-Arnold, Manchester United’s Marcus Rashford, West Ham’s Declan Rice and Bournemouth’s David Brooks.

Chelsea’s Fran Kirby does not make the shortlist for the women’s award but Manchester City trio Steph Houghton, Nikita Parris and Keira Walsh are among the nominees alongside Chelsea’s Erin Cuthbert and Ji So-yun, and Arsenal’s Vivianne Miedema.

The winners, voted for by the PFA members, will be announced at the annual awards ceremony on April 28.

(Source: Soccernet)

## Crawford stops Khan to retain WBO welterweight title



American Terence Crawford retained his WBO welterweight title Saturday, stopping Amir Khan in the sixth round when the Englishman was unable to continue because of an accidental low blow.

Crawford, who was making the second defense of his title, had little trouble controlling the fight and winning by a technical knockout against the overmatched Khan.

Crawford has now won nine of his last 11 fights by stoppage and Saturday’s surprise ending happened after he hit Khan with a hard left to the groin 47 seconds into the sixth round at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Khan buckled and was in obvious pain as he went over to his corner. During the injury stoppage, Khan’s trainer Virgil Hunter asked his boxer if he wanted to continue and Khan said no. Khan could have taken a five-minute break to regain his composure but chose not to.

Crawford denied it was a low blow but the referee saw it differently.

“It wasn’t a low blow,” Crawford said. “I was rushing a little. Trying to box more and catch him in the trenches.”

Three division world champion Crawford improved to 35 wins and no losses.

Crawford, who is considered one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world, sent Khan to the canvas in the first round with an overhand right followed by a left to the

temple. He delivered a similar overhand punch in the last 10 seconds of the round which wobbled Khan’s legs again.

The next couple of rounds saw the 146-pound Crawford throwing almost all his punches at Khan’s head. By the fourth round, Crawford was in complete control and Khan’s swollen face was showing the marks of getting hit with clean punches.

Crawford started going to the body in the fourth and in

the fifth he got his jab working again, popping Khan’s head back with a series of quick shots.

Khan wasn’t Crawford’s first choice. He wanted to fight International Boxing Federation champ Errol Spence and reiterated that on Saturday.

“The only one fight they are talking about is Spence. Whenever he is ready, I am here,” said Crawford. “The only thing I can do is fight (the) person they put in front of me. We are going to make it happen, sooner or later.”

### ■ ‘I am a warrior’

Khan defended his decision to not continue or take the full five minutes of the time out.

“I am a warrior,” he said. “I would never give up in a fight like this. “I was in pain. I could feel it in my stomach. My legs seized. I couldn’t continue. You have to knock me out for me to give up.”

For Khan, the 2004 Olympic silver medallist, it was another disappointing world title fight. He is 2-2 in his last four fights.

Three years ago, he was brutally knocked out by Canelo Alvarez in a middleweight title fight. Saturday’s fight dropped his record in world title fights to 6-4 overall.

Between the Alvarez fight and Saturday’s TKO loss, Khan won two straight bouts against lesser opponents.

(Source: Independent)



# Hamed Haddadi breaks silence on Iran basketball absence

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran center Hamed Haddadi has spoken for the first time about his absence in the national team.

Team Melli missed the service of the 2.18m in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 Asian Qualifiers against Japan and Australia after he faced a problem with the country's basketball officials.

His teammate, Samad Nikkhhah Bahrami also withdrew from the games in support of Haddadi.

Now, Hadadi has decided to break his silence on the rumors surrounding his commitment to Team Melli.

"First, I have to criticize Mr. Shahintab (Iran coach) after he accused me of being disloyal to my country. I will play for Iran national basketball team even with a broken foot. Basketball is my love and I will die for my national team," Haddadi said in an interview with Fars news agency.

Haddadi was invited to Team Melli but refused to play for the country.

