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Russian cinematographer Ayrat Yamilov (2nd L) receives the award for best film on behalf of “A Russian Youth” director Alexander Zolotukhin on April 25, 2019.

‘Iran’s share of One Belt, One Road initiative should rise’

TEHRAN — Iran’s share in the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative should rise, given the country’s background and historic status in the Silk Road, Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dehpasand stressed.

The minister made the remarks in an interview with IRNA in Beijing on the sidelines of the Second International One Belt, One Road Conference.

One Belt, One Road is very important for Iran, and Tehran has been accompanying well with the initiative of the Chinese president, Dehpasand noted.

He went on to say that in line with the implementation of the One Belt, One Road projects, significant capacities and unique geographic features of Iran have led to a lot of benefits for the country within the framework of this engagement. **→4**

Iran-Russia security cooperation growing: Hatami

TEHRAN — Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami said on Friday that defense and security cooperation between Iran and Russia is “growing”.

During a meeting with Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu on the sidelines of the Moscow Security Conference, Hatami said that the two countries have many capacities to expand cooperation. Shoigu

also said defense and military cooperation between Iran and Russia has improved.

“The two countries’ cooperation within the framework of the Astana talks to fight terrorism and stabilize Syria has played an important role,” Shoigu said.

The Astana peace talks were launched on Jan. 23-24, 2017 with the aim of putting an end to the Syrian conflict. **→2**

Iranian scientists produce liquid-based cytology kit

TEHRAN— Iranian scientists at Isfahan Science and Technology Town have succeeded in domestic production of liquid-based cytology kit used in cervical cancer screening, ISNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

Cervical screening has been shown to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer, but only in the setting of well organized, high quality programmes.

Liquid-based cytology is a method of

preparing samples for examination in cytopathology. The sample is collected, normally by a small brush, in the same way as for a conventional smear test, but rather than the smear being transferred directly to a microscope slide, the sample is deposited into a small bottle of preservative liquid. At the laboratory the liquid is treated to remove other elements such as mucus before a layer of cells is placed on a slide. The technique allows more accurate results. **→11**

PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

London has no political independence!

UK’s support for anti-Iran policies has led to hatred and anger of Iran from London. Britain has not only done little to maintain a nuclear deal with Iran, but also fully agrees with the anti-Iranian policies of the Trump government in Washington.

On 5 march 1945, after the end of World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered his controversial speech at Westminster University. There he mentioned:

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow... The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy... This means a special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States.”

Today, almost 74 years has passed since that famous speech. It has to be said that over the past seven decades, members of both Conservative and Labor parties in Britain have been committed to Churchill’s recommendation. In this apparent equation, the UK has become a dependent variable to the United States, and analyzes any action, move or reaction in the international system based on its relationship with Washington. This rule also applies to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Of course, decoding the measures of English officials is not so complicated! British authorities have preferred to help the White House at this period, and not to leave their traditional partner amid the war against the JCPOA. **→13**

Western MSM aiding U.S. efforts to legitimize U.S.-Libyan warlord Haftar

By Alireza Hashemi

TEHRAN — The world was taken by surprise this Friday after news broke out that U.S. President Donald Trump had held a phone call with the Libyan renegade commander Khalifa Haftar four days earlier.

The conversation itself was even more shocking, as a White House statement said Trump had called Haftar to “discuss ongoing counterterrorism efforts to achieve peace and stability in Libya”.

To many people’s surprise, the U.S. president called the warlord who ignored numerous calls

for political resolution of differences with the Libyan government and launched an assault on Tripoli on April 4 to discuss efforts to restore “peace and stability” to the country!

Moreover, in his phone call, Trump “recognized Field Marshal Haftar’s significant role in fighting terrorism and securing Libya’s oil resources, and the two discussed a shared vision for Libya’s transition to a stable, democratic political system.”

Interestingly, Trump shares his vision for Libyan democracy with a former Libyan general who has openly declared is no fan of democracy. Haftar had told the French magazine Jeune Af-

rique in an interview in January that Libya was not “ripe for democracy”.

Haftar launched his operation during the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres’s visit to Tripoli, and less than two weeks before a planned conference to pave the way for democratic elections in the country. The call, signaling the U.S. was throwing his weight behind the Libyan general, was interpreted by some observers as an apparent reversal of the U.S. policy on the country, taking into account strange remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo earlier this month calling for a halt to Haftar’s offensive. **→13**

Chinese illustrator Xiong Liang eager to work with Iranian writers

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN — Renowned Chinese writer and illustrator Xiong Liang has said that he is eager to work with Iranian writers and publishers.

Speaking to the Tehran Times on Wednesday during a visit to the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair, which currently hosts China as a special guest at Imam Khomeini Mosalla, Liang said, “I have seen Iranian illustrators’ works in several

international events and I think the quality of the works are superb.”

There is an attitude common to Iranian and Chinese illustrations that they represent their traditional elements in their works in a modern way, said Liang who is visiting Iran for the first time.

An exhibition of illustrations by Liang and several other Chinese artists is underway at

China’s pavilion in the book fair.

“I use Chinese painting techniques to create my works, which are modern,” he said and added, “I am inspired by old Chinese paintings and even Buddha statues, but the final result is a modern artwork,” he said.

Liang, who is also known as Kim Xiong, started his career during the 1990s. His works have been published in over 50 books. **→16**

Riyadh regime had U.S. green light for mass executions: Ansarullah

TEHRAN— Yemen’s Houthi Ansarullah movement has strongly condemned Saudi Arabia over beheading 37 of its nationals, stressing the Riyadh regime had the U.S. carte blanche for the “heinous” mass executions.

The political bureau of the movement, in a statement, said the sentences were carried out because the individuals had committed no sin other than reject Al Saud’s injustice and tyranny.

The statement highlighted that the policy of

killing and suppression of people with an iron fist is a criminal approach long being exercised by the Saudi regime, adding that the ruling family in Riyadh has resorted to such a practice in a bid to cling to power, Press TV reported.

“The history of the Saudi regime is awash with criminality. Brutal crimes being committed by the Saudi regime against its own nationals and other nations are a proof for its downfall and moral bankruptcy ... Without support

from America, the Saudi regime would not have dared to commit such crimes,” Ansarullah pointed out.

The Yemeni movement then called upon all freedom-loving people around the world to reject Saudi Arabia’s repressive and aggressive policies, and to criminalize the Riyadh regime’s suppression of its own people as well as its ongoing atrocious military onslaught against Yemen. **→3**



© Tehran Times/ Shahab Ghavoumi

Funeral procession held for fallen soldier

A massive funeral procession was held on Friday in Tehran for a soldier, Majid Qorbakhani, martyred in January 2016 while fighting terrorists in Syria.

Qorbakhani was a “defender of the shrine” whose body was discovered and returned to the country just recently.

Defender of the shrine is a term used in Iran as a general reference to those who are martyred in Syria and Iraq in the war against terrorist groups such as Daesh, al-Nusra Front and some other shadowy groups.

ARTICLE

Maryam Qarehgozlou
Head of the Tehran Times
Social Desk

Too precious to lose: What brought back Lake Urmia to life?

Subsequent to heavy rainfalls in the country, many long-lost wetlands and lakes were restored, among which Lake Urmia “the turquoise solitaire of Azarbaijan” was the most conspicuous.

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in the Middle East. It was a home to many migratory and indigenous animals including flamingos, pelicans, egrets and ducks and attracted hundreds of tourists every year who had bathed in the water to take advantage of the therapeutic properties of the lake.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically. In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

Kiumars Daneshjoo, CEO of West Azarbaijan regional water company said on Wednesday that the volume of water in the Lake Urmia has increased to 4.1 billion cubic meters which shows a 2-fold increase compared to the same period last year.

Moreover, Daneshjoo added that the volume of water has risen by about 3 billion cubic meters compared to the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2018).

He went on to highlight that the lake’s catchment area has received some 479 millimeters of precipitations since the start of the current water year indicating a 61-percent rise compared to last year.

He noted that some 1.5 billion water was released from the dams to enter the lake since September 23 reporting that the lake’s surface area reached roughly 3,000 square kilometers. The lake’s surface area has increased 677 square kilometers compared to the same period last year, he added. **→12**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



World has seen
IRGC's positive
measures:
cleric

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani, a Tehran Friday prayer leader, says the world has witnessed "positive measures" by the Iranian armed forces, including the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Addressing worshippers, Emami Kashani said Iran's armed forces merely defend Islam, the nation and the country.

"The U.S. has declared the Guards as terrorist but we should see who the terrorist is," he said. "The terrorist is in America and their measures."

He also said terrorism is incompatible with teachings of Islam and that Daesh (ISIL) terror group was created by the U.S.



Saudi, UAE
overstate their
oil capacities:
oil minister

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on Friday that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates overstate their oil capacities, IRNA reported.

The comments were in reaction to expectations the two countries would fill any supply gap caused by a tightening of U.S. oil sanctions on Iran.

The U.S. behavior and its oil sanctions against Iran are not a bluff, but these are signs of Washington's "very violent hostility toward the Iranian nation," Zanganeh stated.

"The U.S. behavior and oil sanctions are not a bluff, but (the result of) very violent hostility toward the Iranian nation," Zanganeh was quoted by IRNA as saying.



1.3 tons of
synthetic
drug seized in
southeast Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — An Intelligence Ministry official in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan announced on Thursday that the largest ever amount of synthetic drug shishesh (crystal methamphetamine), has been seized in Iran.

"Following a series of complicated operations and collecting information, the department succeeded to seize 1,300 kilograms of narcotics, including more than 850 kilograms of the addictive synthetic drug, shishesh," IRNA reported, quoting the unnamed intelligence officer as saying.

The drug consignment was seized after the intelligence department forces and border guards clashed with an armed group of smugglers, entering Iranian soil via Afghanistan, the news agency said. Two of the armed smugglers were killed, several injured or captured along with a significant amount of weapons and ammunition, the official maintained.

Based on the United Nations reports, Afghanistan ranks first as the producer of opium and Heroin in the world. Iran, being Afghanistan's neighbor, has always been the main route for smuggling narcotics to the Western world.



Putin says will
meet Rouhani,
Aliyev in August

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday he will meet with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at a summit in Russia in August, Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty reported.

Putin made the announcement to journalists in Beijing after meeting with Aliyev on the sidelines of China's Belt and Road forum — an initiative aimed at building trade and transportation infrastructure that links China with South and Central Asia, Europe, and Africa.

"We agreed to hold another Russian-Azerbaijani-Iranian summit in Russia in August," Putin said.

Putin last met together with Aliyev and Rohani at a summit in Tehran in November 2017.



Iraqi PM: We'll
deploy all our
efforts to ease
U.S.-Iran tension

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has said his country will make every effort to ease the tension between Iran and the United States.

"We have good relations with both, with Americans and with Iranians, and we are going to deploy all our efforts to ease and calm down the situation," Al Jazeera on Thursday quoted Abdul Mahdi as saying.

"It is not in the interest of any of the parties engaged, not the United States, not Iran, not Iraq, not the region as a whole," the prime minister remarked.



Moscow
condemns U.S.
oil sanctions
on Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Russia has reiterated its opposition to the U.S. for tightening oil sanctions against Iran, saying that the United States is trying to complicate the internal situation in Iran.

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Friday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said, "U.S. actions cover all aspects of Iran's domestic politics and its activities internationally."

"We consider the U.S. decision not to extend the exemption of the eight countries from purchasing Iran's oil as part of the U.S. global strategy against Iran and condemn it," IRNA quoted Zakharova as saying.

Zarif: No interest in Persian Gulf security if Iran cannot sell oil

Iran has a 'Ph.D. in sanctions busting,' says Zarif

POLITICS
d e s k

President Donald Trump will not succeed in forcing Iran to capitulate to U.S. economic pressure because Tehran has a "Ph.D. in sanctions busting," Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said on Thursday, according to NBC News.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to New York, Iran's top diplomat also said his country would not seek a confrontation with the United States or try to cut off the Strait of Hormuz unless Washington imposes a total economic blockade.

President Donald Trump "believes that the maximum pressure policy will bring Iran to its knees," Zarif said. "Iran will not accept pressure."

Zarif said his country had decades of experience evading U.S. economic sanctions and that it would manage to survive this latest round of pressure. "We have a Ph.D. in sanctions busting," he said.

Iran had managed so far to meet the needs of its population and has continued to sell oil, Zarif said, though he admitted the sanctions had inflicted economic damage and caused pain for Iranian citizens.

The Trump administration's policy amounts to bullying other governments, he said, predicting that some countries would not give in to the pressure, citing public criticism of the sanctions by Turkey.

Zarif's comments came days after the Trump administration announced it would end waivers that allowed several countries to import Iranian oil, vowing to reduce Tehran's oil exports to "zero."

Zarif said Iran would not retaliate or dispute



shipping through the strategic Strait of Hormuz despite the growing tensions with the U.S., but said that could change if Washington managed to completely shut down the country's economy.

"We do not want to take any escalatory steps. This is our intention. The Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf are our lifeline," he said.

"If the United States decides or attempts to disrupt that by preventing us from using our own waters to advance our national economic interests, then it's changing the entire balance and the entire equation," he said.

"If Iran cannot sell oil, if Iran cannot import what it wants, then we will have no interest in

"If the United States decides or attempts to disrupt that by preventing us from using our own waters to advance our national economic interests, then it's changing the entire balance and the entire equation."

Iran-Russia security cooperation growing: Hatami

1 → ■ 'Iran attaches no value to Trump's illegal behaviors'

During a meeting with Serbian Defense Minister Aleksandar Vulin on Thursday, Hatami said that Iran attaches no value to illegal behaviors of U.S. President Donald Trump, criticizing the U.S. move in designating the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization.

He said the IRGC is in the frontline of fighting terror-

ism in the region but the U.S. seeks to weaken its status.

Trump labeled the IRGC as terrorist organization on April 8. It was the first time that the United States branded a country's military terrorist.

Vulin said that Serbia will not let any country interfere in its strategic policies.

He noted that Serbia has close ties with Iran.

Hatami also held a separate meeting with Uzbek Defense Minister Bakhodir Kurbanov.



Tehran says won't let others replace its oil

POLITICS
d e s k

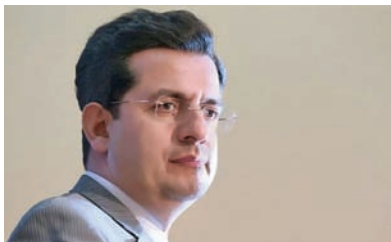
TEHRAN — Tehran says it will not allow any country to replace its oil sales in the global market, warning the United States and its regional allies of the ramifications of their decision to halt Iranian oil exports.

Earlier this week, the U.S. announced that it is not extending any waivers exempting importers of Iranian oil from U.S. sanctions and there will be no grace period for those economies to comply.

"The Iranian government and nation will never forget the enmity of certain countries in such historical period," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a statement on Thursday.

Mousavi condemned Saudi Arabia and Bahrain for welcoming sanctions on Iran's oil exports, saying such support comes from their "blind obedience" to the U.S. government.

In remarks on Wednesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tehran will be exporting any amount of crude it wants, asserting that U.S. attempts to zero out the ex-



port of Iranian oil will be fruitless. The Leader also warned that the enemies' hostile policies will not go unanswered because the Iranian nation would not stand idle in the face of plots.

Elsewhere in his statement, Mousavi pointed to Saudi Arabia's mass execution of 37 people in a single day, saying such "insane acts" are reminiscent of the jahiliyyah (ignorance) of the dark era before the advent of Islam.

"Saudi Arabia commits such acts in order to incite sedition in the region while enjoying the support of the U.S. government, and regional countries need to be vigilant against the dire consequences of such acts," he added.

EU, Japan reiterate support for nuclear deal

By staff and agency

The European Union (EU) and Japan on Thursday reiterated their joint support for the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"We reiterate our joint support for the Iran/Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," said a statement issued after the 26th summit between the EU and Japan in Brussels, according to Xinhua.

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

Also, on Monday the U.S. announced that Washington has decided not to extend waivers allowing major importers to continue buying oil from Iran when they expire in early May.

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



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

Japan has repeatedly expressed support for keeping the JCPOA.

Japanese Ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations Mitsuru Kitano tweeted in May, "At the @iaeaorg Board of Governors meeting, I made a statement on Iran's nuclear issues. "Japan continues to firmly support the JCPOA, as it strengthens the international non-proliferation regime and contributes to the peace and stability of the Middle East region."

Iran says ready for prisoner exchange with U.S.

POLITICS
d e s k

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday that Iran is prepared to take action in line with swapping prisoners with the U.S.

Mousavi said the Foreign Ministry is prepared to free American prisoners who have been jailed by the Iranian Judiciary in exchange for release of the Iranians who have been jailed in the U.S. on "delusional" charges of violating sanctions.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said

during an interview in New York on Wednesday that Iran is ready to swap prisoners with the U.S.

"I put this offer on the table publicly now. [Let's] Exchange them," Zarif said. "If they tell you anything else, they are lying," he added.

Mousavi said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's proposal is clear and needs no interpretation if the U.S. regime has the will."

According to Press TV, Mousavi said, "What the Iranian foreign minister raised in New York just concerns Iranian prisoners in

the U.S. or those arrested in other countries at Washington's request with a number of American criminals in Iran."

He made the remarks in reaction to UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who had assumed Zarif's suggestion of a prisoner swap also includes Iranian-British dual citizen, Nazanin Zaghari, who is jailed in Tehran for espionage.

In his interview on Wednesday, Zarif just said she feels sorry for Nazanin Zaghari and her child and that he has done his "best to help" her.

Iran marks the 1980 Tabas Desert when U.S. was humiliated

POLITICS
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran on Thursday has marked the 39th anniversary of a failed U.S. military operation to free its embassy staff held in Tehran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The military operation, which proved a fiasco for Washington, took place on April 25, 1980, when Jimmy Carter ruling the United States.

A sandstorm hit and brought down the group of U.S. military aircraft in the Tabas Desert, killing eight American servicemen and resulting in the failure of the mission. Inspections showed a helicopter crashed into a C-130 Hercules transport plane as five other choppers were stranded in the storm.



The units involved in the operation were from the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

Speaking during a cabinet meeting on

Wednesday, President Rouhani pointed to Washington's repeated failures against Iran over the past four decades, saying the "historic U.S. failure" in Tabas was a "divine miracle."

"The Tabas incident was a great miracle from God" which led to the failure of the Americans' "complicated military plot," he said, Press TV reported.

"Every day over the past 40 years, they (U.S. officials) have been hatching a new plot against the Iranian people, but they have always failed and will fail again," he stressed.

Many believe the military failure played a major role in Carter's defeat in the 1980

presidential election.

Iran commemorates the event every year as a symbol of the failure of U.S. plots against the Islamic Republic.

During the takeover of the embassy, documents were discovered that proved some of the American embassy staff had been working with U.S. intelligence agencies, meaning they were spies. Some 52 Americans were held in Tehran for 444 days, but later released unharmed.

In its newest brazen plot against Iran, the United States has designated the IRGC branch of the Iranian military as a terrorist organization and threatened to zero out Iran's oil exports.

U.S.-led forces killed 1,600 civilians in Syria's Raqqa in 2017

TEHRAN — Amnesty International and another high-profile war monitoring group say the U.S.-led coalition allegedly fighting the Takfiri terror group of Daesh (ISIL) has remarkably understated the deaths its campaign caused among civilians in the northern Syrian city of Raqqa in 2017, saying the coalition killed more than 1,600 civilians during its assault on the city.

The coalition waged a no-holds-barred assault against the city in 2017 under the pretext of dislodging the terrorists, who had named the city as their so-called headquarters.

According to Press TV< Amnesty and Airwars, a London-based group set up in 2014 to monitor the impact of the U.S.-led campaign, said the onslaught had killed more than 1,600 civilians, 10 times the toll acknowledged by the coalition.

The groups said they spent 18 months researching civilian deaths, including two months on the ground in Raqqa.

“Our conclusive finding after all this is that the U.S.-led coalition’s military offensive (involving the U.S., UK, and French forces)



directly caused more than 1,600 civilian deaths in Raqqa,” the report said.

Amnesty International and Airwars called on the coalition to acknowledge the scope of the reported civilian casualties and “to put in place an independent, impartial mecha-

nism to effectively and promptly investigate reports of civilian harm, including violations of international humanitarian law, and make the findings public.”

