



Rouhani likens Trump to a knifeman whom Iran won't negotiate with **2**



Zarif censures Trump admin for silence on Saudi mass execution **2**



Iran claim Asian Wrestling Championships **15**



Iranian cinema is true reflection of its society: Rosa Bosch **16**



Enmity won't go unanswared

See page 2

Forex reserves enough to stabilize market amid U.S. pressure: Hemmati

TEHRAN — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati said the country's foreign currency reserves are enough to stabilize the country's forex market after U.S. ended the waivers for Iranian oil buyers.

Speaking in a gathering with senior economists on Tuesday, Hemmati noted that the U.S. efforts to drive Iranian oil exports to zero is an illusion and

a dream that never comes true, IRNA reported.

The official mentioned the direct communication between importers and exporters in the past month as a main driver of the increase in the volume of exchanges in the domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), saying "CBI does not determine the exchange rate in Nima System." **→4**

Sci-tech parks export \$260m of knowledge-based products

TEHRAN — Iran's science and technology parks have exported \$260 million of knowledge-based products during the past Iranian calendar year 1397, which ended on March 20, the deputy minister of science, research and technology announced, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Masoud Boroumand said that the

quality of product is an important factor for knowledge-based companies, which can help them to expand their markets.

The government has increased 74% of the science and technology parks budget for the current Iranian calendar year, he said.

Now 62,000 people are working in 42 science and technology parks, which are home to 6,000 companies, he said. **→11**

Mass execution is Saudis tool to crush Shia minority: Amnesty

TEHRAN — Saudi Arabia's Interior Ministry says it has executed 37 people in a single day "in connection with terrorism crimes," as a crackdown led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman against pro-democracy campaigners, human rights activists and intellectuals widens in the kingdom.

The Arabic-language Saudi Arabian daily newspaper Okaz, citing a statement issued by the ministry, the death penalty was implemented Tuesday "on a number

of culprits for adopting extremist terrorist ideologies and forming terrorist cells to corrupt and disrupt security as well as spread chaos and provoke sectarian strife."

The statement added that the executions took place in the capital Riyadh, the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the central province of Qassim, oil-rich and Shia-populated Eastern Province and the kingdom's southern province of Asir. The convicts were all Saudi nationals. **→3**



EDITORIAL

Mohammad Ghaderi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief
@ghaderi62

How Trump's oil plans backfires on him

As expected, Donald Trump, the U.S. president didn't extend sanctions exemptions to nine countries importing oil from Iran including India, China, Turkey, South Korea and Japan.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the decision was intended to bring Iran's oil exports to zero and dial up economic pressure on the country.

The decision led to grave consequences from the very beginning: oil price jumped by 3% and the oil experts expressed strong doubt that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates can make up the difference in oil to ensure that global markets were not unsettled.

Here there are some point that are worth mentioning:

1. The Washington's recent blatant move to hamper Iran's oil sales was based on Washington's unilateral sanctions against Iran, rather than universal multilateral sanctions; this will not only undermine the legality and credibility of the Trump's decision but it will also restrain its real practical effects. In such an environment, the Islamic Republic of Iran will have more freedom to sell oil "indirectly" or "with using mediators" and this means that Trump, Pompeo and Bolton will not reach their goal that is to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero.

2. Washington's move to end sanctions exemptions has led to objections from countries importing oil from Iran. Even countries such as Japan and South Korea that are Washington's allies in East Asia have voiced their objections to this decision and insist to continue negotiating with the White House, so that importing oil from Iran will get back to its normal routine.

Countries such as Turkey and China have taken a stronger stand, saying that they will not follow Trump's scandalous decision. They are, on one hand, worried about the oil market's future conditions and on the other hand think that the White House decision is against the principle of making multilateral decisions in international arena. **→13**

Saudi bloodletting of Shias - Where is the outrage?

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — The custodians of Islam's holiest places have turned the country into a slaughter house, spilling blood of innocents in utter contempt to the teachings of the man who many centuries ago had campaigned against ignorance, misrule and anarchy in the same land.

In a throwback to the 'age of ignorance' before the advent of Islam in the Arab world, Saudi rulers ordered the execution of 37 Saudi citizens on Tuesday, at least 34 of them Shias.

It has been described as the 'biggest mass execution' in the kingdom in last three years. Of course the Shias in Saudi Arabia have seen worst.

Among those executed include Sheikh Mohammad AlAttayah, a prominent Shia scholar in Saudi Arabia, who like others was falsely accused of sedition and denied the opportunity to defend himself.

According to Saudi journalist Ali AlAhmad, AlAttayah's charge was moving to Jeddah to serve the local Shia community there.

Activist Abdullah AlSuriah was also among those executed on Tuesday. AlSuriah was a strong voice against the despot regime in Riyadh and lived in a shanty house close to the world's largest oil port.

Mujtaba Al Suwayket, who had been accepted

into Michigan State University for his higher studies, was also executed for 'participating in pro-democracy protests'. He was arrested at the airport.

Abdullah Hani Al-Tarif, who was arrested on sham charges and forced to confess to crimes like 'chanting slogans and promoting social media propaganda' was also executed on Tuesday.

Abdulkareem Al-Hawaj was a teenager when he was arrested in 2011 for being "near a protest". After being on death row for eight years, he was finally executed, and like others denied fair trial. **→6**

Mecron's political stroke at Elysee Palace

By Hanif Ghaffari

TEHRAN — The results of recent polls in France for the young president are disappointing! The popularity of French President Emmanuel Macron remains stuck at under 30% as he battles a series of political troubles, with no major change reported after the Notre-Dame fire, a poll said. According to the Ifop poll for the Journal du Dimanche just

29% of people polled said they are satisfied with the job Macron is doing, with 69% dissatisfied.

This April reading was unchanged from the last poll in March, the newspaper said. The poll, carried out until 20 April, was published at the end of a dramatic week for Macron which saw him address the nation over the damage to the Notre-Dame cathedral in Monday's devastating fire.

It would be best to look deeper into the crises in France and Europe. The fact is that dissatisfaction with the French president is not merely rooted in the developments of the last 24 weeks in Paris and other cities in the country. since 2007 (the time for the beginning of the economic crisis in Europe) we have seen severe austerity policies being adopted in the Green Continent. **→7**

U.S. new suspicious moves in Iraq

By Ramin Hosseinabadian

TEHRAN (MNA) — Washington's suspicious military moves in Tikrit city of Iraq indicate that Washington has devised another conspiratorial scenario in Iraq.

It seems that there is no end to U.S. military maneuvers in Iraq. Recently, new reports have been published on the measures of American troops in Iraq, which has raised concerns about Washington's possible future scenario in the country.

In this regards, local sources announced the

arrival of a group of U.S. troops to the Camp Speicher in Tikrit, 140 kilometers northwest of Baghdad. Regarding to these sources, "This group of militia was massively armed and had weapons and equipment."

According to reports, after arrival of U.S. troops to the Camp Speicher, a number of no-mads' figures also went and met with American generals stationed there.

While the necessity of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq was on the agenda of the

parliamentary factions and became one of the main issues in the political and media circles, the U.S. military's new operations in northern Iraq are under way.

Accordingly, the major alliances of Iraq, including the "reform and construction" coalition, called for an expeditious withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraqi territory, urging parliamentarians to take the necessary measures to remove alien forces from Iraqi territory as quickly as possible. **→13**



Special guest China opens pavilion at Tehran book fair

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN — China, as the guest of honor, opened its pavilion at the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), Iran's major event in publishing industry, during a special ceremony on Wednesday.

The ceremony was attended by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, TIBF director Mohsen Javadi, the Vice Minister of the State Council Information Office of China (SCIO), Guo Weimin, Chinese Ambassador Pang Sen and a number of Iranian and Chinese cultural officials. **→16**



ARTICLE

Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

The U.S under Trump and his crazed Neocons aim to tyrannize the entire world

In the broadest sense, without all the nuances and other information, this is how things stand very basically regarding the United States:

At least \$6 trillion (If not \$20 trillion which the Pentagon cannot account for) has gone down the drain over the past 20 years or so with the U.S. efforts to gut or destabilize seven countries as per the "Project for a New American Century", a dangerous scheme concocted by Zionists both inside the U.S. and in Israel. It all, and by that I mean all the aggression economic or military, has had little to do with any perceived benefit for the U.S. because there is none unless one counts an economy that has become too dependent on the Military Industrial Complex that former President Eisenhower warned against when he left office in 1960. The sole beneficiary, and even this is questionable long term, has been the racist, apartheid entity that calls itself Israel. Meanwhile the US economy has over the decades been completely financialized, with the top five percent or less of citizens having benefitted while and the middle class and labor have been eviscerated by neoliberal policies. Yes, the U.S. economy has been "growing" since 2009 and the last recession, but this growth has been anemic at best and it also has been dependent on the growth of debt and "money" creation in the trillions that has never in all of history been previously witnessed.

The US political system and the two-party status quo, which remains intact but teetering, is slowly proving unworkable. The system has turned rotten from the appearance of mindless political wannabes and the entrenched hangers on in Congress, many of whom resemble termites, and the partisan U.S. mainstream media can no longer be trusted to report the truth. Not a single foreign policy pursued by the US has been born from goodwill towards other countries, but it is increasingly in fact the result of fear and panic that the Empire of Chaos will fall and its oligarchs and the MIC will face at last their well-deserved day of reckoning. **→6**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



U.S. will pay for its hostilities towards Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Major General Mohammad Baqeri, chief of the Iranian armed forces, said on Wednesday that the United States will soon pay the price for its hostilities towards Iran.

Baqeri made the remarks while introducing the newly appointed commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Hossein Salami.

U.S. move to end sanctions exemptions for Iranian oil exports and its designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organization shows the White House's anger at Iran's power, Baqeri said, Mehr reported.

"Criminals who support terrorists by arming and financing them have named the Guards as a terrorist organization," the top general lamented.



Zarif censures Trump admin for silence on Saudi mass execution

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has lashed out at the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump for remaining silent after Saudi Arabia's latest mass execution of its nationals, one of whom was crucified after beheading.

"After a wink at the dismembering of a journalist, not a whisper from the Trump administration when Saudi Arabia beheads 37 men in one day—even crucifying one two days after Easter," said Zarif in a tweet on Wednesday.

"Membership in the #B_team —Bolton, Bin Salman, Bin Zayed & "Bibi" — gives immunity for any crime," he added.



Guardian Council ratifies bill in support of IRGC

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council on Wednesday ratified the double-urgency bill to bolster the status of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in the face of U.S. moves, IRNA reported.

Members of the Guardian Council considered the bill in a meeting on Wednesday and were unanimous in supporting it, the council's spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said.

The bill, which contains 14 articles, was approved by the parliament on Tuesday, a week after the United States officially designated the IRGC as a "foreign terrorist organization".



VP: Govt. mulling legal actions against U.S. IRGC move

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Vice President for Legal Affairs Layla Joneydi said on Wednesday the Rouhani administration is considering legal actions against the United States in response to its designation of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization.

Joneydi made the remarks after a cabinet session. She added that the U.S. measure runs contrary to international law because it targets a part of Iran's armed forces, ILNA reported.

Last week, the U.S. officially labeled the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization. The move sparked backlash from the Iranian government, which in retaliation named the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) a terrorist organization.



Ambassador Takht Ravanchi submits credentials to UN chief

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's new permanent representative to the United Nations, on Tuesday submitted his credentials to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Takht Ravanchi was named Iran's permanent representative to the UN earlier this month, replacing Gholamali Khoshroo who retired in late 2018.

He has served as a top nuclear negotiator, deputy director for political affairs at the presidential office, and deputy foreign minister for European and American Affairs.

According to ISNA, Takht Ravanchi arrived in New York accompanying Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who is attending a high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on multilateralism and diplomacy.



Zarif warns Trump against the 'infamous B-Team'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday warned U.S. President Donald Trump to beware of "warmongers" and "butchers" who have surrounded him, referring to them as the 'infamous B-team'.

"Be careful @realDonaldTrump. You campaigned against costly stupid interventions. The conniving cabal of warmongers & butchers, the infamous #B_Team, are plotting for way more than what you bargained for," Zarif tweeted.

In an earlier tweet, Zarif referred to U.S. national security advisor John Bolton, Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammad Bin Salman, UAE President Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, also known as Bibi, as the B-team.

Hatami does not rule out military force to counter economic terrorism

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami has said the U.S. plan to zero Tehran's crude sales is impractical, and warned that his country may be forced to resort to "defensive tools" to combat Washington's "economic terrorism" against the Iranian people.

"Welfare of (the Iranian) nation is a part of our vital interests and I consider myself allowed to use all legitimate tools, including defensive instruments, to meet these interests and confront America's economic terrorism," Hatami said, addressing the Moscow Security Conference on Wednesday.

He underlined continued efforts to strengthen the country's defense power within the framework of active deterrence doctrine, saying he does not assume as practical the U.S. claims of zeroing Iran's oil exports.

General Hatami warned of the dire consequences of the West's silence on the United States' bold decisions against other countries, noting that a new form of Nazism has emerged in disguise of Trumpism.

"If this approach continues, the world might be pushed into ill-fated clashes, and therefore it is time to prevent the rise of an-



other Hitler on the global scene," he said, adding that the West's silence on Washington's behaviors and moves would entail grave repercussions for the world similar to the World War II.

■ Hatami meets with Iraqi counterpart
Speaking at a meeting with Secretary General of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense Lieutenant General Mohammad Jawad Kazim in Moscow on Tuesday, Hatami also said Iran and its

Rouhani likens Trump to a knifeman whom Iran won't negotiate with

Rouhani says Saudi Arabia and UAE owe their existence to Iran as Saddam sought Iran's military aid to capture Persian Gulf Arab states in 1990

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani of Iran on Wednesday likened U.S. President Donald Trump to a knifeman with whom Iran will not negotiate.

"Undoubtedly, accepting the demands of a knifeman who through bullying and lying is seeking negotiation will get nowhere," Rouhani told a cabinet meeting.

Rouhani said Iran has always been seeking negotiation and diplomacy but negotiation is possible only when there is no pressure.

"We have always been the man of dialogue and diplomacy, as we have been the man of war and defense, but negotiation is possible only when all pressures are lifted and they apologize for their illegal measures and there is mutual respect," Rouhani stated.

Rouhani also said the Iranians should be well aware that despite a propaganda campaign the United States is not ready for negotiations with Iran.

"America is not ready for negotiations at all, and the things that it is doing is to defeat the Iranian nation," Rouhani remarked.

The Trump administration is intensifying its pressure on Iran since it withdrew from the international nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

In recent weeks, the U.S. has taken radical measures against Iran. On April 8, it designated the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization. Also, on April 22, the U.S. announced that it will not extend sanctions waivers for the buyers of Iran's oil and asked the remaining countries that import oil from to stop their purchases by May 2 or face



U.S. sanctions.

■ We should make the U.S. repentant

Rouhani went on to say that Tehran should make the U.S. regretful for its "illegal and oppressive" measures against Iran.

"We should prove in action that Americans are mistaken and their calculation is wrong, and whenever they realize their mistake and get ready to resolve the issues logically and reasonably then we are ready for that," Rouhani explained.

■ 'No alternative other than resistance'

The president called on the Iranian nation that there is no alternative other than "resistance" against the U.S. moves against Iran.

"We should teach an aggressor who wants to put pressure on Iranians step by step that he has chosen a wrong path."

■ Saudi Arabia and UAE owe their existence to Iran
Elsewhere in his remarks at the cabinet meeting, Rou-

hani said that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirate are owed to Iran for their very existence as former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was seeking Iran's military help in capturing the Arab countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf.

However, Rouhani said, at that time Iran acted "wisely". "You should not forget this," Rouhani said in an address to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Rouhani said Iran was the first country that condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. "We were the first country, even before Saudi Arabia and Emirates and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, that condemned Saddam's attack on Kuwait and issued a strongly worded statement."

Saddam invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1990. "At that time, Saddam was constantly sending messages that he will capture Persian Gulf countries and you (Iran) can also be a partner," Rouhani told his cabinet.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been welcoming the exit of Trump's administration from the 2015 nuclear deal and reimposition of sanctions on Iran.

Trump has also demanded Saudi Arabia and the UAE to compensate for the loss of Iran's oil exports as his administration has announced an end to Iran's oil sanctions waivers.

Rouhani said Saudi Arabia and the UAE are ungrateful to Iran, adding, "Have you forgotten that your existence in the face of Saddam's expansionism is owed to Iran."

Rouhani added, "It was the Islamic Republic of Iran that saved Saudi Arabia. If at that time we had decided something else today there might have been no Saudi Arabia and Emirates."

Khanzadi says Iranian Navy won't let hegemons disrupt Pakistan ties

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Navy will not allow the hegemonic countries to hamper the expansion of cooperation with the Pakistani Navy, Navy Chief Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said on Wednesday.

Khanzadi made the remarks during a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart, Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, on the sidelines of 70th anniversary of Communist China's Navy.

"Given the ups and downs of global and regional policies, we will not allow hegemonic countries to put an end to the opportunity of growth and development of cooperation between the two naval forces," Khanzadi said, ILNA reported.

He stressed that the naval forces of Iran and Pakistan are pursuing a golden period of good cooperation and interaction aimed to boost their maritime security.

Pointing to the dispatching of Iranian naval flotilla to Pakistani ports, he said the



Iranian Navy always welcomes the arrival of Pakistani naval flotilla to Iranian ports.

For his part, the Pakistani Navy chief called for more cooperation between the naval forces of Iran and Pakistan on the world stage.

He said to restore regional peace and security, the two countries should establish close cooperation and interaction with each other.

"Undoubtedly, the exchange of navy forces between the two countries will be effective in boosting ties in relevant fields," he added.

U.S. officials have become 'pawns in a very dangerous Israeli game', Zarif says

The Iranian foreign minister has described the Trump administration's officials as "pawns in Netanyahu's game", warning them against the consequences of the "extremely dangerous" Israeli game they are playing.

Mohammad Javad Zarif made the remarks upon arrival in New York on Tuesday, where was to attend a UN General Assembly meeting on multilateralism and peace, according to Press TV.

"With the U.S., with the standing of the U.S. in the world, it seems that President Trump and the current people in the White House concern and consider more importantly the interests of Israel than those of the U.S.," Zarif told reporters.

"[They] have become in fact pawns in a very dangerous Israeli game, in fact Netanyahu's game in our region.

And this is extremely unfortunate and extremely dangerous," he warned.

Zarif described the U.S. as the "source of instability in this region", saying that it has been cooperating with and supporting other sources of instability in this region, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which, according to the Iranian top diplomat, are countries that have "violated every principle of international humanitarian law."

"They [the Americans] need to reassess their policies and return to a normal behavior in the international scene. The U.S. is currently an outlaw state that has violated almost any agreement that it had agreed," Zarif went on to say.

"The U.S. has not shown that it's a credible negotiating partner; it has shown its contempt for international law and its own agreements and decisions in the past."

Leader: Enmity won't go unanswered

"We will export as much oil as we want to"

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has said Tehran will be exporting any amount of crude it wants to, asserting that U.S. attempts to zero out the export of Iranian oil will be fruitless.

In an address to a gathering of workers in Tehran on the occasion of Labor Week, Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian nation has proved that it will break any impasse.

Highlighting the failure of hostile plots against Iran over the past forty years, Ayatollah Khamenei said that the U.S. has now focused on economic issues to harm Iran but the Iranians will never be brought to their knees in the face of the "Great Satan".

The Leader also warned that the en-

emies' hostile policies will not go unanswered because the Iranian nation would not stand idle in the face of plots.

Describing a cut in Iran's reliance on the export of oil as an opportunity, the Leader said such an opportunity will be used for further reliance on internal capabilities.

"Although the sanctions pave the way for problems in certain cases, they will benefit the country if they are dealt with correctly and logically," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

The Leader said materialization of the resistance economy would neutralize the

American and Zionist regime's plots regarding oil export and other economic issues.

Ayatollah Khamenei also rejected claims by the U.S. and the Zionist regime that they are opposed only to the Islamic Republic's establishment, saying their enmity is targeted at the Iranian nation, because the Islamic Republic is based upon people.

The Leader reiterated the need to draw up plans to boost Iranian-made goods, dynamism at work, and resistance economy to strengthen national dignity and developing immunity to decisions made

The Leader says a cut in Iran's reliance on the export of oil provides an opportunity to further rely on internal capabilities.

by the outsiders.

The Leader's comments came after the White House said on Monday that U.S. President Donald Trump had decided not to reissue waivers regarding sanctions against countries importing Iranian oil when the waivers expire in early May.

In May last year, Washington unilaterally withdrew from a multilateral nuclear deal with Iran that mainly guarantees Iran's oil sales in return for a number of concessions by Iran and the lifting of U.S. sanctions on the country.

Tehran and the other parties to the deal, including European countries, have remained in the deal.

Previously, the U.S. had issued waivers to its sanctions for eight major buyers of Iranian crude.

Mass execution is Saudis tool to crush Shia minority: Amnesty

UN rights chief condemns ‘shocking’ Saudi executions

1 → The official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) also said that one of the condemned was crucified after the execution.

Meanwhile, the Arabic-language Ahrar television network, in a post published on its official Twitter page, reported that imprisoned Shia activists were among those executed by Saudi authorities.

The UN rights chief Wednesday condemned the mass executions carried out by Saudi Arabia this week, stressing that those convicted were likely not afforded credible criminal trials.

“I strongly condemn these shocking mass executions across six cities in Saudi Arabia yesterday in spite of grave concerns raised about these cases,” the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said in a statement.

Death penalty used as tool to crush Shia minority

The execution marks an alarming escalation in Saudi Arabia’s use of the death penalty, said Amnesty International on Tuesday, noting that among those put to death was a young Shia man, identified as Abdulkareem al-Hawaj, who was convicted of offenses related to his involvement in anti-government protests that took place while he was under the age of 16.

“Today’s mass execution is a chilling demonstration of the Saudi Arabian authorities’ callous disregard for human life. It is also yet another gruesome indication of how the death penalty is being used as a political tool to crush dissent from within the country’s Shia minority,” said Lynn



Maalouf, the Middle East Research Director at Amnesty International.

“The use of the death penalty is always appalling but it is even more shocking when it is applied after unfair trials or against people who were under 18 at the time of the crime, in flagrant violation of international law,” Maalouf added.

Under international law, the use of the death penalty against people who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime is strictly prohibited.

“Instead of stepping up executions at an alarming rate in the name of countering terrorism, Saudi Arabia’s must halt this bloody execution spree immediately and establish an

official moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolishing the death penalty completely,” said Maalouf.

Earlier this month, Amnesty International warned that Saudi Arabia is making use of the death penalty to crush opposition figures.

The London-based rights group said Saudi Arabia’s public prosecutor was seeking the death penalty for more people, noting that prominent preacher Sheikh Salman al-Awdah was one of those targeted for execution.

The Prisoners of Conscience, which is an independent non-governmental organization advocating human rights in Saudi Arabia, also announced in a post on its official Twitter page that Awdah, along with two other

clerics, identified as Awad al-Qarni and Ali al-Omari, had been in prison for 19 months with no legal reasons.

The activists were detained in a sweeping crackdown weeks before Saudi Arabia overturned the world’s only ban on female motorists on June 24, 2018. The women had staunchly advocated for the right to drive.

According to Press TV, over the past years, Riyadh has redefined its anti-terrorism laws to target activism.

Tuesday’s mass execution was Saudi Arabia’s largest in the past three years. In January 2016, Saudi authorities executed Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, who was an outspoken critic of the Riyadh regime, along with 46 other men on terrorism charges. Nimr had been arrested in Qatif, Eastern Province, in 2012.

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

Saudi officials have also intensified crackdown in the country’s Shia-populated Eastern Province. Eastern Province has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011. Protesters have been demanding reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the oil-rich region.

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

U.S. forces kill more Afghans than armed groups

TEHRAN - Afghan and international forces, including NATO, killed more civilians in the first three months of this year than the Taliban and fighters from other armed groups, a new UN report has said.

According to findings from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) released on Wednesday, at least 305 civilians were killed by pro-government forces between January and March, 52.5 percent of all deaths in that period, Al Jazeera reported.

“There was a 23 percent decrease in overall civilian casualties as compared to the same period last year and is the lowest for a first quarter since 2013,” the UN report said.

That decrease was due largely to fewer deaths and injuries from suicide improvised explosive devices (IED) attacks, which may have been in part because of a harsh winter.