"Yes, I was called up to the team but could not play for the team since the team's officials had not resolved the problems. Oshin Sahakina, Mehdi Kamrani, Samad Nikkhhah Bahrami and Saeid Davarpanah were angry with the way the officials treated them. Oshin announced his retirement for Shahintab and Kamrani, who had returned to the training, was dropped from Team Melli after six months of hard work and dedication," the former Memphis Grizzlies star added.

"It's a great honor to play for my country. We were in the training camp for six months and we didn't ask for anything but they didn't respect the players. They told us playing for Team Melli is our responsibility and we also said that's right but in Japan the team's members were taken to the venue with public transport," Haddadi stated.



## Tractor Sazi fan attacks Iran captain Masoud Shojaei

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Tractor Sazi fan ran unchallenged onto the pitch and punched the team's captain Masoud Shojaei on Friday.

Tractor Sazi suffered a 1-0 home defeat to Paykan in Iran Professional League and almost missed the chance of winning the title for the first time and the fans who attended the match in Tabriz's Yadegar-e Emam Stadium, protested the players for their lackluster performance.

At the end of the match, Tractor Sazi and Iran captain Shojaei was punched in the face by a fan who ran onto the pitch.

A video of the incident has gone viral on social media. Some fans broke out onto the pitch to invade the players but they were arrested by the policemen.

Several Tractor Sazi fans were reportedly taken to hospital after suffering heart attack after their team lost the match.

## Time is quickly running out for signing, Karim Ansarifard

Nottingham Forest's season hasn't quite gone to plan this term, with the Reds struggling to mount a play-off push and falling well short in recent weeks.

The change in manager a few months ago which saw Aitor Karanka replaced by Martin O'Neill has not worked out for Forest at all, and the former Ireland manager is already coming under some pressure from sections of the City Ground.

The club made a host of new signings over the summer and were expected to challenge for the top six, and one of the those players to join the club in 2018 was striker Karim Ansarifard, who made the move to the Midlands following a spell with Olympiakos.

It hasn't worked out though for the Iranian striker, who has only one goal to his name in a Forest shirt amid injury problems which have kept him out of the team of late.

This week though saw the striker take to social media to show an image of himself enjoying life in the gym, which suggested a return to fitness was not too far away.

However, we aren't convinced that this could have any sort of bearing on Ansarifard's future at the City Ground given there is only



three games left of the Championship season.

The Iranian might well fall foul of yet more change at the club, and unless Martin O'Neill has seen something he fancies during his spell with the Reds, then it could well be curtains for the striker come the summer months.

There's little doubt that the 29-year-old has talent in the bag, having played for his country during the last World Cup in Russia, but it could well be a case of just not working out for a player who has a proven goalscoring record at other clubs during his career.

It will certainly be interesting to see how this one pans out, but looking in at the moment from an outside point of view, there doesn't seem to be too much hope for Ansarifard and his future under Martin O'Neill.

(Source: Football League World)

## Shahrdari Varamin beat Vietnamese team at Asian Club Volleyball C'ship

Shahrdari Varamin continued their remarkable unbeaten run at the 2019 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship.

The Iranian side demolished Ho Chi Minh City in thrilling straight sets (25-22, 25-20, 25-20) in the top-eight playoff match at the University of Taipei (Tianmu) Gymnasium on Sunday.

Alireza Jalali chipped in with 14 attacks from 25 attempts, one block and 4 aces for the winning side, while Nguyen Van Hanh was the lone Vietnamese player who scored double-digit 22 points for Ho Chi Minh City including 20 kills from 30 attempts and one ace.

The Iranian team will face the Japanese representative on Monday.

The 10th edition of the Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship has been organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Chinese Taipei Volleyball Association (CTVA).

The tournament is being held in Taipei, Chinese Taipei from April 18 to 26.

The winner of this tournament will qualify for the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship.

"It's the first match we played in this main hall, but we tried to keep quality. In



the beginning of the match, we had a little problem with their combination attacks, but after that we knew how to play and how to block them," Varamin Municipality's head coach Rahman Mohammadirad commented after the match.