Daesh seized Raqqa in early 2014 during its advance through Syria and Iraq.

Kurdish militants recaptured Raqqa in October 2017 with the help of U.S. air-strikes, which left the once sprawling city totally destroyed.

The wholesale strike against Raqqa reportedly took the coalition’s disregard for massive destruction to a new level. Reuters reporters stationed in the city during and after the offensive said that the bombardment had caused massive destruction in the city, laying waste to entire districts.

In October 2017, the Russian Defense Ministry spokesman said the U.S. had wiped the Syrian city “off the face of the earth” with carpet bombing in the same way the United States and Britain bombed Germany’s Dresden in 1945.

“Raqqa has inherited the fate of Dresden in 1945, wiped off the face of the earth by Anglo-American bombardments,” Major General Igor Konashenkov said back then.

Damascus has repeatedly denounced the coalition for its illegal presence in the country, suspected its true intention, and condemned its disregard for civilian lives.

U.S. acted in ‘bad faith’ in Vietnam talks: Kim

TEHRAN — North Korean leader Kim Jong-un says the U.S. acted in “bad faith” in Vietnam when President Donald Trump and his team held talks with him in Hanoi.

Kim told Russian President Vladimir Putin during their first-ever meeting on Thursday in Vladivostok that the situation on the Korean peninsula has reached a “critical point”, warning that peace and security on the Korean peninsula will entirely depend on the future US attitude, state media reported

“The situation on the Korean peninsula and the region is now at a standstill and has reached a critical point,” the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted Kim as saying.

The situation “may return to its original state as the US took a unilateral attitude in bad faith at the recent second DPRK-US summit talks,” he warned, Press TV reported.

“Peace and security on the Korean peninsula will entirely depend on the U.S. future attitude, and the DPRK will gird itself for every possible situation,” KCNA quoted



Kim as saying.

Just a week ago, Pyongyang demanded the removal of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from the stalled nuclear talks, accusing him of derailing the process.

Trump and Kim met for the first time at a historic summit in Singapore in June last year, when they agreed to “work toward” denuclearization.

The two also held a second summit in Vietnam’s capital, Hanoi, in February, which failed after Trump walked away from the summit, claiming that Kim had insisted on the removal of all sanctions on North Korea in return. Pyongyang rejected that account, stressing that it had only asked for a partial lifting of the bans.

Settlers storm Aqsa as Israel imposes restrictions

TEHRAN — Hundreds of extremist settlers have stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the occupied Old City of East Jerusalem al-Quds amid an escalation of violence by Israeli forces and settlers against Palestinian people.

Palestinian sources, requesting not to be named, said more than 320 Israeli settlers entered the site through the Moroccan Gate under tight protection of several groups of Israeli soldiers and special police forces.

The sources added that the settlers toured the compound and performed prayers on the fifth day of the Jewish week-long Passover holiday.

The sources further noted that Israeli forces had erected checkpoints along streets and alleyways around the al-Aqsa Mosque compound. The movement of locals was also blocked off with iron barriers and sandbags. In addition, Israeli troops searched Muslim worshipers and checked their identity cards before allowing them to enter the site.

The al-Aqsa Mosque compound sits just above the Western Wall plaza and houses both the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque. According to Press TV, Palestinians have



repeatedly warned of Israeli attempts to change the status quo of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third holiest site in Islam.

The occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed new tensions ever since U.S. President Donald Trump announced his decision on December 6, 2017 to recognize Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel’s capital and relocate the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the occupied city.

On December 21, 2017, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution that calls on the U.S. to withdraw its controversial recognition of Jerusalem al-Quds as Israeli “capital.”

U.S. isolated as world leaders open Silk Road summit in China

TEHRAN — Nearly 40 world leaders and scores of finance officials are gathered in Beijing to build a new platform for international trade and counter U.S. unilateralism and protectionist policies.

Dubbed as the Belt and Road (BRI) initiative, they aim to reinvent the ancient Silk Road to connect Asia to Europe and Africa through massive investments in maritime, road and rail projects.

Some 5,000 delegates are attending the three-day forum, with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, whose country became the first G7 member to sign up to BRI, among the headliners.

The United States has not dispatched any officials, dismissing BRI as a “vanity project” and rebuking Rome for participating in the scheme.

However, traditional U.S. allies such as the UK, France, Germany and Spain have sent ministers to the summit amid reports of European frustration with Washington’s trade practices. British Finance Minister Philip Hammond told the summit on Friday his country is committed to help realize the BRI potential, offering Britain’s expertise in project financing.

“The Belt and Road Initiative has tremendous potential to spread prosperity and sustainable development, touching as it does, potentially 70 percent of the world’s population, a project of truly epic ambition,” he said.

German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said major European Union countries want to sign a memorandum of understanding on the BRI initiative as a group.

President Putin called for a global response against protectionism, unilateral sanctions and “trade wars” in veiled criticisms of the United States.

“The rise of protectionism in its most dangerous form, which at the present time is often used illegitimately as unilateral restrictions to bypass the UN Security Council, or worst of all, trade wars,” he said.

“We think that only when we are united can we counter such acute challenges amidst a global economic slowdown and gaps between countries in terms of well-being and technology,” Putin added.

The Russian leader whom Chinese President Xi Jinping referred to as “my closest friend” in a speech at the ceremony, was conferred an honorary doctorate degree from the Chinese premier’s alma mater.

BRI offers to bring much-needed modern infrastructure to developing countries and China’s spending has increased its footprint around the world.

Beijing has not said exactly how much money will be needed in total, but some independent estimates suggest it will run into several trillion dollars.

The United States fears that China aspires to replace it at the center of the world order and the decision by Italy and Luxembourg to join BRI has raised alarm bells in Washington which sees Beijing’s influence now extending to the EU’s core. To U.S. leaders, BRI is on par with the Marshall Plan that established the American supremacy through an economic blueprint to rebuild post-World War II Europe.



They are alarmed -- all the more so because BRI is more than 10 times the size of the Marshall Plan.

The West is worried that the expansion of BRI will lead to the emergence of alternative models of governance that will challenge Western liberalism around the world.

In his keynote speech at the opening of the forum, President Xi stressed that his global infrastructure project “is not an exclusive club”, in a dig at the United States.

He called on countries participating in the initiative to promote a global partnership for connectivity to achieve common development and prosperity.

China is a partner and a competitor at the same time and the EU must define its interests, Altmaier said.

“And for that we need an industry strategy. For that we need our own connectivity strategy,” he added.

Sri Lanka on high alert as police hunt 140 ISIL members

TEHRAN— President Maithripala Sirisena says the country’s police and security forces are looking for more than 100 individuals with links to the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

The country remains on high alert in the aftermath of a string of bombings that claimed the lives of more than 250 people on the Easter Sunday.

Sirisena said Friday that police were looking for no less than 140 Daesh sympathizers, adding some Sri Lankan youths had been

involved with the terror group since 2013. Almost 10,000 soldiers were being deployed across the Southeast Asian country to carry out searches and provide security for religious centers, the military said on Friday.

Sri Lanka and the world were shocked on Easter Sunday after eight apparently coordinated blasts hit churches and luxury hotels in the capital, Colombo, and the cities of Negombo and Batticaloa.

The government, which has blamed a small

group known as the Nations Thawahid Jaman (NTJ) for the attacks, has so far detained at least 76 people. The NTJ has yet to claim responsibility for the bombings. Instead, Daesh has released footage of eight men whom it said had carried out the attacks that five days ago.

The response of Sri Lanka’s security apparatus to the attacks was quickly questioned after reports stated earlier this week that intelligence officials had been alerted about potential bombings weeks before the attacks on Sunday.

Sri Lanka’s own police chief had also warned of a security threat against churches and the Indian high commission in Colombo 10 days before the attacks.

The questionable performance has prompted Sirisena to ask the police chief and the defense secretary to resign. On Tuesday, he pledged to “completely restructure the police and security forces in the coming weeks.”

The civil war ended in 2009 with an estimated 100,000 deaths.

Biden launches 2020 bid, warns soul of U.S. at stake

TEHRAN — Former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden formally joined the crowded Democratic presidential contest, declaring the “soul of this nation” at stake if President Donald Trump wins re-election.



In a video posted on Twitter, Biden focused on the 2017 deadly clash between white supremacists and counterprotesters in Charlottesville, Virginia. Biden noted Trump’s comments that there were some “very fine people” on both sides of the violent encounter, which left one woman dead.

“We are in the battle for the soul of this nation,” Biden said. “If we give Donald Trump eight years in the White House, he will forever and fundamentally alter the character of this nation who we are. And I cannot stand by and watch that happen.”

According to AP, the 76-year-old Biden becomes an instant front-runner alongside Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who is leading many polls and has proved to be a successful fundraiser. Biden has legislative and international experience that is unmatched in the Democratic field, and he is among the best-known faces in U.S. politics.

As an older white man with occasionally centrist views, Biden has to prove he’s not out of step with his party. He’s yet to outline his positions on the issues defining the 2020 Democratic primary, most notably “Medicare for All,” the universal health care plan authored by Sanders that has been adopted by virtually the entire Democratic field.

More than 7,000 Syrians quit camp near Jordan border: UN

TEHRAN — More than 7,000 people have left a desperate desert camp for displaced Syrians near the Jordanian border since March, a United Nations spokesperson said Friday.

According to the UN’s humanitarian coordination office OCHA, around 36,000 people remained in the isolated Rukban camp near Al-Tanf base used by the U.S.-led coalition fighting Daesh (ISIL), after over 4,000 left between March and April 21.

The Syrian government and key backer Russia said in February they had opened corridors out of the camp, calling on residents to leave.

“Since March, over 7,300 people have left Rukban,” OCHA spokesperson David Swanson told AFP, including some 3,000 who left after April 21.

Those who have quit the camp have moved to collective shelters in the central city of Homs or resettled in their areas of origin in the province of the same name, OCHA said Thursday.

It said Rukban residents were organizing their own transportation to the edge of a de-escalation zone established around Al-Tanf, from where they either continued in their vehicles or were transferred by private or government-provided vehicles to four collective shelters in Homs city.

After delays, Afghan president inaugurates new Parliament

TEHRAN—President Ashraf Ghani has inaugurated the country’s new parliament almost six months after elections were held and following long delays, claims of voter fraud, unresolved disputes and political bickering.

Ghani spoke at the ceremony Friday in Kabul, which brought together both the lower, legislative, 249-seat chamber and the appointed, 104-member upper house, AP reported.

He expressed regret over the delays and the fact that 33 seats for lawmakers from the districts in central Kabul province were empty because the election commission still has not announced results for those districts.

Ghani blamed what he said was the “inefficiency of former election commission members” who have since been replaced.

The October election day was marred by bombings and attacks on polling stations across the country that killed 27 civilians and 11 policemen.

Yemeni combat drone targets Saudi mercenaries’ command center in Aden

TEHRAN—Yemeni army soldiers, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, have launched an airstrike against a command center of Saudi-sponsored militiamen loyal to Yemen’s former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, in the country’s southern province of Aden.

A Yemeni military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Yemeni soldiers and their allies attacked the military site in the al-Burayqah district of the province on Thursday, using a domestically-designed and -manufactured Qasef K2 (Striker K2) combat drone, Press TV reported.

Later in the day, Yemeni troopers and fighters from Popular Committees carried out an ambush against vehicles carrying Saudi-paid militiamen on the outskirts of al-Sadis area in Saudi Arabia’s southern border region of Najran, killing or injuring those on board.

An unnamed Yemeni military official also said Yemeni troops and their allies had managed to purge a number of Saudi mercenaries’ positions east of al-Nar Mountain in the kingdom’s Jizan region.

The official noted that several Saudi-sponsored militiamen were killed or wounded in the process.

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

1 → The Arabic-language Saudi daily newspaper Okaz, citing a statement issued by the interior ministry, reported that the executions were implemented Tuesday “on a number of culprits for adopting extremist terrorist ideologies and forming terrorist cells to corrupt and disrupt society 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.

Amnesty International later censured the mass executions,

saying they mark an alarming escalation in Saudi Arabia’s use of the death penalty.

It added 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-regime protests that took place while he was under the age of 16.

STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	203776.9
IFX	2493.35

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,861 rials
GBP	54,203 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES	
Brent	\$72.25/b
WTI	\$64.14/b
OPEC Basket	\$73.43/b
Gold	\$1,281.50/oz
Silver	\$15.05/oz
Platinum	\$892.45/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

‘Iran’s share of One Belt, One Road initiative should rise’

1 → The Second International One Belt, One Road Conference is held in Beijing from April 25 to 27.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR) or the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road is a development strategy



adopted by the Chinese government involving infrastructure development and investments in 152 countries and international organizations in Europe, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

“Belt” refers to the over-land routes for road and rail transportation, called “the Silk Road Economic Belt”; whereas “road” refers to the sea routes, or the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

The Chinese government calls the initiative “a bid to enhance regional connectivity

and embrace a brighter future”. Some observers see it as a push for Chinese dominance in global affairs with a China-centered trading network.

IME suitable platform of economic prosperity

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

TEHRAN (MNA) — Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has named the current Persian Year, 1398, as the ‘Year of Boosting Domestic Production’, calling on all officials to make the issue of production the pivot of their activities.

“If production is boosted, it can solve livelihood problems, it can ensure the country’s independence from foreigners and from the enemies, it can eliminate unemployment and it can solve the problems related to the decrease in the value of the national currency to a great extent,” the Leader said in his message on the occasion of the start of the new year on March 21, 2019.

The issue comes of the highest importance than before, due to Trump’s decision about cutting all waivers of Iranian oil which will dramatically decrease oil-reliant country’s oil revenues.

The need for an indigenous economy and boosting production is more highlighted, now.

Production prosperity is the fuel for the economy engine to run. It entails growth, job creation, improving the nation’s livelihood as well as combating recession, inflation and unemployment. It increases non-oil exports of the country and will consequently boost foreign exchange revenues; having more foreign exchange income, injected back to domestic financial system, will have domestic production enhanced and the formed loop will go on and on. Protecting domestic production will also lure foreign and domestic investments and improve the available infrastructure, which will result in scientific and industrial growth and again boost in production. Any improvement in Gross domestic product (GDP) will consequently reinforce Iran’s depreciated currency, rial, and competitiveness of its products at international markets. Thus, lubricating the production wheel, Iran can compete with foreign rivals.

The initial key factor to reach a booming economy is supporting production units and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which ignite prosperity of other production sectors.

While, injecting liquidity and supplying working capital via granting banking facilities is the dire need of production units in Iran, opening their way to stock market, where they can offer their manufactured products, is the other element that can help production units and SMEs increase productivity, ability to create more jobs and play their role as they should in the economy cycle.

In Iran, mercantile offerings at domestic stock market are done at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME). Directly and without participation of middlemen, domestic products’ prices are set via the contribution of sellers and purchasers, i.e. demand and supply, the mechanism that guarantees interests of the Iranian producers.

IME redirects the profits of selling the products and the earned added value to the real producers, which is an important factor in setting proper cushions for economic prosperity. Cutting the hands of the middlemen and their minions, IME has the ability to cool down the inflated prices and bring tranquility and transparency to the market.

The significant role of transparency in economic activities should not be compromised on the way to boost domestic production. In a bid to impede rents and corruption and spur transparency and competitiveness among production units it seems efficient to offer their products at mercantile exchange market. Transparency acts as a proper bed for creation of the circle of income, saving, and investment, since it lets producers easily earn, save or invest in development and infrastructure projects. The conditions, similar to which cannot be provided by unofficial markets.

→ 13

Mining projects worth \$3b to be inaugurated in a year

ECONOMY DESK TEHRAN — Projects worth \$3 billion are planned to be inaugurated in Iran’s mining sector in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21, 2019), IRIB quoted Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Managing Director Khodadad Gharibpour as saying.

The official has previously announced that projects worth \$2.17 billion have been put into operation in this sector during the past Iranian calendar year.

He said 20 projects implemented by IMIDRO in the previous year created 4,440 direct

jobs and 25,300 indirect jobs, IRNA reported.

The deputy industry and mining minister also said that the projects were implemented through cooperation of private sector.

As previously announced by the Public Relations Department of IMIDRO, the organization intends to renovate 5,000 economic units using 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) of investment during the current Iranian calendar year.

As well as renovating economic units, reviving small mines and expansion of exploitation activities stand among the top priorities of IMIDRO in this year.

IMIDRO also plans to ease its domestic



and foreign trade activities, facilitate international trade, improve competitiveness, and make exported goods variable in the current year.

As the organization announced on Tuesday, the value of Iran’s minerals and mining

industries’ exports stood at \$9.226 billion in the past year.

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.

‘Iran-Germany trade not to be affected by U.S. threat’

ECONOMY DESK TEHRAN — Co-desk chairman of Iran-Germany Chamber of Commerce Michael Tockuss described trade ties between Iran and Germany as long-lasting saying that U.S. threats cannot affect two countries’ ties, IRNA reported.

“On one hand we have the public reaction from public media and on the other hand we have the long-lasting trade relationship between many medium-sized German companies and Iran,” Tockuss told IRNA.

He added “This relationship could be expanded but we need more support from our government and from the Iranian government.”

Elaborating on the impact of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) on Iran-Germany trade, he said “INSTEX is something that we should not undervalue. INSTEX is a very strong political signal and the fact that the European countries act in clear opposition toward the efforts of the United States is a value itself.”



“Practically INSTEX is just on the way. I know that people are working intensively to get it on stream but it has practical impact at the moment,” he noted.

He went on to say that “INSTEX now is a totally new instrument for the European countries and they have to develop it and I know that the key people in INSTEX are working on it but I don’t see that now these efforts of the United States will affect INSTEX because this is not related to it.”

“We have a lot of companies that ask for INSTEX and that want to start it immediately, he said adding “now we are in close contact with the Iranian banks in Hamburg.”

Investors may be doubting effectiveness of ECB policy: Rehn

Investors may be doubting the effectiveness of the European Central Bank’s monetary policy measures in boosting inflation, Reuters reported quoting ECB rate-setter Olli Rehn as saying on Friday.

Rehn, seen as a potential successor to ECB President Mario Draghi, emphasised the need to continue providing stimulus to the economy and joined a growing number of policymakers in expressing scepticism about giving banks relief from a charge on their idle cash.

The Finnish central bank governor said stubbornly low inflation expectations may not only reflect years of low price growth but also investors’ misgivings about the ECB’s own policy.

“Firstly, long-lasting slow inflation may have lowered inflation expectations durably, and even so that they are easily moving downwards,” Rehn said as he presented his central bank’s annual report.

“Secondly, markets may find that monetary policy measures are not, under the current circumstances, effective enough to accelerate inflation.”

He also cited the perception that the ECB would sooner tolerate missing than exceeding its price growth target of just under 2 percent - an interpretation that Draghi himself was at pains to deny in his last news conference.

The ECB has said since March that it will keep interest rates at record lows at least until the end of this year, but Rehn said in an interview published on Friday that some policymakers would have preferred to extend that timeline even farther.

“Some of us were of the opinion that the low interest rate policy could have been pursued even a little longer,” Rehn told Finnish business daily Kauppalehti.

“In this situation of economic uncertainty and weaker growth, there are reasons to pursue a very stimulating monetary policy,” he added.

He added the ECB would be in a better position to assess the economic outlook and “make the necessary decisions” at its next meeting on June 5.

But the former European commissioner poured cold water on the option currently being studied by ECB staff of a tiered rate on deposits, which would give banks an exemption from paying a charge on part of their idle cash.

“I’m not very convinced of the effectiveness of this tool (a tiered interest rate) on the basis of current knowledge,” he told a news conference.

‘U.S. new approach toward Iran not to impact Chabahar project’

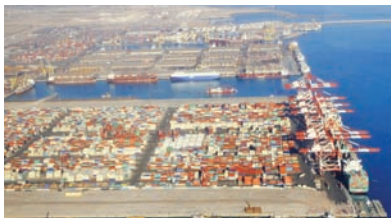
ECONOMY DESK TEHRAN — The U.S. new decision to end waivers for purchase of crude oil from Iran will not impact the Chabahar port project being developed by India, a U.S. State Department official has told PTI news agency.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced an end to the waivers which allowed imports from the Middle Eastern powerhouse, saying Washington’s aim was to bring Iran’s crude exports to zero, Press TV reported.