“It is unclear whether the decrease in civilian casualties was influenced by any measures taken by parties to the conflict to better protect civilians, or by the ongoing talks between parties to the conflict,” the report said.

‘Act with impunity’

Casualties caused by pro-government forces, 608 in all (305 deaths, 303 injuries), were up 39 percent from the same period last year.

The report singled out a sharp uptick in casualties caused by search operations, especially those carried out by Afghan intelligence service special forces, or the Khost protection force, both supported by international troops, which “appear to act with impunity outside of the governmental chain of command”.

Air operations by international forces caused 140 deaths. Air attacks by Afghan forces, ground engagements and search operations were the other causes of casualties by pro-government elements.

U.S. forces spokesman in Afghanistan Colonel Dave Butler responded to the report saying: “We reserve the right of self-defense of our forces as well as the Afghan Security Forces. The best way to end the suffering of non-combatants is to end the fighting through an agreed-upon reduction in violence on all sides.”

The report also said that the Taliban and other armed groups were responsible for at least 227 civilian deaths and 736 civilian injuries, 54.3 percent of all casualties.

The Taliban, who were removed from power by U.S.-led forces in 2001, have been waging a bloody rebellion against the country’s Western-backed government.

Pro-government forces have been struggling to combat the group, which holds sway over nearly half



of the country.

Civilians have repeatedly been caught up in the clashes, with UN statistics showing more than 32,000 killed and 60,000 injured in the past 10 years.

Last year was the deadliest for civilians according to the UN which has been compiling statistics on civilian casualties in Afghanistan since 2009.

Turkey ‘to look elsewhere if U.S. blocks transfer of F-35s’

TEHRAN- Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says Turkey will look elsewhere for an alternative to American F-35 fighter jets if Washington blocks the delivery of its advanced stealth warplanes to Ankara.

Speaking to reporters after the 99th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Parliament on Tuesday, Cavusoglu emphasized that Turkey would look for “the best technology” elsewhere if the U.S. fails to transfer the F-35 fighters.

“We are already partners in the F-35 manufacturing program, we participate in this project, we have paid the necessary amount. There are currently no problems with this,” he said. “But in the worst case scenario, we will have to satisfy our need in another place, where the best technologies will be offered.”

According to Press TV, Turkey has ordered 30 F-35s and plans to buy over 100 in total. It has, at the same time, signed a \$2.5 billion deal with Russia for the purchase of the S-400 missile defense systems with the delivery set to begin in July.

But Ankara’s military deal with Moscow has angered Washington, which has issued an ultimatum to Turkey to stop buying the



Russian batteries or risk losing its NATO membership.

The Pentagon has recently halted the delivery of equipment related to the F-35 to Turkey.

Leaders of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees have also warned Turkey that it risks tough sanc-

tions if it pursues plans to acquire S-400.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the top Turkish diplomat said that Ankara had no intention to hand over its Russian S-400 systems to Qatar and Azerbaijan.

“Why do we buy S-400? Because we have an urgent need for an air defense system,” Cavusoglu added.

Ankara has ‘plan B’

Separately on Tuesday, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar stressed that his country was unfazed by the U.S. threats and would put a “plan B” into action should the U.S. terminate the F-35 deal.

“We have short-term, medium-term and long-term plans,” he said.

Akar further pointed out that four Turkish pilots were currently receiving training on the F-35 fighter jets and that two more were preparing to join the program. In total, he added, 35 to 40 personnel were in training.

Earlier this month, Cavusoglu said Ankara would look to Russia and others to fill its fighter jet requirements if the U.S. scrapped the planned sale of the F-35s.

“There are also aircraft manufactured in Russia,” he told Turkish news outlet NTV. “If we are not able to purchase [the] F-35, Turkey will buy similar aircraft from other countries.”

Ankara has long argued that Turkey, as a sovereign state, is entitled to choose its trade partners and arms suppliers free from foreign intervention.

Terrorists preparing for false flag chemical attacks in Idlib, Hama

TEHRAN - Militants from the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham Takfiri terrorist group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, together with members of the so-called White Helmets civil defense group are reportedly making preparations to stage chemical attacks in Syria’s northwestern province of Idlib as well as the west-central province of Hama in a bid to implicate Syrian government forces and invent pretexts for possible acts of aggression on army troops.

Local sources, requesting not to be named, told Syria’s official news agency SANA on Tuesday that Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorists and Western-backed White Helmets, who have been accused of cooperating with Takfiri militants and staging false flag gas attacks, have already withdrawn from

Jarjaz village in Maarrat al-Nu’man district of Idlib as a prelude to launching the attacks in order “to frame the Syrian army and justify a pretext for a U.S. act of aggression.”

Sources highlighted that terrorists and their allies are planning to use chlorine gas in their anticipated attacks.

Speaking during a press briefing in the Russian capital Moscow on April 18, Russia’s Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, warned that White Helmets and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorists were “preparing for further provocations aimed at accusing the legitimate government in Syria of using poisonous substances.”

The United States has warned it would respond to any possible chemical weapons attack by Syrian government

forces with retaliatory strikes, stressing that the attacks would be stronger than those conducted by American, British and French forces last year.

According to Press TV, on April 14, 2018, the U.S., Britain and France carried out a string of airstrikes against Syria over a suspected chemical weapons attack on the city of Douma, located about 10 kilometers northeast of the capital Damascus.

Washington and its allies blamed Damascus for the Douma attack, an allegation rejected by the Syrian government.

On September 11 last year, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov censured the U.S. threats to use military force against Syria as part of Washington’s blackmail policy.

Kim arrives in Russia for summit with Putin

TEHRAN - North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has arrived in Russia’s Far East for a first summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Governor of Primorsky Region Oleg Kozhemyako officially welcomed Kim at the railway station in the Russian city of Vladivostok on Wednesday, TASS reported.

Putin and Kim are scheduled to meet in Vladivostok on Thursday.

Kim has hoped for a “successful and useful” summit with Putin. Media reports speculate that Kim and Putin would discuss a campaign of pressure and sanctions by the United States against North Korea. The last meeting between the leaders of North Korea and Russia was in 2011, when the then-President Dmitry Medvedev met Kim’s late father, Kim Jong-il.

The Thursday summit will be Kim’s first face-to-face meeting with another head of state since negotiations with U.S. President Donald Trump collapsed in Hanoi in February.

Israel razes family house of slain Palestinian

TEHRAN - The Israeli military has leveled the house of a Palestinian teenager, whom the regime killed last month after accusing him of killing two Israelis.

The house, which was demolished on Wednesday morning, belonged to the family of Omar Amin Abu Lila, who was killed by Israeli forces in the village of Abwein, located north of the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, on March 19.

The 19-year-old was accused of stabbing and killing an Israeli troop and shooting a rabbi to death earlier, Press TV reported.

The Times of Israel reported that Israeli forces had surrounded Omar’s family home in the village of Zawiya before reducing it to rubble. The demolition came after Israeli forces arrested his relatives in order to be able to locate his house.

UK intel. rejects spying on Trump

TEHRAN- The British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) has rejected claims that it was asked by the administration of former President Barack Obama to spy on then-President Elect Donald Trump after the 2016 presidential election.

A GCHQ spokesman made the comments Wednesday after President Trump tweeted that a former CIA analyst, Larry Johnson, had made the allegation against London.

“As we have previously stated, the allegations that GCHQ was asked to conduct ‘wire tapping’ against the then President Elect are nonsense. They are utterly ridiculous and should be ignored,” Reuters quoted the spokesman as saying.

Trump himself sounded alarming on Twitter, referencing an indefinite time of “beauty” when the allegations are allegedly confirmed. “It is now just a question of time before the truth comes out, and when it does, it will be a beauty!”

The Buckingham Palace had confirmed hours earlier that President Trump would visit the UK in June.

According to Press TV, after his working visit last year, Trump is scheduled to visit the UK from June 3-5 for an official state visit as a guest of Queen Elizabeth II.

The right wing news channel One America News Network, which Trump quoted, is apparently known for reporting false stories and fake news.

Johnson, who left the CIA more than 26 years ago, was previously known for spreading a hoax in 2008 that Michelle Obama had used a slur against white Americans.

Palestinian demonstrators call on UN to end Gaza blockade



TEHRAN - Dozens of Palestinian demonstrators have called on the United Nations to put an end to the Tel Aviv regime’s tight blockade on the Gaza Strip, which has been in place against the impoverished coastal enclave for more than a decade.

The protesters converged in front of the UN office in Gaza City on Tuesday, waving national Palestinian flags and carrying banners in condemnation of the Israeli siege. They called for an international intervention to end the blockade.

The Highest Commission of the Great March of Return and Breaking the Siege, which had organized the demonstration, said in a statement that the siege must be lifted as soon as possible, Press TV reported.

“The weekly marches of return will go on until the siege is immediately lifted,” the statement noted.

Sami Ammassi, chairman of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, who joined the protest, told reporters that the rate of unemployment in the Gaza Strip exceeded 54 percent and poverty rates hit 80 percent.

“We call on the United Nations and the international organizations to press Israel to lift the blockade that had critically affected all aspects of life,” he said, adding, “We also call on the Arab League to help end Gaza people’s sufferings.”

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli blockade since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	203777.1
IFX	2493.35

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,098 rials
GBP	54,332 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$73.70/b
WTI	\$65.96/b
OPEC Basket	\$72.44/b
Gold	\$1,274.35/oz
Silver	\$14.90/oz
Platinum	\$895.75/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

‘Forex reserves enough to stabilize domestic market amid U.S. pressures’

1 → The merger of banks, removing zeroes from the national currency, reforming the banking system and the quality of the monetary bases were among other topics raised in the meeting.



Hemmati also published a note on his Instagram page on Wednesday, offering some approaches in order to withstand the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country’s economy.

Compensation for budget deficits caused by the reduction in oil sales by saving and reducing costs or compensating for them through other income sources and subsidies as well as encouraging non-oil exports and injecting the foreign currency earned into the economy cycle were among the solutions proposed by the governor.

‘U.S. approach to limit Iran’s marine activities an economic terrorism’

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad described the U.S. move to restrict Iran’s sea transportation as economic terrorism, and said the country’s marine capacities are beyond the U.S.’s imagination, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from Iran’s nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was condemned by other parties to the 2015 agreement.

Tehran, Ankara to cooperate in urban planning, construction

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Turkey will establish cooperation in urban planning and construction affairs, Mehr news agency reported.

At the proposal of the Deputy Minister of the Environment and Urban Development of Turkey, Fatima Varank, Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami agreed with setting up a joint urban planning and construction committee.

In a meeting with Eslami, Varank said, “there are many expert-level discussions between experts of the two countries of Iran and Turkey on the issues including urban planning, urban development.”

She added, “the two countries have established amicable relationship with each other which dates back to many years ago.”

U.S. to send trade delegation to China next week

The U.S. will send a high-level delegation to Beijing next week as trade negotiations with China continue, CNBC reported.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will head to Beijing for talks that start on April 30, Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement. They will meet with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He.

Following those talks, Liu will lead a delegation to Washington for further discussions that begin on May 8.

The world’s two largest economies have been embroiled in a trade dispute since last year that spooked world markets and hurt global growth. The Trump administration imposed levies on \$250 billion of Chinese goods, and China retaliated by placing its own tariffs on \$110 billion of American products.

Both sides have met several times in a bid to hammer out a deal to end their protracted trade war. The talks so far have focused on a range of issues including forced technology transfer and structural reforms. Washington has also accused Beijing of intellectual property theft — something China has always denied.

Earlier this month, Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported that a new consensus on a U.S.-China trade agreement had been reached. Chinese President Xi Jinping, through a message conveyed by Liu, told President Donald Trump that both sides had made new and substantial progress on key issues regarding trade in the past month, Xinhua reported.

Minerals, mining export at \$9.2b in a year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran’s minerals and mining industries’ exports stood at \$9.226 billion in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), IRNA reported on Tuesday citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

IMIDRO data indicate that the steel products account for the lion’s share of the

exports from this sector in the past year, with the value of \$4.1 billion.

According to the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the country’s non-oil trade balance was \$1.7 billion positive in the past Iranian calendar year.

The value of non-oil exports stood at \$44.3 billion in the previous year while \$42.6 billion worth of commodities were



shipped into the country.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries where 68 types of minerals have

been identified so far, including the world’s largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron ore, which are tempting international investors.

IRENEX to offer heavy crude oil for 1st time on April 30

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) announced on Tuesday that the first round of heavy crude oil offering at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) will be on April 30, Mehr news agency reported.

One million barrels of heavy crude will be offered at the first round at the base price of \$63.51 per barrel.

The offering will be conducted within the same framework that light crude and gas condensate have been offered

at IRENEX.

Accordingly, the heavy crude will be offered in cargos of 35,000 barrels each, and buyers are required to purchase a minimum of one cargo.

Purchases can be carried out with a 6% pre-payment in foreign currencies. The buyers may clear their debts based on the mechanisms already defined by the Oil Ministry.

The cargo can be loaded up until four months after the purchase is done, and receiving the cargos at other terminals

France says Iran payment system making positive progress

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — France reports progress in efforts towards the implementation of a direct payment mechanism, which the European country has launched alongside Britain and Germany to safeguard trade with Iran in the face of U.S. sanctions, Press TV reported.

“The work that has been put in place is making positive progress, with a view to an eventual conclusion” of the non-dollar payment system, officially named the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), the French Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday.

INSTEX, which was launched in January, has been designed by Paris, Germany and the UK -- the three European signatories to the 2015 Iran deal -- to help European companies circumvent the U.S. bans and continue trading with Iran.

In its initial stage, the transactions channel was intended to be used for selling food, medicine and medical devices to Iran, but efforts are underway by the trio to expand INSTEX to cover other areas of trade, including oil sales.

The United States reinstated its sanctions against Iran after leaving the historic multilateral nuclear agreement with Tehran last May. The move, however, drew criticism from the other signatories, which pledged efforts to protect the agreement and keep Tehran in it.

Paris further reiterated its support for the Iran deal, formally called the Joint Com-



prehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The French statement was issued in response to Washington’s latest moves to put more economic pressure on Iran.

The U.S. reintroduced the anti-Iran sanctions in two bouts. The second one came last November, taking aim at Iran’s banking and energy sector.

Washington, however, granted waivers from the bans to eight major importers of the Iranian oil -- China, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Italy, and Greece -- fearing market instability.

Washington, however, said Monday that it would no longer be extending the waivers and called on the recipients of the crude to stop importing any as of May 2 or face U.S. sanctions.

The ministry, meanwhile, vaguely added that in order for INSTEX to come into force, “Iran must also, for its part, make progress on its equivalent counterparty.”

Tehran has warned the Europeans not to tie any irrelevant issue to their legal financial cooperation with the Islamic Republic.

China economic growth improving but still needs stimulus

China’s claim of stronger-than-expected economic growth in the first part of this year may be tempting policymakers to pare back stimulus. Analysts say that would be a mistake.

The world’s second-largest economy expanded 6.4 percent in the first quarter from the same period in 2018, the government announced last week, slightly beating analyst predictions, CNBC reported.

An array of policies, including encouraging banks to make more loans, put in place last year as the economy took a hit from the U.S.-China trade war have been credited with helping boost activity.

But pronouncements since last week’s GDP figure, including after a meeting of the Communist Party’s powerful politburo, indicate that officials see the growth outlook improving, feeding speculation of a rethink in how much of a boost the economy may need.

A politburo statement issued Monday and reported by the official Xinhua news agency emphasized the economy’s strong start to the year but appeared to express concern about financial and real-estate markets. It said those sectors should be closely monitored for possible risks, suggesting worries about possible overheating.

“The slight change in tone is understandable due to the rapid build-up of debt and a potential irrational exuberance in stock markets and big cities’ property markets,” economists



at Japanese investment bank Nomura said in a note Monday regarding the politburo statement.

Chinese stocks have been on a tear in 2019 after recording their worst performance in a decade in 2018. The benchmark Shanghai index is up about 29% so far in 2019 after losing almost 25% last year.

But, Nomura cautioned, China’s growth recovery is “not solid yet” and growth could falter again.

“We believe the pace of monetary easing will slow, but it is still too early to withdraw monetary easing measures despite the limited monetary policy scope,” they said.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley,

Lira’s resilience to rising oil prices is baffling analysts

Analysts are having a hard time explaining the lira’s resilience to rising oil prices, according to a report by Bloomberg.

The worst-performing currency in emerging markets this month fell just 0.2 percent as of 3:02 p.m. in London even as Brent crude nears \$75 a barrel. The U.S. decision to end oil waivers granted to Iran’s customers is a setback for Turkey, a neighbor that’s more reliant on Iranian oil than any other country.

“There have been numerous questions marks on the coordinated action of the authorities to support the lira and one cannot rule out any form of intervention,” Guillaume Tresca, a strategist at Credit Agricole SA in Montrouge, France. “The problem is the Turkish lira does not seem to be a liquid market and it is not reacting normally anymore.”

With Turkish markets closed for a national holiday, low liquidity might be one reason for the lira’s muted response. Investors have also become hesitant to short the currency after some caught out by a surge in local swap rates last month. Instead, they cut their exposure to local bonds for three straight week through April 12, according to central bank data.

Here’s what money managers and strategists are saying about the lira’s inertia: Credit Agricole’s Tresca:

“Since the rise of the overnight FX forward rate foreigners are thinking twice before shorting the lira”



Cristian Maggio, the London-based head of emerging-market strategy at TD Securities:

“It could be a delayed response as a result of thin liquidity and, perhaps (this is me speculating) state-owned banks are keeping a lid over USD/TRY. So it may take more pressure for the lira to weaken further”

“The Iran waiver was a known thing. The market had more than enough time to price in this event. That said, I think the lira will suffer from this event at the margin of an already deprecatory trajectory”

Piotr Matys, a London-based analyst at Rabobank:

“Turkey could very soon find itself in a difficult position at the time when inflation remains stubbornly high close to 20 percent. Iranian oil could be the source of another diplomatic spat between Ankara and Washington, when the relationship is already tense due to Turkey’s insistence on buying Russian missile-defense system”

UK starts search for Carney successor at Bank of England

The UK formally kick-started its search for Mark Carney’s successor as governor of the Bank of England, a role that’s been linked to both senior people within the institution and ex-central bankers around the world.

According to Bloomberg, report, Canadian-born Carney was the first foreigner to run the BOE, and Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond has said he’s willing to look abroad again.

A number of names have been linked to the role, most notably Raghuram Rajan, the University of Chicago professor who previously led the Reserve Bank of India. BOE deputy governors Ben Broadbent and Dave Ramsden,

as well as Financial Conduct Authority boss Andrew Bailey, have also been mentioned. Others include Sharon White, head of the UK’s communications regulator, Santander UK Plc Chair Shriti Vadera, and BOE chief economist Andy Haldane.

The role at the helm of the three-century-old institution comes with a 480,000-pound (\$620,000) salary. Carney was hired by Hammond’s predecessor, George Osborne, who at the time described him as the “best” in the world.

Hammond said he’s searching for a candidate with the “right skills and experience” to take over from Carney, whom he praised

for steering the UK economy through a “challenging period.”

This month, the chancellor acknowledged that Brexit has damaged Britain’s international reputation and some candidates might be deterred by the turmoil. Carney’s term has certainly had its tough times, with the UK’s decision to leave the European Union the major factor. It dragged the BOE into a political battle and saw Carney heavily criticized by some politicians for alleged anti-Brexit bias. The impact of Brexit on the economy has also forced policy makers to put on hold their plans for interest-rate increases.

Carney has delayed his exit from the BOE



twice because of Brexit, though he’s said he won’t do so again and will leave at the end of January 2020. Under the current government plans, the UK is due to formally exit the EU in October at the latest.

Turkey reluctant to replace Iranian oil under U.S. pressure

By Ebrohim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Turkey is not willing to replace Iranian oil with those from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as the U.S. has offered, Bloomberg reported on Wednesday quoting the Turkish Foreign Minister as saying at a reception in Ankara.

Mevlut Cavusoglu mentioned the price difference between Iranian crude and those of Saudi and UAE, saying “Iranian oil isn’t cheap but there is a big difference”

“The U.S. is taking a decision and wants all countries to comply with it. Why should we pay the price?” he added.

The Trump administration is ending waivers that allowed a handful of countries including Turkey to continue importing oil from sanctioned Iran a year after the U.S. withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal.

The U.S. has asked Saudi Arabia and UAE to offset the losses of Iranian oil cuts



in the market.

Turkey is against the idea of buying oil from America’s two anti-Iran allies, whose

relations with Ankara are fraught after the murder of Saudi critic Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom’s consulate in Istanbul last October.

On Monday, a few hours after the United States announced that it will not extend sanctions waivers for buyers of the Iranian oil, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said this action will threaten “regional peace and stability”.

“The U.S. decision to end sanctions waivers on Iran’s oil imports will not serve regional peace and stability,” Cavusoglu tweeted.

Iran and Turkey plan to set up a financial mechanism to circumvent U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said after visiting Ankara last week.

According to a report by Richard Nephew published by Columbia University’s Center on Global Energy Policy, China, India and Turkey aren’t necessarily committed to bringing imports of Iranian crude down to zero and the U.S. will have to negotiate “over the terms of their withdrawal from Iran or be prepared to deal with their noncompliance.”

S. Korea to dispatch delegation to U.S. for talks on Iran oil sanctions



ENERGY DESK TEHRAN — South Korea is planning to send a high-ranking delegation to Washington this week for follow-up talks on a U.S. decision on ending the sanctions waivers for the country and seven other importers of Iranian oil.

As reported by Yonhap, the delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Yun Kang-hyeon, is scheduled to meet with their U.S. counterparts.

“Our goal is to seek consultation. That’s what we are trying to do,” a foreign ministry official said, without elaborating.

Following the U.S. announcement on Monday regarding the end of exemptions from sanctions on Iranian oil imports, South Korean foreign ministry said in a statement that the government has been negotiating with the U.S. at all levels to extend the waiver, and that it will continue to make every effort to reflect Seoul’s position until the May deadline.

Earlier this month, South Korea’s

finance minister, Hong Nam-ki, held talks with U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in Washington to seek a waiver extension.

South Korea, which relies heavily on Iranian condensate to produce petrochemical products, had been in negotiations with the U.S. to gain an extension to the waiver that expires May 1.

In November 2018, The United States granted exemptions to eight countries including South Korea allowing them to continue buying Iranian oil.

South Korean companies stopped importing Iranian crude oil in September 2018, however receiving waivers, after a five-month hiatus, South Korea imported \$101.2 million worth of Iranian crude oil in January.

The Northeast Asian country is not an oil producer and more than 13 percent of its total oil purchases come from Iran.

South Korea is the third-largest buyer of Iranian oil.

Oil falls from 6-month high on signs of a bearish market



Oil prices fell on Wednesday after a report allayed concerns about tightening supply, ending a rally that took prices to their highest since early November on concerns that OPEC output cuts and sanctions would take too much oil out of the market.

According to Reuters, the International Energy Agency (IEA), a watchdog for oil consuming countries, said in a statement on Tuesday that markets are “adequately supplied” and that “global spare production capacity remains at comfortable levels.”

Also weighing on prices, U.S. crude stocks rose by 6.9 million barrels last week, more than expected, data from industry group the American Petroleum Institute showed on Tuesday. EIA stocks data is due later on Wednesday.

Brent crude futures were at \$74.18 per barrel at 0848 GMT, down 33 cents from their last close. It was the benchmark’s first fall after three days of rises, but it is still set for its fifth consecutive weekly gain.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI)

crude futures were at \$65.89 per barrel, down 41 cents from their previous settlement – not enough to steer them away from what is set to be their eighth week of gains.

Crude oil prices for spot delivery rallied after the United States said on Monday it would end all exemptions for sanctions against Iran, demanding countries halt oil imports from Tehran from May or face punitive action from Washington.

China, Iran’s biggest oil customer, has formally complained about the move.

The United States has said it saw Saudi Arabia as a partner to balance oil markets.

“The (Saudi) kingdom will be relied upon to work with other producers to keep markets adequately supplied,” PVM said in a note.

But some analysts say the market was still fundamentally bullish.

“The factors that could lead to higher prices are overwhelming,” said Carsten Fritsch at Commerzbank, adding a push towards \$80 a barrel was more likely than a fall below \$70.

OPEC to decide on output only after reviewing oil prices, Kuwait minister says

Kuwait’s oil Minister Khaled Al Fadhel said on Tuesday that any decision on OPEC output will be made only after reviewing prices.