"We had a very good result. Against Panasonic Panthers in our next match, I think it will be the most important match for us since if we can beat them, we will top the pool and the next match after that will be much easier for us. Panthers are also a good team in this tournament. They bring all the players and I think they are one of the strong teams to be reckoned with. We will do our best and hope the Japanese enjoy our match," he added.

(Source: asianvolleyball)

## Matchday Four: West Zone Preview

The 2019 AFC Champions League group stage enters the decisive phase with eight matches taking place across West Asia in Matchday Four on Monday and Tuesday.

Having crossed the halfway line of the group stage, Matchday Four sees the sides that faced-off two weeks ago trading places with the reverse encounters kicking-off the second half of Groups A to D in West Asia.

### ● Group A

Competition is heating up in Group A with just four points separating leaders Zob Ahan and bottom-placed Al Nassr.

The Saudi side shuffled the deck on Matchday Three after ending their run of two defeats with an emphatic 4-1 victory against previously unbeaten Al Zawraa in Riyadh.

The two sides face-off again on Tuesday, this time in Karbala where Al Zawraa had beaten Al Wasl 5-0 in their first home match, propelled by a Group A record crowd of 27,000 fans.

The only side yet to lose a game in this group, Zob Ahan look to confirm their place at the top of the group and edge ever closer to booking a knock-out spot for the third time in four years when they host Al Wasl.

The reverse fixture two weeks ago saw the Iranian side come from a goal behind to overcome Al Wasl 3-1 in Dubai. A third consecutive defeat for the Emiratis will put their chances of progression in tatters.

### ■ Zob Ahan (IRN) vs Al Wasl (UAE)

Venue: Foad Shahr Stadium, Isfahan

### ■ Al Zawraa (IRQ) vs Al Nassr (KSA)

Venue: Karbala Sports City, Karbala

### ● Group B

After three matches for each team, Group B is yet to

witness a single draw. In fact, every match in this group has seen at least two goals.

UAE's Al Wahda and Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad stand out with six points each, the Emiratis lead the group by virtue of a superior head-to-head record, having defeated their rivals 4-1 on Matchday Two.

Coach Henk ten Cate's men continue their march towards maintaining the top spot as they welcome Qatar's Al Rayyan to Abu Dhabi. Al Wahda had edged their opponents in the reverse fixture two weeks ago thanks to an added time penalty scored by Leonardo.

Two-time AFC Champions League winners Al Ittihad also needed a penalty in added time to overcome PFC Lokomotiv 3-2 in Jeddah.

The two sides lock horns again on Monday in Tashkent where Lokomotiv had won their first game of the campaign 2-0 against Al Wahda, the Uzbek side's only win so far.

### ■ Al Wahda (UAE) vs Al Rayyan (QAT)

Venue: Al Nahyan Stadium, Abu Dhabi

### ■ PFC Lokomotiv (UZB) vs Al Ittihad (KSA)

Venue: Lokomotiv Stadium, Tashkent

### ● Group C

After convincingly winning their first two games of the group, Al Hilal succumbed to a 2-1 defeat at the hands of Esteghlal on Matchday Three. The Saudi side, however, remain top of Group C with six points.

Esteghlal, meanwhile, moved into the heart of competition for the two Round-of-16 places with the win in Doha, having collected just one point from their first two matches. A win against Al Hilal in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday could see them topple the Saudis from the top spot.

Matchday Three saw Al Ain come from two goals down

to rescue a point against Al Duhail in Qatar. The Emirati side will be encouraged by the result as they look to get a first win against their rivals, having lost to them twice in the 2018 Round of 16.

Under coach Rui Faria, Al Duhail have delivered mixed results, losing their previous away match to Al Hilal 3-1 but staying unbeaten on home soil. Getting the three points at the Hazza bin Zayed Stadium on Tuesday can send them to the top of the group, depending on the other result.