“The exception for reconstruction assistance and economic development for Afghanistan, which includes the development and operation of Chabahar Port, is a separate exception, and is not affected by yesterday’s announcement,” the unnamed spokesperson told Press Trust of India Tuesday.

President Donald Trump’s “South Asia strategy underscores our ongoing support of Afghanistan’s development as well as our close partnership with India,” the spokesperson added.

India is Iran’s second largest oil importer. In November, the Trump administration granted India an exemption from U.S. sanctions to import an average of 300,000 barrels per day



from Iran for six months.

By retracting its oil exemptions, the Trump administration is encroaching on the energy security of India and other clients of Iranian crude.

India started its commercial activities in Chabahar within the framework of a trilateral deal which also includes Afghanistan in January.

The port provides the easiest access to the high seas to landlocked Central Asian countries of Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

Chabahar on the coast of the Gulf of Oman is Iran’s southernmost city. The port is easily accessible from India’s west coast and New Delhi hopes to utilize its transit potentials to embolden the country’s connectivity footprints.

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 98-02/102

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
IRIB 9DAY Infrastructure Equipment for Project of SD to HD according to the tender documents

Deadline of Receiving Documents:
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Wednesday May 01, 2019.**

Place of Receiving Documents:
Secretariat of Tenders’ Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 25,346** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Saturday June 01, 2019** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Monday June 03, 2019** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

For more information, please contact the following phone numbers: **0098-21-22166313**
It is obvious that cost of publishing two advertisements shall be borne by the winner of tender.

Public Relations Dept. of IRIB

'U.S. sanctions doesn't affect Iraq's energy ties with Iran'

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Deputy prime minister of Iraq for energy affairs said the U.S. decision on ending waivers on Iran sanctions does not affect Iraq's energy ties with Iran since the country does not import oil from Iran, IRNA reported on Friday.

Thamer Ghadhban, who is also the country's oil minister, made the remarks in a joint press conference with Executive Director of the International Energy Agency Fatih Birol in Baghdad.

"Iraq is an exporter of crude oil to other countries and therefore is not subject to the new decision of the U.S. president" the official said.

The oil minister said on Thursday that although his country had the capacity to increase its oil production to six million barrels per day (bpd) if necessary, but it is committed to OPEC-led output cuts and would not take unilateral action to boost supply.

Iraq's electricity ministry has also announced that despite the recent decision by Donald Trump to end sanctions exemptions on Iran oil, Iraq will continue



to import gas from Iran.
As reported by Mehr news agency, the

spokesman of Iraqi Ministry of Electricity Musab Al-Mpdares told a talk show on

Wednesday that "Iraq now imports about 28 million cubic feet of gas from Iran which feed a number of power stations that produce about 2,800 MW."

The official further noted that his country plans to increase its gas imports from Iran to 35 million cubic feet per day as of early June in order to increase electricity production to 3,500 MW.

The spokesman also said that the Iraq ministry is going to supply 18,000 MW during hot summer as its main aim, adding that Iran will continue to export 1,200 MW per day to Iraq as before.

He further pointed out that Iran and Iraq use their local currencies to carry out the contract payments.

The United States on Monday demanded that buyers of Iranian oil stop purchases by May 1 or face sanctions, ending six months of waivers which allowed Iran's eight biggest buyers, most of them in Asia, to continue importing limited volumes.

The White House said after its Iran move it was working with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to ensure oil markets were "adequately supplied" but traders worried about tight supplies.

Persian Gulf Star refinery to produce sweet naphtha



E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), Persian Gulf Star refinery will only produce sweet naphtha, "Since Farvardin (First month in the Iranian calendar), all the PGSR sour naphtha output will be converted to sweet naphtha." Shana quoted Mohammad-Ali Dadvar the managing director of the refinery as saying.

Dadvar also noted that the fourth phase of the refinery is going to be focused on capacity optimization and fault elimination of existing phases.

According to the official, the significant increase in the refining capacity of the first three phases of the refinery has been the main reason for this decision.

The third phase of Persian Gulf Star Refinery (PGSR), in south of Iran, was put into

operation in early January.

The output of the refinery's 3rd phase stands at 12-15 million liters per day and the total output is currently 45 million liters per day.

Persian Gulf Star Refinery in the southern province of Hormozgan is the first of its kind designed based on gas condensate feedstock received from South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Construction of the refinery started in 2006, but the project was delayed as the result of some mismanagement and also financial limitation due to the West-led sanctions against Iran.

Persian Gulf Star, the Middle East's largest processing facility for gas condensate, is planned to play a big role to turn Iran into an exporter of gasoline.

Ending waivers won't stop Iran oil exports: official



E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iran's presidential chief of staff said the U.S. decision on ending the waivers on Iran sanctions is not going to stop the country's oil exports.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will undoubtedly sell its oil and our oil revenue and exports will continue," Shana quoted Mahmoud Vaezi as saying on Wednesday.

The official denounced U.S. action to end sanctions waivers for Iran's oil importers, saying "They are primarily fishing for a massive propaganda and psychological warfare against the Iranian nation. I have no doubt that, like other conspiracies, what they have just announced will also bring solidarity and unity in the country more than ever."

"It's natural that this American action

will create restrictions for Iran economically, but what they are truly seeking is psychological pressure," he said.

The United States on Monday announced that buyers of Iranian oil should stop purchases by May 1 or face sanctions, a move to choke off Tehran's oil revenues.

The Trump administration on Monday said it will not renew exemptions granted last year to buyers of Iranian oil.

The United States reimposed sanctions in November on exports of Iranian oil after U.S. Donald Trump last spring unilaterally pulled out of a 2015 accord between Iran and six world powers.

Eight economies, including China and India and South Korea, were granted waivers for six months.

Tullow Oil cuts production forecast after problems at Ghana fields

Tullow Oil, the Africa-focused independent oil company, has cut its production forecast for this year after experiencing "technical issues" at its fields off the coast of Ghana.

According to a report by Financial Times, the London-listed company said problems with gas compression at its Jubilee asset and a delay in completing a production well at its TEN field had now been resolved but it has been forced to revised down its full year production guidance

to 90,000-98,000 barrels of oil per day compared to a February estimate of 93,000-101,000 barrels a day.

Production across the company in the first quarter of the year averaged 84,600 barrels/day which the company admitted was "below expectations", although current production has improved to 95,000 barrels/day and is expected to rise to 100,000 barrels/day as additional wells in Ghana are expected to come on stream.

Like many other independent oil groups Tullow,

which still has net debt of \$3bn, went through a tough restructuring in the years following the oil price crisis of 2014, including a rights issue in 2017. However, the company recently marked a significant turning point when it announced it would resume dividend payments to shareholders.

It earlier this year recommended a final dividend of 4.8c per share, costing a total of \$67m and has promised a pay-out of "no less" than \$100m a year in future.

Oil price surge contorts Asia's LNG markets

Asia's liquefied natural gas market is being distorted as the cost of LNG bought under long-term contracts linked to oil prices jumps to double spot gas cargoes amid tighter U.S. sanctions on Iran's crude exports and cuts in OPEC oil supply.

According to Reuters, the price gap between LNG traded in the spot market and term cargoes linked to benchmark Brent crude oil has stretched to its widest in about 8 years, driving some buyers locked in to term deals to try to delay shipments or look to adjust contracts.

That comes as record supplies of LNG keep spot prices low, while prices under term contracts rise in tandem with oil.

Brent this week hit highs so far for 2019 after Washington stepped up sanctions on Tehran and as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) continued to withhold crude supply to bolster markets.

"Anyone buying on a Brent basis and selling on a (spot) basis, for example, is losing money in a big way," said Jason Feer, global head of business intelligence at Poten & Partners, an LNG tanker brokerage and consultancy.

Brent-indexed LNG costs around \$10.50 per million British thermal units (mmBtu)

at the moment, while the spot price is just above \$5 per mmBtu.

Measured by a single cargo on a large LNG tanker, an oil-linked delivery currently costs as much as \$120 million, while the same product delivered into the spot market could be available for around \$60 million.

"(The wide price spread) is a good example of the risks that are emerging as the LNG market becomes more globalized and commoditized," Feer said, adding that pricing had become increasingly diversified.

Oil-linked term cargoes make up around two-thirds of supply in Asia, the world's top LNG-consuming region. Long-term LNG contracts are typically linked to oil prices as there are no uniform global prices for gas.

"Right now, buyers who have crude exposure are paying up for LNG, while buyers with gas-related or LNG-related exposure are benefiting," Feer said.

The price distortion is driving some buyers in China and Japan to request delays in term cargoes, several industry sources told Reuters, although they added that producers had so far resisted making large concessions.

Others are looking to utilize so-called downward quantity tolerances (DQT) in their term contracts from LNG sellers, three of the sources said, requesting anonymity

as they were not allowed to talk about the specifics of contracts in public.

DQTs are standard provisions allowing buyers to purchase less LNG than their full annual contract quantity, without incurring penalties.

Saul Kavonic, head of energy research for Australia at Credit Suisse, said the gap in term and spot prices could pressure gas buyers to try to renegotiate contracts with producers.

He also said that LNG from U.S. projects, which is mostly priced off the U.S. gas market, could become more attractive versus other suppliers such as Australia or Qatar, which mainly sell under an oil price formula.

"The current high oil price environment may make U.S. LNG appear relatively more attractive to buyers again when considering the next wave of project developments," Kavonic said.

And analysts said the price gap would not disappear any time soon.

"Recent strong LNG production growth in 2018, continuing through the rest of 2019 and 2020, means we are unlikely to see much correlation between oil and spot LNG prices in the short term," said Wood Mackenzie's Asia Pacific head of gas and LNG research Robert Sims.

China's March Iran oil imports rise 6% from a month ago

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — China's imports of Iranian crude oil increased by six percent from the previous month, Reuters reported on Thursday citing customs data.

China, the world's largest oil importer, took in 2.3 million tons, or about 541,100 barrels per day (bpd) of crude from Iran in March, data from the General Administration of Customs showed, up from the 509,700 bpd imported in February.



Iranian imports rose just ahead of this week's decision by the United States to end waivers on sanctions over Iranian oil exports.

China is Iran's largest oil buyer, with total imports last year averaging 585,400 bpd.

According to a report by S&P Global Platts, oil exports from Iran have increased significantly in March to once again reach to near pre-sanctions level.

Iranian crude and condensate exports increased by 12 percent to 1.7 million barrels per day (bpd) in the mentioned month.

As expected, the surges in Iran's oil exports came after the country's Asian buyers rushed to use the opportunity that the waivers on U.S. sanctions has provided.

According to Platts, China's demand for Iranian crude has also rebounded in recent months. Flows to China averaged 627,710 bpd last month from levels of 571,464 bpd in February.

Oil dips but set for milestone run of weekly gains

Oil prices dipped on Friday on expectations that OPEC will raise output to counter shrinking exports from Iran after sanctions imposed by the United States, where crude stocks have swelled.

Prices are still on course though for the longest run of weekly gains in years, as oil markets have tightened amid an OPEC output cut deal, sanctions on Venezuela and Iran and unsteady production in Libya, Reuters reported.

Brent crude futures were at \$74.24 per barrel at 0829 GMT, down 11 cents. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$64.96 per barrel, down 25 cents.

The dip followed Brent's rise above \$75 per barrel for the first time this year on Thursday after Germany, Poland and Slovakia suspended imports of Russian oil via a major pipeline, citing poor quality.

The move cut parts of Europe off from a major supply route. Russia has said it planned to start supplying clean oil via a pipeline on April 29.

WTI is on track for its eighth successive weekly gain, the longest weekly run since the first half of 2015. Brent is set a fifth weekly price gain, the longest stretch in a year.

Crude futures are up around 40 percent so far this year.

Washington said on Monday it would end all exemptions for sanctions against Iran.

"The end of the U.S. waivers on Iran exports will be offset by higher core-OPEC and Russia and as a result we do not expect further price upside, even if volatility is likely to increase in coming months," U.S. bank Goldman Sachs said.

Despite U.S. efforts to drive Iranian oil exports down to zero, many analysts expect some oil to still seep out of the country.

"400,000 to 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude and condensate will continue to be exported," said energy consultancy FGE, down from around 1 million bpd currently.

Jefferies bank saw 500,000 to 600,000 bpd, adding "at least China and potentially India and Turkey will continue to import Iranian crude".

China, the world's biggest buyer of Iranian oil, has formally complained to the United States.

Meanwhile OPEC member Iraq said it could raise its output. Also providing a cap on prices, U.S. crude inventories last week rose to their highest since October 2017.

"All of this has had the makings for a bout of rally fatigue. Indeed, the energy complex is once again struggling for traction this morning as market players await for a fresh catalyst to take prices higher," PVM analysts said in a note.

Second Announcement



Permit No.1398.479

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : **31-32-86306-44-002**

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Material Description
UPGRADING "CLARKE" DJ-160 POWER TURBINE TO DJ-160 RU

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 63,567 EURO or 2,996,000,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: **061 341 23455** Fax No.: **061 3445 7437**

Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir>
تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۷/۲/۴ نویت دوم ۹۷/۲/۴

S Africa, Iran to ‘weather the storm together’: amb. Khumalo



By Marjohn Sheikhi

TEHRAN (MNA) – South African embassy in Tehran celebrated the country’s Freedom Day on Wed., during which Ambassador Khumalo stressed the two countries’ resolve to continue developing relations in the face of all existing challenges.

South Africa celebrates its national day on April 27, designated as Freedom Day to mark the day in 1994 when the first democratic election was held in the country and ushered in a new era after a long period of colonialism and White minority domination, known as apartheid.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of their Freedom Day, the South African embassy in Tehran held a ceremony on Wednesday evening, with representatives and diplomats from a number of embassies in Tehran in attendance.

The ceremony was opened by a speech by South African Ambassador to Tehran, V. M. Khumalo, followed by a speech by assistant to Iranian Foreign Minister in African Affairs, Mehdi Agha-Jafari. The two then proceeded to cut a South African flag cake in honor of the country’s Freedom Day.

Addressing the attendees, Ambassador Khumalo said Freedom Day ushered in a new beginning of hope for a transformative future for all South Africans, as everyone for the first time in 25 years finally had the opportunity and freedom to exercise their democratic right to participate in the governance of the country.

He thanked Iran for its contribution and support towards the struggle for freedom in South Africa, noting the visits by former President Mandela to Iran in 1992 and 1999.

“For the past 25 years, Iran has remained an important friend to South Africa. Through the Joint Commission of Cooperation our countries have expanded engagements in a number of sectors such as tourism, trade and investment, science and technology, arts and culture, health, education, to name a few,” he said.

The ambassador then expressed his country’s continued support to Iran, saying the two countries would “weather the storm together.”

He also noted the visit of Iranian President Rouhani to South Africa this year, maintaining that the visit would serve to further strengthen the existing bilateral relations and mutual support.

He concluded his speech by offering condolences to the families of the victims of the recent floods that have affected at least 23 of the country’s 31 provinces since heavy downpours began on March 19. According to reports, the floods have taken the lives



A stand displaying South African products

of at least 67 people and destroyed over 25,000 homes around the country, with Lorestan and Fars provinces having the highest number of casualties.

The ambassador called on everyone to commit to the global efforts to combat climate change and its devastating effects on the environment.

Also speaking at the ceremony was the assistant to Iranian Foreign Minister in African Affairs, Mehdi Agha-Jafari, who highlighted the strong relations between Iran and South Africa, by noting the high number of political talks and exchange of delegations and visits of high-ranking officials between the two sides, as well as the two countries’ cooperation in international areas such as the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), human rights and peace in the Middle East region.

After the South African general elections on May 8, Iran and South Africa will be planning for the 14th round of joint economic commission, as well as technical committee meetings, Agha-Jafari announced.

He also noted the state visit of President Rouhani to South Africa in 2019.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, as an independent state, remains resolute on its principal positions on promoting multilateralism, committing to JCPOA as a valid international document as long as Iran’s interests are covered, benefiting from nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and supporting the rights of the oppressed people of the world,” he said.

He further voiced confidence that the future of relations between Iran and South Africa is “bright”, and the leaders of both countries are keen on developing cooperation despite the existing challenges and unlawful pressures, such as the imposition of sanctions by the United States.

Dictator: Media code for ‘Government we don’t like’

By Alan Macleod

FAIR - Let’s start with a quiz: Quick! Name some dictators! I’m willing to bet most of you responded with just a few of the same names: Assad, Putin, Castro, Kim Jong-un, Gaddafi, Maduro. This is not because they are the only dictators in the world (far from it), or that all of them even necessarily qualify for the title, but precisely because these are the figures most constantly labeled as such by our media.

“Dictator” is a very powerful moniker to give someone. There is a hard-to-define but very important distinction between a government with authoritarian tendencies or a poor human rights record, on the one hand, and a full-blown dictatorship. The very name implies that dictatorial governments should, nay, must be resisted and overthrown, while the same action is not appropriate or justifiable for the former.

Democracy is a supposedly sacred ideal for Americans. Politicians and media tell us that the United States “stands for” democracy and opposes dictatorships everywhere, one reason why the US must continue to involve itself diplomatically and militarily around the world.

However, Freedom House’s “Freedom in the World” studies find that 49 countries—over a quarter of the world’s governments—are “not free”, a designation they use interchangeably with “dictatorships” on their website and their reports. Why then, do most politically savvy people not know the names of all these dictators? Why are they not household names, like Assad and co.? Is it because the United States provides military assistance (training, sales and aid) to three-quarters of them, as Rich Whitney’s study (Truthout, 9/23/17) suggests?

■ How Free is Freedom House?

Defining and quantifying what does and does not constitute a dictatorship is a notoriously tricky business, and Freedom House’s strong conservative political bias makes its list and judgments all the more questionable. For one, the “non-governmental” organization is actually overwhelmingly funded by Washington, who employed Freedom House in 2006 to perform “clandestine activities”—i.e., regime change operations—in Iran.

The man in charge of compiling the freedom list, used by Whitney and many others, admitted his methodology consisted of “hunches and intuition.” And as many scholars have indicated, Freedom House also has a long history of supporting US client



has held office in Cameroon since Gerald Ford was president. He recently won a seventh term in office that Foreign Policy (10/22/18) described as a “farce.” Cameroon has been in the news of late, due to the government’s human rights abuses pushing the country to the brink of a civil war. Freedom House considers it to be one of the least free countries in the world.

However, when discussed at all, Biya was presented matter-of-factly by the media, without the need to add call him a “dictator.” The New York Times (10/6/18) presented him euphemistically as “one of the world’s longest-serving presidents.” From the coverage, readers would not know he is a dictator, even by Freedom House’s standards. In fact, going through fully 20 years of coverage in the Times, Biya was never once described as a “dictator,” “despot,” “tyrant” or any other similar designation.

When Biya was rebuked at all, the tone of the coverage was less condemnatory and more muted criticism. Voice of America (2/14/19) noted that Biya’s decision to remove presidential term limits (meaning he could rule for life) led some “critics” to call the move “authoritarian.”

■ Egypt

Gen. Abdel el-Sisi came to power in 2013 in a military coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of President Mohamed Morsi. Sisi recently announced his plan to rule until 2034—effectively in perpetuity.

The New York Times’ article (2/14/19) on the subject noted that this would “further entrench his authoritarian rule,” and even

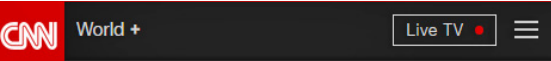
4/2/19) have refrained from describing him as a dictator, with the BBC (3/6/19) simply referring to him as a “reclusive president.”

Indeed, reading the Guardian’s coverage (4/1/19), one would have no idea he was not the epitome of a democrat. The New York Times (3/12/19) also praised Bouteflika for “bringing back stability” to the North African country, and “restoring the honor of the nation’s army.” As with Cameroon’s Biya, Bouteflika has never once been described as a “dictator” in the last 20 years of Times coverage.

■ Kazakhstan

Another ruler propped up with US military aid is Nursultan Nazarbayev. The 85-year-old, in power since 1989, recently announced he would step down. It was also revealed that Kazakhstan’s capital, Astana, would be renamed Nursultan in his honor (not a common occurrence in democracies—with Washington, named for the winner of an election that involved approximately 1 percent of the population, arguably not an exception).