According to the official, the decision by Washington to not extend waivers on Iranian crude oil imports will be a key topic of discussion when OPEC members meet in Jeddah in May.

“I am sure the topic of American sanctions will be a hot topic to be discussed [at the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee meeting in Jeddah in May],” S&P Global Platts quoted Fadhel as saying during a visit in Tokyo.

“A decision will be made only after the review of [oil] prices and how that influences

the prices,” Fadhel said when he was asked to comment whether OPEC will review its output policy after the US announcement on Monday to end all waivers from Iran oil sanctions due to expire May 2.

“Kuwait as a country, a member in OPEC and a founder in OPEC, we always seek stabilization of [oil] prices across the world,” for the benefit of oil producers and consumers, he added.

Asked whether Kuwait is ready to increase its oil production, Fadhel said: “As a minister of oil, we have not discussed this issue as of now,” adding that the producing country will follow OPEC’s production policy.

Kuwait produces around 2.7 million bpd of oil in accordance with the cuts decided by JMMC, he added. He declined to comment on Kuwait’s spare production capacity Tuesday.

The JMMC – which oversees the OPEC/non-OPEC deal -- is set to meet next on May 19 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, after the cancellation of an extraordinary meeting scheduled for April 17-18 at which OPEC had originally hoped to announce any cut extension.

OPEC is set to meet on June 25 in Vienna to discuss extending the agreement to cut output by 1.2 million bpd beyond the end of June, followed by a meeting the next day



with the non-OPEC signatories. The current agreement exempts Venezuela, Iran and Libya from output reductions.

Oil traders to Saudi Arabia: "show us the barrels"

“The United States, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates ... are committed to ensuring that global oil markets remain adequately supplied,” the White House said in a press statement issued on Monday.

“Oil markets are well-supplied and oil inventory levels are seasonally strong,” Reuters cited the U.S. State Department as writing in an accompanying briefing note explaining the rationale for eliminating sanctions waivers for buyers of Iranian oil.

“We have commitments from oil-producing countries, including the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to increase oil production to offset reductions in Iranian oil exports,” the department announced.

The department observed that oil stocks in OECD countries remain above the five-year average while U.S. oil production and exports are increasing.

“Other major producers have signaled to markets a willingness and ability to increase production to compensate for additional Iranian reductions,” the department added.

The decision to eliminate all remaining sanctions waivers for Iran’s oil buyers follows a round of top-level diplomatic contacts between the White House and leaders of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Tougher sanctions are likely contingent on a U.S. understanding that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will make up lost Iranian barrels at least one-for-one to keep prices steady.

Senior U.S. policymakers have been anxious to stress tougher sanctions will not reduce the availability of crude or lead to



higher crude costs and increased fuel prices for motorists.

Oil traders, however, think differently. Tougher sanctions are seen reducing oil supplies during the second half of the year, leaving the market under-supplied, inventories falling, and prices likely rising.

Brent’s six-month calendar spread has jumped to a backwardation of more than \$3 per barrel, up from less than \$2.50 before the announcement and just \$1.20 a month ago.

Brent’s calendar spread has been the best signal for changes in the production-balance since the late 1990s, alternating between backwardation and contango as the market cycles between under- and over-supply.

Brent’s backwardation is now at the highest level since March-April 2018 (when Iran sanctions were also high on the agenda) and before that June 2014 (when Libya’s

production was interrupted by civil war and Islamist fighters were racing across northern Iraq).

The calendar spread is now in the 88th percentile for all trading days since 1990, indicating traders expect the market to be significantly under-supplied in the second half of the year.

The increasing backwardation in Brent signaled many traders expected the market to be under-supplied in the second half of the year before sanctions were abruptly tightened.

Even before the sanctions announcement, hedge funds and other money managers had bought more than 550 million barrels of extra crude and fuels futures and options in the last 14 weeks expecting higher prices.

Bullish bets on a further rise in Brent prices outnumbered bearish ones on a fall by a ratio of almost 13:1 last week up from just 2:1 in December.

Traders have reached a very different judgment about the outlook for oil supplies, inventories and prices in the second half of 2019 to advisers at the State Department or in Saudi Arabia and its allies.

Oil traders appear skeptical Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will offset the reduction in Iran’s exports fully without a further increase in prices first, notwithstanding their understandings with the White House.

Traders will likely continue pushing Brent spot prices and spreads higher until Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates make a firmer commitment to boost their production and show the market extra barrels, or the White House increases pressure on them to do so.

Iran Oil Show 2019 to kick off in early May

ENERGY DESK TEHRAN — The 24th Iran International, Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2019) is due to kick off on May 1 at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

According to the organizers, renowned companies from various countries including Azerbaijan, Spain, Germany, Britain, Italy, Turkey, China, Russia, the Netherlands, Ukraine, and etc. will be showcasing their latest products and achievements in oil and gas industry in the four-day event, IRIB reported.

According to the head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) public relations office, which is in charge of organizing the event, although this year the number of foreign participants has decreased due to the U.S. sanctions, still many countries are interested in Iran’s lucrative oil industry and market.

“This year the main focus of the exhibition is on developing domestic production and empowering domestic companies,” Mohammad Naseri said.

The inaugural ceremony of the exhibition is scheduled to be attended by senior officials from the industry including Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, alongside a number of Iranian parliament members, ambassadors of other countries in Iran, directors of Iranian oil, gas and petrochemical industries, and representatives of some renowned international companies.



Does Germany’s LNG strategy make sense?

By Vanand Meliksetian

Europe’s largest economy is going through a monumental change due to the energy transition or ‘Energiewende’ as it’s called in Germany. Over the years significant amounts of private sector money and government subsidies have gone into renewables. Approximately \$200 billion has been invested in wind turbines and photovoltaic cells to reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses. Despite the growing share of renewables, coal is still a significant part of the energy mix. Also, since the disaster at Fukushima, nuclear energy has fallen out of grace with the German public. The phasing out of coal and nuclear-fired power plants by 2038 will require additional sources to supplement intermittent wind and solar power.



The relative clean nature and abundance of natural gas make it an ideal ‘bridging fuel’ towards a carbon neutral future. Therefore, the German government has shown support for investments in gas infrastructure to ensure a stable and reliable supply of cheap energy such as Nord Stream 2. This pipeline is the most divisive and politically charged energy project in Europe. Although construction is well on its way of being completed with approximately 1,000 kilometers of pipes already welded together, Berlin has also agreed to invest in two new LNG gasification facilities. Three locations are competing to host the new facilities: Wilhelmshaven, Brunsbüttel, and Stade.

Recent developments concerning Nord Stream 2 strongly influenced Berlin’s attitude towards LNG. Political pressure from several Eastern EU members and the U.S. to cancel the project has forced Germany to come up with measures to counter arguments of being over-reliant on Russia. Instead of caving in to pressure, Berlin has taken the savvy political decision to support the construction of several LNG facilities. Although successful from a political point of view, in economic terms it doesn’t make much sense.

The gas market in northwest Europe is well integrated through interconnectors linking consumers and producers in the North Sea area. Germany, also, sits in the middle of three major gas producing countries: Norway, the Netherlands, and Russia. The flow of cheap energy has benefited the German industry by keeping costs low and products competitive. However, the energy outlook of the region, when it comes to natural gas, doesn’t look bright due to technical and political reasons.

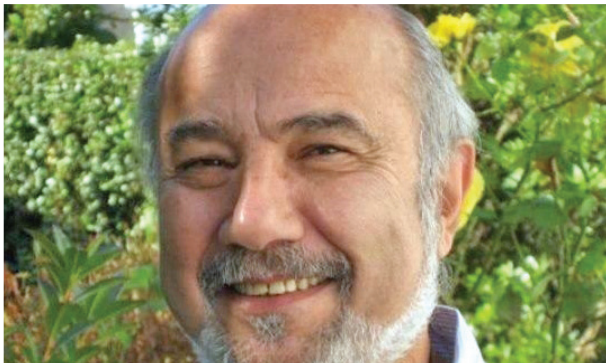
The North Sea, for a long time, was an important production area but that stands to change due to the depletion of energy resources. Next to that, earthquakes in Groningen, the Netherlands have caused political controversy which has eroded support for the gas industry. The decision has been made by the Dutch government to gradually lower production and to stop producing altogether by 2030. Norway, on the other hand, is unable to increase exports further which leaves only Russia to fill the gap when it comes to traditional energy suppliers.

The ‘Energiewende’ has significantly increased the electricity bill for common Germans, who are now facing the highest energy bills in the EU. The high costs associated with the energy transition increase the need for cheap natural gas to prevent further price hikes. Despite the German public’s enduring support for the ‘Energiewende’, even higher energy bills could go at the expense of political support for the government decisions. The fact remains that piped gas from Russia is cheaper than LNG. Therefore, the plans for two LNG facilities would require government subsidies in a standard market economy.

Add to this that the EU has an elaborate but underutilized LNG infrastructure of which approximately one third is used. High prices in Asia have diverted shipments away from Europe as producers can earn more by supplying Asian LNG giants such as Japan, China, and South Korea.

However, LNG facilities could render an advantage to German customers. For a long time, Europe was Gazprom’s most lucrative market due to the continent’s relative dependence and high prices. The introduction of LNG acts as a ceiling to the prices the Russian gas giant can set for its natural gas by adding flexibility to the market. Consumers can switch from piped to shipped gas when there is a financial reason. German LNG could be the leverage against future negotiations with Gazprom.

‘Arab NATO would be a total joke without Egypt’



TEHRAN (FNA) - Professor Hossein Askari, a former advisor to Saudi finance minister, said Egypt would want a big annual check from Saudi Arabia and the UAE to join the Arab NATO, and further slammed the Saudi crown prince for robbing Arabs of dignity and tarnishing Islam.

“He needs money and without Egypt Arab NATO would be a total joke because all you would have is [P]GCC minus Qatar and with the addition of Jordan,” Hossein Askari, an expert on Saudi Arabia who also teaches international business at the George Washington University, told FNA.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ How do you assess attempts made to establish the so-called “Arab NATO”?

A: Normally, I would applaud all defensive arrangements. But I don’t believe that this is the real goal of the proposed Arab NATO. It is not for the defense of these Arab countries. The driving force behind this effort has been MBS and Saudi Arabia. They want to have a force to engage Iran, and Iran and Iraq. MBS has a big ally in the Crown prince of the UAE. They are working together and pulling in Kushner and the United States. I repeat something that I have said many times, the Al-Sauds are obsessed about Iran. They believe that Iran wants to overthrow them and so they want a big force to confront Iran. With such a coalition, they hope to show the US that they are ready. This would make it more likely for the US to declare war on Iran. It would also draw Israel.

■ What are the goals of such a coalition?

A: As I have said, I think that the goal is to be ready for an opportune time to attack Iran and try to break Iran up as the country we see today. Their allies in such a move would be the US and Israel.

■ According to some news reports, Egypt has withdrawn from efforts to form an “Arab NATO”. What could be the reason behind this withdrawal?

A: I am sure that Egypt would want a big annual check from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Sisi may be just bargaining. He needs money and without Egypt, an Arab NATO would be a total joke because all you would have is [P]GCC minus Qatar and with the addition of Jordan. They cannot even muster a complete [P]GCC force, so they would add Jordan in place of Qatar.

■ The principle of collective defense is at the very heart of the NATO’s founding treaty. It remains a unique and enduring principle that binds its members together, committing them to protect each other and setting a spirit of solidarity within the Alliance. Could an “Arab NATO” arrive at such an objective? Does the US agree to article 5 of the NATO statute?

A: As you correctly note Article 5 is at the heart of NATO. It has been invoked only after 9/11. The Europeans clearly responded in support of the US. Would the US respond to such a call if a European member was under attack? I believe that the US would normally live up to this obligation. But I say normally because I think we live in abnormal times, namely the Trump presidency. I don’t believe that Trump would respond to helping Europe but I believe other recent presidents would have. Trump looked the other way and said nothing as the Russians killed a resident of England on English soil. He only came in support of the UK when members of his own party criticized him. Let’s face facts NATO is under threat and is in trouble. Trump does not understand that the US military in Europe, European defense expenditures and the willingness of Europeans to support US foreign engagements are critical for US security and defense. Trump’s focus is what do they spend on defense and what do we spend. They don’t spend enough. So let’s scrap NATO.

■ What is the role of the US in shaping this coalition and will it remain after Trump’s presidency?

A: I think the US, especially under Trump, is encouraging an Arab NATO. The reasons are many. The U.S. would sell more arms. There would be a ready Arab force in case the US wanted to intervene in the Persian Gulf. The US could withdraw some of its forces from the Middle East. They would see such a force as a helpful balance against Iran and Iraq. All the Arabs under one command would make it easier for Kushner and Trump to bring them closer to Israel and destroy all hope of a Palestinian state. This I believe is at the heart of Kushner so-called peace plan that he wants to unveil, a plan which he has shared with Netanyahu and MBS but with no Palestinian input. It is a joke that he could have a plan where only one side, namely Israel, is consulted. MBS has robbed Arabs of any dignity that they might have had. He has tarnished Islam’s message to the world as he engages in horrendous acts, robs his country, tortures Saudis and all the while claims to be the custodian of Islam’s holiest places. He will do anything to get Trump’s and Netanyahu’s support to stay in power and to threaten Iran. He has no dignity.

Saudi bloodletting of Shias - Where is the outrage?

1 → Salman Qureish used his social media prowess to organize pro-democracy protests in 2011-12. He was 18 when he was arrested and finally executed on Tuesday.

Abbas Al-Hassan was married with four children and was arrested in 2013 on charges including ‘spreading Shia beliefs’ and ‘campaigning for human rights in the kingdom’. He was also executed on Tuesday.

Ahmad Hassan Ali, 34, was executed for ‘attending pro-democracy demonstrations and chanting anti-regime slogans’. He was brutally tortured in the custody and had fallen sick.

Munir al-Adam was sent to gallows for ‘participating in anti-regime protests’. According to reports, he was tortured in custody so ruthlessly that he turned fully deaf and partially blind.

Hussain Al-Rabi was a young activist from Qatif who belonged to a poor family. He fought for people’s rights and was executed for same. His younger brother was also killed in 2014.

Many of those executed were young Shia citizens of Qatif, Madina and Al-Ahsa and were active in their communities. They demanded equal rights and an end to discrimination, abuse, exploitation and killings.

Shias in Saudi Arabia have faced persecution throughout the country’s history, but the crackdown has intensified in recent years, especially since MBS took over in June 2017 following a bloodless coup.

Hundreds of Shia citizens have been executed in recent years on false charges and scores of others continue to be on death row, including Ali al-Nimr, Dawood al-Marhoon and Abdullah al-Zaher.

Most of them were arrested in anti-government protests in 2011-2012, which rocked the country’s eastern province, with predominantly Shia population, who have been quite legitimately demanding an end to anti-Shia discrimination and the release of political prisoners.

The protests led to the execution of top Shia cleric Sheikh Baqir al-Nimr in 2016, who was put to death along with 46 other



prisoners in the largest mass execution in Saudi Arabia since 1980.

Amnesty International said the sentence was carried out “after grossly unfair trial” and said there were “questions about the fairness of the trial in a monstrous and irreversible injustice”.

In 2017, fierce clashes broke out between Saudi security forces and Shias in the eastern province following demolitions in the Shia town of Awamiya. At least 20 civilians were killed.

In July last year, after the execution of four Shiite men in country’s Shia-dominated eastern province, Amnesty said the Saudi regime was employing the death penalty as a “political weapon to silence dissent”.

The latest massacre and display of a mutilated body on a pole has sparked anger and outrage from human rights campaigners across the world. But the world leaders are silent.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other watchdog bodies said the executions were carried out after “sham trials” and were “a chilling demonstration of the Saudi Arabian authorities’ callous disregard for human life.”

Saudi Interior Ministry said the men were executed for their role in ‘spreading extremist ideologies, forming terrorist cells, fueling sectarian tension and plunging the country into chaos’.

The same old sweeping and vague charges the dictatorial regimes employ as a tool to crush voices of dissent, said Taha Hussain, a Lebanon-based human rights activist.

Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty’s Middle East director, said the men were convicted after “sham trials” and were forced to confess to the crimes under torture.

“It is also yet another gruesome indication of how the death penalty is being used as a political tool to crush dissent from within the country’s Shi’a minority,” she said.

“The use of the death penalty is always appalling but it is even more shocking when it is applied after unfair trials or against people who were under 18 at the time of the crime, in flagrant violation of international law,” she added.

Saudi Arabia have executed over 100 people since the beginning of the year and is on its course to surpass the last year’s number if it continues at the same pace, said the watchdog.

Independence still matters: prof. Michael Walzer

By Rooholamin Saeidi

TEHRAN - As a professor, author, editor, and lecturer, Michael Walzer has addressed a wide variety of topics in political theory and moral philosophy: political obligation, just and unjust war, nationalism and ethnicity, economic justice and the welfare state. His books (among them Just and Unjust Wars, Spheres of Justice, The Company of Critics, Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad, On Toleration, and Politics and Passion) and essays have played a part in the revival of practical, issue-focused ethics and in the development of a pluralist approach to political and moral life. For more than three decades Walzer served as co-editor of Dissent, now in its 64th year.

His articles and interviews appear frequently in the world’s foremost newspapers and journals. He is currently working on the fourth volume of The Jewish Political Tradition, a comprehensive collaborative project focused on the history of Jewish political thought.

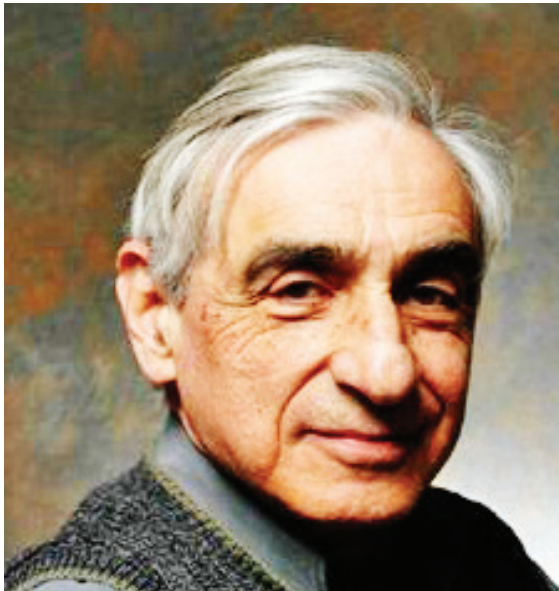
His book, The Paradox of Liberation: Secular Revolutions and Religious Counterrevolutions, was published in March of 2015, and his new book, A Foreign Policy for the Left, was published in 2018.

Following is the text of his interview with Asre-Andisheh Magazine:

■ Do you think that ‘independence’ has become an outmoded concept under conditions of globalization and due to complex interdependence or do you consider it to be still relevant in a globalized world?

A: Until the state system is completed, and everyone who needs a state has one, I continue to believe in the value of independence. Free-standing states are still the necessary agents of security and welfare. That may not be true forever, but it is certainly true today--just ask the Palestinians or the Kurds, who don’t have a state, or anyone living in a failed state or in a state torn by civil war.

■ We are witnessing a very positive attitude toward nationalism in Europe during recent years and many European citizens stand against internationalism and multiculturalism and want to preserve their independence and



national identity. How do you interpret and analyze this situation? Is it indicative of the fact that independence is still important to nations?

A: Statism and nationalism are not the same thing, but the most typical state is the nation-state, and I do support the right of endangered or persecuted nations to have a state of their own. But this has to be a liberal state, guaranteeing the rights of minorities, willing to take in refugees, and so on. So this is an internationalist position: everyone in the world should have the protection of a decent state. I do believe that nations have a right to preserve their culture, but not at the expense of other nations. Rightwing nationalism in places like Hungary and Poland should be opposed--and is opposed by many Poles and Hungarians, whom I regard as my political friends.

■ Some scholars believe that Mr. Trump’s protectionism

in America or Brexit and resurgence of far right in Europe are signs which indicate that independence still matters to states even in a network of complex interdependence. What is your idea? Do you agree with them?

A: Of course independence still matters, but what that means is that we argue among ourselves about what the policies of our country should be. Almost half of the British people, and probably more than half now, opposed Brexit. And Trump is viewed favorably by only about 35% of Americans. Independent countries can and should cooperate with one another for mutual security, to curb environmental damage, to regulate the global economy, and to share the burdens of the refugee crisis. These kinds of cooperation depend upon decisions made in sovereign states.

■ In your idea is it possible to remain politically or culturally independent but to cooperate with other actors economically and commercially in current world system?

A: Yes.

■ Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted and perused an independent foreign policy since the revolution 1979 in both regional and international scales. Do you consider Iran successful in following such foreign policy vis-a-vis its neighbors or great powers?

A: Iran has certainly had some success in expanding its influence in the Middle east--though I suspect that this success entails a loss of independence for countries like Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Certainly, the tendency of politics in the Middle East in recent decades has not been to strengthen the independence of the countries of the region. Iran here is an exception to the general rule, and Iran is one of the reasons that effective independence is rare in the region.

■ What advantages and disadvantages does perusing an independent foreign policy have for a regional power like Iran?

A: That’s really a question for Iranians to answer. It seems to me, looking on from a distance, that Iran’s success in expanding its influence has come at considerable cost to the Iranian people--economic decline and a loss of political liberty. The recent demonstrations suggest wide-spread discontent with this result.

The U.S under Trump and his crazed Neocons aim to tyrannize the entire world

1 → That day has not arrived yet. But it will. Goodwill in the long run cannot be denied. The world is too intertwined.

Trump, as many know, has reneged on virtually all his campaign promises with regard to foreign policies. He has been thoroughly captured by appointed Neocons like Bolton and Pompeo, which is to say he has been captured almost solely by Netanyahu and the oligarch Jewish/Zionist billionaires in the U.S. How else can one explain the moves Trump has made beginning almost a year ago when he cancelled U.S. participation in the JCPOA?

No question Trump and his administrative lackeys want above all for Iran to buckle and leave the JCPOA. Trump wants Iran to provoke a U.S./Saudi/Israeli military attack, and not just on Iran, but on Iran’s allies, in particular Hezbollah in Lebanon and on the Assad government in Syria. Trump

also seems to be pushing, with its demands to kill Iranian oil sales, to provoke Iran to try to block commercial traffic through the Straits of Hormuz, providing yet another reason for war in the Middle East. At the moment, in this almost delirious swarm of bad actions, China reportedly may not obey Trump and may actually be planning to boost oil purchases from Iran. Russia and Turkey, India and Japan and other countries, would be advised to follow suit or at least not cut their purchases of Iranian crude oil. This may be the moment, if ever there was one, to break the stranglehold the U.S. has enjoyed for decades as the world’s number one bully. The sheer arrogance of the U.S. government under Trump acting like the world’s dictator is almost beyond belief. It reeks of desperation, too. As Philip Giraldi, a former CIA employee who visited Iran last year with other notable U.S. citizens

writes: the U.S. has “heightening tension with major powers Russia and China while also threatening Iran and Venezuela on an almost daily basis. Now Cuba is in the crosshairs because it is allegedly assisting Venezuela. One might reasonably ask if America in its seemingly enduring role as the world’s most feared bully will ever cease and desist, but the more practical question might be “When will the psychopathic trio of John Bolton, Mike Pompeo and Elliott Abrams be fired (and replaced) so the United States can begin to behave like a normal nation?”

No question, anyway, that a faltering U.S. “empire” like many previous empires has become more strident, demanding and dangerous exactly at the time when its credibility and popularity are dying. And whoever gave Trump the “right” to hand over (and more) the Syrian Golan to Netanyahu and Israel, breaking inter-

national laws and norms as if they simply never existed? Make no mistake, most if not all the world outside of Saudi Arabia and Israel are against this raw power play. But this is not news to Iran nor to anyone else. It’s time Europe stepped up, too, and condemned the Trump regime. South Africa, for one, has already broken off most of its diplomatic relations with the outlaw Zionist state. Others may follow.

What the U.S. has at bottom decreed to the entire world is that the U.S. alone gets to decide who trades with whom. In effect, national sovereignty according to Trump does not exist anywhere. As one commentator has remarked, this goes well beyond a merely aggressive foreign policy. It suggests a global dictatorship enacted by the U.S. Countries like China and Russia and Iran must now and forevermore decide to resist, or else become slaves to U.S. tyranny.

The resurgence of religion in the last modern century: prof. Scott Thomas

Is it possible to remain religious and to become modern?