### ■ Al Ain (UAE) vs Al Duhail (QAT)

Venue: Hazza bin Zayed Stadium, Al Ain

### ■ Al Hilal (KSA) vs Esteghlal (IRN)

Venue: Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi

### ● Group D

Perhaps the most closely contested group of the eight, only two points separate table toppers Pakhtakor and bottom-placed Al Ahli going into Matchday Four.

Al Ahli failed to score and fell to defeat on the road for the second game running, to freeze at three points after their opening day home victory over Al Sadd. They play hosts to Persepolis in Dubai on Monday.

Persepolis had won the reverse fixture in the same city two weeks ago, thanks to goals from Shoja Khalilzadeh and Ali Alipour.

Unbeaten so far, Pakhtakor sit top of the group with five points ahead of the trip to Doha where they face Al Sadd on Monday. The two sides had shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw on Matchday Three in Tashkent.

### ■ Al Sadd (QAT) vs FC Pakhtakor (UZB)

Venue: Jassim bin Hamad Stadium, Doha

### ■ Al Ahli (KSA) vs Persepolis (IRN)

Venue: Al Maktoum Stadium, Dubai

## S. Korea to host Australia, Iran in football friendlies in June

South Korea will host Australia and Iran in men's football friendlies in June, the sport's national federation said Friday.

An official with the Korea Football Association (KFA) said Australia will visit South Korea to complete their home-and-away series, with South Korea having faced the Socceroos in Brisbane last November. South Korea and Iran only need to sign an agreement to finalize their meeting.



Based on FIFA's International Match Calendar, two official matches can be scheduled between June 3 and 11. South Korea, coached by Paulo Bento, will assemble on June 3 and play their two matches on June 7 and 11.

It has not been determined on which of those dates Australia and Iran will take on the Taeguk Warriors.

Iran are the top Asian Football Confederation (AFC) team in the FIFA rankings at No. 21, 16 spots ahead of South Korea and 20 spots above Australia.

South Korea have faced Iran 30 times, with an all-time record of nine wins, eight draws and 13 losses. South Korea's last win over Iran came in January 2011 in the quarterfinals of the AFC Champions League. In ensuing meetings, Iran enjoyed four consecutive 1-0 victories over South Korea before they played to a scoreless draw during the FIFA World Cup qualifiers in August 2017.

In 27 meetings against Australia, South Korea have seven wins, 11 draws and nine losses. They have just one win in their past six matches against the Socceroos, with three draws and two losses.

(Source: Yonhap)

## Iranian chess champion refuses to play Israeli rival

**IRNA** — Iranian chess champion Ali-Reza Firouzja refused to play with the Israeli player in Germany's Grenke Classic Chess in a gesture interpreted as a support for the Palestinian people.

Firouzja refused to compete the Israeli rival on Friday while he has defeated all his competitors so far.

The event is taking place with 904 players from 48 countries. Firouzja had already refused to play with an Israeli in Rilton Cup in Sweden.

Having been named 'the genius' of Iran's chess, he is now standing on the top of the U16 ranking table.

Earlier, he became the champion in classic and the runner-up in international tournament in Gamma Rejkavik Open (April 8-16).

Becoming the champion in Iceland Chess 960, Firouzja also qualified to attend 2019 Chess 960 in Norway.

## ACL MD 4: Ryuji Sato to officiate Al Hilal v Esteghlal

**MNA** — Japanese referee Ryuji Sato has been chosen to officiate Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia and Iran's Esteghlal match.

Sato will be assisted by his countrymen Hiroshi Yamauchi and Jun Mihara. Ryuji Sato has refereed internationally in the ASEAN Football Championship, and FIFA World Cup qualifiers. He is also a referee at the J. League Division 1.

Esteghlal will meet its rival in Matchday Four of the AFC Champions League in Group C.

The match will be held at the Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the UAE on Tuesday.

The Iranian football club now stand third in Group C with four points, two points behind the leaders Al Hilal and head-to-head with Al Duhail.