Nazarbayev has a long history of cracking down on freedom of speech, the press and religion, and uses torture against his political opponents. Despite this, he was presented positively in the media, with the New York Times (3/19/19) simply referring to him as the “longtime president of Kazakhstan.” The Associated Press (3/19/19) called him “the only leader that independent Kazakhstan has ever known,” praising him for “maintaining stability.” Reuters (3/19/19) claimed he was a “widely popular” leader, with none of the above using the “dictator” moniker.



Algerian President Bouteflika pulls candidacy for fifth term

By Bianca Britton, CNN

Updated 2034 GMT (0434 HKT)

March 11, 2019



Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has announced he will not run for a fifth term in office.

state dictatorships and attacking enemy states such as Nicaragua; the ratings have a strong conservative and pro-US ideological bias. Nevertheless, its index is useful, as it is the most commonly cited source on the matter, and one can assume that it is not going out of its way to falsely label US allies as dictators.

When you look at the governments that Freedom House describes as dictatorships, those that are also Official Enemies are frequently described as such in corporate media—for example, Russia (Washington Post, 5/8/18), Cuba (USA Today, 2/26/19), Syria (New York Times, 3/2/19), Belarus (ABC, 3/5/19), North Korea (USA Today, 3/22/19) and Venezuela (New York Times, 4/10/19). Yet “our dictators”—that is, the “not free” governments that Washington supports—are rarely if ever labeled as dictatorships by the establishment press. In fact, there is very little coverage at all of those countries that are “behaving themselves” as far as the US State Department is concerned.

Let’s look at the press coverage of four of Freedom House’s “dictators” who receive US military aid, all of whom have been in the news recently: Paul Biya of Cameroon, Abdel el-Sisi of Egypt, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Kazakhstan’s Nursultan Nazarbayev.

■ Cameroon

The 86-year-old Paul Biya, the longest serving non-royal head of state in the world,

noted he had jailed “tens of thousands” of opponents, muzzled the internet and taken over the courts. Nevertheless, it stopped well short of calling him a dictator. Indeed, it noted that he enjoyed strong support from around the world, and was seen as a “bulwark against Islamist militancy” in the region, endorsed by the US and France. Other media outlets followed this tendency. CNN (2/13/19) simply described him as “current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi,” while NPR (2/14/19) likewise just referred to “Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi.”

While accurately noting Sisi’s “unprecedented crackdown on dissent,” which imprisoned “tens of thousands of people,” the BBC’s report (2/15/19) labeled him neutrally as “president,” and only characterized his steps to rule virtually indefinitely as something “opponents of the proposal describe” as “a further step towards authoritarianism.” Thus, its strongest criticism of Egypt is that it’s accused of moving toward “authoritarianism”—a long way from being a full-fledged “dictator.”

■ Algeria

After he announced he intended to stand once again for president, massive protests broke out all around Algeria against 82-year-old Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The uprising has been serious enough that he has promised to stand down. Despite coming to power fraudulently and ruling with an iron fist for 20 years, media outlets (e.g., CNN, 3/11/19; Reuters,



Venezuela’s dictator Maduro survived a tough week, but his problems are about to get worse

ANDRES OPPENHEIMER

BY ANDRES OPPENHEIMER
FEBRUARY 25, 2019 05:43 PM, UPDATED FEBRUARY 25, 2019 06:43 PM



The Washington Post editorial board (3/29/19) published a glowing appraisal of his tenure. It presented him as a visionary leader, an ex-steelworker “who led the former Soviet republic out of the empire’s chaotic implosion,” claiming he brought Kazakhstan into a peaceful, prosperous new era, while “building national identity” and stopping any ethnic conflict. While noting that he “ruled as a strongman” and “would have been wiser to view dissent and democracy with more tolerance,” the editorial implied his repression was justified, concluding “he won’t be soon forgotten” by his people.

■ Double Standards

The double standard is highlighted by the constant media references to enemy states as dictatorships, whether the label is warranted or not. The Washington Post (1/4/19) describes leftist Bolivian President Evo Morales as “wishing to become a Venezuela-style dictator,” while the Guardian (12/3/18) carries warning of Bolivia becoming an “imminent ‘Venezuelan-Cuban-style’ dictatorship.”

The leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua is constantly called a “dictatorship” as well. The New York Times (8/2/18) published an opinion piece from a Nicaraguan headlined “A Dictatorship Is Rising in My Country Again.” Many other outlets describe him as a “dictator” (Economist, 7/12/18; Time, 3/18/19) carrying out a

“terrifying crackdown” (National Review, 3/15/19)—language that is never used for US-backed dictatorships.

And it takes only a cursory glance at the headlines to see how Nicolas Maduro, “the child butcher of Venezuela” (Washington Examiner, 2/21/19), is portrayed:

- “The Dictator of Venezuela Earns His Title” (New York Times, 2/27/19)
- “Venezuela’s Dictator Maduro Survived a Tough Week, but His Problems Are About to Get Worse” (Miami Herald, 2/25/19)
- “Why Are Progressives More Focused on Disagreeing With Trump Than Countering a Dictator [Maduro]?” (Washington Post, 3/2/19)
- “Newt Gingrich: Venezuela’s Dictator Maduro Must Go—Even if the Military Has to Intervene” (Fox News, 3/14/19)
- “Maduro Really Didn’t Like Being Asked if He’s a ‘Dictator’” (New York Post, 2/26/19)
- “Gen. Jack Keane, Hans Humes on Venezuela’s Socialist Dictator Maduro’s Potential Exit” (Fox Business, 3/7/19)

Is it truly a coincidence that these three countries with elected leftist heads of state are constantly labeled “dictatorships”? Bolivia is not even on Freedom House’s “not free” list—unlike Cameroon, Egypt, Algeria and Kazakhstan. Venezuela and Nicaragua were recently added to it, despite the fact that both countries’ latest elections were endorsed internationally.

While there are some clear shortcomings to Venezuela and Nicaragua’s political systems, the US-dominated Organization of American States observed the 2017 Nicaraguan municipal elections and declared that “the popular will [was] expressed through the vote in the vast majority of Nicaragua’s municipalities.” (With 53 percent turnout, the governing Sandinista party won in 135 out of 152 communities, with the Independent Liberal Party taking 12 of the remainder.)

Meanwhile, Venezuela’s 2018 elections were endorsed by 150 international observers, including foreign ex-heads of state like Spain’s Jose Zapatero and Ecuador’s Rafael Correa, with three international election observation teams endorsing the result, despite the fact that US media wrote them off as a sham (FAIR.org, 5/23/18).

The same cannot be said for Kazakhstan, even by Freedom House, that notes that “none of the elections held in Kazakhstan since independence have been considered ‘free and fair’ by credible international observers.” Nursultan was declared to have won 98 percent of the vote in 2015.



Egypt debates bills that could see Sisi serve as president until 2034

By Ian Lee, CNN

Updated at 1318 GMT (2118 HKT) February 13, 2019



Enemy states are covered far more and far more harshly in US corporate media than friendly ones. A search for Paul Biya in the NYTTimes.com database elicits 97 results, compared to 1,135 for Maduro, 713 for Morales and 3,517 for Ortega, despite the fact that Biya has been in power as long as the other three combined. (Cameroon’s population is 24 million, three-fourths the size of Venezuela, more than twice as big as Bolivia and four times as populous as Nicaragua.)

In a recent article (FAIR.org, 3/23/19), I suggested that the term “moderate” or “centrist” has a tactical definition when used in the media. It does not refer to any political positions, but is used as a way of conveying legitimacy. Thus anyone the media approve of is, by definition, a moderate. FAIR (8/20/18) has also noted that a “regime,” in US media usage, is simply a government that is at odds with the US empire.

The “dictator” label is also a powerful cue, used by media to prime the reader to see a particular country or leader a certain way. Readers are invited to feel outraged at the misdeeds of Assad, Putin or other anti-US head of states, while authoritarian rulers that toe the US line are ignored or even praised. The choice of whether to use a word like “dictator” frames a country in a way conducive to elite US interests, conveying legitimacy or the lack thereof in a single label.

Women have more powerful stories to tell, Indian director Praveen Morchhale says

By Marjohn Sheikhi

TEHRAN (MNA) – Indian director and script writer Praveen Morchhale, whose 'Widow of Silence' is competing at 37th FIFF in Tehran, believes that women have more powerful stories to tell, and cinema can play a role to improve their situation in the world.

Indian director, script writer, and film producer, Praveen Morchhale, is competing at the main competition section of the 37th Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran with his latest movie, 'Widow of Silence'.

The film, which has recently snatched the Grand Jury prize for the 'Best Feature' at the 17th annual Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles, for its depiction of "a condition that most of the world doesn't get to see", is the story of a woman named Aasia (Shilpi Marwaha) who is a 'half widow' in the trouble-torn Kashmir. 'Half-widow' refers to a woman whose husband, like many other men in this Indian-controlled region, was arrested and never returned. The movie, which, apart from the lead actress, uses non-professional local actors, shows Aasia's struggles to obtain a death certificate for her husband as she goes through her work and the caring for her family.

Mr. Morchhale was present at the FIFF venue in Charsou Cineplex in downtown Tehran, and he was gracious enough to give some of his time for an interview with Mehr News that will follow. He was also accompanied by Iranian cinematographer Mohammad Reza Jahan-panah, who worked with him on 'Widow of Silence'.

The Indian director attaches great significance to "the human aspect of the cinema, which is universal and can be seen and understood by anyone in the world."



is well-organized here. The most important thing for any festival, though, is the selection of the movies, and I believe that Fajr's lineup is very high-standard. So, if you take these three factors into consideration – audience, organization and film selection – then you can say that Fajr is perfect, and very special in comparison to other festivals.

You are very knowledgeable about the Iranian cinema, so my next question concerns that. Do you, both as a filmmaker and a participant at various film festivals, believe that the Iranian

in spreading its influence throughout the world due to its high quality and appeal.

How do you compare the Iranian cinema to the contemporary cinema in India?

Discussing the Indian cinema, I believe, is a much wider topic, because Indian films are made in many languages, such as Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and there are many different film industries, with Bollywood being only one part of it. But as long as the independent cinema is concerned, I think the Iranian cinema is much ahead of its Indian counterpart, if you look at festival participation.

But in the past three or four years, the Indian independent cinema has come a long way and made very fast progress. Now we have Indian films in important film festivals around the world, such as Venice, Cannes, Busan, etc. We have different cultures, with different attitudes to cinema, and different stories to tell, so I think it won't be fair to compare the Iranian and Indian cinemas together. Each has its own unique identity, and both are flourishing.

Let's talk about your movie, 'Widow of Silence', which is participating at both the International Competition and 'Olive Branches' sections of this year's Fajr festival. Tell me about how it came to be.

Around two years ago, I came upon a piece of news about the situation of half-widows (whose husbands have disappeared but are not yet declared dead) in India. It really hurt me and I was quite surprised, because I've lived all my life in India and I never knew about this issue. So, I started doing research on the topic. It is a very human story, and sadly nobody knows about it. Here are these women who are suffering, and their struggles and strength should be brought to the world's attention. So, I decided to make a movie about it.

What were the challenges that you encountered along the way while making the movie?

I don't really think of any aspects of making 'Widow of Silence' as an actual challenge. The project was handled with great passion, and when you do something with passion and dedication, you don't perceive any aspect of the job as a challenge. Whatever is thrown at us, we face it happily and try to solve it. If you focus on the challenge, then it starts to feel like a 'burden', and you most likely won't be able to enjoy the process of producing the film.

But there were physical challenges about the area where we filmed. At night, the tem-

perature would drop to zero, and we had electricity problems, as well as logistic problems. There were no hotels, just very small guest houses, but despite all this, we were all very happy while making the film.

When we talk about Indian cinema, almost everyone just thinks about Bollywood, what with how imposing and profitable the industry is. What steered you away from that path and pushed you toward the independent cinema? What motivated you to take on such heavy subject matters, like the terrors of war and women's plights?

Bollywood, as you know, is very commercial, and its basic parameters is how much money they can make out of a story. If making more money means twisting the story or even diluting it, by putting in songs and dancing scenes that serve no purpose but entertainment, they will happily do it. For me, what matters is the human aspect of the cinema, which is universal and can be seen and understood by anyone in the world. I wanted to tell the story as it is from a neutral point of view; show what these women are going through. And for that I had to be true to the story and the subject matter, rather than creating something superficial. Bollywood may touch the surface of any subject, but the real issue will be lost somewhere.

So, does that mean that you see yourself as a filmmaker with a mission? The kind that feels the need to uncover the hidden truths and bring to attention what has been concealed or ignored?

As a filmmaker, you have some responsibility. Your cinema can be without a theme or a purpose, for entertainment only, or it can have some soul in it, something that makes the audience to think, and for me the latter is more important. I believe that my cinema should leave an impact or a deep impression on the audience, make them think about the issue the narrative is talking about.

You chose to work with an Iranian cinematographer, Mohammad Reza Jahan-panah, on 'Widow of Silence'. How was the experience?

It was a wonderful experience. Mr. Jahan-panah is very humble, very knowledgeable, and very thorough in his craft and art, and very aesthetic. The most important thing that makes working with him very enjoyable is that he is very down-to-earth, without the usual arrogance you see in the film industry. His creativity added a lot to my film, and gave it a very good flavor. He also made a lot of contribution to bringing my vision into life.

I look forward to working with him on future projects. In a few months, probably, we will be shooting a new movie together. The story is again centered in Kashmir, but it's a very philosophical film, about life and death within a social and political community, from the point of view of a gravedigger. I hope the film will be a powerful representation about the situation in Kashmir, and that we will be able to commence the project very soon.

Women are at the center of your movie, 'Widow of Silence', as well as in several other films I had the opportunity to watch at this year's festival. Do you think cinema can do something to help

improve women's situation in the world?

I strongly believe that women are being discriminated against everywhere in the world, even in the most developed countries in Europe. Women still don't have the kind of rights and status that they rightfully deserve. I believe that cinema has a strong role to play to bring these issues forward, and that women have more powerful stories to tell; they have a more powerful emotional, social and rational attitude toward everything rather than the men. They can have a very strong impact on the society, and through cinema they can achieve it very fast.

How was the audience feedback to your film at Fajr?

I received a very good feedback from my movie's screening the other day. I believe that the 'half-widow' phenomenon is very new to the audience in Iran, because it is a very particular aspect in Kashmir only.

At the same time, I think this human story is easily felt by everyone around the world, regardless of how particular the situation is. The movie was screened in Europe, America, Asia, and I believe everywhere the impact was the same. People have the same deep feeling and sympathy for the lead character.

I had people coming up to me after the screening, whether in France or in South Korea or here in Iran, telling me how much the film had made them think about the situation of the half-widows. My kind of cinema is not too fond of words and the language barrier.

I prefer to show the situation by images rather than by characters talking. This, I believe, helps the audience to feel like they are in the middle of the story, experiencing the situation alongside the characters. I take long shots, and use very little dialogue and camera angles, in a minimalist approach, to help the audience engage more closely with the images and feel like they are right there in the story.

What kind of filmmaker do you consider yourself? The kind that introduces a problem and throws his characters into the conflict just to watch how they react, or the kind that also shows the characters, and by extension the audience who are sharing the experience, a way out?

Some filmmakers may wish to put forward a problem and leave the solution to the audience, or some may wish to also provide the solution to that dilemma. When the film focuses on a particular solution, it runs the risk of limiting itself to a particular point of view, which may be right or wrong.

I personally try to steer away from making judgments, and leave it up to the audience to decide what the right solution might be. On the other hand, when you provide the solution, there is nothing left to provoke the audience to think for themselves.

How has your experience been in Tehran and with your interactions with Iranians?

I've had a very nice experience in Tehran. People are very friendly and knowledgeable here, both the ones I interacted with at the festival venue and those outside.



'Widow of Silence' directed by Praveen Morchhale

How were you introduced to Fajr International Film Festival?

I came here in 2015 as a guest for the festival when it was still held together with the national event. Later in Kolkata, my film was chosen by Mr. Esfandiari, who was a jury member in Kolkata where I won Best Film award. He told me to submit the film to Fajr and he would be happy to invite me. Beyond this introduction, I was also well aware of Fajr, since it is a very well-known film festival in Asia.

So, how does Fajr measure up to the other film festivals you have so far taken part in?

When comparing Fajr with other film festivals, one thing that immediately jumps to attention is the difference in the audience. Here in Iran, the festival goes are very knowledgeable about cinema, and I believe they have a deep understanding of cinema. Other than that, everything

cinema – with its recent remarkable popularity around the world – is just a 'festival-favorite', or do you think that the productions also have what it takes to appeal to the taste of the general audience, for instance, those in India?

Nowadays, one can say with confidence that geographical boundaries no longer matter. Most of independent, high-quality films produced around the world are accessible to everyone on the digital platform and many other different mediums. In India, in particular, the Iranian cinema is held in high regard. It is a very 'human' and attractive cinema. On the other hand, it also depends on how you market your films. The independent cinema, for instance, needs a lot of money for a successful marketing, and in many cases, the filmmaker does not have that kind of money to publicize the film. But still, I think the Iranian cinema has been successful

Second Announcement



Permit No.1398.492

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: **48-32-9500052**

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
02	PLUNGER PUMP MANUFACTURER:LEWA(GERMANY) MODEL: G3K200 DISCHARGE & SUCTION PRESSURE (BARG): 70-5	03+ SPARE PARTS

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

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Tender descriptions:	
The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,198,319
Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
Tender No.: FP/12-98/014 Indent No.: 08-23-9745067	4,027,400,000
Qualitative evaluation of tenderers	
Method	R Based on minimum scoring (60 Points) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.
1- Applicants which have more than 4 in process contacts with NIDC are not allowed to participate in this tender . 2- Applicants which have more than 2 in process contacts with NIDC in similar subject (exclusively same subject) are not allowed to participate in another tender	
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Submitting Method	Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Income Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents
Closing date	Days after the last time of Purchasing 35
Documents Receiving Method	Address Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569
Tender Guarantee	
Value of guarantee	202,000,000 Rial / 4,234 Euro
Type of guarantee	✓-Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓-Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
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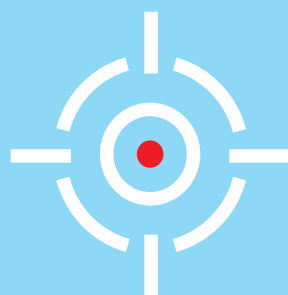
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The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

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

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Scientists create largest collection of coral reef maps ever made

Scientists have offered a new way to accurately map coral reefs using a combination of Earth-orbiting satellites and field observations. This first-ever global coral reef atlas contains maps of over 65,000 square kilometers (25,097 square miles) of coral reefs and surrounding habitats.

The maps, published in the journal *Coral Reefs*, are the result of a 10-year Global Reef Expedition by scientists for the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation.

The expedition traveled to over 1,000 remote coral reefs in 15 countries, mapping and surveying the reefs down to a one-square meter scale to better understand their health and resiliency. Many of the reefs visited on the expedition had never been studied before.

The high-resolution coral reef maps contain information on shallow water marine habitat such as fore and back reefs as well as information on the size of seagrass beds and mangrove forests for key locations visited on the expedition.

■ Mangrove forests

All of these coastal habitats are key components of tropical coastal ecosystems and help to filter water, protect the coast from storms, and provide key nursery habitat for commercial and subsistence fisheries. They also face increasing threats from coastal development, overfishing, and climate change.

To develop the new model to accurately map coral reef and other tropical shallow-water marine habitats, scientists took data collected from extensive SCUBA surveys



Scientists estimate that over 50 percent of coral reefs worldwide have been lost in the past 40 years due to climate change and other human pressures.

conducted on the Global Reef Expedition and extrapolate that information across the entire reef using ultra-high-resolution satellite imagery.

“Developing such an understanding for coral reefs is especially challenging because they are submerged underwater and therefore obscured from casual view. With this study,

we demonstrate the potential to use satellite images to make coral reef maps at global scale.”

Scientists now have a way to peer beneath the waves to accurately map large areas of coral reefs at greatly reduced cost. Traditional coral reef surveys are expensive to conduct and limited in scope, requiring hours of underwater surveys conducted by high-

ly-trained scientific divers. Using this new model, scientists can create detailed coral reef habitat maps at a regional scale without having to survey the entire reef in person.

“Satellite, aircraft, and drone imaging will become an increasingly important tool for addressing the coral reef crisis at the global scale at which it’s occurring,” said Purkis, also the interim chief scientist for the Living Oceans Foundation.