By Rooholamin Saeidi

Part 2 **TEHRAN** - Dr. Scott Thomas is an American who lectures in International Relations and the Politics of Developing Countries. He studied in the School of International Service at the American University, Washington, DC before going to the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics for his MSc and PhD. He taught at universities in the United States, Switzerland, and South Africa before coming to Bath in 1994 where he is a permanent member of the teaching staff. At Bath he teaches a variety of courses on international relations.

Following is the text of the part 2 of his interview with Asre-Andisheh Magazine:

■ What do some thinkers mean when they call the 20th century 'The Century of God'? What does this concept indicate?

A: I would prefer to call the 21st century – 'the century of God.' It would seem, given what I have said already in previous questions, the 20th century may have been the high water mark of secularization, and a particular faith in the myth, the theory, of secularization as a coherent, inevitable social process spreading around the world. It is why I now talk about the religious world of the 21st century.

It was, of course, André Malraux, the French intellectual who was Minister of Culture towards the end of Charles De Gaulle's presidency, who purportedly said, 'The 21st century will be religious or it will not be,' which for many has become a kind of prophesy. It is argued he did not say this, but that did point to an enduring power of religion, and a relationship between God and man in every age. However, he boldly said this during the high water mark of modernization and secularization. I quote Gary Wills, the U.S. commentator, 'The learned have their superstitions, prominent among them is a belief that superstition is evaporating.'

■ Contrary to our expectations, even reflectivist or post positivist thinkers like Alexander Wendt who pay attention to social factors, neglect religion and don't take it seriously. What is the reason of this negligence? Is it as you write in your book, because of 'secular habit'?

A: Yes, this is broadly the reason since these broad societal characteristics also influence academia. The reasons are the standard ones I explained in my book. Firstly, scholars of International Relations marginalized religion since it was supposed to decline according to the theory of secularization – (Western) modernity would be the global home of all of us. Secondly, religion was marginalized, given what I called the 'Westphalian presumption,' i.e. a certain reading, a certain set of assumptions, which argued that the lessons of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), i.e. mixing religion and politics, inevitably leads to violence and intolerance, and so the Westphalian settlement – according to the conventional story, separated religion from international politics. Thirdly, for these reasons religion was marginalized from the main theories, paradigms, or traditions of thought in International Relations. Fourthly, is the impact of positivism and materialism on the study of International Relations: positivism is based on naturalism (i.e. the same scientific method is applicable to explaining a natural event like a volcanic eruption or a political event like a political revolution), and it is based on the separation of facts from values. Materialism – all varieties, and not only Marxism, argues the basic material, economic, and technological forces are what are important for studying international relations. Positivism and materialism established the epistemological basis of the discipline – what constitutes knowledge, and how to go about discovering it. However, what had been lost is the role of ideas, values, beliefs, desires, hopes, and passions in international relations.

Alexander Wendt's form of social constructivism – dominant in the U.S., is now often called 'conventional constructivism' – it combines a positivist epistemology with a social, or relational ontology (i.e.



The problem is this - God's return – if God ever went away, at least in the public, political, and scholarly consciousness, always seems to be related to anger, jealousy, revenge, and violence. This is, as I said, what the Copenhagen School of Security Studies calls the 'securitization' of religion.

the types of actors engaged in International Relations), in contrast to 'consistent' social constructivism, which combines a social epistemology and a social ontology. The first conforms to mainstream social science, and the other recognizes the reflexive, inter-subjective nature of international politics, and I think the implications of this difference can be seen in some of my responses below, and my use of critical theory in international relations.

■ Why do you consider religion as 'The Soul of the 21st Century'?

A: What else is there, what other idea, concept conveys what this concept has conveyed throughout much of history? The concept has always grappled with how identity, meaning, and purpose are connected in diverse ways in societies and communities around the world. At some level these ideas are also connected to conceptions of transcendence – even in critical theory. This is also what provides the basis – beyond an individualist ontology for interreligious dialogue.

■ Today we witness a contradiction that in practice, religion and religious actors play an important part in international relations but in theory, they are still neglected and marginalized by mainstream or even reflectivist theories. How can we interpret and solve this contradiction?

A: Well, what can be called 'the religious turn' in the study of International Relations, which has been going on since the 1990s has tried to deal with this problem. There is also now the Religion and International Relations section of the International Studies Association. However, the real problem is religion is still 'securitized,' what the Copenhagen School of Security Studies argues when something is perceived to be a security threat, which legitimates extraordinary actions by states (migration, immigration have also recently been securitized). The story I told earlier of the role religion in the United Nations and the European Union requires a lot more research since the idea religion in relevant to international institutions is denied, ignored, or forgotten by many elites, or secular elites, from developing countries. I am not sure it can be resolved entirely but there can be glimpses of hope for the future. The Catholic lay organization, Community of Saint'Egidio, which helped establish with

the Italian government 'humanitarian corridors' for Syrian refugees which may turn out to be a model for Europe (a similar arrangement has recently been signed with the French government). What Pope Francis has done, which in all likelihood will outlive his pontificate, is the link between social policy and interreligious dialogue. In the past interreligious dialogue has been about doctrines, but Pope Francis has linked it to how people from different religious traditions can work together on some of the major social policy questions affecting many states and societies. One of the key pointers towards the future on theory and practice may very well be the role of religious non-state actors (social ontology), and the kind of knowledge from below (social epistemology) which they have, and the new concept of religious engagement in foreign policy and international relations.

■ What do you mean by 'The Revenge of God' in your book when you refer to the global resurgence of religion? Can we say that westerners' excessive attitude in marginalizing and omitting religion has resulted in its coming back to the West?

A: The West marginalized religion, and the Communist world persecuted it, and God is coming back to both worlds. I would not use the word 'revenge' to describe this social process, the phrase comes from Gilles Kepel, the French expert on Islam. It is a great title for a book, and if God has come back, many would argue he has come back with a vengeance – God has come back violently. What I have said is that the global religious resurgence is one of the ways the global South has 'outwitted' the developed countries.

The problem is this - God's return – if God ever went away, at least in the public, political, and scholarly consciousness, always seems to be related to anger, jealousy, revenge, and violence. This is, as I said, what the Copenhagen School of Security Studies calls the 'securitization' of religion. It reflects what I have called 'the Westphalian presumption,' the dominant ways religion - and its seemingly inevitable relationship to violence has been perceived, and even conceived in the European political imagination, and recent Western concerns regarding religion in international relations.

Recall it was Ludwig Feuerbach (a strong influence on Marx), who wrote at

the time the famous book, The Essence of Christianity (1841). Religion, he argued, consists of ideas and values produced by human beings in the course of their cultural development, but they mistakenly project them on to divine forces or gods. So, 'God fights back' (BBC), 'God's Warriors' (CNN), 'The Revenge of God' (Gilles Kepel), and similar titles perhaps say more about contemporary (or at least Western, or Western secular) views of god than they do about religion and international relations.

However, following Feuerbach, who may be (partly) on to something - is it God who is angry, violent, and revengeful, or is it we humans who are like this? We cannot conceive of a God who is not angry, violent, and revengeful since this is what we are like. So, we project (as he says) our violent characteristics onto God, and in this way we do indeed create God, or really create our images of God as a God of war, violence, and revenge to justify our own violence.

■ In your opinion can we understand and theorize religion in the framework of existing IR theories or do you believe that there should be new theories?

A: I am more inclined to say this depends on the broad division between positivist and post-positivist approaches to the study of International Relations – and, how religion is conceived within in them. Any approach will be deficient which does not recognize that the discipline of International Relations not only seeks to explain the political world, but is also crucially, and inevitably also a part of the political world, and a part of global politics. This opens up also the whole area – which is not widely engaged with, regarding the concepts of religion. How we study religion and its impact in politics and international relations changes if we recognize that religion is not a transcultural or transhistorical concept but is socially and politically constructed. Therefore, I now argue, taking the argument of my book further, if you want to take religion seriously in International Relations, take politics seriously. I mean by this not the conventional agenda – with examining the consequences of mixing religion and politics, i.e. religion being securitized. What now need to be studying the politics surrounding the way the concepts – the sacred, the secular, and the political are socially and politically constructed in specific countries, contexts, and historic states-systems.

■ What opportunities do interpretive, normative and constructivist approaches provide for theorizing religion in international relations?

A: I concluded my book, The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations, by saying to see the world differently is already a way of beginning to change it. So theory does matter. It opens up new way of seeing and interpreting what is going on. I am no deconstructionist, there really is a world out there, but if I was in the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 I would not be here. However, the social world is not like the natural world. All of us – especially in the West, but now many people in the global South with the rise of the NICs and BASIC countries, do not influence the volcanic activity of Mount Vesuvius in Italy (i.e. not positivism or naturalism in social science), but we all can have an influence on many contemporary international events. What critical theorists call 'theory as negative critique' – how the world got to be the way it is, should it be this way, and can it be changed, fits very nicely from a theological viewpoint with the idea of theory as prophetic critique, and offers a basis for critically assessing international relations from within the perspective of the Abrahamic religions.

Critical theory's approach to 'theory as theory as every day social practice,' argues every one of us – by our life styles, what we buy, what we consume, how we travel, etc., every one of us every day is living out a theory of international relations. Again, this view of theory fits with what every believer in the Abrahamic religions conceives of as the moral life, the social life, and the spiritual life.

Canadian analyst says Sudan coup an outside job



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A prominent Canadian expert described the recent military coup in Sudan "a clandestine regime change" attempt orchestrated from outside the North African country supposedly by the US and its regional allies, including Saudi Arabia and Israel.

"I see the events which ultimately transpired less as a domestic coup d'état on the heels of a homegrown protest movement than a classic intervention by the USA and its allies or, more to the point, a clandestine "regime change" which closely mimicked the play book used to install el-Sisi in Egypt as the culmination of its part in the somewhat protracted Arab Fall," Barry Grossman, who is based on the Indonesian island of Bali, told Tasnim in an interview.

Following is the full text of the interview.

■ Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir was recently removed by a military coup after months of anti-government protests against his three-decade rule. A military council led by Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan is now in power and says it will oversee a transitional period that will last a maximum of two years. What do you think about the latest developments in the African country? How do you predict the future of the developments? Would the military council hand over the power to a democratic government?

A: It would be easy, of course, to let one's analysis of these events be colored by the fact that al-Bashir came to power himself by a coup d'état and, perhaps more significantly, by his previous willingness to do Saudi Arabia's bidding, especially in Yemen. But to be frank, I do not feel that is an appropriate approach, unless people are committed to brushing Atlantic World interference under the carpet while refusing to learn anything about what this portends for others in the region.

Let us not forget that, in recent years, Sudan was itself split in two, with its oil rich southern region become the new, independent state of South Sudan with full Atlantic World backing. Indeed, I do not think it would be overstating the matter to see the emergence of South Sudan as an independent nation in 2011 as being nothing less than the culmination of another massive US heist designed to separate nations which do not fully submit to US hegemony from their natural resources.

We should also not forget that despite longstanding US sanctions and other measures which discriminated against Sudan, including designating Sudan as a state sponsor of terror, al-Bashir's government nevertheless long cooperated with US counter-terrorism efforts and, at one point, the Bashir government is reputed to have even offered to extradite Osama Bin Laden in return for a US commitment to lift its sanction against Sudan. The offer was of course declined and we all know what happened in the ensuing years.

The main problem I have with recent events stems from reports that only weeks before the recent coup that removed him, President Bashir was pressured by the KSA to put aside his differences with Salah Gosh, OBL's former handler in Sudan who went on to become Sudan's point man working with the USA on counter-terrorism, even though Gosh was sidelined and almost imprisoned some years back for making comments which suggested that he was willing to back a coup d'état against al-Bashir.

The first thing Gosh did after President Bashir naively agreed to the Saudi request and appointed Gosh as the head of Sudan's intelligence apparatus, is travel to Germany where he was reported as having met with MI6 and the head of Mossad, ostensibly to plan a political transition for Sudan after Bashir's imminent removal.

Of course, it is not entirely surprising that the KSA had apparently elected to betray their once loyal ally, since recent developments involving Prince Mohammad bin Salman, Saudi Arabia warming relations with Israel, the still secret Trump "Final Solution" for "resolving" the Palestinian "problem", and last but not least, Bashir's own apparent moves to normalize relations with Syria's President Assad, all seem to have left Saudi Arabia's King-in-waiting and de facto ruler, MBS, decidedly unimpressed with al-Bashir.

As a result, I see the events which ultimately transpired less as a domestic coup d'état on the heels of a homegrown protest movement than a classic intervention by the USA and its allies or, more to the point, a clandestine "regime change" which closely mimicked the play book used to install el-Sisi in Egypt as the culmination of its part in the somewhat protracted Arab "Fall".

■ According to media reports, there have been some meddlesome measures by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in Sudan. However, Sudanese protesters have declared their strong opposition to the two countries. What do you think about the future of relations between Sudan and the two Arab countries and do you think that the next Sudanese government would be an ally of the two?

A: Well, I am not convinced that even the protest movement was what it has been portrayed to be, any more than I was convinced by similar claims relating to protests in Libya, Egypt, Syria and elsewhere during the carefully engineered Arab Fall which, despite the havoc, destruction, and bloodshed, was so celebrated by the Atlantic World, bearing in mind that it is never very difficult for foreign agents to stir up a critical mass of civic unrest in nations suffering under the burden of long term Atlantic World manipulation, intervention, sanctions, and more generally, unfairness in all matters related to trade.

In any case, what exactly drove protesters to take a stand if not domestic economic problems which inexorably followed years of US sanctions and the theft of 75% of Sudan's oil revenues by forcing the Independence of South Sudan on the majority?

■ As you know, Sudan is part of Saudi Arabia's disastrous military campaign against Yemen. Given that a huge number of the Saudi-led coalition forces fighting in Yemen are Sudanese, what do you think about the effect of developments in Sudan on the protracted war on Yemen?

A: Well I suppose we will know the answer to this question soon enough. But I certainly will not be surprised to see Sudan once again taking a far more active military effort in support of the belligerent and criminal Saudi-US-UK and UN backed war on the people of Yemen.

Mecron's political stroke at Elysee Palace

➔ After 11 years, such policies led to nothing but a rollback of the United Europe, and the continuation of the crisis in the Eurozone. France's unrests had also affected the Benelux region (Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg). Obviously, some other European countries, including Spain, Italy and Greece, will face new upcoming events. These countries continue to pursue austerity policies to reduce public spending, reduce external debt and etc.

Definitely, many European governments will be seriously affected by the spread of new protests in the Green Continent. This is while the governments of Germany and France no longer have the power to control and manage the crisis (as they used to do before).

As it was mentioned, the beginning of the new round of the Europe's general crisis from France (traditionally one of Europe's pioneering players) has complicated the

equations in Europe to a large extent. In this situation, the EU leaders don't have a common understanding of the existing crises, besides, they have even problems in formulating those crises, and this is going to make the mire more frightening for them.

If the current trend continues in France, Emmanuel Macron will have the same fate as the two previous presidents of his country. An issue that even frustrates the current president of France.



Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Brand New Apt in Elahieh
one 120 sq.m apt with 1 Bdr on
ground floor, one 200 sq.m apt
with 3 Bdrs. on third floor
furn, spj, gathering room
roof garden, parking
\$1400 & \$2500

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Fereshteh
15th floor, 250 sq.m
3 Bdrs., fully furn, spj, gym
lobby, parking, **\$2500**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Luxury Apt in Niavaran
brand new, 4th floor, 700 sq.m
3 master bedrooms., unfurn
equipped kitchen, spj
3 parking spots, **\$5300**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Tripex Penthouse in Zafarani
800 sq.m, 4 Bdrs. with one
suit, furn, spj, elevator
parking spot, **\$15000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apartment in Velenjak
2th floor, 200 sq.m, 3 Bdrs. furn
balcony elevator, spj
24/7 security, parking, **\$1700**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Jordan
1th floor, 163 sq.m, 3Bdr.
equipped kitchen, furn balcony,
sauna, storage parking, **\$1500**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa

Duplex Villa
in Shahrak Qarb
140 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., unfurn
yard, renovated, roof garden
storage, parking
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Villa in Elahieh
duplex, 3000 sq.m land
furn/unfurn, 500 sq.m built up
Beautiful garden, parking
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Villa in Darous
3 floors, 640 sq.m, swimming pool,
6 parking spots, yard
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Ajudaniye
2 floors, 315 sq.m & 300 sq.m
furn, equipped kitchen swimming
pool, sauna
parking, gym, **\$4000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Aqdasieh
duplex, 750 sq.m land, 500 sq.m
built up, 5 Bdrs., nice garden
indoor swimming pool, sauna
3 parking spots
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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



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

From Oxford Cert Universal

**Best Consultation
Best Services, Best Result**

Intl. Department Manager "Tina 09128103205"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

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

Building & Office

Whole Building in Zafarani
brand new, 5 floors, 250 sq.m
spj, elevator, roof top
storage, 10 parking spots
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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

Whole Building
in Argentina Square
brand new, 6 floors, 6 apts
each floor 250 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
elevator, parking
Price negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in
Saadat Abad
2 apts 75 sq.m, 2 apts 150 sq.m
renovated, parking
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Zafarani
3 apts, 568 sq.m land, 1220 sq.m
built up totally, 17 Bdrs. unfurn
elevator, storage, lots of parking
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Darous
administrative office license
brand new, 6 floors, each floor
one apt, each apt 185 sq.m with
2 Bdrs., elevator, parking spot
\$8000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Ideal Offers

Apt in Zafarani
4th floor, 130 sq.m with
2 Bdrs., furn, parking, **\$1500**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Elahieh
4th floor, 150 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
2 bath rooms, fully furn
balcony, swimming pool
Jacuzzi, elevator, billiard table
Parking, **\$1700**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

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

Apt in Niavaran
1th floor, 250 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
unfurn, sauna & swimming pool,
parking, **\$1800**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Fereshteh
185 sq.m, 2 master room with one
room, furn, spj
parking, **\$1700**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Suite in Yusef Abad
63 sq.m, 1 Bdr, fully, equipped
kitchen, renovated, yard
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Evin
90 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., nice & clean furn,
equipped kitchen parking
\$900
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

مالکین محترم

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

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

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

مالکین محترم

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

SHANON
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
+989121907875
Tel : 88510081

3bdrs Apts
Farmanieh (\$1400) F.F
Fereshteh (\$1800) F.F
Darrous (\$1600) F.F

Available Villas
Velenjak (\$5000) 4bdrs
Jordan (\$4000) 5bdrs
Both with S/p, S, J, & yard

Kamranieh (\$2000) 220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F
Zaferanieh (\$2200) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME
Real Estate
Member of DELTA Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865

Advertising Dept:
times1979@gmail.com

+9821 430 51 450

www.tehrantimes.com

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading
International Daily

Advertising Dept

Tel:
021 - 430 51 450

TEHRAN TIMES
Iran's Leading International Daily

ENGLISH PERSIAN GLOSSARY

واژه نامه اصطلاحات مطبوعات
انگلیسی - فارسی

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

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

For more information contact:

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

Climate change has worsened global economic inequality, new study says

A new Stanford University study shows global warming has increased economic inequality since the 1960s. Temperature changes caused by growing concentrations of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere have enriched cool countries like Norway and Sweden, while dragging down economic growth in warm countries such as India and Nigeria.

"Our results show that most of the poorest countries on Earth are considerably poorer than they would have been without global warming," said climate scientist Noah Diffenbaugh, lead author of the study published April 22 in the peer-reviewed Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "At the same time, the majority of rich countries are richer than they would have been."

The study, co-authored with Marshall Burke, a Stanford assistant professor of Earth system science, finds that, from 1961 to 2010, global warming decreased the wealth per person in the world's poorest countries by 17 to 30 percent. Meanwhile, the gap between the group of nations with the highest and lowest economic output per person is now approximately 25 percent larger than it would have been without climate change.

The gap would narrow

Although economic inequality between countries has decreased in recent decades, the research suggests the gap would have narrowed faster without global warming.

The study builds on previous research in which Burke and co-authors analyzed 50 years of annual temperature and GDP measurements for 165 countries to estimate



The "historical data clearly show that crops are more productive, people are healthier and we are more productive at work when temperatures are neither too hot nor too cold," Professor of Earth system science Burke explains.

the effects of temperature fluctuations on economic growth. They demonstrated that growth during warmer than average years has accelerated in cool nations and slowed in warm nations.

The "historical data clearly show that

crops are more productive, people are healthier and we are more productive at work when temperatures are neither too hot nor too cold," Burke explained. "This means that in cold countries, a little bit of warming can help. The opposite is true in

places that are already hot."

In the current study, Diffenbaugh and Burke combined Burke's previously published estimates with data from more than 20 climate models developed by research centers around the world. Using the climate models to isolate how much each country has already warmed due to human-caused climate change, the researchers were able to determine what each country's economic output might have been had temperatures not warmed.

Without global warming

To account for uncertainty, the researchers calculated more than 20,000 versions of what each country's annual economic growth rate could have been without global warming. The estimates in the paper capture the range of outcomes delivered by those thousands of different routes.

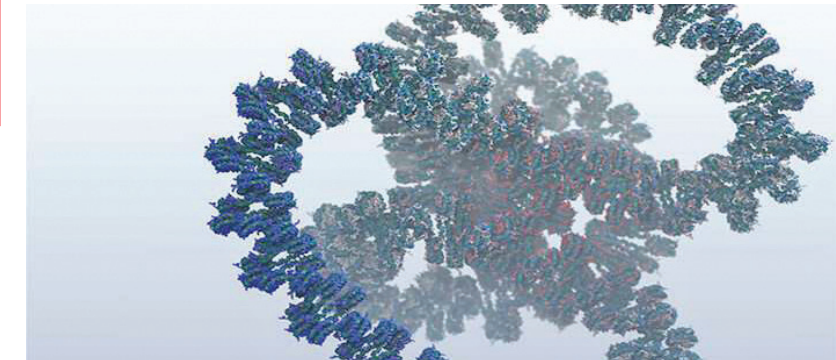
"For most countries, whether global warming has helped or hurt economic growth is pretty certain," said Burke. Tropical countries, in particular, tend to have temperatures far outside the ideal for economic growth. "There's essentially no uncertainty that they've been harmed."

It's less clear how warming has influenced growth in countries in the middle latitudes, including the United States, China and Japan. For these and other temperate-climate nations, the analysis reveals economic impacts of less than 10 percent.

While the impacts of temperature may seem small from year to year, they can yield dramatic gains or losses over time.

(Source: newswise.com)

In a breakthrough scientists create first billion-atom biomolecular simulation



Researchers at Los Alamos National Laboratory have created the largest simulation to date of an entire gene of DNA, a feat that required one billion atoms to model and will help researchers to better understand and develop cures for diseases like cancer.

"It is important to understand DNA at this level of detail because we want to understand precisely how genes turn on and off," said Karissa Sanbonmatsu, a structural biologist at Los Alamos. "Knowing how this happens could unlock the secrets to how many diseases occur."

Sanbonmatsu and her team ran the breakthrough simulation on Los Alamos' Trinity supercomputer, the sixth fastest in the world. The capabilities of Trinity primarily support the National Nuclear Security Administration stockpile stewardship program, which ensures safety, security, and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear stockpile.

All living things

DNA is the blueprint for all living things and holds the genes that encode the structures and activity in the human body. There is enough DNA in the human body to wrap around the earth 2.5 million times, which means it is compacted in a very precise and organized way.

The long, string-like DNA molecule is wound up in a network of tiny, molecular spools. The ways that these spools wind and unwind turn genes on and off. Research into this spool network is known as epigenetics, a new, growing field of science that studies how bodies develop inside the womb and how diseases form.

When DNA is more compacted, genes

are turned off and when the DNA expands, genes are turned on. Researchers do not yet understand how or why this happens.

While atomistic model is key to solving the mystery, simulating DNA at this level is no easy task and requires massive computing power.

Modeling an entire gene

"Right now, we were able to model an entire gene with the help of the Trinity supercomputer at Los Alamos," said Anna Lappala, a polymer physicist at Los Alamos. "In the future, we'll be able to make use of exascale supercomputers, which will give us a chance to model the full genome."