## Iranian teams big movers in Club World Ranking

**TASNIM** — Iranian football clubs Persepolis, Esteghlal and Zob Ahan have moved at the Club World Ranking.

Persepolis have moved up 30 places to 156th with 3845 points. Esteghlal have climbed up 45 spots to 259 with 2681 points. Zob Ahan have also moved 45 points to 261 points in the ranking.

Tractor Sazi have dropped two places to 541st with 1244 points. Clubworldranking.com is a weekly ranking system of the best soccer teams, top scorers and coaches in the world, based on match results over the past 52 weeks.

## Preview - Group D: Al Ahli Saudi FC v Persepolis FC

Two weeks after Persepolis eased to a 2-0 win against Al Ahli at Zabeel Stadium, the two sides meet again just a few miles to the north at Al Maktoum Stadium.

Last year's AFC Champions League finalists and the 2012 runners-up face-off on Matchday Four of Group D on Monday. They find themselves occupying third and fourth place respectively.

Al Ahli come into the match with a new boss at the helm after Uruguayan manager Jorge Fossati was dismissed less than three months after being appointed.

Youssef Anbar, the new coach, started his reign with a 3-2 win over Al Wehda in the Saudi Pro League and will hope his continental debut is equally positive.

Persepolis, on the other side, hope their slow start at the AFC Champions League campaign is behind them, having recovered from collecting one point in their first two games with the win over Al Ahli on Matchday Three.

(Source: the-afc)



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A trouble that saddens you is better than a blessing that rouses your selfishness and loses you God's favor, for, the former grinds your body like a rasp, and the latter burns your spirit little by little.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Iranian photographer Adel Pazyar wins Phodar Biennial Grand Prize

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian photographer Adel Pazyar has won the Grand Prize of the 10th International Phodar Biennial, a photography competition in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Pazyar received the award for his collection "Uncertainty", which contains photos from an Iranian youth detention center, the organizers announced on Thursday.

Another Iranian photographer Abdollah Heidari received an honorable mention for his series titled "Children Diagnosed with Autism". Organized by Sofia Municipality, an exhibition of the selected photos is currently underway at the Sofia Central Railway Station until May 20.

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

### Installation

■ Sets of installation by Melisa Valipur are currently on display in an exhibit at Saless Gallery. The exhibition titled "Bewilderment" runs until May 1 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

### Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Fereidun Omid is underway at El Gallery. The exhibit named "Shining" will run until April 29 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebheh St., off Mahdih St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

■ Paintings by Abdolhamid Pazuki are currently on view in an exhibition at Asar Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until May 10 at the gallery that can be found at 16 Barforushan St., Iran-shahr St.

■ Seyhun Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Fariba Gorjian. The exhibit titled "The Curve of Oblivion" will continue until April 24 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

■ Hamed Sahihi is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery. The exhibit named "Slowness" will run until April 30 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

■ A collection of paintings by Soheil Mokhtar is on view at Delgosha Gallery. Entitled "Double-Edged Brush", the exhibit will be running until May 5 at the gallery located at 30 Mohajer Alley, Iranshahr St. off Karim Khan Ave.

■ Paintings by Maryam Safarzadeh are on display in an exhibition at Four Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Roots" will run until April 29 at the gallery, which can be found at 4 Eshraqi Alley off Shariati Ave. near Seyyed Khandan Bridge.

■ Parviz Ruzbeh, Narges Khaleqi, Hamid Rahimi, Mehdi Ziraki, Behnush Forutan and 28 other artists are displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Shokuh Gallery. The exhibit named "This Year" will be running until April 30 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.

### Photo

■ Photos by Hosna Shahramipur are on display in an exhibition at Dena Gallery. The exhibit titled "The Time between Parentheses" will run until April 29 at the gallery located at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.