■ The coral reef maps

The high-resolution coral reef maps made for this study can be found on the World Reef Map, an interactive coral reef atlas where users can explore all of the coral reefs and shallow water marine habitats mapped on the Global Reef Expedition.

Scientists estimate that over 50 percent of coral reefs worldwide have been lost in the past 40 years due to climate change and other human pressures.

Although they by no means cover every reef worldwide, this new atlas covers a meaningful portion of key reef provinces around the world. It also provides much-needed baseline data of coral reef health prior to the 2017 mass bleaching event.

“Benthic habitat maps are an essential tool in coral reef conservation as they provide a snapshot of where reefs are located and the status of their health,” said Alexandra Dempsey, the director of science management for the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation and a co-author of the paper.

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

Team says ice-proof coating for big structures relies on a ‘beautiful demonstration of mechanics’

A new class of coatings that sheds ice effortlessly from even large surfaces has moved researchers closer to their decades-long goal of ice-proofing cargo ships, airplanes, power lines and other large structures.

The spray-on coatings, developed at the University of Michigan, cause ice to fall away from structures — regardless of their size — with just the force of a light breeze, or often the weight of the ice itself. A paper on the research is published in *Science*. The researchers overcame a major limitation of previous ice-repellent coatings — while they worked well on small areas, researchers found in field testing that they didn’t shed ice on very large surfaces as effectively as they had hoped. That’s an issue, since ice tends to cause the biggest problems on the biggest surfaces — sapping efficiency, jeopardizing safety and necessitating costly removal.

They cleared this hurdle with a “beautiful demonstration of mechanics.” Anish Tuteja, an associate professor of materials science and engineering, described how he and his colleagues turned to a property that isn’t well-known in icing research.

“For decades, coating research has focused on lowering adhesion strength — the force per unit area required to tear a sheet of ice from a surface,” Tuteja said.

■ The surface area got large

The “problem with this strategy is that the larger the sheet



of ice, the more force is required. We found that we were bumping up against the limits of low adhesion strength, and our coatings became ineffective once the surface area got large enough.”

The new coatings solve the problem by introducing a second strategy: low interfacial toughness, abbreviated LIT. Surfaces with low interfacial toughness encourage cracks to form between ice and the surface. And unlike breaking an ice sheet’s surface adhesion, which requires tearing the entire sheet free, a crack only breaks the surface free along

its leading edge. Once that crack starts, it can quickly spread across the entire iced surface, regardless of its size.

“Imagine pulling a rug across a floor,” said Michael Thouless, the Janine Johnson Weins Professor of Engineering in mechanical engineering. The “larger the rug, the harder it is to move. You are resisted by the strength of the entire interface between the rug and floor. The frictional force is analogous to the interfacial strength.

■ Interfacial roughness

“But now imagine there’s a wrinkle in that rug. It’s easy to keep pushing that wrinkle across the rug, regardless of how big the rug is. The resistance to propagating the wrinkle is analogous to the interfacial toughness that resists the propagation of a crack.”

Thouless said the concept of interfacial toughness is well known in the field of fracture mechanics, where it underpins products like laminated surfaces and adhesive-based aircraft joints. But until now, it hadn’t been applied in ice mitigation. The advance came when Thouless learned of Tuteja’s previous work and saw an opportunity.

“Traditionally, fracture mechanics researchers only care about interfacial toughness, and ice mitigation researchers often only care about interfacial strength,” Thouless said. “But both parameters are important for understanding adhesion.

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

‘Catastrophic’ breeding failure at one of world’s largest emperor penguin colonies

Emperor penguins at the Halley Bay colony in the Weddell Sea have failed to raise chicks for the last three years, scientists have discovered.

Researchers from British Antarctic Survey (BAS) studied very high-resolution satellite imagery to reveal the unusual findings, published on 25 April in the journal *Antarctic Science*.

Until recently, the Halley Bay colony was the second largest in the world, with the number of breeding pairs varying each year between 14,000 - 25,000; around 5-9% of the global emperor penguin population.

The failure to raise chicks for three consecutive years is associated with changes in the local sea-ice conditions. Emperor penguins need stable sea-ice on which to breed, and this icy platform must last from April when the birds arrive, until December when their chicks fledge.

For the last 60 years the sea-ice conditions in the Halley Bay site have been stable and reliable. But in 2016, after a period of abnor-

mally stormy weather, the sea-ice broke up in October, well before any emperor chicks would have fledged.

■ Leading to death of chicks

This pattern was repeated in 2017 and again in 2018 and led to the death of almost all the chicks at the site each season.

The colony at Halley Bay colony has now all but disappeared, whilst the nearby Dawson Lambton colony has markedly increased in size, indicating that many of the adult emperors have moved there, seeking better breeding grounds as environmental conditions have changed.

The re-location of many of the birds to a more stable breeding ground is encouraging, as until now it was not known whether the penguins would seek alternative sites in response to significant changes in their local environment.

Lead author and BAS remote sensing specialist Dr. Peter Fretwell said: “We have been tracking the population of this, and other



colonies in the region, for the last decade using very high resolution satellite imagery.

“These images have clearly shown the catastrophic breeding failure at this site over the last three years.

■ The penguin huddles

Our specialized satellite image analysis can

detect individuals and penguin huddles, so we can estimate the population based on the known density of the groups to give reliable estimate of colony size.”

BAS penguin expert and co-author Dr. Phil Trathan, said: “It is impossible to say whether the changes in sea-ice conditions at Halley Bay are specifically related to climate change, but such a complete failure to breed successfully is unprecedented at this site.

“Even taking into account levels of ecological uncertainty, published models suggest that emperor penguins numbers are set to fall dramatically, losing 50-70% of their numbers before the end of this century as sea-ice conditions change as a result of climate change.”

By using satellite imagery to study the behavior of this colony and its response to catastrophic sea-ice loss scientists will gain vital information about how this iconic species might cope with future environmental change.

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

Climate change could be making oceans waves bigger, researchers discover

Extreme ocean winds and waves have become more common over the past three decades, according to scientists who warn climate change could be causing the trend.

A team of experts at the University of Melbourne looked at around 4 billion observations of wind speed and wave height captured by 31 satellites between 1985 and 2018.

Overall, the study published in the journal *Science* indicated oceans appear to have become stormier. This has implications for coastal communities, as storm waves can erode beaches and cause flooding.

The biggest increases in extreme winds were found in the Southern Ocean. There extreme winds increased by approximately 1.5 meters per second, or 8 percent, over the last 30 years. Extreme waves in this same region increased by 30 centimeters or 5 percent.

■ Winds were increasing faster

On average, winds were increasing at a faster rate than the waves, Professor Ian Young, study co-author and an expert in physical oceanography and marine and ocean engineering at the University of Melbourne told Newsweek.

Extreme events in the Southern Ocean can impact beaches in the Southern Hemisphere, as this is where ocean swells in the Indian Ocean, the Southern Atlantic and the Pacific are generated.

“Although increases of 5 percent for waves and 8 percent for winds may not seem like much, if sustained into the future such changes to our climate will have major impacts,” Young said.

The study was limited, however, because while the team used a very large database Young said the world’s oceans are vast and satellites miss some storms, which may make the findings biased. And the dataset only goes back 33 years, when the satellites were first put in orbit.

Yet the trends still warrant concern, suggested Young. It remains unclear if climate change caused the extreme events noted by the researchers, but the historic record seems to suggest a link, he said.

“Sea level rise is still the most significant climate-change signal we are seeing in the oceans. Changes in winds and waves will further enhance the damage sea level rise will cause. The results, however, show that the climate is linked

in many ways and that a changing climate system is likely to have many cascading impacts.”

■ Sea level rise

“When people think of sea level rise they are concerned by the potential flooding that will result. Over the next century, however, the biggest source of coastal flooding will still be storm events,” he explained.

“What sea level rise will do is increase the severity and frequency of these storm-related flooding events. If extreme waves are increasing in magnitude, it will further increase the impact of these flooding events and also have major impacts on the erosion of beaches.”

“As with all climate-related change, the message is clear,” said Young. “We need to limit the production of greenhouse gases. Only through coordinated and significant global efforts will we address rising greenhouse gas levels.”

A separate study which looked at the potential public health impact of climate change suggested global warming could worsen the spread of microbes which are immune to the drugs and substances we use to kill them, such as antibiotics.

(Source: [Newsweek](#))

Astronomers just detected the universe is expanding much faster than it should be



The latest measurement of the expansion rate of the Universe is in, and it has confirmed with more certainty than ever that we have a real dilly of a pickle on our hands. Once again, the result has shown that the Universe is expanding much faster than it should be based on the conditions just after the Big Bang.

The Universe’s rate of expansion is called the Hubble Constant, and it’s been incredibly tricky to pin down.

According to data from the Planck satellite that measured the cosmic microwave background (the conditions of the early Universe just 380,000 years after the Big Bang, the Hubble Constant should be 67.4 kilometers (41.9 miles) per second per megaparsec, with less than 1 percent uncertainty.

There are a number of ways to derive the Hubble Constant. Edwin Hubble observed the Doppler shift of retreating nebulae - that is, the changes in the wavelength of light as the object moves farther away. But, in the decades since then, our methods have refined. Now, calculations often involve the use of standard candles such as Cepheid variable stars, whose known luminosity allows for accurate distance calculations - and they have pretty consistently been returning results faster than the Planck data.

Last year, for example, a Cepheid variable calculation of the Hubble Constant returned an expansion rate of 73.5 kilometers (45.6 miles) per second per megaparsec.

This measurement reduced the possibility that the results were somehow mistaken to one in 5,000. Now we have a fresh result that narrows it down even further.

That’s about 9 percent faster than estimates based on the Planck data. And the chance that the discrepancy is a fluke or an error is now just one in 100,000.

“This mismatch has been growing and has now reached a point that is really impossible to dismiss as a fluke. This disparity could not plausibly occur by chance.”

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

Diamonds reveal how continents are stabilized, key to Earth’s habitability

The longevity of Earth’s continents in the face of destructive tectonic activity is an essential geologic backdrop for the emergence of life on our planet. This stability depends on the underlying mantle attached to the landmasses. New research demonstrates that diamonds can be used to reveal how a buoyant section of mantle beneath some of the continents became thick enough to provide long-term stability.

The longevity of Earth’s continents in the face of destructive tectonic activity is an essential geologic backdrop for the emergence of life on our planet. New research by a group of geoscientists from Carnegie, the Geological Institute of America, and the University of Alberta demonstrates that diamonds can be used to reveal how a buoyant section of mantle beneath some of the continents became thick enough to provide long-term stability.

Diamonds may be beloved by jewelry collectors, but they are truly a geologist’s best friend. Because they originate deep inside the Earth, tiny mineral grains trapped inside of a diamond, often considered undesirable in the gem trade, can reveal details about the conditions under which it formed.

The material that comprises them must thicken, stabilize, and cool under the continent to form a strong, buoyant, keel that is fundamental for preserving the surface landmass against the relentless destructive forces of Earth’s tectonic activity. But how this is accomplished has been a matter of debate in the scientific community.

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

In a breakthrough test scientists create speech from brain signals

A prosthetic voice decodes what the brain intends to say and generates (mostly) understandable speech, no muscle movement needed.

“In my head, I churn over every sentence ten times, delete a word, add an adjective, and learn my text by heart, paragraph by paragraph,” wrote Jean-Dominique Bauby in his memoir, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. “In the book, Mr. Bauby, a journalist and editor, recalled his life before and after a paralyzing stroke that left him virtually unable to move a muscle; he tapped out the book letter by letter, by blinking an eyelid.

Thousands of people are reduced to similarly painstaking means of communication as a result of injuries suffered in accidents or combat, of strokes, or of neurodegenerative disorders such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or A.L.S., that disable the ability to speak.

Now, scientists are reporting that they have developed a virtual prosthetic voice, a system that decodes the brain’s vocal intentions and translates them into mostly understandable speech, with no need to move a muscle, even those in the mouth. (The physicist and author Stephen Hawking used a muscle in his cheek to type keyboard characters, which a computer synthesized into speech.)

The new system deciphers the brain’s motor commands guiding vocal movement during speech — the tap of the tongue, the narrowing of the lips — and generates intelligible sentences that approximate a speaker’s natural cadence.

Experts said the new work represented a “proof of principle,” a preview of what may be possible after further experimentation and refinement.

(Source: [NYT](#))

Seafaring grows over Noruz holidays

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The number of sailings **d e s k** in Iran grew by nine percent during the Persian New Year (Noruz) holidays (March 16-April 4) in comparison to the same period last year, said deputy director of the Ports and Maritime Organization.



“Some six million and 200 thousands sea travels were made from March 16 to April 4 [a high season for the New Year travels], which shows a nine percent hike year on year,” IRNA quoted Hadi Haqshenas as saying on Wednesday. “A [countrywide] flooding [disaster] that happened [by the beginning of] this year, caused an average decline of five percent in some ports but led to an overall increase of sea travels in the country. And ports in Hormozgan province contributed to some 75 percent of all sea travels during the period.”

The official added that there were 45 offshore terminals operating in northern and southern coasts of the country. “A total of 590,000 vehicles were transported from the mainland to Kish and Qeshm islands in the Persian Gulf, which demonstrates a sign of safety institutionalization in sea trips,” he explained. According to data compiled by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, Iranians made 74 million overnight stays in their domestic trips during (Noruz) holidays, showing an increase of 20 percent year on year.

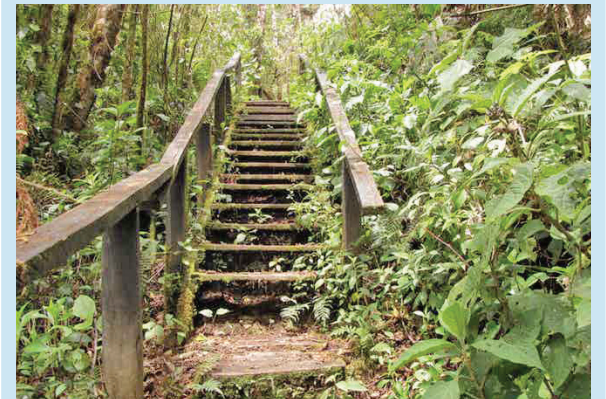
Destination festivals boost tourism

The tourism sector is one of the largest money generating sectors in the world. It is an ever developing industry, where new niches emerge. Tourism, as a concept, has come a long way today, and the activity has been classified into various types. From adventure tourism to medical tourism, there are many forms of tourism. Recently, during the Easter weekend, Nigeria held the biggest one-day music festival in West Africa. In Thailand, on April 20, marvels of medical cannabis showcased as a new era kicks off. Thailand became the first country in Southeast Asia to legalese marijuana for medical purposes last year. (Source: africanews.com)

 **ROUND THE GLOBE**

La Amistad National Park

The Talamanca Range-La Amistad Reserves / La Amistad National Park extends along the border between Panama and Costa Rica. The transboundary property covers large tracts of the highest and wildest non-volcanic mountain range in Central America and is one of that region's outstanding conservation areas. The Talamanca Mountains contain one of the major remaining blocks of natural forest in Central America with no other protected area complex in Central America containing a comparable altitudinal variation.

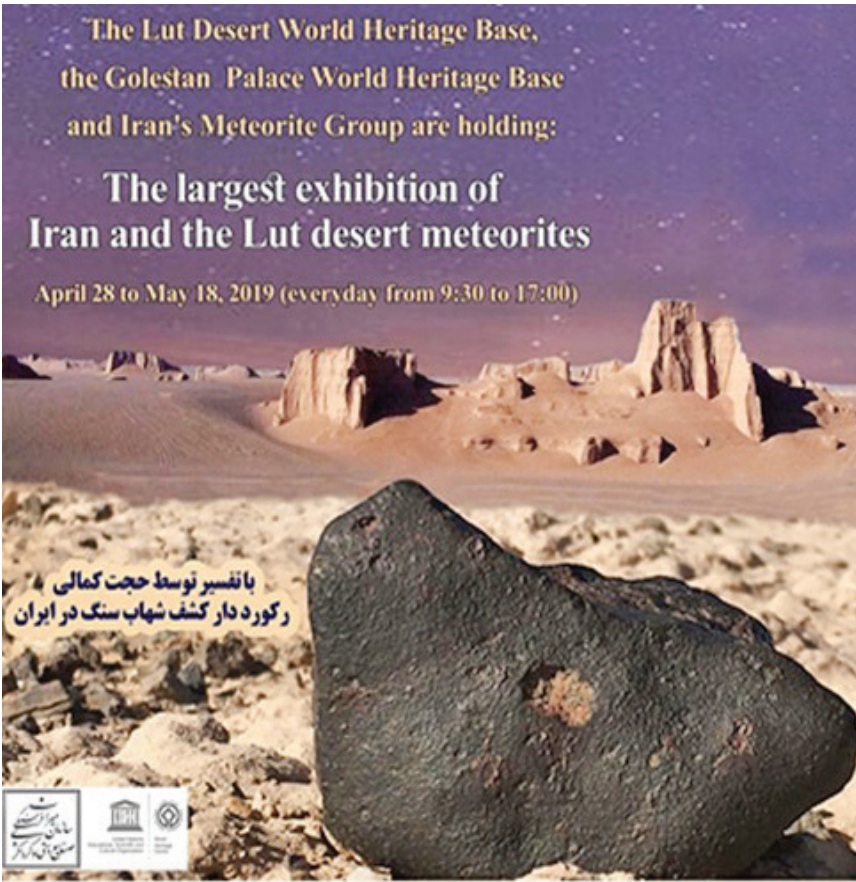


Inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage site, the property has many peaks on both sides of the border, including Cerro Chirripo, the highest elevation in Costa Rica and all of southern Central America. The surface area of the property 570,045 hectares, of which 221,000 hectares are on the Panamanian side. The beautiful and rugged mountain landscape harbors extraordinary biological and cultural diversity. Pre-ceramic archaeological sites indicate that the Talamanca Range has a history of many millennia of human occupation. There are several indigenous peoples on both sides of the border within and near the property. In terms of biological diversity, there is a wide range of ecosystems, an unusual richness of species per area unit and an extraordinary degree of endemism. The scenic mountains and foothills contain impressive footprints of Quaternary glaciation, such as glacial cirques, lakes and valleys shaped by glaciers, phenomena not found elsewhere in the region. (Source: UNESCO)

Iran to host its largest ever meteorite exhibit

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — The largest **d e s k** ever exhibition of meteorites in Iran will open on Sunday at the Museum of Anthropology of the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in Tehran. The exhibition will display meteorites which have hit the sprawling Lut Desert and other parts of the country over time. A gathering of Iranian geoscientists, associated academia and dignitaries have been invited to the opening ceremony of the event. Meteorite expert Hojjat Kamali, who is a record holder spotter, collector and museum owner of such outer space rocks, is scheduled to deliver a speech at the event, CHTN reported. “The event will be the largest and first specialized exhibition of Iran’s meteorites, in which over 700 pieces, which are registered with the efforts of Mr. Kamali on international bulletins, will go on display,” said Mehran Maqsoodi, the director of Lut

Desert World Heritage. Meteorites, whether more iron-rich or “stony,” are generally silvery or black, and therefore stand out in two major environments – sandy deserts, or icy realms. According to experts, the dry conditions of a desert help to preserve the space rocks in as original as condition as possible. The scorching Lut Desert is now being considered to be one of the top areas in the world for finding meteorites, thanks to its unique parameters. In recent years, significant finds have been made, with the efforts of national and international teams of researchers. Seven years of satellite temperature data analyzed by NASA show that the Lut Desert is the hottest spot on Earth. Based on the research, it was hottest during 5 of the 7 years, and had the highest temperature overall: 70.7°C in 2005. The exhibition will be running through May 18.



What did tourism look like in the Ancient world?