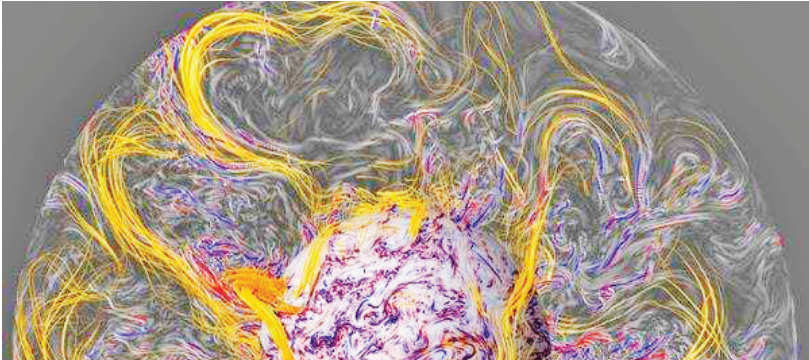
Exascale computers are the next generation of supercomputers and will run calculations many times faster than current machines. With that kind of computing power, researchers will be able to model the entire human genome, providing even more insight into how genes turn on and off.

In the new study published in the Journal of Computational Chemistry April 17, the Los Alamos team partnered with researchers from the RIKEN Center for Computational Science in Japan, the New Mexico Consortium and New York University to collect a large number of different kinds of experimental data and put them together to create an all-atom model that is consistent with that data.

Simulations of this kind are informed by experiments, including chromatin conformation capture, cryo-electron microscopy and X-ray crystallography as well as a number of sophisticated computer modeling algorithms from Jaewoon Jung (RIKEN) and Chang-Shung Tung (Los Alamos).

(Source: phys.org)

Mystery of weird jerks in Earth's magnetic field solved, scientists claim



In January, scientists announced Earth's magnetic field was moving quickly and in an unexpected traveling from Canada toward Siberia faster than it should have — and no one knew exactly why.

The sudden change in the position of the magnetic north pole meant scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration had to do an unscheduled update to the World Magnetic Map model—the system used across the globe to ensure the accuracy of positioning in systems like GPS and aircraft navigation.

The magnetic north pole is always on the move, but the shift of its position is generally quite steady. The unexpected change could be related to a strange phenomenon known as "geomagnetic jerks." First discovered in 1978, these jerks are characterized by the magnetic field abruptly and unexpectedly accelerating at fairly random intervals.

Earth's magnetic field is produced by the planet's metallic core.

Movements within the core cause variations to the field. This could be slow convection over long time scales, or "rapid" hydromagnetic waves that can be seen over just a few years.

Creating a model for the jerks

Julien Aubert from France's CNRS and colleagues used supercomputers to create a model for the jerks. They re-created conditions thought to exist at Earth's core and then let the computer carry out what would be 4 million hours of calculations.

From this, scientists were able to reproduce the conditions that take place before a geomagnetic jerk.

Findings showed the jerks arise when

hydromagnetic waves are emitted in the inner core. The waves are amplified as they rise to the surface of the core, creating disturbances that fit with what we observe during geomagnetic jerks.

The "origin of jerks has been a riddle for geophysicists since their discovery 40 years ago," Aubert told Newsweek. "On theoretical, or more observational grounds, many mechanisms have been proposed during those years, involving other types of core motions or waves."

In our opinion the strength of our proposal is that it relies on self-consistent computer simulations of the geodynamo, i.e., it solves the equations for motion and magnetic field generation that derive from the first principles of physics.

So geomagnetic jerks are self-consistently generated in a framework requiring a minimal number of prior assumptions."

Earlier periods

He said that one limitation of the paper is that their model does not necessarily fit with geomagnetic jerks recorded in earlier periods, like the one that took place in 1969, for example.

In terms of what the findings mean for the current movement of the magnetic north pole, he said a geomagnetic jerk in 2016 appears to have caused the shift in position. "As the paper shows, although the core flows at the origin of jerks are rather localized at the surface of the core (1,800 miles beneath our feet), the magnetic perturbation that they give rise to at the surface of the Earth is rather widespread, and can affect the acceleration of the north magnetic pole, as recently observed," he said.

(Source: Newsweek)

Mixing grass varieties may reduce insect infestations in lawns: new study

A simple change in the choice of grass varieties for many lawns in the United States could be a key tool for fending off fall armyworm infestations, according to new research.

St. Augustinegrass (Stenotaphrum secundatum) is the most common turfgrass species in the southeastern United States, and it is typically planted with a single cultivar across an entire lawn. But multiple cultivated varieties, or cultivars, of St.

Augustinegrass are commercially available, and landscape entomologists at the University of Florida and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently sought to find out which, if any, of those cultivars offered natural resistance to the fall armyworm (Spodoptera frugiperda), a caterpillar that commonly damages lawns.

Their tests found that none of the six common St. Augustinegrass cultivars rose above the rest in resisting fall armyworm infestation. But, when the cultivars were planted together in mixtures of two or four cultivars, it was a different story.

"We were most surprised by how clear the effect of



cultivar diversity was on fall armyworm host selection and feeding," says Ethan Doherty, biological scientist at the University of Florida's Indian River Research & Education Center and lead author on the study.

Consistent preference

The "insects had a consistent preference for the cultivar monoculture plantings, and we saw that the effect of cultivar diversity

became increasingly more pronounced as diversity increased from two to four cultivars. We didn't expect such a clear result."

Doherty conducted the research as part of his master's degree studies with advisor Adam Dale, Ph.D., assistant professor of turfgrass and ornamental entomology at UF, and Robert Meagher, Ph.D., research entomologist at the USDA-Agricultural Research Service's Center for Medical, Agricultural, and Veterinary Entomology.

To test the fall armyworms' preference among single and multiple St. Augustinegrass cultivars, the researchers conducted a variety of tests. They fed groups of the caterpillars, or larvae, diets of single cultivars to compare the susceptibility of each cultivar to the insects. Then they fed the larvae mixed diets of grass clippings, one cultivar at a time but changing the cultivar every two days. In another test, they placed the larvae in enclosed plantings of one, two, or four cultivars, allowing them to choose among the cultivars in the plantings. In these tests, the larvae were measured for qualities such as weight, development rate, and survival rate.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Mars InSight lander just recorded a quake on Mars for the first time

NASA's InSight Mars lander may have recorded its first 'Marsquake' - seismic tremors, faint but unmistakable deep in the belly of the red beast.

Early analysis has confirmed that the tremor did originate inside the planet, as opposed to atmospheric influences such as wind. Now seismologists are hard at work to narrow down precisely what caused it.



Quakes on Mars, just like quakes on Earth, can reveal details about the planet's interior. InSight, which landed on Mars in November last year, is a mission specifically designed to study the guts of Mars. It's equipped with a range of instruments to take measurements of the planet's temperature, rotation and seismic activity.

Most of the data collected by the Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure (SEIS) instrument to date has consisted of background noise, but on April 6 - Sol 128 of InSight's mission - the instrument finally registered what the team had been looking for.

The waves of a strong enough tremor can act a bit like a planet-sized ground-penetrating radar, only with seismic waves instead of electromagnetic. As these waves propagate through a planet, they can slow down as they move through certain materials, or bounce off others, letting seismologists infer the interior composition.

Sadly, the Sol 128 event was too faint to tell scientists anything about the structure of Mars's interior, and here on Earth it would have been lost among the constant grumbings of tectonic activity.

But it does demonstrate that, even though Mars isn't tectonically active, there is seismic activity - raising hope for a stronger tremor down the line. Especially since three other, fainter seismic signals were also recorded on Sol 105, Sol 132, and Sol 133.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Frogs, salamanders face threat from killer fungal disease, research suggests

Pathogens are taking a catastrophic toll on amphibians with hundreds of species of frogs, toads, and salamanders suffering devastating losses. However, scientists aren't letting these animals go without a fight.

Since the disease first emerged in the 1980s, it has caused the deterioration of at least 501 species of frogs, toads, and salamanders, according to a study published in the journal Science in March 2019.

Even worse, chytrid is not the only pathogen that's wreaking havoc on amphibian populations. Ranavirus, which has at least four different varieties, is also devastating amphibians.

Not only are amphibians dying out, but their dwindling numbers also mean that they cannot play their part in keeping the ecosystem healthy, such as eating disease-carrying mosquitoes, carrying food for other animals, and helping prevent algal blooms.

If left unresolved, these pathogens could completely lay waste to animal populations worldwide. Is there anything humans can do to save these animals?

According to the Zoological Society of London, zoologists will be gathering in London for a two-day symposium to come up with an emergency plan to save the amphibians in danger of the deadly pathogens. The international event will be held on April 24 to 25.

"We will be holding a full-day workshop in which we get the very best people in the field - conservationists, zoologists and experts on co-infections together and get them to hammer out the best strategy for dealing with this," Professor Trent Garner says in The Guardian. "Unless we get one, this is going to get a lot worse."

The outlook isn't entirely bleak, though. In 2015, antifungal drug treatments have shown promise in eliminating chytrid in the wild. A few years later in 2018, scientists discovered that a number of frog species are developing resistance to the fatal disease.

(Source: techtimes.com)

Scientists develop new concept for novel fire extinguisher in space

Researchers have developed a new concept of fire extinguishing, named Vacuum Extinguish Method. VEM is based on the 'reverse' operation of the conventional fire extinguishing procedure: It sucks the combustion products, even flame and the firing source itself, into a vacuum chamber to clean up the firing zone. This concept is advantageous for space use, as it prevents the spread of harmful combustible products throughout the enclosed cabin.

A research team in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Toyohashi University of Technology has developed new concept of fire extinguisher optimized for space-use, named Vacuum Extinguish Method (VEM).

VEM is based on the completely "reverse" operation of widely-used fire extinguisher, namely, spraying extinguisher agent(s) into the firing point. VEM is sucking the flame as well as combustion product, even fire source, by vacuum into the vacuum chamber to remove the firing matters from the space of interest.

This reverse concept shall be suitable for the special environments that are highly enclosed (such as space vehicles or types of space transportation, submarines, and types of deep sea submersed vehicles) to prevent or suppress spreading the harmful combustion products such as fume, particulate matters, toxic gas component across the entire enclosed cabin.

This is especially advantageous for space use, preferable in an extreme vacuum environment. This work is a collaborative research with the Hokkaido and Shinshu Universities. The results of our research were posted on-line in the special issue of Fire Technology; Spacecraft Fire Safety on April 16, 2019.

(Source: sciencedaily.com)

Notre-Dame fire: Rain threatens France’s damaged cathedral

Architects working on preserving Notre-Dame are rushing to cover the cathedral before rain can cause further damage. Rain is forecast for the French capital on Wednesday, with further showers predicted for Thursday. The cathedral’s vault, which partly collapsed in the fire, is already partly waterlogged after fire-fighting efforts.



Protective material has been wrapped around parts of Notre Dame

Architects fear that heavy rainfall could result in further collapse of the 800-year-old cathedral. The chief architect of Notre-Dame , Philippe Villeneuve, told French broadcaster BFMTV that erecting an emergency tarpaulin was “the highest priority”. “The beams are there, the tarpaulin is arriving. The climbers, since it will be climbers who will do that, and the scaffolders, are ready,” he said.

There are already plans to erect a large, purpose-built “umbrella” on the roof of the landmark, which will have its own peak and protect the structure while reconstruction takes place. But the umbrella is not ready - and the threat of impending rain is too serious to wait.

There were fears the 800-year-old cathedral could be completely destroyed during the fierce blaze on 15 April. Firefighters managed to save the structure and much of its interior - but emergency work has been taking place since to stabilize the building.

Three large holes in the cathedral’s vault - its arched ceiling - are the most obvious signs of damage. One was made by the collapse of the cathedral’s spire.

But its famous rosette stained-glass windows have been covered with protective material and reinforced with timber posts.

■ What next for Notre-Dame?

French President Emmanuel Macron has vowed to rebuild the symbol of Paris within five years - in time for the Olympics in the city scheduled for 2024.

The cost is likely to be enormous, with hundreds of millions already pledged by individuals and businesses both in France and from around the world.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has suggested an international competition for designs for the new spire, to replace the 19th-century design by Eugene Viollet-le-Duc which collapsed.

In the meantime, however, plans are in motion to build a temporary wooden cathedral in the square outside to continue Catholic services on the grounds. The idea which has already earned the approval of Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo.

Notre Dame was already undergoing extensive restoration work when the fire broke out. It is not yet clear if that contributed to the blaze, or what the cause was.

Alongside protecting the cathedral from the rain, the removal of the damaged scaffolding is one of the first steps towards the cathedral’s full restoration - a process that could take weeks. (Source: BBC)

ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic city of Ayutthaya

The historic city of Ayutthaya in Thailand, founded in 1350, was the second capital of the Siamese Kingdom. It flourished from the 14th to the 18th centuries, during which time it grew to be one of the world’s largest and most cosmopolitan urban areas and a center of global diplomacy and commerce.

Ayutthaya was strategically located on an island surrounded by three rivers connecting the city to the sea. This site was chosen because it was located above the tidal bore of the Gulf of Siam as it existed at that time, thus preventing attack of the city by the sea-going warships of other nations. The location also helped to protect the city from seasonal flooding.



The city was attacked and razed by the Burmese army in 1767 who burned the city to the ground and forced the inhabitants to abandon the city. The city was never rebuilt in the same location and remains known today as an extensive archaeological site. Once an important center of global diplomacy and commerce, Ayutthaya is now an archaeological ruin, characterized by the remains of tall prang (reliquary towers) and Buddhist monasteries of monumental proportions, which give an idea of the city’s past size and the splendor of its architecture. Well-known from contemporary sources and maps, Ayutthaya was laid out according to a systematic and rigid city planning grid, consisting of roads, canals, and moats around all the principal structures. (Source: UNESCO)



Tehran talks explore fresh ideas on modern architecture

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Tehran **d e s k** hosted an international conference on April 23-24, which turned the spotlight on how to better restore modern architecture and landscape across Iran.

Experts from Japan, Germany, France, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Taiwan, and Serbia attended the event titled “The International Conference on Conservation of 20th-Century Heritage from Architecture to Landscape”, Mehr reported.

Chaired by Tehran Mayor Pirouz Hanachi, the conference addressed conservation and revitalization of modern and industrial heritage in Iran within themes “legal capacities and processes”, “tourism and economy” and “future perspectives

and impact of the 20th century in Iran”.

University of Tehran and Negarestan Garden hosted the event in close collaboration with the Docomomo International (International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement) and TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage), the report said.

By late 19th century, traditional Iranian architecture began assuming some Western architectural elements, patterns and motifs which resulted in creation of hundreds of prestigious monuments in the country. Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran is an exemplar that embodies a successful integration of earlier Persian crafts and architecture with Western influences.

Bushehr eco-lodges to offer special discount to mark Persian Gulf day



TOURISM **TEHRAN** — **d e s k** Eco-lodges across southwestern Bushehr province will give special discount to their customers on the occasion of the Persian Gulf National Day, April 30.

“On the ninth, tenth, and eleventh of Ordibehesht month (April 29 to May 1), eco-lodges across Bushehr province will offer their guests a 30% discount,” provincial tourism chief Arghavan Mehdizadeh said, ISNA reported.

The goal is to make travelers more familiar with potential attractions of rural

scene of the province including daily life, customs, rituals, she added.

Iran’s very diverse natural setting yields many to nature lovers who may stay with a nomad or rural family to feel rustic routines, agriculture, wildlife, traditional art and culture.

April 30 has been designated in the Persian calendar as the Persian Gulf National Day to mark the anniversary of Abbas I of Persia’s successful military campaign when the Portuguese navy was forced out of the Strait of Hormuz in the Capture of Ormuz (1622).

Ancient Egyptian tomb with dozens of human remains, child mummies and ‘soul of the deceased’ statuette discovered

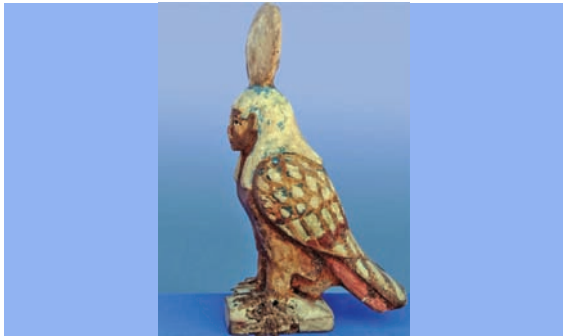
Archaeologists discovered an ancient tomb containing dozens of mummies at a site in southeast Egypt. Cut into rock and hidden behind a stone wall, the tomb contained the bodies of both adults and children stored across multiple burial chambers.

As well as human remains, Egyptian and Italian researchers found artifacts including vases, coffin fragments, intricately decorated masks, cartonnages and a statuette, Egypt’s Ministry of Antiquities reported Tuesday.

The main room of the tomb contained about 30 mummies, including the remains of several young children tucked into a recess on one side of the chamber.

Archaeologists also found tools of the funerary trade in the room, including a mummy-transporting stretcher made from palm wood and pieces of linen, several jars of bitumen, a lamp and a painted statuette of the Ba-bird: a part-bird, part-human figurine depicting the “soul of the deceased,” the Egyptian ministry explained.

The room was also home to several painted and unpainted cartonnages and partial funerary masks. Similar



An ancient statuette found in a tomb near the Mausoleum of Aga Khan, in Aswan’s west bank, in Egypt.

to papier- mache, ancient Egyptians made funerary masks and cartonnages from layers of papyrus and plaster. They painted these decorative items with bold, colorful designs.

The researchers found more mummies elsewhere in the

tomb, two of whom were concealed in a painted cartonnage. Archaeologists think these could be the bodies of a mother and a child. The team also found four other mummies in a structure containing several jars still holding food.

Fragments of painted wood from coffins indicated the tomb belonged to someone called Tjit, who lived around the end of the time of the Pharaohs and the start of the Graeco-Roman period (332 BC-395 CE). Painted wooden coffin fragments revealed the name of the owner and honored certain gods, Egypt’s Ministry of Antiquities reported.

The tomb is located near the Mausoleum of Aga Khan in Aswan’s west bank, an area that is home to dozens of gravesites. The Egyptian-Italian archaeological mission has mapped about 300 tombs, 25 of which have been excavated over the last four years, lead archaeologist Patrizia Piacentini said in a statement.

Egypt has been keen to share news of recent archaeological discoveries in an effort to entice visitors back to the country in the wake of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 and subsequent political unrest.

(Source: Newsweek)

Traveling to Cuba may get harder for Americans

By Tariro Mzezewa

For Americans who want to visit Cuba, things got even murkier as the Trump administration last week said that it would further restrict nonfamily travel to the island.

The new restrictions are part of a tougher policy toward Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba, said John Bolton, the president’s national security adviser, who called the three countries “the troika of tyranny” in a speech to veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion, the failed 1961 attempt to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro.

“The Department of the Treasury will implement further regulatory changes to restrict nonfamily travel to Cuba,” he said. “These new measures will help steer Americans’ dollars away from the Cuban regime.”

The statement suggests that the government will increasingly restrict travel to the island, but it was vague enough to leave travelers wondering if their trips to Cuba would suddenly be canceled.

■ What have the rules for traveling to Cuba been?

For decades, the United States banned its citizens from traveling to Cuba for tourism because of the hostile relationship between the two countries. And for many years, Americans who wanted to go to Cuba anyway would first go to another country and fly from there.

From 1999 to 2003, the United States government granted so called “people-to-people” licenses that allowed Americans to travel to Cuba if the trip was, for example, for educational or religious reasons. When President George W. Bush’s administration imposed new travel restrictions, those licenses were no longer issued.

In 2011, in an effort to thaw relations with the island, the Obama administration once again granted people-to-people licenses, making it possible for Americans who were not journalists or scholars to visit Cuba legally, as long as they went with a licensed operator.

In March 2016, the rules were expanded, making it possible for Americans to travel on their own to Cuba, as long as they took part

in educational exchange activities, including interacting with Cuban people.

Under that policy, those visiting Cuba had to fall into one of 12 approved categories.

■ What are the 12 approved categories?

The 12 categories are: family visits; support for the Cuban people; educational, religious or journalistic activities; humanitarian projects; professional research and professional meetings; activities of private foundations, research or educational institutes; public performances, clinics, workshops, athletic and other competitions, and exhibitions; official business of the United States government, foreign governments and certain intergovernmental organizations; exportation, importation or transmission of information or informational materials; and certain authorized export transactions.

■ How hard has it been to go?

The process for traveling to Cuba has been fairly simple in recent years, much like going on any other vacation. Americans can book direct flights from various cities on airlines, including JetBlue, American, Southwest and

United. Travelers then apply for a tourist card, commonly called a visa even though it isn’t really one. Some airlines sell the card online, but many travelers bought the card at the airport before leaving the United States. The card is valid for 30 days and can be renewed in Cuba for another 30 days.

In 2017, the Trump administration reversed the people-to-people policy and said Americans could again only visit as part of an educational tour. The current administration also banned Americans from staying and shopping in government-owned hotels and shops. This has led to an increase of Airbnbs and guesthouses known as casas particulares, which are not directly government-run. The Cuban government controls most hotels, but there are some owned by Starwood and Marriott.

The Treasury Department says that people caught violating these rules can be fined \$250,000 and sentenced to up to 10 years in prison, but there is no evidence of anyone ever having to pay this fine or go to prison.

(Source: The New York Times)



Tehran Municipality plans to hold smart city meetings

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Municipality Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Organization plans to hold a series of meetings as a part of a project for turning the capital into a smart city in the near future, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Tehran Municipality plans to hold “Smart Tehran, Innovative Tehran” meetings from the next week, the head of the ICT organization Mohammad Farjoud announced.

The first meeting will be on the smart waste management solution for Tehran, which will be held on April 29, he said.

Tehran municipality has collected 8000 tone wastes daily, which is not recycled and segregated properly, he lamented.

“We urged the knowledge-based companies to meet this need and help us to solve the waste management,” he explained.

As per a report published by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in October 2016, waste generation per capita in Iran’s urban areas is about 658 grams per day while Iranian waste generation per capita in rural areas is about 220-340 grams per



day. Average Iranian waste generation per capita amounts to some 240 kilograms per year. In Tehran alone waste generation per

capita is estimated at 750-800 grams per day and each Tehrani citizen generates about 270-450 kilograms of waste per years.

Out of 20 million tons of waste being produced annually in Iran only 3.2 million tons is recycled and the rest ends up in landfills which lead to the production of some 10 million cubic meters of leachates.

■ **Private sector lend a hand to smart city project**

He highlighted the important role of private sector in innovation saying that they have a pivotal role in smart city projects.

“We have started the smart city project at the Tehran Municipality one year ago and now we seek for interaction on meeting the technological demands in the field of urban services,” he explained.

Different organizations need different technologies and the Tehran Municipality plans to meet these demands, he said.

Tehran Municipality is searching for a space to establish a complex for startups and innovative companies, he said.

Although Tehran Municipality does not plan to establish accelerator and the incubator center but to encourage the private sector to invest on it, he explained.

Sensory evaluation laboratory opens in Mashhad

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The first sensory evaluation and consumer behavior laboratory in the eastern Iran opened during a ceremony in the city of Mashhad on Tuesday.

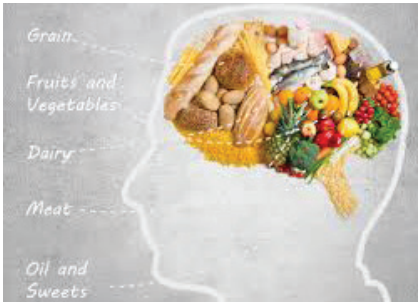
Established by the Research Institute of Food Science and Technology, the laboratory meets the demands of industrialists and businessmen for

new products, the head of the institute Qadir Rajabzadeh announced.

The laboratory provides tests for reception, costumer focus and dynamic elements relating to time in different fields of taste, texture and color of food products, he explained.

Analysis of food and beverage is a key part of product development and

quality control to ensure products safety and conformity. Sensory analysis (or sensory evaluation) is a scientific discipline that applies principles of experimental design and statistical analysis to the use of human senses (sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing) for the purposes of evaluating consumer products.



Digital enables shared services centers to deliver new wave of business impact

The number of shared services centers is growing, and enterprises are also expanding the size of their existing centers. Why? A key driver is that digital transformation enables shared service centers (also referred to as “Global in-house Centers” (GICs)) to deliver a new wave of business impact to their parent organizations. Digital technologies such as analytics, automation, and other enabling technologies allow GICs to drive their enterprises’ digital agendas. In fact, Everest Group’s market research shows that the share of new GIC setups that supported digital services was 52% in 2018. However, it’s important to note that some GICs perform better than others and deliver superior outcomes in driving digital agendas. What makes the difference?