# Iran's modern art pioneer Monir Farmanfarmaian dies at 97

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Monir Shahrudi d e s k Farmanfarmaian, a modern art pioneer in Iran who was famous for her mirror mosaics and geometric drawings, died from old age at her home in Tehran on Saturday night. She was 97.

One of her close relatives who wanted to remain anonymous confirmed the news of her death, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Sunday.

Farmanfarmaian was born in Qazvin and moved to Tehran at eight when her father was selected to serve as an MP. She studied painting at the University of Tehran and then moved to Paris to learn about avant-garde arts.

Meeting painter and poet Manuchehr Yektai, who then married Farmanfarmaian, was the turning point in her life. She traveled to New York City to study fashion design at the Parsons School of Design and Cornell University.

She worked as a fashion designer for several magazines, including Glamour, and a number shops during the 1950s when she met Andy Warhol, a leading pop art figure, who presented her a silk screen from his Marilyn Monroe series.

Farmanfarmaian split up from Yektai and married Abolbashar Farmanfarmaian, a law student at Columbia University. She selected his surname as her own pseudonym.

After her second marriage, she made numerous trips to her homeland where she became familiar with a number of traditional Iranian arts, including teahouse painting. In addition, she attended several major art events in Iran with her abstract paintings, one of which was also showcased at the Venice Biennale.

In the early 1960s, she attained her special style in mirror mosaics and geometric drawings, which were regarded at world's major auction houses such as Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonhams.

The Negarestan Garden Museum of the University of Tehran opened a new section in December 2017 to put 51 artworks by Farmanfarmaian on display in a permanent exhibition.



Monir Farmanfarmaian sitting in a wheelchair visits a permanent exhibition of her artworks that opened at the Negarestan Garden Museum of the University of Tehran on December 15, 2017. (Honaron-line/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

## Iranian designer Aidin Arjomandi misses judging Adobe awards due to U.S. sanctions



Iranian graphic designer Aidin Arjomandi

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian graphic designer Aidin Arjomandi stated that he had to forego judging at the 2019 Adobe Design Achievement Awards (ADAA) due to sanctions imposed on Iran by the Trump administration.

In an article published by Persian news agencies last week, Arjomandi said that he had been invited via an email to join the jury of the ADAA, which is held at Adobe HQ in San Francisco, California.

However, the organizers sent another email and said that they could not collaborate with him due to the sanctions. "I had never been confronted with such discriminatory treatment by societies that always claim they are in a fight against various aspects of discrimination,"

Arjomandi stated.

"The organizers of the ADAA have said that they made the decision due to the legal limits imposed by the sanctions, but this explanation failed to convince me," he added.

The Creative Director of the Arena Design Studio, Arjomandi won A'Design Award in 2015 by inventing a brand new musical instrument, the Celloridoo, which was a hybrid one by combination of cello and the didgeridoo.

He is the member of the World Design Consortium, International Design Club, International Council of Creative Industries and the International Association of Designers.

He was also a member of the juries at the 2018-2019 A'Design Award in Italy and the 2019 Asian Design Award in South Korea.

## Indonesia's TVRI CEO Helmy Yahya visits Tehran



COI director Hossein Entezami (L) and TVRI CEO Helmy Yahya meet at the Film Museum of Iran on April 20, 2018.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Helmy Yahya, the director of Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI), a state-owned public broadcasting television network in Indonesia, arrived in Tehran on Saturday to meet Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) director Hossein Entezami.

The meeting took place at the Film Museum of Iran where they discussed ways to expand relations, the COI announced in a press release published on Sunday.

Entezami gave a brief explanation about the cinema of Iran at the meeting and said that family issues and social topics have a special status in Iranian films.

"Violence and sex have no place in Iranian films, which allows the Islamic countries easily to select and show the

films," he said.

He also proposed hosting festivals of movies from Indonesian filmmakers in Iranian cities, and said that organizing such events would help introduce the film industry in Indonesia to the Iranian people.

"Strengthening ties with the Islamic countries, especially Indonesia, is among our country's priorities," Entezami said.