By Ethan Aines, archaeology grad student at Cambridge

Tourism—or something like it—has been recorded from classical antiquity through the middle ages. Although travel was not nearly as widespread as today, and, as pointed out by Andrew, not perfectly analogous to what we consider travel today, in general we can speak of a tendency from ancient times towards the modern era that approaches tourism. Travel in the ancient Mediterranean for reasons akin to modern-day tourism is well documented by historical sources. In Ancient Greece, many people would travel every year to visit a series of festivals and games, including but not limited to the Olympic games. Travel was also common from Magna Graecia—the areas in Southern Italy extensively populated by Greek settlers—to Greece for cultural exchange. In the fifth century BC, the historian Herodotus traveled to Egypt, Tyre, and Babylon, writing about his journey. Although Herodotus was credited by Cicero as the Father of History, the works of Pausanias constitute something of a similar character to what we would identify as travel literature. Around 150 CE, Pausanias wrote his ten-volume Description of Greece, which documents the architecture, art, mythology, and history associated with different regions of Greece. Around the same time as Pausanias, “guidebooks” were becoming quite popular. The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, referring to extraordinary buildings in classical antiquity, were listed in numerous



different documents for Hellenic travelers. The most famous of these lists is credited to Antipater of Sidon from his Greek Anthology in which he wrote (about ten years after Pausanias’s Description): “I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheus, and the hanging gardens, and the Colossus of the Sun, and the huge labor of the high pyramids, and the vast tomb of Mausolus; but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, ‘Lo, apart from Olympus,

the Sun never looked on aught so grand.” (Full text of “The Greek anthology”) Traveling to see sites became even more popular during the Early and High Middle Ages, as did proto-travel literature, in general. Arab writers Ibn Jubayr, from Al Andalus, and Ibn Battuta, from Morocco, both traveled and wrote about their journeys extensively between the 12th and 14th centuries CE. Travel literature was a favorite genre in the Arab world at the time and earlier, and the One Thousand Nights and a Night, a collection of folk tales compiled during the Islamic Golden Age, is replete with examples of strange travels throughout the world. “Tourism” also flourished in the Middle Ages throughout Europe in the form of pilgrimages, which carried momentous spiritual significance, beginning around the 3rd and 4th centuries CE. Travelers would visit sites associated with the life and death of Christ, the Apostles, Saints, and Christian martyrs. In the 1140s, a volume known as Mirabilia Urbis Romae was written, documenting the “Marvels of the City of Rome” for pilgrims. Later, at the end of the 14th century CE, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote The Canterbury Tales, a collection of ribald stories following a group of pilgrims from Southwark to the Shrine of Thomas Becket. By the 18th and 19th centuries CE, travel on a “grand tour” was quite common among the European upper classes, and travel looked much more like tourism does today. (Source: quora.com)

Rising sea levels are threatening Hawaii’s beaches — here’s what’s being done to save them

Oahu’s Waikiki Beach is iconic. Surfers head to the water, shoppers seek out high-end boutiques, and just about everyone wants to walk along the white sandy shore and get their photo taken. But that might all change in the next several years as water levels rise and scientists say frequent flooding is imminent. According to a 2017 report by the Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission that was updated in September 2018, the capital of Honolulu, Waikiki Beach, and several coastal areas on Hawaii’s five islands will experience frequent flooding within 15 to 20 years. According to lawmakers, the water levels have already risen more than 6 inches in recent decades. The 2017 report estimates that as the Earth heats up and water expands



there will be a 3-foot rise in Hawaii’s sea level by 2100. This rise would threaten over 6,000 buildings and 20,000 people with chronic flooding across the five islands. “This flooding will threaten \$5 billion of taxable real estate; flood nearly 30 miles of roadway; and impact pedestrians, commercial and recreation activities, tourism, transportation, and infrastructure,” said Shellie Habel, lead author of the 2017 study, in a release on Science Daily. To protect Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, and the state’s coastline, AP reports that Hawaii’s state Senate and House of Representatives passed a bill that calls for a shoreline protection plan. If approved, the bill would utilize \$4 million to fund a pilot project to build-up and protect the shoreline. (Source: travelandleisure.com)

Ancient tomb of mysterious man named Tjt discovered in Egypt

Archeologists in Egypt recently discovered a tomb near Aswan, along the Nile River. Hieroglyphic text etched on the wooden coffin fragments found inside the tomb revealed that it belonged to a mysterious man named Tjt, the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities said yesterday (April 24) in a statement. Though the owner of the tomb was Tjt alone, its occupants were many. It hid dozens of mummies, some of them of young children. Two of the mummies lay on top of one another, meaning they could have been a mother and her child, according to the ministry. The tomb was likely built between the sixth century BC and the fourth century CE. There were also a variety of ancient artifacts scattered throughout the tomb, including offering vases and amphorae — tall decorated jars with tiny necks flanked by two handles. Along one wall stood an intact stretcher that ancient Egyptians likely used to bring bodies into



the tomb. Next to some other mummies were vessels that still contained food. Archaeologists also found fragments of funerary masks painted in gold and a small statue of the ba-bird. A bird with a human head that represents a person’s soul, this is a typical symbol found in burials of the time. Near the chamber’s entrance, sitting next to a lamp, were materials used by ancient Egyptians to wrap mummies, including vessels of bitumen (asphalt) to preserve bodies and white, unpainted cartonnage. That material consists of linen, papyrus and plaster. The text that mentioned Tjt also referenced ancient Egyptian gods, including Hapi, the god of the Nile River. This tomb is just one of about 300 scattered around the area of the Mausoleum of the Aga Khan, an imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, according to the statement (Source: Live Science)

Ryanair launches podcast travel series

Budget airline Ryanair has launched a new podcasttravel series, the latest addition to its Try Somewhere New travel content platform which seeks to entice holiday-makers to explore further afield. Season one of the podcast features three 25-minute episodes fronted by TV presenter Julia Bradbury who reports on popular tourist destinations throughout Europe, with episode

one focusing on Portugal, Spain and Norway. This feeds into efforts by the airline to produce informative travel content and video guides for all of its destinations. Ryanair’s Alejandra Ruiz said: “Our ‘Try Somewhere New’ platform also offers bespoke written and video travel guides, tips and advice for travelers looking to explore the cities, islands and regions across Rya-

nair’s network of destinations in Europe and beyond. Remember — don’t waste your summer indoors — get out and Try Somewhere New with Ryanair.” The series will be shared on Ryanair’s social media channels and made available directly to travelers who book flights to any of the featured destinations. (Source: thedrum.com)



Iranian scientists produce liquid-based cytology kit

1 → The process is being widely used in the United States, many European countries, and elsewhere.

Cervical cancer is a cancer arising from the cervix. It is due to the abnormal growth of cells that have the ability to invade or spread to other parts of the body. Human papillomavirus infection (HPV) causes more than 90% of cases;

most people who have had HPV infections, however, do not develop cervical cancer.

According to World Health Organization cervical cancer is the fourth most frequent cancer in women with an estimated 570,000 new cases in 2018 representing 6.6% of all female cancers. Approximately 90% of deaths from cervical cancer occurred in low- and mid-



dle-income countries. The high mortality rate from cervical cancer globally could be reduced through a comprehensive

approach that includes prevention, early diagnosis, effective screening and treatment programmes.

The high mortality rate from cervical cancer globally could be reduced through a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, early diagnosis, effective screening and treatment programmes.

Plan to lower high blood pressure to start nationally: minister

HEALTH TEHRAN — National plan to lower high blood pressure among Iranians will go into effect on May 17 concurrent with World Hypertension Day, Health Minister Saeed Namaki has said.

In a letter to President Hassan Rouhani Health Minister asked the president to urge all responsible bodies to help in the fight against the disease, ISNA news agency reported on Wednesday?

He expressed hope that in a collective attempt, high blood pressure, one of the biggest risk factor for deaths, will be lowered among Iranians.

Every year, May 17 is dedicated to World Hypertension Day (WHD). This is an initiative of the World Hypertension League (WHL), an affiliated section of the International



Society of Hypertension (ISH).

The WHD was first inaugurated in May 2005 and has

become an annual event ever since. The purpose of the WHD is to promote public awareness of hypertension and to encourage citizens of all countries to prevent and control this silent killer, the modern epidemic.

The theme for World Hypertension Day is Know Your Numbers with a goal of increasing high blood pressure (BP) awareness in all populations around the world.

Worldwide, raised blood pressure is estimated to cause 7.5 million deaths, about 12.8% of the total of all deaths. World Health Organization reports that raised blood pressure is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease and ischemic as well as hemorrhagic stroke. Blood pressure levels have been shown to be positively and continuously related to the risk for stroke and coronary heart disease.

World Immunization Week 2019 stresses the importance of working together to leave no one behind

World Immunization Week will be celebrated both globally and regionally from 24 to 30 April 2019, using the slogan "Protected Together: Vaccines Work!" to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Immunization saves millions of lives every year and is widely recognized as one of the most successful and cost-effective public health interventions. Around the world, 162 countries now use vaccines, and the average global rate of vaccination coverage is 85%.

The Eastern Mediterranean Region has seen a remarkable increase in the number of people receiving vaccines in recent years, with more vaccines introduced and more countries eliminating diseases through immunization. More lives are being saved each year in consequence.

National immunization programmes in the Region have achieved remarkable successes over the last decade. In 2017, 13.5 million children received routine immunizations compared to 11.5 million in 2008. New vaccines have been introduced into national immunization programmes, resulting in 69 additions to immunization schedules in the Region. More than 470 million children have been vaccinated against measles through supplementary

immunization activities, and several countries are making progress towards eliminating measles.

"In addition to its positive impact on child health, when immunization rates are high, we know the wider community is protected. The theme of this year's campaign 'Protected Together: Vaccines Work!' reminds us of the importance of ensuring that everyone is provided with the life-saving benefits of vaccines to protect them against diseases," said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO's Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. "Expanding access to immunization is vital to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and WHO's triple-billion goals. Immunization will lay the foundation for progress towards universal health coverage in line with our regional vision of Health For All, By All."

As part of this year's campaign, vaccinators who spearhead efforts to reach every child – community health professionals, doctors, nurses, managers and parents will all be celebrated and honored as immunization heroes. Their roles in keeping children healthy and securing a safer, healthier future for all will be acknowledged.

During World Immunization Week 2019, the WHO Regional Office expresses the Organization's appreciation of governments



in the Region for their commitment to strengthening immunization programmes, and also thanks WHO's partners for their continued interest in, commitment to and support for immunization programmes.

But a lot of work still needs to be done to fill the immunization gap. As many as 3.1 million children remain unvaccinated or under-vaccinated in the Region, and outbreaks of measles and diphtheria have been reported in some countries.

"In broader partnership with civil

society, community and immunization partners, together we can and must drive vaccination progress to reach more children, rolling out newer vaccines and expanding the benefits of vaccination across the life course. I urge you all to celebrate World Immunization Week 2019 with absolute commitment to ensure that everyone is protected from vaccine-preventable diseases and no one is left behind," Dr Al-Mandhari said.

(Source: emro.who.int)

Innovative patch may reduce muscle damage after a heart attack

A recent study in rats shows that an innovative patch prevented the stretching of the heart muscle common after a heart attack.

An innovative new patch limits heart muscle damage after a heart attack.

A heart attack occurs when the blood flow that provides the heart muscle with oxygen is significantly reduced or blocked.

The heart muscle is injured in the process, and the amount of damage usually depends on the size of the area supplied by the blocked artery.

It can take about 8 weeks for the heart muscle to heal. Despite the damage, the rest of the heart has to keep on pumping blood.

Scar tissue may form in the injured area and have an impact on the amount of blood that the heart is able to pump.

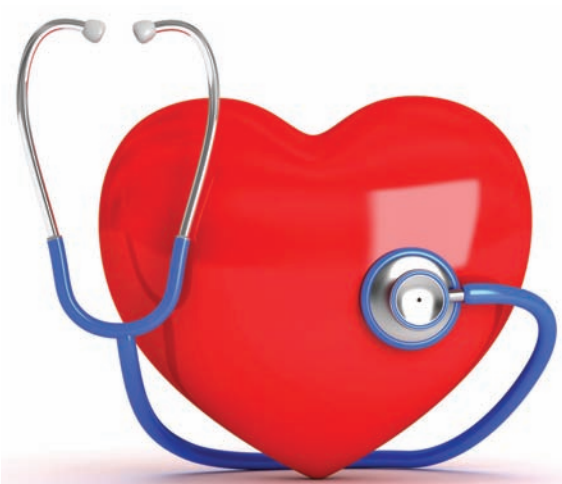
Most people who survive a heart attack have some degree of coronary artery disease. This occurs when arteries become hardened and narrowed. Usually, survivors have to make crucial lifestyle changes and may have to take medication to prevent a future heart attack.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 700,000 people in the United States have a heart attack every year. Of these, more than 500,000 experience their first heart attack and about 200,000 have already had one.

Signs of a heart attack include chest pain and shortness of breath. Half of U.S. individuals have at least one of the following risk factors: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or smoking.

Diabetes, obesity, physical inactivity, and excessive alcohol use also increase the risk of a heart attack.

■ Testing a new type of adhesive heart patch
Scientists at Brown University in Providence, RI, Fudan University in Shanghai, China, and Soochow University in Suzhou, China have collaborated to create and test a



new type of adhesive heart patch on rats.

The study was an interdisciplinary effort among researchers in computer modeling and mechanics, material scientists, and cardiology. The scientists published their findings in the journal Nature Biomedical Engineering.

The scientists created this adhesive patch using a water-based hydrogel material and developed it using computer simulations. The patch can sit directly on the heart, and the results of the study show that it may help limit the muscle damage that often occurs after a heart attack.

"The idea here," explains study co-author Prof. Huajian Gao, from Brown University, "is to provide mechanical support for damaged tissue, which hopefully gives it a chance to heal."

Prof. Gao goes on to say that past studies had shown

that mechanical patches could be effective, but no research had attempted to identify the "optimum mechanical properties." Getting those properties right is crucial to ensuring that the patch can work properly.

"If the material is too hard or stiff," he adds, "then you could confine the movement of the heart so that it can't expand to the volume it needs to. But, if the material is too soft, then it won't provide enough support. So, we needed some mechanical principles to guide us."

■ Creating right mechanical properties is key

The researchers developed a computer model focused on two key components, one of which was the expanding and contracting of the heart and the impact the patch had on these functions.

The other was to model the injuries that occur after a heart attack. In this way, the team could look at how much mechanical support would be necessary to limit the damage.

Following the results of the computer model, the researchers — led by Prof. Lei Yang, of Soochow University — created a hydrogel material using food-sourced starch. This material is inexpensive, easy to make, and viscoelastic, which means that "it combines fluid and solid properties."

The study in rats showed that this new type of adhesive patch was effective in reducing muscle damage after a heart attack.

"[It] maintained a better cardiac output and thus greatly reduced the overload of those remaining cardiomyocytes and adverse cardiac remodeling," says study co-author Ning Sun, a cardiology researcher at Fudan University.

Their research found that the patch can reduce cell death, the accumulation of scar tissue, and oxidative stress. The researchers believe that more testing is required, but the results are promising.

"It remains to be seen if it will work in humans, but it's very promising, says Prof. Huajian Gao.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Why science can't seem to tell us how to eat right

Eggs once fell from grace, going from the sunny breakfast staple of choice to a hard pass if you wanted to avoid heart attacks. Then, like all disgraced celebrities, they seemed to make a comeback -- in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Health experts said we could stop worrying about the cholesterol or eating too many eggs. (Brunch never looked so fantastic.) Then last month, a study seemed to say -- hold up! -- cholesterol in your diet and eating eggs was linked to a higher heart risk.

Instead of screams of frustration, though, the news was met with a collective sigh of boredom. Because to be honest, there's a long list of foods, diets, and ingredients -- coconut oil, butter, avocados, low-fat foods, salt, nuts, saturated fat, sugar -- that seem to have gone through the same good guy-bad guy cycle.

It's understandable if you yawned, looked at your fitness-tracker watch of choice, and asked, "Remind me, where are we in the cycle on this one?" just before digging into your plate of scrambled eggs. So who is to blame for the average person's jaded palate when it comes to foods that supposedly are or are not "healthy"?

Like many things food-related, it depends on whom you ask. Some blame the science, which, you might have guessed, has some problems. (More on that later.) Others say it's the media. And people who stand to profit -- namely, the food industry as well as nutrition "gurus" hawkling diet books and products -- are also adding to the messages.

■ Here's why it's kind of your fault, too

Americans have a glorious variety when it comes to living life, eating different foods, cooking them in different ways, and making thousands of decisions every day. These can all affect the long-term risk of things like heart disease and diabetes, which makes it pretty hard to study the connection between diet and chronic disease.

But scientists, always up for a challenge, do it anyway. For decades, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and other advisory groups have relied on observational research, which are studies that look at what people in the real world eat and how they fare health-wise. In those studies, people fill out questionnaires about how often they ate certain foods in the past year. For example, NHANES, or the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, has been done since the 1960s and has more than 100 questions, like "how often did you drink coffee?" or "how often did you eat mixed vegetables?" with answers like "never" and "2-3 times per month."

But some critics say this type of research is unreliable to the point of being useless -- people barely remember what they ate for breakfast, much less how many times a week they ate broccoli last January. Plus, people tend to fudge a bit to make themselves look better.

In his research published in 2013 and 2015, Edward Archer, PhD, analyzed more than 60,000 people in the NHANES databases. He found that the number of calories people said they ate were not enough to actually keep them alive.

"The dietary data that food frequency questionnaires collect is physiologically implausible, about 65% to 85%, meaning it cannot be right," says Archer, who did the research at the University of Alabama in Birmingham but is now the chief science officer at EnduringFX, a company that analyzes data from wearable devices.

"We have this data that is just ridiculous. If people can't survive on it, why is the dietary guidelines advisory committee using it as a baseline for our dietary guidelines?" he says. "Everyone agrees that NHANES is a joke, but the federal government continues to use it." (Archer's early studies as a graduate student took place in a lab where his research assistant salary was funded by Coca-Cola, but he said he has been self-funded since 2016.)

John Ioannidis, MD, a professor at Stanford University, has argued for years that the vast majority of nutrition research is flawed to the point of being false. He says results from observational studies are often not confirmed in placebo-controlled, randomized trials, which are the gold standard when it comes to finding out if something is scientifically sound. He also says researchers cherry-pick data to support their own biases; there are too many small, low-quality trials published; and a lot of nutrition-related research is compromised by strong financial ties to the food industry.

What's more, many one-ingredient claims -- like a study that seems to suggest that one hazelnut a day will increase your lifespan by a year -- just don't sound credible.

"I love hazelnuts, and I do recommend that you eat more of them, but I don't do it because I expect to live 120 years if I eat that many hazelnuts every day," he said at a conference in 2018.

In a statement, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which publishes the Dietary Guidelines, said it includes "study designs that offer the strongest evidence for establishing a relationship between diet and health."

"When it comes to minimizing public confusion, we encourage the public to not read too much into individual studies and not to change their eating behaviors based on one study," a USDA spokesperson said. "Instead, we encourage the public to follow the key recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines since they are based on the body of scientific evidence over time and are a reliable source for consumers and practitioners."

■ So what does science really know about food?

But not all of the recommendations for healthy eating rely on observational studies, and scientists take a variety of studies into account when coming up with general guidelines, says Bonnie F. Liebman, director of nutrition at the Center for Science in the Public Interest in Washington, D.C.

"The dietary guidelines are based on a combination of those observational studies and randomized controlled trials," she says.

In randomized trials, scientists assign people to one group or another and follow them for a specific period of time to see which treatment (or food) is better for you. These types of trials are hard to do for food -- you can't ask people to eat only, say, hot dogs for weeks, months, or years at a time. But some research does look at whether some eating habits are linked to a lower blood pressure, cholesterol, or other things that are associated with chronic disease, which are considered acceptable in cases where you can't follow people over a lifetime.

"Some critics don't really understand the science or have misinterpreted the science. But if you rely on the American Heart Association, the World Health Organization, the American Cancer Society, you'll find a pretty consistent message," Liebman says.

Marion Nestle, a retired professor of nutrition, food studies, and public health at New York University, says the dietary advice hasn't changed all that much in decades.

"Eat vegetables; don't eat too much salt, sugar, and saturated fat; watch your body weight; and don't eat too much junk food. I mean that hasn't changed since 1960," she says. "What seems to change is research about individual nutrients and individual foods, but that's not how people eat."

News stories about this research may not disclose the funding source, size, or quality of the study, or how it fits in with other research. And some journalists may rely on university or medical journal news releases that overhype or don't tell the whole story about a study's findings, Liebman and Nestle say.

(Source: WebMD)

25% of waste produced in Iran recyclable: environment official

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Approximately 25% of the waste generated in Iran is recyclable, director general of Tehran province department of environment has said.