In Everest Group’s report, “Digital Maturity in GIC – Pinnacle Model Analysis 2018,” we identified the characteristics of what we refer to as “Pinnacle GICs” – global shared services centers that stand apart from other GICs for their business outcomes and capability maturity. Pinnacle GICs achieve superior business outcomes because of their advanced capabilities. We study these best-of-the-best GICs to provide insights into key enablers for desired outcomes and investments required for the greatest speed to impact.

■ Outcomes achieved

Look at this statistic for example: Our study found that 68% of the pinnacle GICs generated significant strategic impact compared to only 37% of the other GICs. We define “significant” as high to very high impact on strategic areas. For example, 73% of Pinnacle GICs reduced their cost of innovation compared to only 40% of other GICs achieving this.

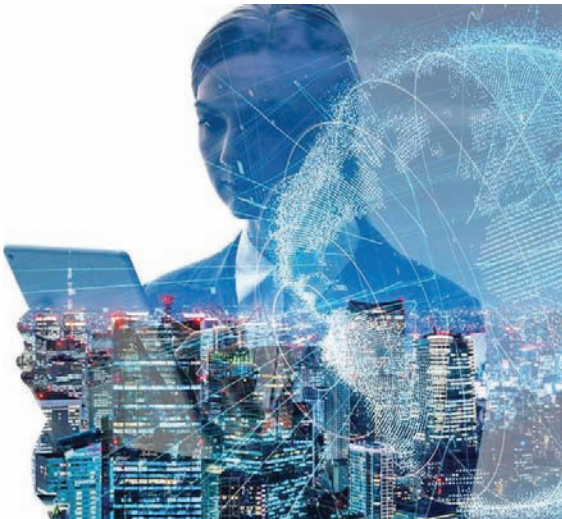
Furthermore, 46% decreased their time to market compared to only 26% of the other GICs. And consider the outcomes for improving customer experience – the Holy Grail of digital transformation activities: 73% of Pinnacle GICs achieved this outcome compared to only 49% of the other GICs.

Pinnacle GICs also delivered twice as much revenue growth impact for their parent organizations through digital initiatives compared to other GICs.

They accomplished these outcomes and more return on their investment (ROI) from digital initiatives in only 15 months compared to 17 months for other GICs.

Enabled by digital technologies, these companies also achieved significant cost and operational impacts. Pinnacle GICs generated 28% average cost savings from digital initiatives compared to only 8% for other GICs. They achieved 46% improvement in operational metrics compared to 19% by other GICs including:

50% increase in process accuracy (compared to 21% of other GICs) and 35% improvement in staff productivity



(compared to 16% of the others).

■ Key success factors

GICs driving superior results in digital agendas is an important trend in how companies are generating new competitive capabilities, so let’s look at what your company needs to know to generate this kind of performance from its GIC.

Our study revealed that Pinnacle GICs start their digital journeys differently. They take a “pull” approach, creating opportunities in solving business problems proactively rather than being driven from the top down in a “push” approach. An important characteristic is that they focus on intentional cross-functional collaboration in their effort to solve business problems such as improving the customer or employee experience or increasing efficiencies. And, notably, they focus on efficiency improvement with technology as an enabler vs. technology adoption per the parent organization’s requirements.

They focus continually on aligning with their parent organizations expectations. Pinnacle GICs achieve more than twice as much penetration across digital segments than other GICs – 43% in automation compared to 21% of other GICs and 30% in analytics compared to 15% of the others we studied.

An important differentiator is that Pinnacle GICs are pervasive across business units and have depth within specific digital segments. For instance, 71% support multiple business units, whereas only 39% of the other GICs have this

characteristic. In addition, 55% provide end-to-end support within digital segments compared to 19% of other GICs.

Pinnacle GICs have three other distinguishing factors that lead to success in driving digital agendas:

Operating model: 73% have digital teams embedded within business units, coordinated through a centralized digital team (this factor is present in only 40% of the other GICs we studied)

Metrics: 64% currently use or plan to use output/output-based metrics to measure impact (compared to 37% of other GICs)

Influence: 62% have influence with their parent organization to lead the design/execution of the parent’s digital strategy (compared to 31% of the others in our study).

Another key success factor is the focus on innovation by Pinnacle GICs. Our study shows that 73% of Pinnacle GICs have dedicated innovation teams, compared to 44% in other GICs. But having innovation teams doesn’t guarantee success. In our study, more than 80% of Pinnacle GICs actively collaborated with the ecosystem such as startups and a similar percentage measured impact of innovation on business outcomes of the parent, compared to 34% and 54% in other GICs. Clearly, adopting a more comprehensive approach to innovation is a hallmark of Pinnacle GICs. It is, therefore, not surprising that Pinnacle GICs are also better aligned with their parent’s expectations on digital.

■ Digital talent

A significant challenge in the digital journey today is acquiring talent with the necessary level of digital skills. However, our study found that the Pinnacle GICs are winning the war for digital talent. When it comes to acquisition, 50% of them were able to acquire the necessary talent compared to only 44% of other GICs, and 77% were able to retain that talent compared to only 56% of other GICs. Notable differentiators for talent retention in the Pinnacle GICs include:

88% offer relevant/challenging work opportunities

81% create specialist career paths

71% provide a differentiated work environment.

Consider Your Creation of New Value

Historically, shared service centers achieved significant savings, often using third-party resources. Understandably, companies have expanded their use of these centers. But our study of the global in-house centers that are achieving significant digital outcomes reveals that the use of shared services centers is now on the path for achieving an even greater wave of business impact. My advice: Consider how your company can create new value through this strategy on your digital transformation journey.

(Source: forbes.com)

Micro-laptop puts portable productivity in your pocket

Remember netbooks? Small-screened internet machines that, for the most part, were woefully underpowered but supremely portable. A Chromebook waiting to happen, kind of. The GPD Pocket 2 sees a return to the once popular format, but with a little more power under the hood. It marries the touchscreen of a 7-inch tablet and the traditional keyboard of a laptop, packs in a 7th gen Intel SoC and runs Windows 10.

The Pocket 2 has a 7-inch Gorilla Glass 4 IPS touchscreen with a not too shabby...

As its name suggests, the GPD Pocket 2 is the second version of the company’s Pocket laptop, which raised more than 3.5 million bucks on Indiegogo last year. Naturally, given such phenomenal support from the crowd-funding community, GDP has returned to



Indiegogo to raise production funds for its latest portable.

The Pocket 2 more than doubles the performance prowess of the first gen model,

rocking a 7-inch Gorilla Glass 4 IPS touchscreen with a not too shabby 1,920 x 1,200 resolution and a bezel of just 4 mm. Inside, there’s a dual-core m3-7Y30 processor with integrated HD graphics that turbos to 2.6 GHz, which is supported by either 4 or 8 GB of LPDDR3 RAM and 128 GB of solid state storage with SD card expansion. The micro-laptop runs Windows 10 Home 64-bit operating system.

The Pocket 2 wears a stylish magnesium alloy chassis, and features a chiclet keyboard and an optical navigation sensor rather than a space-hogging trackpad. GPD has even managed to squeeze in an active cooling system, “rather than a passive cooling thin design that sacrifices performance.”

(Source: New Atlas)

Marine science and technology tower to be launched in Qeshm Island

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – A marine science and technology tower is slated to be built in Qeshm Island of the Persian Gulf, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari attended the ground breaking ceremony of the project on Tuesday.

The vice presidency has several plans to develop marine biotechnology with a special focus on algae, he said.



The vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari breaks ground at the future site of technology tower for marine science in the Qeshm Island, Persian Gulf.

Algae is an untapped market with a great profitability, he added. Sattari paid visits to several knowledge-based companies including the one producing macroalgae-derived ingredients for cosmetic industry and a shrimp farm.

For the knowledge-based companies the motivation is the first priority and the financial issues come next, he said.

He said that the venture capitals would be a great help to introduce the knowledge-based companies in the future.

In mid-April, Sattari announced that the Iranian knowledge-based companies exported \$450 million of products in the previous Iranian calendar year 1397.

He said that the knowledge-based companies sold 900 trillion rials (about \$21 billion) of products during the past year. This is while the figure was 600 trillion rials (about \$14 billion) during the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018).

Last week, Seyyed Mohammad Sahebkar Khorasani, an official with the vice presidency for science and technology, announced that Iranian knowledge-based companies have created job opportunities for 140,000 applicants until the end of the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2019).

‘Fintech creates boom in bank, insurance and investment market’

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – Fintech creates boom in bank, insurance and investment market, the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari announced during the 12th International Exchange, Bank and Insurance fair (IRAN FINEX), which runs until Thursday, IRNA reported on Monday.

Financial Technology, nowadays better known under the term ‘fintech’, describes a business that aims at providing financial services by making use of software and modern technology.

Fintechs provide a new view toward financial market and investment and during the past year the young entrepreneurs establish fintech startups, which develop bank and insurance market in Iran, he said.

The banks are seeking to buy fintech startups, he said, adding in this way, the banking system will be changed in the near future.

He said that the big insurance companies are investing on startups and they have an active role in startup ecosystem.

He highlighted the important role of the Central Bank of Iran in development of fintech in the country.

Today, in most parts of the world, fintech companies directly compete with banks in most areas of the financial sector to sell financial services and solutions to customers. Mostly due to regulatory reasons and their internal structures, banks still struggle to keep up with fintech startups in terms of innovation speed.

Fintechs have realized early that financial services of all kinds – including money transfer, lending, investing, payments, ... – need to seamlessly integrate in the lives of the tech-savvy and sophisticated customers of today to stay relevant in a world where business and private life become increasingly digitalized.

According to statistics published by International World Stats (IWS) until December 31, 2017, there are 56,700,000 Internet users in Iran, which is 69.1% of the population.

Sci-tech parks export \$260m of knowledge-based products

➔ In mid-April, the vice president for science and technology Sattari announced that the Iranian knowledge-based companies exported \$450 million of products in the Iranian calendar year 1397. He said that the knowledge-based companies sold 900 trillion rials (about \$21 billion) of products during the past year.

Bons-AI follows sunlight, asks for water

Bonsai trees are beautiful and live longer than humans, but everyone knows that they require maintenance and dedication. Bons-AI is an interactive demo from TDK which pushes the whole Bonsai concept into the future.

Transformed into a smart tree thanks to its high-tech base, the tree can now move around to place itself at the best location to receive sunlight. The base can accept up to a 20 Kg (~40 Lbs) weight, in other words: a very beautiful (and old) Bonsai.

We really liked the industrial design which is most definitely modern but would fit a traditional house, or even a zen garden patio, very well. It is possible to speak to Bons-AI, and it will act somewhat like a simple, smart speaker. But sometimes, it is the tree that will seek your help: when moisture sensors detect that it is too dry, it will come to its human owners to ask for water by having the base change color.

Bons-AI isn’t a product, but one of the cool demos that TDK came up with to demonstrate what its various components and sensors can do. Bons-AI is fitted with a soil sensor, a camera (to guide its motion), a motion sensor (for stability), a small solar cell, an ambient light sensor, a wireless charger and of course, a microprocessor.

(Source: ubergizmo.com)

Iran, Turkey to boost co-op in environmental issues, waste management

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Department of Environment (DOE) chief, Issa Kalantari, and Turkey’s Deputy Minister of the Environment and Urban Development, Fatma Varank, discussed increased cooperation on environmental issues and waste management during a meeting held on Wednesday.

During the meeting, Kalantari expressed readiness to use Turkey’s technical experiences on successful waste management practices, IRNA reported.



Over the past few years, sand and dust storms originated from the neighboring countries, including Iraq and Syria have stricken Iran, Kalantari said, adding, it is imperative to hold multilateral meetings in order to review and address the issue.

Discussing waste management Varank said that over the past years, every citizen of Turkey consumed 400 pieces of plastics per year, while the amount declined by 75 percent due to increased prices.

She further noted that it is planned that all waste to be segregated at source and utilized for generating energy by 2030.

Referring to Iran–Turkey barrier, Kalantari noted that despite the mutual security interests for both countries, environmental issues in building the barrier have been overlooked as it causes some disturbances to the wildlife and the environment.

He further noted that the barrier should not limit animal species from crossing the barrier and that safeguarding the ecosystem must be taken into account, so that experts in both countries should exchange views on the issue.

Varank, for her part, said that the environment knows no border, so we need to cooperate in the environmental fields.

There have been some drawbacks to the wall’s development, which were further overcame, as some passes were installed to facilitate the wildlife crossing the border, she highlighted.

However, it was not enough due to difficulties for some large wildlife species which cannot pass through it, and we look forward to solve the problem, she added.

The Iran–Turkey barrier is a border barrier under construction along the Turkey–Iran border aimed at preventing illegal crossings and smuggling across the border. The wall will cover 144 km of the 499 km Turkey–Iran border. As of December 2017, half of the border barrier has been finished. According to the responsible officials, the border barrier will be completed by spring 2019.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

A trial in America about tobacco damages

(April 1, 1999)

A jury ordered the cigarette company Philip Morris to pay record **damages** to the family of a man who died of lung cancer. BBC Correspondent Katty Kay reported. The jury found Jesse Williams and the company, Philip Morris, each fifty percent guilty of **negligence**, so, although it has awarded his family **record damages**, the jury has also found that Mr Williams was responsible for his actions. But that’s not much **consolation** to the cigarette company, whose stock price plummeted after the **verdict** was announced. This is the second legal blow against Philip Morris in less than two months. In February, a jury ordered the company to pay fifty-one-and-a-half-million dollars to a Marlboro smoker with **terminal** lung cancer, and financial analysts say this latest case suggests that juries in America are starting to punish the tobacco industry, and it could **open the door** to more such **suits**. Philip Morris will **appeal** against the ruling which it said was the product of passion and prejudice, and **precedents** suggest that the company has a chance of escaping the payment. So far in America, all verdicts of damages against cigarette manufacturers have been **overturned** at appeal.

■ Words

damages: when a court of law awards damages to someone it orders those who are responsible for harming them to pay them a set amount of money
negligence: the failure to do something that you ought to do.
record damages: this is more money than has ever been awarded before in a similar case
consolation: something that is a source of solace or comfort
verdict: the legal term for the decision that is given at the end of a trial by the jury as to whether to someone is guilty or not guilty
terminal: describes a disease or illness that is incurable and causes death
open the door: to make possible: this expression often describes the effect unforeseen events can have
suits: a suit is a case which is brought to trial in a civil, rather than a criminal, case
appeal: to formally ask the court to hear a case again in the hope of a reversal of the decision
precedent: a formal word meaning that something similar has happened before
overturned: in a legal context, to overturn means to change or reverse a decision

(Source: BBC)



7-month heavy rainfalls beat 2-year drought: IMO official

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Director of National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center (NDWMC) affiliated to Iran’s Meteorological Organization (IMO) Sadeq Ziaeean announced that since the beginning of current water year (starting on September 23, 2018) precipitations have compensated for the below normal averages of past two years.

The amount of rainfall the country received only during the first month of the current year (started on March 21) constitute 36 percent of the precipitation normally received a whole water year, he highlighted, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

This is while the first month of each year the country normally receive 15 percent of the precipitations of the whole water year, he added.

He went on to note that some provinces namely Hamedan and Markazi have received 60 percent of the total precipitation of a water year only during the past month (March 21-April 20).

The country’s mean precipitation was 84 millimeters during last month, which increased by 288 percent compared to the same period last year, he said, adding, the amount shows a 169-percent rise in comparison to the long term averages.

Speaking of the provinces receiving the highest precipitations during the first month of spring, he added that Lorestan province receiving 301.3 millimeters of rain set the record high for the highest precipitation rates, noting, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari



and Hamedan provinces with 243 and 212 millimeters of rain respectively, ranked second and third.

During the last month, some 73 millimeters rained in Golestan province which shows an increase of 60 percent compared to the previous year and 54 percent rise in comparison to the long term averages, he said.

Also, last month Khuzestan province received 86 millimeters of rainfall demonstrating a 166 percent rise compared to that of last year amounting to 32.5 millimeters. The amount was also 142 percent higher

than the long-term means of 36 millimeters.

Referring to the provinces experiencing the lowest rainfall averages during last month, Ziaeean lamented that provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan and Kerman recording 35 and 43 millimeters of rainfall were the provinces with shortest rainfall averages.

However, last year in the same period only 3 millimeters rained in Sistan-Baluchestan province while its long-term mean was 10 millimeters, thus 240 percent increase was reported in terms of long-run

means, he explained.

He went on to say that province of Kerman faced above normal rainfall with 18 millimeters of rain reported during the same period last year and 17 millimeters in the long run, which shows 236 and 153 percent increase respectively.

Pointing to Tehran rainfall averages, he stated that the capital also hit the normal averages getting 98 millimeters of rain, so precipitation increased by 186 percent in Tehran compared to last year rate of 34 millimeters, adding, it also beat the long-run record of 39 millimeters by 148 percent rise.

Comparing the country’s rainfall rate during the 7 months of the current water year with that of last year, he said that the whole country received 289 millimeters of rain which was recorded 113 millimeters over the same period last year.

Additionally, long term averages show 197 millimeters of precipitation which was short by 46 percent compared to this water year, he added.

Iran must receive rainfall amounting to 232 millimeters on average per water year, but figures show that the country have exceeded the normal rainfall in a water year by 24 percent only in the first 7 months of the year.

“So, we can say that recent rains have so far made up for two years of droughts,” he stated, adding that “this year’s precipitations cannot compensate for a decade of drought and managing water resources is a must”.

\$2b non-repayable loans allocated to rebuild flood-hit houses

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Non-repayable loans amounting to 90 trillion rials (nearly \$2 billion) will be provided for reconstruction of housing units in the provinces hit by flood, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, Minister of Interior, has announced.

“Recent flood damage to the whole country is estimated at about 350 trillion rials (about \$8.5 billion), he stated,” IRNA reported on Monday.

He went on to say that some 180,000 housing units have been devastated by flood, 56,000 of which are beyond repair requiring renovation, adding, damaged

houses in Khuzestan province have not been counted yet due to unfavorable conditions.

The government is trying to renovate and retrofit the houses, so, a total budget of 90 trillion rials (nearly \$2 billion) will be granted as non-repayable loans, he said, adding that some 150 trillion rials (around \$3.5 billion) will also be allocated as low-interest loans.

“It is planned to provide at least 40 percent of the budget within the next three months,” he added.

Some 20,000 housing units will be repaired by the

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and the Welfare Organization takes measures toward retrofitting another 10,000 flood-hit houses, he further noted.

“We are trying to compensate for the whole damages which is mainly renovation of housing units by the next year,” he concluded.

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 houses, municipal facilities, including roads, sewage systems, health centers, hospitals, etc.

Iranian donors allocate \$35m to flood survivors



SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian donors have contributed an amount of 1.47 trillion rials (nearly \$35 million) to those affected by flood, deputy director of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has announced.

The contributions have been both in cash and kind, as 450 billion rials (about \$11 million) of which was financial assistance, Fars quoted Alireza Asgarian as saying on Wednesday.

Assistance after each natural disaster comes in two phases. One is the first aid offered to the victims, and the other – which is the most expensive – comes after

the crisis during which houses should be rebuilt and infrastructures should be provided, he lamented, adding that, “we are trying to fully repair and retrofit the flood-ravaged housing units.”

He went on to say that the Foundation intends to renovate 20,000 houses, 10,000 of which requires to be rebuilt. He further called on the people to join hands and help recover all those flood-haunted families.

Iranian Red Crescent Society Chief Ali Asghar Peyvandi said earlier on April that people have so far donated some 1.3 trillion rials (nearly \$31 million) in cash and kind to the flood victims.

Particulate matters 20 times above safe levels in southeastern Iran



ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Severe particulate matter (PM) pollution reached its highest points exceeding the standard levels by 20 times in Zabol county located in Sistan-Baluchestan province, southeastern part of the country, the provincial meteorological organization chief has announced.

Sand and dust storms speeding up to 97 kilometers per hour led PM concentration to reach 2,957 micrograms per cubic meters in the city of Zabol, IRNA quoted Mohsen Heidari as saying on Wednesday.

Other cities in northern part of the province are also affected with high levels of

particulate matters, he lamented.

In November 2018, Abdolrahman Shahnavazi, head of Sistan-Baluchestan disaster mitigation and management organization announced that storms reaching speeds up to 112 kilometers per hour led to PM concentration heading for 6,262 micrograms, which is 42 times above the safe levels.

In August 2018, it was announced that strong SDSs as fast as 100 kilometers per hour speed have stricken Sistan-Baluchestan province for 19 times since the beginning of the last [Iranian calendar] year (March 21, 2018).

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads

Some 90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads in Iran, an official with traffic police has said.

The old taxis are being used 8 times more than private cars, YJC quoted Mohammad Tarahhomi as saying on Monday. There are 1.5 million clunker vehicles and 9 million clunker motorcycles in Iran, he regretted, adding that unfortunately scrappage of old, high-emission vehicles is linked with importation of vehicles which is now banned.

۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در جاده‌های کشور تردد می‌کنند

رئیس اداره حقوقی پلیس راه گفت: ۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در ایران وجود دارد. به گزارش باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان سرهنگ محمد ترحمی گفت: میزان تردد این تاکسی‌ها هشت برابر خودروهای عادی است. وی افزود: یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار خودروی فرسوده و ۹ میلیون موتورسیکلت فرسوده در کشور وجود دارد. متأسفانه حیات اسقاط به واردات گره خورده است و از آنجا که واردات ممنوع شده است، اسقاط نیز صورت نمی‌گیرد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dia-”

■ **Meaning:** through or across
■ **For example:** This lesson is designed to help students identify and measure the *diameter* of a circle.

PHRASAL VERB

Tell of somebody/something

■ **Meaning:** to describe an event or person
■ **For example:** The poem tells of the deeds of a famous warrior.

IDIOM

Find (one’s) feet

■ **Explanation:** to reach a level of comfort in a new situation
■ **For example:** It took a while, but I’ve finally found my feet in my job.

How Trump's oil plans backfires on him

What are the consequences of the White House anti-Iran activities?

1→ 3. The story doesn't end here! Even though it seems that the conflict between Iran, U.S. and its two followers, Saudi Arabia and UAE, is only about oil but the conflict can expand to other fields as well. Washington, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi can't possibly expect that after their activities against Iran in oil market, Iran's response will be limited to "oil and energy sector"! Iran will make smart, calculated moves to ensure that U.S. and its allies will face the consequences of their activities in other fields. The Islamic Republic of Iran's meaningful silence is just a preliminary stage when Iran prepares its serious and effective response for the ones who devised this oil scheme against it.

4. The U.S. recent move against Iran by ending sanctions exemption is an official end to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). After Trump unilaterally abandoned the JCPOA in May, the agreement lost most of its effects, but it was still in place; anyhow, now that the U.S. has imposed extensive sanctions against Iran's oil, there is no reason for the Islam Republic to stay in this agreement.

On the other hand, the reaction of European Union to the U.S. recent decision shows that the European troika has no intention to maintain its nuclear agreement with Iran. In



the meantime, Federica Mogherini, the president of the UN Foreign Affairs Council and the chairwoman of JCPOA Joint Commission, had the audacity to remain completely silent. This indicates that there has been a clandestine agreement between Washington and the European Union member states in regard to sanctions against Iran's oil. Clearly, in this situation, Iran's foreign ministry should officially stop JCPOA talks with the Europe and prepare to totally withdraw from JCPOA.

5. Considering the strong role of "mediators" in selling Iran's oil in unofficial international markets, it seems that under current circumstances, approving the four bills to join the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will only strengthen the West in using repressive measures and controlling tools to further prevent Iran from selling its oil.

Ending the sanctions exemptions to countries importing oil from Iran and designation of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps as a terrorist organiza-

tion by Trump administration leaves no room for anybody in Iran to defend the approval of FATF bills.

In this regard, Iran needs to take a strong stand and rule out the possibility of approving the UN Convention on Transnational Crime (Palermo bill) and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (CFT), unless U.S. revise its two recent anti-Iran measures.

6. Evidently, Trump has started a dangerous game against the Islamic Republic of Iran; a game that the White House started but its end will not be determined by Trump or his allies. Let's remember that Washington has already made wrong predictions about reaching its goals with pressuring Iran's economy. Following Washington's withdrawal from JCPOA in May, Trump had claimed two critical time periods that would force Iran into economic collapse, predicting that they are likely to be in August and November. Washington high-ranking officials had also claimed that based on realistic and expert analysis that they have made, Iran will experience a major economic and political collapse by November 2018! It goes without doubt that once again Washington is doing another ill-fated attempt in starting an oil conflict with Iran. However, this failure will have far heavier costs for the U.S. compared to the last year.