For his part, Yahya also said that cooperation with Iran is of great significance, and hoped that the two organizations can collaborate on joint film projects.

He also said that he and his delegation were very surprised to see the museum, which shows the great power and progress of Iranian cinema.

## I know Iranian cinema through Kiarostami films: German editor Hansjorg Weissbrich

By Manijeh Rezapoor

**TEHRAN** — German film editor Hansjorg Weissbrich has said that he is familiar with Iranian cinema through films by legendary filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami's movies.

Speaking to the Tehran Times in an email interview, Weissbrich, who is in Tehran to hold workshops at the 37th Fajr International Film Festival, said that he has also watched Asghar Farhadi's "A Separation" and Mani Haqiqi's "Pig" at the Berlin Film Festival.

"I would love to know more about Iranian cinema than I currently do," he added.

"A Separation" was named best film at the Berlin Film Festival in 2011, while, its cast ensemble received best actor and actress Silver Bears at the event. Haqiqi's "Pig" was screened at the Berlin Film Festival in 2018.

Weissbrich will hold three workshops at the festival set for April 22, 23 and 24.

"In my workshops, I will address techniques of editing and storytelling by presenting some examples from films



Hansjorg Weissbrich in an undated photo.

I have edited," he said.

The editor has already collaborated with many world famous directors. He has won the award for best film editor

at the 64th edition of the German Film Awards for George Maas's thriller "Two Lives".

Weissbrich also said that he received the invitation from the Fajr organizers via the production company of German director Hans-Christian Schmid, with whom he has worked for more than 20 years.

"We have done all his feature films together since 1995, with 'Distant Lights', 'Requiem', 'Storm' and 'Home for the Weekend', all premiered at the Berlin Film Festival," he said. "I have also frequently worked with Oscar-winning director Florian Gallenberger, who was a guest of the Fajr festival two years ago," he added.

Weissbrich has also collaborated with Gallenberger in his Oscar-winning short film "Quiero Ser" ("I Want to Be"), as well as his feature films "Shadows of Time", "John Rabe" and "Colonia".

Gallenberger's latest film "As Green as It Gets" will be reviewed in a special program for German filmmakers at the Fajr festival this year.

The 37th Fajr International Film Festival opened in Tehran on April 18 and will be running until April 26.

## "City of Love" star Forugh Qojabegli named best actress at Beijing Intl. Film Festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Forugh Qojabegli has been selected as best actress for her role in Iranian filmmaker Ali Jaberansari's drama "Tehran: City of Love" at the 9th Beijing International Film Festival, the

organizers announced on Saturday.

The film is about Mina (Forugh Qojabegli), who is unhappy about her weight, Hessam, a retired bodybuilder who trains older men and Vahid, who sings at funerals and weddings.

"A Fortunate Man" by Bille August from Denmark was picked as best feature film while Laszlo Nemes from Hungary was named as best director for his film "Sunset".

The award for best actor went to Aris Servetalis for his role in "The Waiter"

by Greek director Steve Krikris.

Prominent Iranian director Majid Majidi was on the jury panel of the festival.

Iranian films "Here" by Seyyed Hadi Mohaqeq and "Three Faces" by Jafar Panahi were also screened during the festival.

## Iran celebrates Sadi National Day in Shiraz

**1 ->** The Fars National Library and Archives in Shiraz also hosted several academic sessions on Sadi's poetry, which were attended by Asghar Dadbeh, Nasrollah Purjavadi, Ziba Eshraqi, Hossein Karami and several Sadi scholars.

In addition, the Book City Institute in Tehran organized a conference last week to discuss affinities between Sadi and leading German dramatist and poet, Friedrich Schiller. The conference is scheduled to be held in Shiraz and the

German cities of Berlin and Weimar.

One of the greatest figures of classical Persian literature, Sheikh Muslih od-Din Sadi Shirazi is famous worldwide for his Bustan (The Orchard) and Gulistan (The Rose Garden).