Generally waste is of economic value and while unlocking it would yield financial benefits waste management is being disregarded in the country, ISNA news agency quoted Kiyomars Kalantari as saying on Friday.

Waste and leachate would bring about considerable damages to the earth, he regretted, adding that about 57,000 tons of waste is being produced in the country on a daily basis and unfortunately a great deal of it will be strewn around in the nature.

Recycling the waste would stop pollutions from entering groundwater and surface water resources and stop wasting energy, he added.

“We generally assume that consumers are blameworthy, while producers deserve disapproval as they have to produce products which can be easily recycled by using modern technologies.” Kalantari explained.

Everyday 8,000 tons of waste is being transferred to landfills in Tehran but not even 1 kilogram of it is recycled as waste segregation at source in not being practiced, he lamented.

Recycling is of great importance as waste has a huge negative impact on the natural environment. Harmful chemicals and greenhouse gasses are released from rubbish in landfill sites. Recycling helps to reduce the pollution caused by waste as well as reduce the need for raw materials.

According to 4waste.com waste can be classified into five types of waste which is all commonly found around the house. These include liquid waste, solid rubbish, organic waste, recyclable rubbish and hazardous waste.

■ 1. Liquid Waste

Liquid waste is commonly found both in households as well as in industries. This waste includes dirty water, organic liquids, wash water, waste detergents and even rainwater.

■ 2. Solid Rubbish

Solid rubbish can include a variety of items found in household along with commercial and industrial locations.

Solid rubbish is commonly broken down into the following types: Plastic waste – This consists of bags, containers, jars, bottles and many other products that can be found in household. Plastic is not biodegradable, but many types of plastic can be recycled. Plastic should not be mix in with regular waste, it should be sorted and placed in recycling bin.

Paper/card waste – This includes packaging materials, newspapers, cardboards and other products. Paper can easily be recycled and reused.

Tins and metals – This can be found in various forms throughout home. Most metals can be recycled.

Ceramics and glass – These items can easily be recycled.

■ 3. Organic Waste

Organic waste is another common household. All food waste, garden waste, manure and rotten meat are classified as organic waste. Over time, organic waste is turned into manure by microorganisms. However, this does not mean that one can dispose them anywhere.

Organic waste in landfills causes the production of methane, so it must never be simply discarded with general waste.

■ 4. Recyclable Rubbish

Recyclable rubbish includes all waste items that can be converted into products that can be used again. Solid items such as paper, metals, furniture and organic waste can all be recycled.

■ 5. Hazardous Waste

Hazardous waste includes all types of rubbish that are flammable, toxic, corrosive and reactive.

These items can harm human beings as well as the environment and must be disposed of correctly.

Too precious to lose: What brought back Lake Urmia to life?

1 → In late March and early April 2019, 28 of Iran’s 31 provinces were affected by devastating flooding from the rain.

Intense rains during the fall of 2018 and spring 2019 seem to be the main cause of this fresh pulse of water not only in Lake Urmia but also all other wetlands nationwide.

While the lake is again showing signs of life and seems to gain its former glory some officials believe that recent rainfalls are not the main reasons behind lake’s restoration stating that measures taken by the Lake Urmia Restoration Program have mainly revived the lake.

In an interview with IRNA news agency published on Friday Masoud Tajrishi, deputy environment chief, has claimed that releasing water from the dams as well as proper dredging practices have revived Lake Urmia.

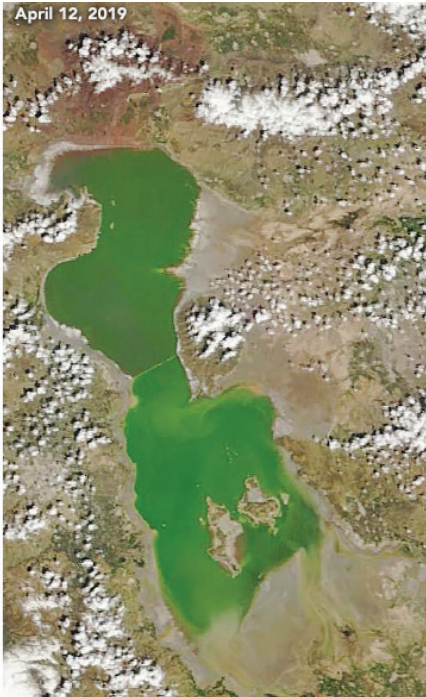
He went on to say that while the regions received the same amount of precipitations in water year 2006-2007 the lake didn’t show any signs of revival. Same thing happened in water year 2009-2010 and the lake didn’t return to life rather the water level dropped by 43 centimeters, he added.

Tajrishi believes that by removal of sediments and debris from the bottom of lake over the past four years the lake sprang into life after recent rainfalls.

While Tajrishi and some other officials



Images published on NASA Earth Observatory website, acquired by the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) on NASA’s Terra satellite, show the lake on February 5, 2019, and April 12, 2019, before and after the recent floods in the region. The rains were reported to be the heaviest Iran has seen in 50 years. After the spring rains, the depth of the lake increased by 62 centimeters compared to the spring of 2018.



believe that Lake Urmia couldn’t survive if it wasn’t for measures taken over the past few years by Lake Urmia Restoration program, many other lakes across the country are now covered with water fully or partially without any restoration programs.

Without torrential rains no substantial amount of water would be stored behind the dams to be released to enter the wetlands.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said in late March that heavy rainfalls in Iran has filled 70 percent of dams and resulted in restoration of drained wetlands across the country saying that volume of water stored behind the dams stands at 35 billion cubic meters while the amount measured at 23 billion cubic meters in the same period last year.

Issa Kalantari, chief of Iran’s Department of Environment, said in late March that 90 percent of the wetlands nationwide are now restored.

National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center (NDWMC) data shows that since the beginning of the current water year (starting on September 23, 2018) the whole country has received 293.5 millimeters of precipitation on average and this is while the average precipitation the country received over the last water year (September 2017-September 2018) amounts to 120.8 milliliters.

Pedestrians account for 45% of traffic deaths in Tehran

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN**—About 45% of all deaths caused by traffic accidents in Tehran, the capital, were related to pedestrians last year (March 2018-March 2019), head of traffic accidents department of Tehran Traffic Police has said.

87% of the deceased pedestrians were male and 13% were female, Ehsan Momeni explained, Mehr news agency reported on Thursday.

More than half of the accidents resulting in deaths of the pedestrians occurred at night and in highways, Momeni added.

Highlighting that bright color and high contrast make objects visible at night he urged the pedestrians to wear bright colors at night.

According to the latest data released by Iran’s Forensics

Organization some 15,927 died in traffic related accident in the first eleven months of the past year. In Tehran also, some 1,221 lost their lives in car crashes.

Sadly some 341,570 also sustained injuries in accidents, the report added.

Crossing the street at designated crosswalks or intersections, making sure that of using crossing signals, avoiding jaywalking (crossing the street, not at a designated crosswalk), increasing your visibility at night by a carrying a flashlight or wearing reflective clothing, crossing the street and walk in well-lit areas, making eye contact with drivers in stopped vehicles to ensure they see you, and avoiding distractions, such as looking at your phone when walking or crossing a street can enhance pedestrian safety.



Fire poppies: rare golden flowers rise from the ashes in California

When wildfires swept through southern California last year they left a trail of destruction: leveling houses, historic Hollywood sets and sites of biodiversity. Now a rare flower is proving that great destruction can give rise to something spectacular.

Park ranger Ana Beatriz Cholo has been on a mission to find fire poppies – a rare and elusive species that only grows on the

heels of major fires – in the Santa Monica Mountains, which were especially hard hit. She knew they were unusual, and that the 2018 Woolsey fire, which scorched more than 96,000 acres, made this a good year to hunt.

Cholo got lucky: on a mountain trail this week she discovered the flowers, which are also known as Papaver californicum and come in orange, red and brick red. For an

area struggling to recover from fire damage even as other parts of California are swept by a phenomenal super bloom, these inflorescences are a rare, and literal, bright spot.

The fire poppy belongs to a group of plants known as fire followers: those that use the heat, smoke or charred soil as signals to sprout. Their seeds lie dormant for years, explains Marti Witter, a wildfire ecologist for the Santa Monica

Mountains national recreation area. Then when the fire hits, it sends a message to begin germination. For fire poppies, the signal comes from smoke. For other fire followers, the heat of a blaze can crack open the hard coating on a seed. “This year, the combination of fire and rain has created good conditions for lots of fire followers,” she says.

(Source: The Guardian)

Enough rainforest to fill 30 football pitches destroyed every minute last year

The world lost 12 million hectares of tropical rainforest last year – an area the size of North Korea and the equivalent of 30 football pitches every minute, according to a new report.

“It’s death by a thousand cuts,” said Frances Seymour, senior fellow at the US-based World Resources Institute (WRI), which led the research based on an analysis of satellite imagery.

“The health of the planet is at stake and band aid responses are not enough. The world’s forests are now in the emergency room.”

The global destruction of tree cover includes around 3.6 million hectares of primary rainforest – older, untouched trees that absorb more carbon and are harder to replace – covering an area the size of Belgium.

Brazil lost the most tropical primary rainforest in 2018, at 1.3 million hectares, followed by the

Democratic Republic of Congo with 481,248 hectares.

The Global Forest Watch report suggested that most of Brazil’s loss last year was down to “cutting in the Amazon” by illegal loggers and militias, which threatened the survival of nearby “uncontacted” indigenous tribes.

It came as Brazil’s federal police revealed they had uncovered a scheme to illegally harvest timber in the Amazon region. The criminal conspiracy is said to involve state environmental agency officers and forest engineers.

The greatest increase in deforestation compared to 2017 came in Ghana, with a 60 per cent increase mostly blamed on illegal mining and the expansion of cocoa farms.

“Forests are our greatest defense against climate change and biodiversity loss, but de-

forestation is getting worse,” said John Sauven, executive director of Greenpeace UK.

“Bold action is needed to tackle this global crisis including restoring lost forests. But unless we stop them being destroyed in the first place, we’re just chasing our tail.”

However there was some improvement in Indonesia, where government policies on protected forests appeared to have resulted in tree cover losses dropping to their lowest rate since 2003.

Much of the deforestation in that country is blamed on land clearance for oil-palm plantations.

Last year’s total loss of 12 million hectares was the fourth-highest since records began in 2001 but was lower than 2016 and 2017 when losses peaked largely due to forest fires.

(Source: The Independent)

Second Announcement

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 48-32-9700004

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
02	PORTABLE HIGH PRESSURE PUMP UNIT API 674.DRIVER: DIESEL . SKID MOUNTED CAPACITY : 17000BPD. WORKING PRESSURE: 90 BARG SUCTION PRESSURE: 0 BARG. MAX .FLUID.TEMP.: 70C	1+2 YEARS SPARE PART

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their “Intention To Participate” letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.
The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 26,257 EURO or 1,250,000,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.
Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab
NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID
FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437
Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir>
تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۷/۲/۴ نوبت دوم ۹۷/۲/۴

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Second Announcement

Khouzestan Steel Company

IN THE NAME OF GOD

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER

No. :401975

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE 6000 MT FERRO SILICO MANGANESE WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

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

INTRESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF:
EUR 50 "FIFTY EURO" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:
1) ACCOUNT No.0100013543943 AT "EXPORT DEVELOPMENT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ CENTRAL BRANCH"
2) ACCOUNT No.1902-750-4019644-1 AT "EGHTESAD NOVIN BANK- OF IRAN AHVAZ SHARIATI BRANCH" OR
Rials 2,000,000,"TWO MILION RIALS" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:
1) ACCOUNT No.0102513186002 AT "MELLI BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"
2) ACCOUNT No.0100304453001 AT "SADERAT BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"
AND PRESENT THE PAYMENT RECEIPT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:
RAW MATERIAL & ENERGY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY (KSC)
KM 10 AHVAZ – BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI ROAD
P.O.BOX: 1378
POST CODE: 61397-31398
AHVAZ– IRAN
Note1: BIDDER SHALL SUBMIT WITH TENDER A BID BOND ISSUED BY AN IRANIAN BANK OR BY A EUROPEAN FIRST CLASS BANK , IN THE AMOUNT OF 110,880 Euro OR 16,964,640,000 Rials FOR 6000 MT FERRO SILICO MANGANESE AND MAY REDUSED IN PROPORTION WITH THE QUANTITY OF BIDDERS OFFER.
Note2: ALL BIDS MUST BE INFORMED US WHICH PARTICIPATE IN OUR TENDER UP TO 4thMay, 2019. WHEN YOUR COMPANY IS CONFIRMED AND THE TENDER DOCUMENT IS SENT TO YOU, YOU MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE AFORESAID ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE 18thMay,2019.THE OPENING DATE OF ENVELOPES WILL BE AT 10 AM ON THE 19thMay,2019 IN THE BUYER’S CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHVAZ-IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER.
Note 3: FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT WITH FOLLOWING DETAILS:
Tel No. : +98 61 32908115 / 32136159
Fax No. : +98 61 32908115
Mr.M.FARZINEJAD EMAIL : m.farzinejad@ksc.ir OR VISIT:<http://WWW.KSC.IR>

Western MSM aiding U.S. efforts to legitimize U.S.-Libyan warlord Haftar

➡ However, the case is hardly a reversal as Pompeo's remarks were not followed by any actions and last week the U.S. even rejected a UN Security Council resolution calling for an end to clashes near the Libyan capital.

Given Trump's praise of Haftar for "securing Libya's oil resources" in their phone conversation, it appears Haftar has indeed been the CIA's man in Libya the whole time.

■ U.S.-Backed Operation

After all, Haftar is known to be a CIA asset who was kept in reserve by the U.S. for near two decades. Moreover, the operation of against Tripoli could have not been started without the U.S. consent.

A Guardian report dating back to 2014 sheds light on Haftar's deep connections with the US:

"A career soldier, Haftar – grey-haired, hefty and thought to be 64 – supported Muammar Gaddafi in his 1969 coup that overthrew the monarch, King Idris. His reward was command of Libya's abortive invasion of Chad in the 1980s, a chaotic war in which Haftar was captured and then disowned by Gaddafi.

Embittered, he fled to America, settling in Langley, Virginia, a stone's throw from CIA headquarters. He has denied working with the CIA, but the agency certainly encouraged the main Libyan dissident group, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, of which Haftar was chief of the military wing."

The mysterious commander's ongoing operation carried out by his self-styled Libyan National Army could have not been started without the U.S. green light, as the general is funded and armed by its close partners in the region.

Haftar visited Saudi Arabia on March 27 to meet with King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, where he was offered support for his plans to take Tripoli. The Wall Street Journal has revealed that Saudi Arabia is financing Haftar's campaign. "We were very generous with him," the paper quoted an anonymous Saudi official as saying.

Moreover, the LNA commander had travelled to Cairo to meet with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi one day before his conversation with Trump. The Middle East Eye reports Sisi has a close relationship with Trump, and the language of Trump's



comments praising Haftar mirrored a statement issued by Egypt's presidency on Sisi's meeting with the Libyan.

It is likely that Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE, and another partner of Haftar who is accused of smuggling arms to him, see the commander as a means of beating down the Muslim Brotherhood, which has a hostile relationship with the Wahhabi kingdoms and the incumbent Egyptian government.

Notably, Haftar enjoys the backing of Libya's Wahhabi factions, who follow a harsh interpretation of Islam and have implemented strict Wahhabi law in some areas he has controlled.

■ MSM's Flawed Narrative

As the U.S. uncovers its support for the Libyan general, western agencies have ignored the awkwardness of Trump's move and have left the U.S. narrative unchallenged. Moreover, some of them have made their narrative on Haftar more positive, perhaps to boost his legitimacy in the public eye.

In the first place, the western agencies have failed to challenge Trump's assertion that Haftar is seeking peace in the country.

They failed to ask how a would-be autocrat who has stood in the path of peace in Libya and undermined the UN's efforts to bring the country's warring factions together could "achieve peace and stability" in the war-stricken Arab country.

In their reports on the latest escalation in Libya, the western outlets simply point

that Haftar is leading an operation to take Tripoli, but they prefer not to go into details. The fact is the operation is part of Haftar's fight for power, which he seeks to portray as a battle against "terrorism".

The two-week offensive on Tripoli, which has been stopped on the city's southern suburbs, has left at least 227 people dead, more than 1,125 injured and over 30,000 people displaced, according to the World Health Organization.

In the absence of any sign of a political solution or a ceasefire, Haftar's military campaign has raised fears of a full-scale civil war in Libya.

■ Renegade Commander?

The western outlets generally equalize Haftar and Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, portraying them as two rivals in the conflict. This case is highly similar to Venezuela, where the U.S.-backed opposition leader Juan Guaidó is being displayed as a president rivaling President Nicolás Maduro.

Many outlets refuse to use negative adjectives to describe Haftar, referring to him simply as a "commander" or "general".

As an example, the London-based Reuters called him a "Libyan commander" in its report on the Trump-Haftar phone call. This is while Reuters had described Haftar as a "renegade commander" in a 2014 story reporting the U.S. State Department was not condoning Haftar.

Another proof for the gullibility of the

Western media was a Reuters report this Saturday quoting the LNA spokesman as telling the UAE-funded Sky News Arabia that Trump's call to Haftar shows the U.S. believes in the role of the LNA in the war on terror.

Of note, the article uses the term "Libyan army" to refer to a loose patchwork of militant groups allied to Haftar.

Instead of questioning Trump and his dubious phone call with Haftar, the Reuters article is clearly echoing the U.S. narrative and aims to boost legitimacy of Haftar and his self-styled LNA.

Besides Reuters, some other western outlets also toed their government's line and offered narratives sympathetic towards Haftar.

Washington Times described Haftar "a former asset of the CIA" leading a "Russian-backed" Libyan National Army, without explaining how it reached the conclusion Haftar is no longer a CIA asset.

Moreover, the Associated Press referred to Haftar as a "Field Marshal", a self-proclaimed title the former Libyan general likes very much.

■ Stronger Support for Haftar Expected

The biased coverage of the Libya conflict by the western agencies is nothing new.

These outlets have generally turned a blind eye on the disastrous consequences of the West's role in toppling the long-time Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

The West's intervention, happened under the guise of peace-building efforts, turned a once rich and stable country into a de-facto failed state.

The Libyan commander is the right man for the western powers to feed their oil appetites, so we should expect closer backing for Haftar by the western government and media.

The Libyan commander's hell bent on taking the whole country, and the strong U.S. endorsement would inject fresh blood into his army.

Perhaps the Libyan government is aware of the West's double dealing, and that describes the reason behind their Monday move to cut security ties with France.

Unfortunately, peace is unlikely to return to Libya any time soon.

London has no political independence!

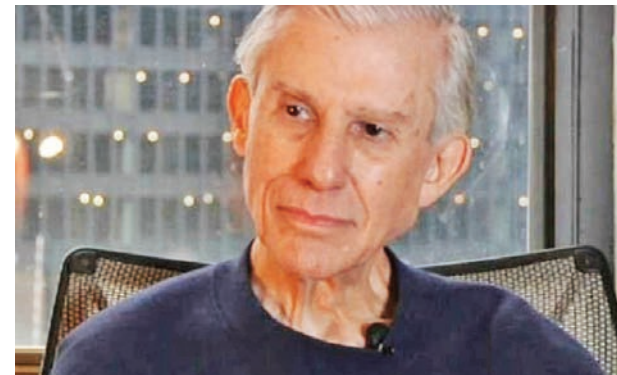
➡ On summer 2017, and during the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, senior British officials were committed to American and Zionist authorities to do their best to "change the nuclear accord", or "cancelling it". In other words, British officials have promised Trump and Netanyahu to accept their final decision, even if it didn't agree with the JCPOA.

The speeches, arrangements, and even the moves of the British Foreign Secretary in confrontation with the JCPOA are all based on a "grand strategy" in British foreign policy. This grand strategy is nothing but their alliance with the United States of America. In this equation, the presence of Democrats or Republicans in power is not basically important. In this political deal, documents such as the JCPOA, though they are of high legal value, will be of no importance to the leaders of London and Washington.

Today we are in 2019! British officials have continued to become indiscriminate mercenaries of the White House in the international system. Undoubtedly, you can never think of England as an independent country and politics in the world of politics! A country whose politicians have been involved in the killing of thousands in the West Asia region and elsewhere.