U.S. new suspicious moves in Iraq

1→ Meanwhile, Fatah Alliance also demanded a similar stance toward the exit of American troops from Iraq.

It seems that Americans are seeking new conspiracies in Iraq to target the Iraqi government and nation, and on the other hand, to challenge the relations of Baghdad with its allies in the region, including The Islamic Republic of Iran.

As it seems, the visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi to Iran was not pleasant for Washington. Abdul Mahdi traveled to Iran while Americans expected Iraq to reduce its relations with Tehran following extensive financial sanctions against Tehran and to refrain from any economic cooperation with Iran while limiting bilateral relations.

However Iraqi Prime Minister signed MoUs with Iranian authorities in various fields while traveling to Tehran. It seems that the new U.S. moves in Iraq are aimed at reducing the influence of Iran in the country.

On the other hand, Baghdad officials' refrain from accompanying Washington's ally in the region, Riyadh, caused that Americans to increase their influence in Iraq, in order to prevent Tehran's proximity to Baghdad.

In addition, consultations have been underway to complete the Iraqi cabinet, headed by Adil Abdul Mahdi. Meanwhile, the continuation of political consultations between the parliamentary coalitions of the "reform and construction" and "Fatah Alliance" shows the fact that the completion of the Iraqi Cabinet has become an imminent issue.

On this basis, the talks and negotiations of Iraqi government and political groups about completion of Iraqi cabinet

are prior, so that the process of democracy that began last May has not been challenged and successfully completed.

Therefore, Iraqi groups are aware that avoiding any conflict and resorting to dialogue and negotiation can help government to defeat foreign conspiracies in addition to fulfill its domestic demands.

In this regard, the leader of the National Wisdom Movement of Iraq, Ammar al-Hakim in Baghdad and leader of "Reform and Construction" coalition, a major coalition in parliament, stressed to complete Iraqi cabinet as soon as possible through dialogue and negotiation.

He also called for an all-round dialogue between political organizations, especially between the "Reform and Construction" and "Fatah Alliance" coalitions, and emphasized that dialogue and negotiation could solve many uncertain issues and largely help the government to provide services.

Whereas, Hadi Al-Ameri, chairman of the Badr Organization and leader of "Fatah Alliance", one of the two major Iraqi parliamentary factions, has also emphasized to complete cabinet through political negotiations between parliamentary factions previously.

Consequently, it is clear that U.S. is not interested in completion of democracy process and the cabinet formation in Iraq. It is obvious that U.S. recent moves in Iraq are also linked with their efforts to prevent the completion of the cabinet.

In addition to U.S. moves, some media are stimulating political parties and factions against the government of Baghdad in order to delay cabinet completion.

In this regards, Adil Abdul Mahdi has shown that he



has a high morale to engage with various political parties, factions and political alliances since his appointment as Iraqi cabinet's secretary by President Barham Salih. He can manage Iraqi political atmosphere in a way not to let Iraq become the scene of useless political struggles. This characteristic of Abdul Mahdi led him to initiate a constructive engagement with leaders of various factions.

In conclusion, the new U.S. moves in Iraq are implemented with major goals to affect the relations of Tehran and Baghdad, as well as challenging the internal developments in Iraq, including the completion of the process of democracy and the introduction of the remaining cabinet ministers. It is clear that Americans are not pleased with the process of democracy in Iraq and its relations with Tehran, and resort to any move to create chaos in this country.

Trump sees Yemen war bill an affront to his 'authority': U.S. analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A Middle East expert specializing in Yemeni affairs said US President Donald Trump probably sees a congressional bill to end US military involvement in Saudi Arabia's ongoing aggression against Yemen as an "affront to his authority".

"I'm not surprised by the veto. Trump probably sees Congress' bill as an affront to his authority, which it is not, but the American diplomatic and military establishment is likely more concerned not about the war in Yemen but the erosion of support in Congress for the US alliance with Saudi Arabia..." Dr. Charles Schmitz told Tasnim.

Dr. Charles Schmitz is a professor of geography at Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland where he has taught since 1999. Dr. Schmitz is a specialist on the Middle East and Yemen. He began his academic career as a Fulbright Scholar and American Institute for Yemeni Studies fellow in Yemen in the early 1990s. Dr. Schmitz's current research interests include the political economy of development in Yemen, international law and the coun-

ter-terror policy, international governance and failing states, and the sociology of contemporary Yemeni society. Currently, he is vice president of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies and a member of the board of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

Following is the full text of the interview: **■** President Trump on Wednesday vetoed a bill Congress passed to end US military assistance in the Saudi Arabia-led war in Yemen. What's is your take on the veto by Trump?

A: I'm not surprised by the veto. Trump probably sees Congress' bill as an affront to his authority, which it is not, but the American diplomatic and military establishment is likely more concerned not about the war in Yemen but the erosion of support in Congress for the US alliance with Saudi Arabia. The bill calls for the withdrawal of support only for the war in Yemen, not for the Saudis in general, but some in Congress were calling for an arms embargo on the Kingdom itself.

■ According to media reports, the US



Congress has grown uneasy with the president's close relationship with Saudi Arabia. The lawmakers criticized Trump for not condemning Riyadh for the killing of Jamal Khashoggi. What is the reason behind this close relationship?

A: Trump is clearly taken by the Saudi leadership, and the Saudi leadership is important for Trump's plan for the Middle

East, especially his deal of the century in Palestine/Israel and his conflict with Iran. Trump and the Saudi leadership share strong common interests.

■ 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: The senator is playing politics. He wants to link Trump with bin Salman's arrogance. The actions to which he refers are the killing of Khashoggi and perhaps the jailing of the opposition, but there are deeper tensions that the senator would like to ignore. The Saudis are key US allies in the region, but their government and society do not share key American values of democracy and equality. What Congress is really upset about is that bin Salman's actions highlight a deeper tension that the US and Saudi Arabia would like to ignore.

Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Italy and Greece.

Some US and foreign officials and outside experts criticized the Trump administration's Iran policy, arguing it has not given much thought to the likely effects of its Iran policy on oil markets or on the nations, especially China, India, Turkey and Iraq, that now will be sanctioned if they continue to import oil from Iran.

"The administration has launched a fairly significant initiative without doing the necessary groundwork with the countries that will be most affected," Suzanne Maloney, an Iran expert at Washington's Brookings Institution, told TIME.

Syria allows planes of Qatar Airways to use airspace after 8 years

The Syrian government has agreed to a request by the Qatari civil aviation authority to allow planes of Qatar Airways to fly over Syria, eight years after the Persian Gulf's peninsular state suspended its ties with Damascus.

"Transport Minister Ali Hammoud has agreed to allow Qatar Airways to cross Syrian airspace, based on a request from the Qatari civil aviation authority," the Syrian Ministry of Transport said in a statement late Monday.

When a foreign-sponsored deadly war broke out in Syria in March 2011, Doha severed ties with Damascus and supported the so-called armed opposition groups in Syria, Press TV reported.

Qatar Airways kept its planes at bay and took longer routes to circumvent the war zone, a policy that was also adopted by most other international airlines.

The conflict in Syria has largely wound down in recent years and government troops, backed by Russian air cover since 2015, are now in control of most of the country. The Takfiri terrorist groups are either completely defeated and destroyed or significantly weakened.

"The agreement came on the principle of reciprocity, as Syrian Air crosses Qatari airspace and never stopped flying to Doha throughout the war," the statement further said, adding that the use of Syrian airspace would see "increased revenues in hard currency for the benefit of the Syrian state."

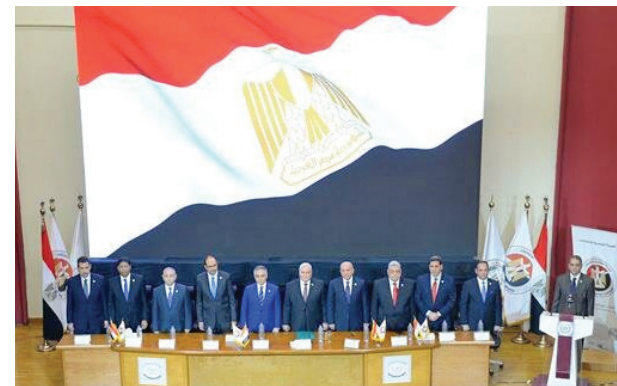
Syria also saw its membership in the Arab League suspended in November 2011. The league claimed the Syrian government had allegedly launched a crackdown on opposition protests. Syria, however, strongly rejected the allegation and denounced the move as "illegal and a violation of the organization's charter."

In December last year, Tunisia resumed direct flights to Syria as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) reopened its embassy in Damascus. Shortly afterwards, Bahrain confirmed that its consulate in Damascus and the Syrian diplomatic mission in Manama were also operational.

Qatar, which is in a bitter feud with some Persian Gulf neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, in January ruled out the possibility of re-opening an embassy in Damascus.

Egyptians allow Sisi to stay in power until 2030

Nearly 90 percent of voters in Egypt have backed constitutional amendments that allow President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to remain in power until 2030, election officials said on Tuesday.



Lasheen Ibrahim, the head of Egypt's National Election Authority, said in a press conference in Cairo that the amendments to the country's 2014 Constitution were approved with 88.83% voting in favor, with a turnout of 44.33%.

"These (changes) are effective from now as your constitution," Ibrahim said.

The nationwide referendum took place over three days, from Saturday through Monday to maximize turnout. Almost 27 million votes were cast out of an eligible base of 61 million voters.

Fourteen amendments to Egypt's 2014 constitution were up for a vote, as well as two new articles. Egypt's parliament voted last week in favor of the changes.

One amendment would extend a presidential term from four to six years. It would also add two more years to Sisi's current term and allow him to seek re-election for another six-year term in 2024.

Another measure would expand Sisi's power over the legislative branch by creating an upper house known as a senate. The president would be able to handpick a third of the members.

The new changes will bolster the role of the military and expand the president's power over judicial appointments, giving him new authority to appoint members of the judiciary.

Pro-government media, business people and lawmakers had pushed for a "Yes" vote and a high turnout, with many offering free rides and food handouts to voters, while authorities threatened to fine anyone boycotting the three-day referendum.

"I didn't vote yes to get a bag [of food], but the bag encouraged me to go to the polls," one voter in the Shubra district, whose name has been withheld for her safety, told The Guardian, recounting an intricate system whereby a local trader took a photo of her ID card and number for receiving government subsidies 10 days before the vote. She presented this to receive a pink slip outside the polling station, the voucher was then stamped by staff inside after she voted, and it was exchanged with a vendor for a bag of basic foodstuffs, such as cooking oil, pasta, sugar, and tea.

"People are poor and we need anything that can support us," she said. "A lot of people I know went to the polls in order to get a bag of food, because Ramadan is around the corner and prices are very high these days."

Opposition parties had urged a "no" vote, but they have little power in parliament, which is packed with el-Sisi supporters and overwhelmingly approved the amendments earlier this month. The local media is also dominated by pro-government commentators, and the authorities have blocked hundreds of websites, including many operated by independent media and rights groups.

According to Pres TV, El-Sissi led the military overthrow of an elected but divisive president amid mass protests against his rule in 2013 and has since presided over an unprecedented crackdown on dissent.

Thousands of people, including many pro-democracy activists, have been arrested by authorities. Freedoms won in 2011, when mass protests ended President Hosni Mubarak's nearly three-decade rule, have been rolled back.

Trump Move on Iran to Sink Global Economy into Recession: Geopolitical Analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — An American geopolitical analyst warned that the Trump administration's decision to end sanctions waivers for Iran oil imports will push up prices and could "sink an already reeling global economy into recession".

"The move by the Trump Administration to remove the exemption on nations who at first buy Iranian oil without sanction should increase the price of oil on global markets," Dean Henderson, author and geopolitical analyst from Missouri, told Tasnim on Tuesday.

In a statement on Monday, the White House said US President Donald Trump "has

decided not to reissue" waivers regarding sanctions against countries importing Iranian oil when the waivers expire "in early May."

The exact deadline is May 2.

"This decision is intended to bring Iran's oil exports to zero, denying the regime its principal source of revenue," the statement from White House press secretary Sarah Sanders read.

The American analyst added, "The lack of Iranian supply could create a move upward in price which could well sink an already reeling global economy into recession. Ironically, in purely economic terms, this will help oil producers like Iran and Venezuela and hurt

oil importing nations."

"It will further alienate the US from the global community in what amounts to another butcher neocon policy," Henderson stressed.

In November, the US imposed new sanctions on exports of Iranian oil after Trump unilaterally pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers.

Washington, however, granted Iran's eight main buyers of oil waivers to the sanctions that allowed them limited purchases for six months.

They were China, India, Japan, South

Chelsea’s Sarri charged with misconduct over Burnley behavior

Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri has been charged with misconduct for his behavior during Monday’s 2-2 Premier League draw with Burnley, the English Football Association said.

The Chelsea coach was sent to the stands by referee Kevin Friend after becoming embroiled in a scuffle amongst players on the touchline in the dying moments of the game at Stamford Bridge.

Sarri did not carry out his post-match media duties, sending assistant coach Gianfranco Zola to fill in for him instead.

Zola told reporters at the time that Sarri had sought to get his players out of the scuffle but the referee had “misinterpreted” his intentions and that the Chelsea manager had been offended by a comment from the Burnley bench.

“Maurizio Sarri has been charged with misconduct in relation to his behavior in the 94th minute of Monday’s Premier League fixture between Chelsea and Burnley,” the FA said in a statement on Wednesday.

The Chelsea manager has until 1700 GMT on Friday to respond to the charge, the governing body added.

(Source: Mirror)

Lillard scores dramatic three-point buzzer-beater from 37 yards in Portland win

Damian Lillard scored a dramatic three-point buzzer-beater from 37 feet to give the Portland Trail Blazers a 118-115 win against the Oklahoma City Thunder and a 4-1 series win.

It capped a remarkable night for Lillard, who scored 50 points. At one stage in the fourth quarter the Thunder led by 15 points, with Paul George scoring 36 points.

Russell Westbrook scored 29 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds for his 10th NBA play-off triple-double.

But it was not enough as the Thunder were knocked out in the first round for the third season in a row.

The Blazers will play either the Denver Nuggets or the San Antonio Spurs in the Western Conference semi-finals. Denver lead that series 3-2 after Tuesday night’s 108-90 victory.

In the Eastern Conference, the Toronto Raptors beat the Orlando Magic 115-96 to seal a 4-1 series win and the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Brooklyn Nets 122-100 for a 4-1 series win.

(Source: BBC)

ATP Finals moving from London to Turin from 2021 to 2025

The ATP Finals will move from London to Turin after the Italian city was named as host of the event from 2021 to 2025.

Manchester, Singapore and Tokyo were also on a five-city shortlist to stage the season-ending tournament.

It has been held at London’s O2 Arena since 2009 but will move to the Pala Alpitour stadium.

“We believe that Turin has all the ingredients to take the event to new heights,” said the ATP’s executive chairman Chris Kermode.

The ATP Finals feature the world’s best eight singles players and doubles teams of the season and will boast a record prize fund of \$14.5m (£11.2m) in 2021.

Turin will be the 15th city to host the event, and first in Italy, since it was first staged in 1970.

A cumulative total of more than 2.5 million spectators have watched the ATP Finals at the O2 Arena, which will host the event in 2019 and 2020.

The Pala Alpitour stadium, which was opened in 2005, has a capacity of around 15,000 and is Italy’s largest indoor sporting arena.

World number one Novak Djokovic, who lost to Alexander Zverev in last year’s final, said: “The ATP Finals is the biggest and most prestigious event that we have at the ATP.

“It’s a tournament that has historically moved around and so I’m very excited to see it move to Turin from 2021.”

Italy also hosts the Next Gen ATP Finals, with Milan staging the first five editions of the tournament for 21-and-under players from 2017 to 2021.

(Source: BBC)

Liverpool to play at Notre Dame Stadium in July

Liverpool will play the first-ever competitive soccer match at Notre Dame Stadium as part a three-game preseason tour of the United States this summer.

The Premier League leaders announced on Tuesday they will stage friendly matches from July 19-24 in three of the U.S.’s most iconic stadiums.

The tour will begin on July 19, when the Reds will take on Borussia Dortmund at Notre Dame Stadium in South Bend, Indiana. They will then face Sevilla at Boston’s Fenway Park on July 21 before wrapping up against Portuguese side Sporting at Yankee Stadium in New York three days later.

“Preseason tour is an important time of the year for our first team to prepare for the upcoming season, while also providing the opportunity to bring the first team to our fans around the world,” said Liverpool chief commercial officer Billy Hogan.

“We’re heading to three incredible locations this year. Each of the stadiums has their own deep-rooted heritage similar to our own and we’ll face three great opposition teams in Borussia Dortmund, Sevilla and Sporting CP.

“This trip to the USA will be very special and we’re really looking forward to having as many of our supporters with us along the way.”

(Source: Soccernet)

Paralympics GB stunned after Yokohama hotels demand payment for accessibility

British Paralympic officials say they were left stunned when hotels near their training camp for the 2020 Games demanded they pay to make rooms accessible for wheelchair athletes – and then pay again to convert them back afterwards.

One senior figure said there had been a “total lack of interest” from hotels they had contacted in Yokohama when it came to helping the British Paralympic team, who will make their final preparations in the city ahead of Tokyo 2020. Another source said the issue had been a “huge headache” for more than 18 months.

What has made the issue harder to solve is that it is beyond the remit of the Tokyo 2020 organizing committee, which runs the Games. Rather it is down to individual hotels – many of whom do not see the social or economic benefits of providing more accessible rooms.

Much to the relief of British officials there has been a recent breakthrough, with the Yokohama City authorities agreeing to create a fund to pay for modifications for the rooms that Paralympics GB will be using as part of its preparation camp plans.

Nevertheless, there remains a broader concern in the Paralympic movement that there will too few accessible hotel rooms in Tokyo for disabled spectators, journalists and officials when the Games take place next year.

Part of the problem is that hotel rooms in



Tokyo have smaller spaces than most large cities, with some having narrower doors making it harder for wheelchairs to access. Another issue is that there are few bathrooms with grab rails and bath tubs. Some also cite societal reasons as a factor, with some in Japan not realising it is an issue because there are fewer wheelchair users in Tokyo than most cities.

The International Paralympic Committee accepts that Tokyo lags behind other big

cities in terms of accessible rooms. However it insists that new laws have been passed by the government to ensure that hotels have more accessible rooms after the Paralympics.

The IPC president, Andrew Parsons, told the Guardian: “This is not a Games specific issue. There is an issue with the legislation in Japan when it comes to the number of accessible rooms. In hotels with more than 50 rooms you have to have one accessible

room but it doesn’t matter if that hotel has 500 rooms, it can still just be one accessible room.

“We understand that this issue may bring some challenges to our partners, including journalists with a disability,” he added. “But the positive side, we have managed to work with the different levels of government to make something positive about this challenging situation, and we hope that this will be one of the legacies of the Games.”

Parsons said it was also important to note that the athletes village is fully accessible for Paralympians. And he praised organisers for doing their best to understand the problems and for trying to find solutions.

“While there is an issue with accommodation, everything else is going smoothly,” he added. “And it has been really a pleasure to work alongside the Tokyo organising committee and the government. They understand the challenges they have, and they even on this difficult issue they are finding solutions. They don’t deny they have a challenge or a problem. And I believe the Games will be absolutely fantastic.”

The Tokyo organising committee has said that the city has about 700 accessible rooms – though a senior figure in one British sport told the Guardian that when those rooms are judged by European standards the true figure might be less than 100.

(Source: Guardian)

Spain court acquits former FC Barcelona president of money laundering



A Spanish court on Wednesday acquitted former Barcelona president Sandro Rosell, who spent nearly two years in pre-trial custody, of money laundering.

Rosell, his wife and four others, were accused of “large-scale money laundering” of close to 20 million euros (\$23 million) since 2006, relating to television rights and sponsorship deals in Brazil.

The National Court, which handles major criminal cases, said it had acquitted all six accused because “after evaluating the evidence presented during the trial, the accusations were not proven”.

“As such, given the doubts that were raised, the principle of ‘in dubio pro reo’ must apply,” said the court, using the Latin for ‘when in doubt favour the accused’, referring to the presumption of innocence.

Prosecutors at the Madrid-based court had called for the ex-Barca boss, who was held in pre-trial between May 2017 and February 2019, to be jailed for six years.

The Rosells were accused of hiding money illegally obtained by Ricardo Teixeira, the former head of the Brazilian Football Confederation.

The case centres on a deal signed by Teixeira in 2006 with a company based in the Cayman Islands for the television rights to 24 Brazil friendly matches.

Altogether, Rosell and his wife allegedly received close to 15 million euros in their accounts as part of the deal.

They pocketed 6.6 million euros with 8.4 million destined for Teixeira, prosecutors say.

Rosell, 55, had previously lived and worked in Brazil, where he forged business links. Teixeira has been indicted by US Justice Department prosecutors investigating the FIFA corruption scandal.

Rosell is also suspected of having received some five million euros illicitly as part of Nike’s sponsorship deal with the Brazilian team. He resigned as Barcelona president in 2014 over murky transfer dealings that brought Brazilian striker Neymar to the club from Santos.

Rosell is waiting to be tried in another case for corruption, fraud and tax evasion related to Neymar’s transfer to the Catalan giants in 2013.

(Source: AFP)

L’Equipe: Pogba confirms his intention to leave United



The French outlet claim that the player has confirmed to his close circle and United team-mates of his plan to leave the Old Trafford outfit this summer.

As time goes by, it appears that Paul Pogba’s footballing future lies away from Manchester United with L’Equipe today reporting that the French player has told his closest circle of his intention to leave Old Trafford this summer.

The outlet report that United team-mates have also been informed about the player’s intentions.

The Premier League club are now planning for a Pogba exit and will now look to try and secure the best economic solution with any potential sale to Real Madrid. The French midfielder’s current deal at Old Trafford expires in 2021.

The recent Champions League elimination at the hands of FC Barcelona has been another factor in the player’s decision process, frustrated at the club’s ongoing situation with the weekend’s 4-0 away defeat landing another blow on the prospect of United competing in European football’s most prestigious

tournament next season.

United currently languish in sixth place in the Premier League and failure to qualify for the Champions League would also apparently have an economic repercussion on Pogba’s wage with no UCL football contributing to a 25% salary reduction for the French player.

Paul Pogba and Real Madrid have been subtly flirting with each other in the past few weeks: “Playing for Real Madrid is the dream of every footballer and even more so under Zidane”, admitted Pogba last month when on international duty.

Zidane too has used countless press conferences to express the admiration he holds for Pogba as a player. “I like him a great deal, that’s nothing new. He’s a midfielder who knows how to both attack and defend” claimed Zizou in front of the assembled media.

With the current season dragging on for Real Madrid, Zidane and his back room staff are already deep into the 2019-20 season planning stages.

(Source: AS)

Shane Long makes history with fastest ever Premier League goal

It only takes a second to score a goal, legendary football manager Brian Clough once famously opined.

In Shane Long’s case on Tuesday, he needed just 7.69 seconds, as he charged down a clearance from Watford’s Craig Cathcart before giving Southampton a record-breaking lead at Vicarage Road in their English Premier League match.

For Long, by no means a prolific goalscorer -- this was only his ninth goal in his last 84 top flight appearances -- it meant an unlikely place in the history books.

The Irishman’s early strike saw him usurp former Tottenham captain Ledley King as the scorer of the Premier League’s fastest ever goal.

King had scored 9.82 seconds into a game against Bradford City the 2000/01 season. Long is the second Southampton player to score inside the opening 15 seconds of a Premier League game; James Beattie took only 13.52 seconds to give the Saints the lead away at Chelsea in the 2004/05 season.

Record breakers

Former Turkey forward Hakan Sukur holds the record for the fastest goal in a World Cup match, a milestone he



achieved by netting an opening goal 11 seconds into the third-place playoff against South Korea in 2002.

Meanwhile, Belgium striker Christian Benteke holds the record for the fastest goal scored in a World Cup qualification game; he found the back of Gibraltar’s net just 8.1 seconds

into their clash in 2016. Famously, San Marino took the lead against England in a qualifier after 8.3 seconds in 1993, thanks to a goal from Davide Gualtieri.

Russia’s Dmitri Kirichenko hold the equivalent record in the history of the European Championship; he scored 67 seconds into a game at the 2004 tournament against Greece, who would go on to win the competition unexpectedly.

None of them, however, can lay claim to the fastest goal in the history of international football; that gong belongs to Germany icon Lukas Podolski, who scored against Ecuador after just six seconds in 2013.

Long’s goal, however, could not quite guarantee Premier League safety for a Southampton side now managed by Ralph Hasenhuttl. While Long may have scored in the first minute of the game, Watford equalized in the last through Andre Gray.

The 1-1 draw moves Watford back ahead of Everton into seventh place, while Southampton sit 16th -- six points ahead of Cardiff City, the current occupier of the final relegation position.

(Source: CNN)

La Liga to be Real Madrid’s number one priority next season - Zidane

Zinedine Zidane said on Wednesday La Liga will be Real Madrid’s top priority next season

after they were mathematically ruled out of the title race with five games left.

Barcelona’s victory over Alaves confirmed that Madrid cannot be crowned champions

given they sit 16 points behind the Catalans with only 15 still to play for.

Despite incredible success in the Champions League, it means Madrid have now won the Spanish title only once in seven years while Barca are on the cusp of se-

curing their fourth in the last five, and eighth in 11.

“For us next year, the league must be our number one priority,” Zidane said.

“It’s the longest competition, it’s the one that cannot be missed and I’m going to put

that in the heads of my players.

“It will be our bread and butter for sure, without devaluing the rest, because we try to fight on all fronts at this club, but our bread and butter will be La Liga.”

(Source: Marca)

Esteghlal will never give up: Winfried Schaefer

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal coach Winfried Schaefer says they still have a chance of qualifying for AFC Champions League knockout stage.

The Iranian giants lost to Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia Tuesday night in Group C at the Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium.

The result means Al Hilal need just one point from their remaining two games to book their place in the knockout stage for the ninth time in the past decade.

Qatari club Al Duhail sit second with seven points. Esteghlal freeze at four points and Al Ain of the UAE remain bottom of the table with just two points.

“We will never give up when there is still a chance to qualify for the next stage. We are a great team and we’ll fight for everything,” the German coach said.

“The first 30 minutes of the first half they played better. We have to finish when we have the chance but our players wasted their opportunities against Al Hilal,” Schaefer said.

“In the second half, we had a lot of possessions and created scoring chances but failed to do that. From now on, we will concentrate on Al Duhail match because we should get back on track by beating the Qatari team at our home,” the Esteghlal coach added.

“Esteghlal players are under pressure for the domestic league schedule. We will have to travel to Mashhad on Friday to face Padideh. We are aware of the importance of proper recovery. Recovery is as important as training for us,” Schaefer concluded.



Russia sitting volleyball coach Ovsyannikov happy with Joint practice with Iran



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Russia sitting volleyball head coach Alexander Ovsyannikov is happy with holding joint practices with Iran in Tehran.

The Russian team are preparing for the 2019 ParaVolley Europe Sitting Volleyball Zone Championships, slated for July in Budapest, Hungary.

The competition’s winners will earn the quota place for the 2020 Paralympic Games.

“Iran’s sitting volleyball team are the world’s best team. It’s very important for us to hold a joint practice with Iran. The joint training camp with Iran will improve us ahead of the Europe Sitting Volleyball Zone Championships,” Ovsyannikov said.

“We have already come to Iran and it has helped us to learn more. High-level

Iran strengthen our team. We can recognize our weak points with holding training camp with the Iranian team,” he added.

“Iran are the favorites to win the title at the 2020 Tokyo and we will vie with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and Brazil to become runners up,” the long-serving coach added.

Praising the Iranian players, Ovsyannikov said, “Iran take advantage of the good players, namely Davoud Alipourian and Ramezan Salehi. Morteza Mehrzad is also a physically strong outside hitter. We suffer lack of talented players in Russia. We have a domestic league with only seven teams,” the Russian coach stated.

“It’s for the fifth time I travel to Iran. Iran is a beautiful country with tasty foods,” Ovsyannikov concluded.

Iran claim Asian Wrestling Championships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian wrestlers won four gold medals and one bronze in five freestyle weight classes on the second day of the Asian Championships in Xi’an, China on Wednesday.

The Iranian wrestlers had won three gold and two bronze medals in Day 1. Iran claimed the title with 220 points, followed by India (155 points) and Kazakhstan (129 points).

Reza Atri defeated KANG Kumsong (PRK) 9-3 in the 57kg, Bahman Teymouri beat Parveen RANA (IND) 3-0 in the 79kg, Reza Yazdani beat Batzul ULZIISAIXHAN (MGL) 7-4 in the 97kg, Behnam Ehsanpour won gold after defeating LIU Minghu (CHN) 2-1 in the 61kg,

Kamran Ghasempour beat Aligarzhi GAMIDGADZHIEV (KGZ) 10-0, Alireza Karimi took gold medal with a 11-0 win over Viky VIKY (IND) in the 92kg and Yadollah Mohebbi took Iran’s seventh gold after beating DENG Zhiwei (CHN) 2-1 in the 125kg. Peyman Biabani (65kg), Younes Emami (70kg) and Mohammad Nokhodi (74kg) also claimed three bronze medals.

Asian Wrestling Championships is the Wrestling Asian Championship organized by the Asian Associated Wrestling Committee (AAWC).

The men’s tournament began in 1979 and the women’s tournament was first staged in 1996, and it has been held every year.

Jahanbakhsh among worst Premier League signings

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian international winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh has been named among worst Premier League signings.

‘The Athletes Hub’ have named their 12 worst signing in the Premier League this season and Jahanbakhsh is among the list.

He joined Brighton on a five-year contract for a club record fee in the summer.

Brighton did not disclose the fee but media reports put it at 17 million pounds (\$22.4 million).

Jahanbakhsh has not found his place in the English Premier League club.

At the top of the list is Manchester United’s Fred, who cost 52 million pounds last summer, while ex-England internationals Joe Hart (Burnley) and Jack Wilshere (West Ham) also feature.



- Worst signings in the Premier League 2018/2019:
1. Fred (Manchester United, 52 million pounds)
 2. Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa (Fulham, 22 million pounds)
 3. Jack Wilshere (West Ham, free)
 4. Maxine Le Marchand (Fulham, 30 million pounds with Jean-Michael Seri)
 5. Alireza Jahanbakhsh (Brighton, 17 million pounds)
 6. Joe Hart (Burnley, 3.5 million pounds)
 7. Adama Diakhaby (Huddersfield, 9 million pounds)
 8. Ben Gibson (Burnley, 16 million pounds)
 9. Kepa Arrizabalaga (Chelsea, 71.6 million pounds)
 10. Denis Suarez (Arsenal, loan from FC Barcelona)
 11. Mohamed Elyounoussi (Southampton, 16 million pounds)
 12. Yerry Mina (Everton, 27.5 million pounds)

Hotel robbery takes edge off Farah’s marathon preparation

LONDON (Reuters) — Briton Mo Farah was given an unwelcome birthday surprise when he was robbed at his hotel in Addis Ababa last month, putting a damper on what he said had been an otherwise perfect preparation for Sunday’s London Marathon.

Farah, third last year and facing a monumental challenge to overcome Kenya’s world record holder and defending champion Eliud Kipchoge, said he had completed a really good block of training in Ethiopia.

“I couldn’t have asked for better,” he said. “There were just a couple of things.”

Asked to expand, the multiple Olympic and world champion over 10,000 meters and 5,000m on the track, said: “There was a problem at the hotel. Someone went into my bag and took some money and took a present my wife had got me (a watch), so that was disappointing when I’d been staying there so long.

“It was on my birthday,” added Farah, who turned 36 on March 23 and won the Chicago Marathon last year.

He will be center of attention for the home crowd and the BBC broadcasting the race. Yet, he is only the eighth-fastest man in the field and his best of 2:05.11 is almost four minutes adrift of Kipchoge’s – which would leave him almost a mile behind the Kenyan if they were to reproduce those times on Sunday.

Kipchoge set his astonishing world record of 2:01.39 when winning Berlin last year and is seeking an unprecedented fourth London triumph.

He told a news conference on Thursday that he had not raced since Berlin and had followed his usual preparation - a system that has served him well in a career that has seen him win 10 of his 11 marathons, including the 2016 Olympic Games.

“I like London, I’m fit and ready to compete,” he said, adding that he was still in discussions regarding what pace he will ask the pacemakers to set.

Farah said he fully respected Kipchoge’s talent and extraordinary record but

added that he was learning all the time having switched to the roads in 2017 and was not turning up “expecting to finish third or fourth.”

“You look up to these guys, you have to learn from the best and I have learned from each race I’ve done,” Farah said.

“I think I could have gone 2.04-something in Chicago (where he set a European record of 2:05:11) but it was about winning the race.

“Last year in London when Eliud increased the pace at around 20 miles I went with it a bit but just felt tired and in my mind I felt ‘I can’t keep that going’ and you end up taking it back a notch. But I am here to race and will give 100 percent as I always do.”

■ EXTRA ENDURANCE

Farah said he had underestimated the volume of training required to convert his track speed into the extra endurance needed for 26.2 miles on the road, but that he was enjoying the challenge.

“The most important thing is that I’m

happy and enjoying it,” he said. “I’m still hungry, I feel like I’ve got my mojo back.”

While Farah and Kipchoge fight it out at the sharp end, around 40,000 others will be pounding the streets of London in the 39th running of what organizers say is the world’s most popular race.

“We had 415,000 applications in five days,” said race director Hugh Brasher. “This weekend we will reach one billion pounds raised for charity by runners, with more than half of that coming in the last nine years.”

In the first race in 1981, co-founded by his father and former Olympic gold medalist Chris Brasher, five percent of finishers were female, while this year that figure is expected to be around 45 percent.

The race is also testing a number of innovations to help reduce its environmental impact, such as fewer feeding stations and an experiment where 700 runners will use a recyclable plastic belt to carry refillable bottles.

Katayoun Khosrowyar optimistic about her girls at Asian Championship

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran’s U-19 women football team coach Katayoun Khosrowyar hopes her girls qualify for the 2019 AFC U-19 Women’s Championship.

Iran will kick off the campaign with a match against hosts Vietnam on Friday in Hanoi.



Iran will face South Korea and Lebanon on April 28 and 30 respectively.

“Players have undergone intense training sessions 10 days before leaving for Vietnam. We have prepared and analyzed each team as much as possible, but the opponents are extremely strong and will have various playing styles,” Khosrowyar told Tehran Times.

“I am hopeful that after all the hard work it will pay off and we will qualify for the next round,” she added.

For the final round of qualifiers, eight teams have been divided into two groups of four teams, with the group winners and runners-up joining host nation Thailand, reigning champion Japan, DPR Korea and China PR in the Finals in October.

Australia are in Group A along with Uzbekistan, host Myanmar and Nepal.

The Round 2 Qualifiers will be played over three matchdays from April 26 to 30.

World Series 2019: Reigning champions return

Reigning men’s and women’s World Para Swimming World Series champions Daniel Dias and Louise Fiddes will be in action from Thursday as they participate in simultaneous World Series events in their home countries.

Brazil’s most decorated Paralympian will swim in Sao Paulo from 25-27 April, while the Brit will compete in Glasgow, between 25 and 28 April.

■ Dias leads the way

It will be the third successive year that the Brazilian Paralympic Training Centre stages a World Series event. Around 250 swimmers from 16 countries are expected to compete this year.

“It is my season debut and also a very important competition since it gives us the opportunity to achieve the marks for 2019’s main events, the Parapans and the World Championships. I am confident I can gain a place to represent my country once again.”

China’s three-time Paralympic champion Bozun Yang and Cuba’s Rio 2016 gold medalist Lorenzo Perez Escalona stand out among the international swimmers.

The center opened its doors in 2016 and is a major infrastructural legacy of the Paralympic Games.

Dias said: “Having such a great facility in Brazil enable us to avoid long trips and makes it easier for us to set up our season schedule.”

■ From underdog to world beater

With so many experienced and multiple-Paralympic champions competing, few expected teenage swimmer Fiddes would end up taking the 2018 World Series crown.

The 18-year-old now has the mammoth challenge of repeating that stunning performance as she makes her season debut on home soil in Glasgow.

British spectators will be hopeful of celebrating further success through four-time Paralympic champion Bethany Firth and London 2012 gold medalist Jessica-Jane Applegate.

The World Series champion from 2017 - Monica Boggioni of Italy - will also be in attendance, hoping a good performance can kickstart her bid to regain the title.

Other top names competing include Canada’s Paralympic champion Aurelie Rivard, Spain’s Sarai Gascon and Ireland’s Ellen Keane.

All athletes’ results at each World Series edition are calculated using a standardized World Para Swimming points system via an online virtual competition platform.

This ensures that the overall World Series winner will be the best performing athlete over the duration of the series, meaning that every performance counts.

(Source: Paralympic)

Malcom wants to leave Barcelona in summer

Malcom wants to leave Barcelona at the end of the season with the club prepared to sell if they can recoup what they spent on him last summer, multiple sources have confirmed to ESPN FC.

The Brazilian forward was set to join Serie A side Roma from Bordeaux until Barca swooped in with an eleventh-hour bid to take him to Camp Nou in a deal worth €40 million.

However, coach Ernesto Valverde appeared to suggest he didn’t want the player by labelling him “a signing made by the club.”

Since then, Valverde has offered Malcom very few opportunities to prove himself at Barcelona. Despite impressing with goals against Real Madrid and Inter Milan, he has started just eight games in all competitions. In total, he has made 19 appearances, scoring four goals.

The 21-year-old has remained positive throughout the season, insisting he will keep working hard to fight for a place in the team, but he has grown frustrated at his lack of game time.

Sources have confirmed to ESPN FC that he will look to move on in the summer, with his agents already offering him across Europe.

(Source: ESPN)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Hamshahri No. 3 - ISSN: 1017-94



Tehrantimes79



Tehrantimesdaily

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



It is not possible to approach God through recommended percepts which damage the obligatory ones.

Imam Ali (AS)

Chinese writers to attend meeting at Tehran Book City

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Several Chinese writers are scheduled to attend a meeting, which will be organized at the Book City Institute in Tehran on today.

The meeting will be held in two sections, in the first of which Chinese poet Zhao Lihong will talk about Chinese poetry.



This picture shows a copy of the Persian version of Chinese writer Cao Wenxuan's book "Feather", which will be discussed in a meeting at the Book City Institute in Tehran on Thursday.

Book City Institute deputy director Ali-Asghar Mohammadkhani, Iranian poet Mohammad Shams Langerudi and mythology professor of Shahid Beheshti University, Abolqasem Esmaeilpur, will also attend this section of the meeting, which is scheduled to start at 5 pm.

In the second part of the meeting that will begin at 7 pm Cao Wenxuan, a Chinese novelist who is best known for his works of children's literature, will speak about his book "Feather", which has already been published in Persian in Iran.

Sahar Tarhandeh, the translator of "Feather", is also expected to attend the meeting in this section.

Zhao Lihong will also deliver a speech in this section, which will be attended by Iranian authors Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi and Mehdi Hajvani.

A group of Iranian children will also perform a puppet show based on Zhao's "Feather" during the meeting.

This meeting is part of the program organized in collaboration with the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair, which is hosting China as a special guest this year.

Iran's Cinema Verite director attends Kazan film festival

A R T d e s k TETEHRAN — The director of Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival of documentary films, Mohammad—Mehdi Tabatabaiejad, is in Kazan to take part in the world festival directors' meeting, Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) announced on Wednesday.



Mohammad—Mehdi Tabatabaiejad in an undated photo.

Tabatabaiejad is also the director of the DEFC.

The meeting will be organized on the sidelines of the Kazan International Muslim Film Festival to exchange cultural and cinematic experiences between Kazan and the neighboring Muslim countries.

The motto of this year's edition of the festival is "To the dialogue of cultures through the culture of dialogue."

The festival, which opened on April 24 in the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, will be running until April 30.

Special guest China opens pavilion at Tehran book fair

1 → Speaking at the ceremony, Mohsen Javadi, who is also the deputy culture minister for cultural affairs, expressed his hope that the book fair can introduce the culture of the two countries to their young people.

In his brief speech, Guo Weimin thanked Iranians for their hospitality, and the organizers for their warm reception for the Chinese guests.

"We have been in contact through the Silk Road since the ancient times, and now we need to improve the economic and cultural relations between the two countries," he noted.

As a special guest, China is participating in the book fair with the motto of "Getting to Know China".

A delegation composed of about 200 Chinese cultural figures and officials as well as over 100 publishers, writers, translators and illustrators are taking part in the book fair, which will run until May 4.



People visit China's pavilion at the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair on April 24, 2019.

"A Russian Youth" wins Fajr Critics' Circle Award



Russian cinematographer Ayrat Yamilov (R) receives the Critics' Circle Award on behalf of "A Russian Youth" director Alexander Zolotukhin during the 37th Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran on April 24, 2019. (FIFF)

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — "A Russian Youth" by Alexander Zolotukhin from Russia has won the Critics' Circle Award at the 37th Fajr International Film Festival.

Russian cinematographer Ayrat Yamilov receives the award on behalf of Zolotukhin during a ceremony held at Charsu Cineplex in Tehran on Wednesday.

The film tells the story of a young Russian soldier who has lost his sight during a German gas attack in World War I. But due to his strong sense of hearing, he is kept at the front to listen

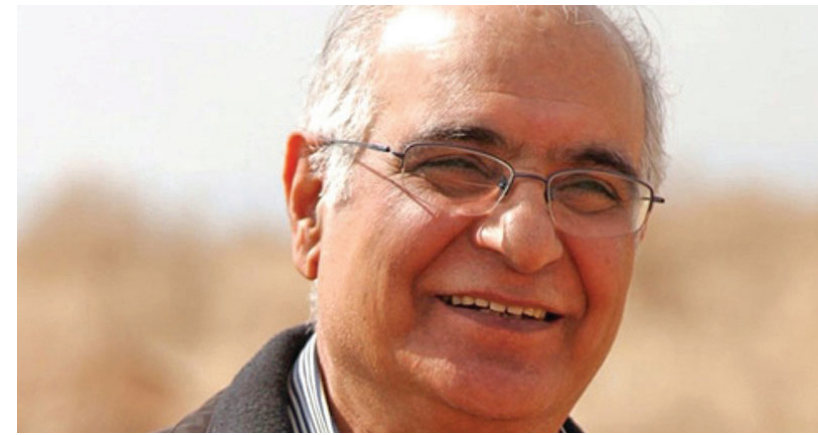
for enemy planes at the giant metal pipes that form a kind of early-warning system.

"Werewolf", a co-production between Poland and Germany by Polish director Adrian Panek, was selected as runner-up.

The film tells the story of eight orphan children who survived a Nazi camp in 1945.

Over 160 films from 64 countries have been screened in various sections of the 37th Fajr International Film Festival, which will come to an end today.

Tehran book fair to introduce Moradi Kermani's latest story "Teaspoon"



Writer Hushang Moradi Kermani in an undated photo.

C U L T U R E d e s k TEHRAN — "Teaspoon", the latest story by children's book writer Hushang Moradi Kermani, will be introduced at a special ceremony during the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair today.

He is scheduled to attend the ceremony, which will be held at the pavilion of Moin Publications, to autograph copies of his book for readers, the director of the publishing company, Lima Saleh Ramsari, told the Persian service of MNA on Wednesday.

"The book contains several short stories which differ from the author's previous works," Saleh Ramsari said.

The stories in "Teaspoon" are set in the city, while the stories in Moradi Kermani's previous works are concerned with issues in rural life, he added.

"I am sad to say that Moradi Kermani says 'Teaspoon' would be his last book and that he wants to quit writing because the stories upset him," he mentioned.

Moradi Kermani's works also appeal to adults. He is the author of numerous bestsellers such as "You're No Stranger Here", "The Water Urn" and "A Sweet Jam". Most of his works have been translated into English, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Arabic, Armenian, Turkish and several other languages.

Iranian cinema is true reflection of its society: Spanish producer Rosa Bosch

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — Rosa Bosch, the Spanish producer of Wim Wenders' movie "Buena Vista Social Club", says that Iranian cinema is an accurate reflection of Iranian society.

She is in Tehran to hold a workshop at the 37th Fajr International Film Festival, which comes to an end today.

"Iranian cinema is very true. It is a true reflection of the society and culture of the country. It is as if you have seen the films before, and now you see the sets," Bosch told the Tehran Times.

"That means Iranian cinema is not artificial, it has a very big heart and it is really based on what happens in life and how life is," she added with a smile on her kind face.

This is the first time Bosch is visiting Iran but she knows a lot about Iranian people and the history of their country.

She served as the deputy director of the London Film Festival from 1986 to 1997. "I think the festival was the first international event where films from Iran were shown," she said.

"One thing about coming here is as if you have seen a lot of photographs of a house and you finally go into the house," she said about her experience of being in Iran.

"For example, I take a taxi and then I see the images of Iranian cinema like what happens in Jafar Panahi's film 'Taxi'," she added.

Working with Sheila Whitaker, the director of the London Film Festival who co-wrote the book "Life and Art": The New Iranian Cinema" with writer and producer Rose Issa in 1999, encouraged Bosch to improve her knowledge of



Spanish film producer Rosa Bosch attends a panel discussion during the 37th Fajr International Film Festival at Tehran Charsu Cineplex on April 22, 2019. (Mehr/Majid Haqdust)

Iranian cinema.

"When I worked at the London Film Festival I never came to Iran because Sheila came, I was Sheila's deputy then," she mentioned.

With her love of Japanese films and Italian cinema, Bosch called Iranian cinema part of her life as she knows a large number of Iranian cineastes, including Abbas Kiarostami, Jafar Panahi, Abolfazl Jalili, Niki Karimi and Fatemeh Motamed-Arya.

"I think all the festivals in the Middle East and the Arab world are in the process of change," she said. "But really the

only true festivals I think are the Fajr and Cairo festivals, and I think it is very important that these things continue."

Bosch's workshop was part of the programs arranged for the Fajr festival's Talent Campus, a venue to discover gifted young students from across the world in various fields of cinema.

"I think it is great, it is an essential thing to have young people at Talent Campus where they have the opportunity to watch and learn. I think the workshops are wonderful," she said.

"The world's film figures and fantastic names like Luca Bigazzi and Silke Buhre were here, where the young people met, held talks and learned; this is essential," she noted.

She praised Mexico, Iran, Denmark and several other countries for their unique films and said, "These four or five cultures have managed to make their own films and work internationally over the past 25 years, and that is a big achievement."

Rosa also said that she likes both feature and documentary movies of Iranian cinema. She praised "Monir", Iranian filmmaker Bahman Ghobadi's documentary about late Monir Shahroudi Farmanfarmaian, a modern art pioneer in Iran who was famous for her mirror mosaics and geometric drawings.

Rosa said that she was going to meet Monir, who died of old age in Tehran last week. But anyway, she was able to visit her museum at the Negarestan Garden Museum of the University of Tehran.

Bosch held a panel discussion and a workshop and also attended a press conference during the festival, during which international festivals, distribution, some technical things about the festivals and the international aspects of filmmaking were discussed.

Replica of part of destroyed Palmyra altar unveiled in Syria

DAMASCUS (Reuters) — A Damascus museum on Tuesday unveiled a replica, built by Italian archaeologists, of part of a temple altar destroyed by ISIS in the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra.

The 2,000-year-old Temple of Bel at Palmyra was one of the jewels in Syria's lavish trove of historical monuments, spanning myriad civilizations, before the country's conflict began in 2011.

Islamic State seized Palmyra in May 2015 and demolished many of its ancient structures and objects, while looting others to help finance its operations.

The temple's ornate stone altar structure was destroyed in October 2015, but an Italian team has rebuilt its ceiling using 3D imaging and skilled stonework.

"It is identical to the original piece with all its details and decorations because the 3D technique is very developed," said Mamoun Abdul Karim, the former head of the Syrian government's antiquities department.

"But it is no substitute for the original object," he added.

The new altar is 4 meters long and built with a combination of plastic and polished stone, said Frances Pinnock of the Sapienza

University of Rome, head of the scientific team that worked on the building process.

She said they had proposed building a replica as an emotional response to the destruction of the ceiling, but also to see if it was scientifically possible to construct what was lost.

Abdul Karim called on the international community to make the same effort to restore Syria's Palmyra as it is making for Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, damaged in a fire last week.

"It is an international responsibility," he said.



Frances Pinnock, head of the scientific team that worked on the building process, looks at the replica of an altar ceiling from the old Temple of Bel at Syria's National Museum of Damascus, Syria April 23, 2019. (Reuters/Yamam Alshaar)