CIA, Mossad behind Sudan coup: U.S. analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — An American political analyst blamed the U.S. and Israeli regimes for a recent military coup in Sudan and said the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Mossad were most likely behind the recent removal of Omar al-Bashir.



"I suspect the CIA and maybe Israel's Mossad are behind al-Bashir's removal - even though his forces are aiding the Saudis in Yemen," Chicago-based Stephen Lendman told Tasnim in an interview.

Stephen Lendman is a writer, syndicated columnist, activist, News TV personality, and radio show host. He currently writes for MoneyNewsNow.com and VeteransToday.com and hosts, since 2007, a progressive radio show at The Progressive Radio News Hour on The Progressive Radio Network.

The 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: Many post-WW II coups had dirty U.S. hands on them. I suspect the CIA and maybe Israel's Mossad are behind al-Bashir's removal - even though his forces are aiding the Saudis in Yemen.

By its very nature, military rule is repressive. Just societies want a clear separation between military and political authorities, the former serving the latter.

Al-Bashir has been in power for about 30 years. The U.S. wants him tried in the International Criminal Court because he hasn't surrendered Sudanese sovereignty to Washington. The Trump regime wants a subservient puppet replacing him.

What's going on in Sudan should be for the Sudanese to decide, not a hostile foreign country like the U.S., meddling in the affairs of most other nations.

The coup virtually assures democratic governance will not come to power when the Sudanese military relinquishes it - likely to retain it for an extended period.

■ 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: I heard something about the Saudis and UAE meddling in Sudan. What's going on in virtually all conflict theaters was orchestrated in Washington, likely together with the UK, other NATO countries, Israel and other regional ones like the Saudis and UAE in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa.

The Sudanese want foreign hands off their country. The U.S. wants the country transformed into a vassal state, it aims the same for all other nations - notably Russia, China, Venezuela and Iran, along with control over their oil and other resources.

Most Arab countries go along with the U.S. agenda. Because of its sovereign independence, Syria is targeted for regime change, Yemen was targeted because the U.S. wants a puppet regime in charge of it controls, not the independent Houthis.

■ 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: What's going on in Sudan will have no effect on the U.S. war in Yemen, begun by the Bush/Cheney regime in October 2001 - shortly after its naked aggression on Afghanistan.

The key issue is this. The U.S. under Republicans and undemocratic Dems want dominion over planet earth, its resources and populations - by whatever it takes to achieve its objectives.

Naked aggression, color revolutions, and old-fashioned coups like what's being attempted in Venezuela are its favored strategies.

U.S. rage for dominance is humanity's greatest threat. I greatly fear the unthinkable nuclear war against Russia and/or China eventually. Together they're the last powerful frontier against Washington's hegemonic aims. If things turn out this way, we're all doomed.

IME suitable platform of economic prosperity

➡ Under the conditions that the country is dealing with the toughest sanctions ever and unpredictable foreign exchange rate fluctuations and these factors are directly influencing the prices of basic goods and raw materials, unofficial markets, on which the government has no observation, exacerbate the difficulties.

Producers can easily supply their required raw material at IME at real prices. Participating in IME would spur competitiveness among producers to improve quality of their products, as previously mentioned.

On the consumer side, the offered products at IME come with reasonable prices. IME is trying to issue new financial instruments to support domestic production, supply raw materials, and cover price fluctuation risks.

In fact, the road to make production prosper is bumpy. Supplying liquidity of production units, the present banking restrictions in monetary transactions with other coun-

tries, the arrears of the Iranians banks to CBI, the value added taxes levied mostly on producers, the unstable foreign exchange rates, the increased prices of the raw materials, the decrease in purchasing power and the increase in production prices are considered as threatening factors to the goal.

For the newly started Iranian calendar year the government is determined to review and modify its monetary policies about setting foreign exchange rates, curb the rampant inflation and high liquidity volume and supply the present budget deficit via relying on stock market.

Offering crude oil and gas condensates at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) is being done on a regular basis now and it is hoped that the international ring of IRENEX would find a way to give a breath to the oil sales and revenues of Iran, following Trump's removal of Iran oil waiver exemptions.



IME, as the other pillar of Iran's stock market, can play a key role in rescuing the country from Trump's draconian sanctions.

Roberto de la Madrid: West expects Guaidó to serve its corporations' interests

TEHRAN (FNA) — Roberto de la Madrid, an award-winning journalist and political commentator, says the support of the West for the Venezuelan opposition leader "has nothing to do with democracy"; but serving the commercial, military, political and geopolitical interests of the Western corporations.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, Roberto de la Madrid related Washington's intervention in Venezuela's affairs to the US historical regime change policy which allows it to control the natural resources of other countries through their puppet regimes.

Roberto de la Madrid is a Mexican journalist with extensive career in international media. He has won several important journalism prizes, including Mexican National Communication Prize (2011), National Journalism Prize awarded by the Journalists Club and UNAM National Service Award.

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ Why is Guaidó more supported outside Venezuela than inside?

A: Guaidó is well known both at home and abroad. He probably has more support abroad because the Venezuelan right-wing is supported by the US government and, therefore, by many Western commercial media, and many governments that are aligned with Washington. The media plays a crucial role in presenting news in such a way that Guaidó is portrayed as the savior and Maduro as the bad guy. However, a very accurate study should be done within Venezuela to see what percentage of the

people really support Maduro and what percentage Guaidó. It should be remembered that in the last elections for the National Assembly, people supported the opposition and the right-wing won over the Chavistas. Afterwards, Maduro called for general elections where the majority of the opposition parties did not participate. The Chavistas won. Therefore, the percentage of real support to each side remains unknown. Meanwhile, the US sanctions have suffocated Venezuela's economy; we cannot deny that there are people who are unhappy because the average salary of a professional who works with a lot of energy is \$6 a month, which means he has to work for a whole month to be able to buy only 2 kilograms of meat and nothing more.

■ Why does the US see itself entitled to declare an unknown unelected person as the President of Venezuela, as it has done with Guaidó?

A: There is no law, neither in local legislation nor in International Laws which allows the United States or any other countries to recognize or impose a president who has proclaimed himself on the streets of another country. The most logical thing and the most lawful way to do it is to have the United Nations Security Council to evaluate the situation. In this case, the UNSC can declare an intervention and call for elections to restore democracy. However, this has not taken place; so, any coalition of nations would be illegal as they have no approval of the UNSC or the International Law.



■ Does the West expect Guaidó to lead Venezuela toward democracy, or to collapse a country that has been resisting US hegemony for the past two decades?

A: What the United States expects Guaidó is to lead Venezuela to the point where the interests of the big corporations that govern the West are met. What the international coalition that supports Guaidó expects has nothing to do with democracy, but with the acceptance of certain values and rules and the alignment with the commercial, military, political and geopolitical interests established by the big Western corporations.

■ The footprint of the US can be seen in many major crises in oil-rich countries such as Iran (1953) and Iraq

(2003). Do you think "Venezuela (2019)" is on the same list?

A: In a way, it explains the behavior and the voracity of the United States for seizing or controlling the points that it believes are vital for its commercial, military and political spirit. Indeed, the coups it has supported, organized, orchestrated and committed throughout history, are part of a strategy to use democracy or internal politics as a perfect makeup to control the masses and in some way satisfy this guideline: it is necessary for the Stars and Stripes to be waved on the flagpole of this or that country. By imposing a government and controlling it, they can control the natural resources or geographical ports that empower their production and their transit around the world.

Man City fighting ‘like animals’ for Premier League, says Fernandinho

Fernandinho says Manchester City’s desire to fight “like animals” is fuelling their Premier League title charge as they strive to hold off Liverpool.

Pep Guardiola’s City returned to the top of the table with victory against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

The 2-0 win, from their game in hand, took City a point above Liverpool with three matches remaining for both sides.

It was their 11th successive league win and followed a similarly important victory over Tottenham, which came after the disappointment of Champions League elimination at the hands of the same opponents. “We showed the desire in competing for every ball like animals,” said City midfielder Fernandinho after the United match. “I think this is the spirit of a team that wants to be champions. “It was not just Wednesday -- in general every game, especially last Saturday, after the ‘defeat’ against Tottenham, in the way we played from the first minute (City won the second leg of the Champions League quarter-final 4-3 but went out on away goals)

“If you look back to January, they (Liverpool) could have been 10 points clear after our game. We didn’t want that.

“We reduced the gap to four points and now we are one point up. That is the way the Premier League is going to be decided and I hope we can do our job and win those three games, and be champions again.”

The derby, settled with second-half goals from Bernardo Silva and Leroy Sane, was regarded as the toughest hurdle left facing the defending champions in their run-in.

Yet with the lead just a slender one, Fernandinho is aware there is still little room for error. Liverpool, who face already relegated Huddersfield on Friday, will likely be back at the summit before City play their next game at Burnley on Sunday.

(Source: Goal)

Solskjaer confident that Pogba will stay at Man Utd

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is confident that Paul Pogba will still be at Manchester United next season but admits he cannot guarantee the French World Cup winner will stay.

Pogba fuelled speculation linking him with a move to Real Madrid last month, suggesting Real were “a dream club for any player”, although he declared at the time he was happy at Old Trafford. Both manager Solskjaer and United’s board want their £89 million (\$115 million) club-record signing to stay, although they have acknowledged that circumstances could change.

“You can’t guarantee anything in football but yes I think Paul is going to be here,” Solskjaer told reporters on Friday. “I can assure you that he is very determined to be successful at United.”

Pogba scored eight goals and provided five assists in his first 10 games following Solskjaer’s appointment but his performances have tailed off since, and it was a surprise to many observers that the French midfielder was named in the Professional Footballers’ Association’s team of the year on Thursday.

Former Manchester United midfielder Roy Keane this week described Pogba as a “big problem” for the club, suggesting that he was not committed enough to the team.

But Solskjaer said Pogba can cope with the scrutiny.

“That’s just the standards he sets, because when he’s creating chances, scoring goals, doing loads of work... that’s just media, supporters, everyone looks to Paul. ‘Could you have done better?’

“He’s done fantastic for us, he’s a human being as well and we’re all the same, we want him to do well.

(Source: AFP)

Sala’s father dies three months after son



The father of Premier League footballer Emiliano Sala, who was killed in a plane crash earlier this year, has died three months after his son’s death.

Horacio Sala, 58, suffered a heart attack on Friday, his friend and president of his local club confirmed.

Daniel Ribero, from San Martin de Progreso, told C5N TV channel that Mr Sala had passed away before doctors arrived at his home in Progreso.

Emiliano Sala’s plane crashed en route to Cardiff after leaving from France. The Argentine footballer was on his way to joining his new club Cardiff City from French club Nantes in a club record £15m deal when the crash happened over the English Channel.

Progreso mayor Julio Müller led the tributes to Mr Sala, telling La Red radio station: “Horacio could not overcome Emi, we thought that after the discovery he would be able to close that circle.”

The Piper Malibu N264DB plane carrying Sala and pilot David Ibbotson went missing over waters near the Channel Islands on 21 January and it took rescuers two weeks to find the wreckage.

The football star’s body was recovered on 8 February after a private rescue team took over the search for the missing plane.

The father-of-three, a long-distance lorry driver, spoke to the BBC two weeks ago and pleaded “that justice be done” for his son.

He told the BBC Wales Investigates programme he wanted to “continue investigating all the things that we have to know and that we can know.”

“That is all I can ask,” added Mr Sala, who had split-up from his son’s mother Mercedes.

Air accident investigators are still looking into why the Piper Malibu plane carrying Sala to Cardiff for his first training session crashed. The light aircraft was piloted by Mr Ibbotson, from Crowle, North Lincolnshire, whose body has not been found.

(Source: BBC)

Match-fixing not doping poses greatest risk to sport



Two of the men that put the doping crisis in the global spotlight say the integrity of sport now faces a greater threat from match-fixing than drug cheats.

Richard McLaren, who authored a 2016 report into state-sponsored Russian doping and David Howman, a former director general of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), painted an alarming picture about match-fixing at the Symposium on Match Manipulation and Gambling in Sport in Toronto on Wednesday and Thursday.

McLaren, a Canadian law professor and CEO of McLaren Global Sport Solutions, told Reuters that doping and match-fixing combined were the two biggest issues affecting the integrity of sport.

Yet manipulating outcomes was a bigger problem, he said.

“What makes sport different than entertainment is unpredictability. Fixing results removes the greatest and most important characteristic, that unpredictability,” he added.

“If it loses unpredictability because of fixed results the passion for sport is diminished and that is a much bigger issue.”

Match-fixing has become increasingly pervasive in recent years across a number of sports.

More tennis players, for example, were disciplined for violations of anti-corruption rules in 2018 than in any other year in the last 10.

A number of cases in other sports have also brought renewed attention to the issue.

■ Crime syndicates

Organised crime has been the driving

force behind sports corruption, according to Howman, and the globalisation of sports betting has allowed crime syndicates extend their reach and match manipulation expertise.

“I have done a lot of work in the general sport integrity area and I can quote you what I am told by people who work in that more general business, including enforcement agents, and they all say the biggest threat to sport integrity is organised crime,” Howman, a New Zealand-based barrister who was director general at WADA from 2003 to 2016 and now serves as the chair of the Athletics Integrity Unit, told Reuters.

“We saw it coming at WADA and I raised it during my term there as a significant issue

that needed to be countered by world sport, because the bad guys involved in pushing dope and steroids are the same bad guys involved in match manipulation.”

Andy Cunningham, director of integrity services for Sportradar, a company that monitors betting patterns and offers intelligence to over 100 sports governing bodies, said exact figures for how much is bet on sport are at best a “guesstimate”.

Interpol, however, set the figure at \$500 billion a year.

Operating in every corner of the globe, match-fixers work to manipulate the outcome of everything from World Cup matches to the lower rungs of the International Tennis

Federation’s (ITF) Futures tournaments.

Sportradar reported in 2015 it had identified as many as 60 fixed matches in the Canadian Soccer League (CSL), a small league operating mostly in Southern Ontario with few supporters that was for years the target of Asian match fixers.

In the most recent Sportradar report, Cunningham said the CSL had largely cleaned up its act and Asian bookmakers had lost interest.

■ No global agency

McLaren pointed to an ITF-commissioned report that found only 600 of the nearly 14,000 players competing in ITF competitions made enough money to cover their costs, providing an impoverished pool of athletes for fixers to target.

There is no global agency in place to fight corruption in sport in the way WADA was set up to combat doping and nor, according to Howman, is there ever likely to be such an organisation.

Instead the fight is being left to often ill-equipped individual sporting bodies, governments and law enforcement agencies.

“Everyone is resisting another WADA,” said Howman. “They don’t want to have an independent body taking control over their fiefdoms and they don’t want to see another fall like a Russian fall and that would be likely if you had a world anti-corruption unit or whatever you wanted to call it.

“What I think will occur is step-by-step. Tennis is confronting it now, cricket has confronted it. There are sports where there is already entrenched match-fixing.

(Source: Reuters)

Sterling honored with award for fighting racism



Manchester City’s England forward Raheem Sterling has been awarded The Integrity and Impact Award at this year’s BT Sport Industry Awards for speaking out on a range of social issues, including racism.

Sterling was recognized for his fight against racism in the sport and for using his platform to call for more action to be taken. He had said this month that more players needed to speak out when they suffered racism to eradicate it from the game.

“I was just speaking about my personal experiences, I didn’t expect it to get so much attention. I just wanted to bring it to the attention of my audience on Instagram,” Sterling said as he received the award from his England coach Gareth Southgate.

“It’s been really pleasing to see people listening and trying and do better. Partly what happens when you try to do good things is you set examples for the next generation coming through.”

The 24-year-old also signed a manifesto earlier this week where he said clubs should be handed automatic nine-point deductions and ordered to play three games behind closed doors if their supporters indulged in racist behavior.

Sterling, who began his career at Liverpool, said the example of his former captain

Steven Gerrard encouraged him to try to develop into a role model.

“Coming from Liverpool I had people around me like Steven Gerrard that I looked up to and I’m looking at him and thinking ‘what can I do within myself to be half the person and player he was’,” he added.

“You take little things and each year you try and develop them and become better not just on the field but off it as well.”

Dow Jones Sports Intelligence, the founder of the award, congratulated Sterling for the impact his actions had in addressing racism and other “social issues of diversity and inclusivity”.

“He has given new confidence and a voice to other footballers and athletes to speak out when once they may not have done so,” Dow Jones head of sport Simon Greenberg said in a statement issued on Thursday. “He has sparked the sports media and the industry more widely to consider conscious or sub-conscious racial bias in their actions.”

England manager Southgate received the Leadership in Sport Award on behalf of the FA for building a new atmosphere in the dressing room which helped his team reach the 2018 World Cup semi-finals.

(Source: Mirror)

‘We’re all grateful to him’: Nadal salutes retiring Ferrer in Barcelona



Rafael Nadal showed no mercy towards an emotional David Ferrer as he eased into the quarter-finals of the Barcelona Open on Thursday, describing his compatriot who is winding down his career as a “pleasure to watch”.

Ferrer is set to retire after the Madrid Open next month and made a tearful exit on what was his 15th and final appearance at this tournament.

But there was no room for sentiment for Nadal, who won 6-3, 6-3 to take one step closer to a record 12th Barcelona title.

Four of those triumphs came after beating Ferrer in the final and, at the end of this latest victory, Nadal’s 37-year-old opponent saluted the crowd before placing his pink headband down on the service line.

“David is not retiring because of his level but it has been a complicated year and a half for him with injuries,” Nadal said.

“His level this year has still been very high and for all these years he’s been fighting hard and giving us pleasure watching him. We are all grateful to him.”

Ferrer reached a career-high ranking of number three in the world in 2013, the same year he went closest to winning a Grand Slam too, undone by Nadal again

in the French Open final.

“I gave everything I had,” added Ferrer. “I’m very happy, it’s a dream come true to play one of my last matches on this court.”

Nadal will be gunning for his 12th success at Roland Garros next month and this was more like the sort of form expected of the world number two, who had won 30 consecutive sets in Barcelona before falling one behind to Leonardo Mayer on Wednesday.

“I had to majorly improve,” Nadal added. “I need to step up, play with more energy and a different attitude.”

Nadal will now face Germany’s Jan-Lennard Struff, who knocked out fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, before a potential semi-final meeting with Dominic Thiem, whom he beat in the French Open final last year.

Fourth seed Kei Nishikori is also through after beating Felix Auger-Aliassime in straight sets.

Nadal broke Ferrer for 4-2 in the opening set and was serving for it at 5-3 when rain delayed the match for almost an hour.

But the stoppage could not change the momentum, with Nadal quickly wrapping up the frame upon his return before breaking again early in the second.

(Source: AFP)

Neymar headlines returning cast as PSG target French Cup



Paris Saint-Germain’s pursuit of a fifth successive French Cup title will be bolstered by the return of Neymar and Edinson Cavani from long-term injuries for Saturday’s showdown with Rennes at the Stade de France.

Brazil star Neymar made his first appearance since January 23 as a second-half substitute in Sunday’s 3-1 win over Monaco as PSG celebrated clinching a sixth Ligue 1 crown in seven years.

Cavani also returned to action, coming on for the final 17 minutes, as PSG’s famed front three -- which has accounted for 78 goals this season -- were reunited after months apart.

Coach Thomas Tuchel admitted he “worried” for PSG’s prospects after they blew a third chance to wrap up the league at Nantes last week, but the German struck a more positive note after watching his team belatedly seal the title.

“Our objective is clear: to win the double. We have to win on Saturday,” said Tuchel, who is also set to welcome back Angel Di Maria after six weeks out.

“The French Cup is very important to us, and we hope to clinch it and leave nothing for the others,” added goalkeeper Alphonse Areola, his thoughts echoed by defender Marquinhos.

“A title is always about honour and pride. We all know

what our goal for the season is, and that’s to win a maximum number of titles for the club,” said the Brazilian.

Anything less than a domestic double for PSG, attempting to lift the French Cup for a record 13th time, would cast further gloom over the Qatari-backed club after their latest European failure.

But Gianluigi Buffon expects Rennes, who enjoyed their best ever run on the continent this year by reaching the Europa League last 16, to present a tricky test.

PSG beat Rennes 3-1 at Roazhon Park and won 4-1 at the Parc des Princes, but Rennes will look for the ultimate revenge as they chase a first French Cup in 48 years.

“The fact that it’s a one-off match, a final, brings the two sides closer together, the gap isn’t as wide as it can be over 38 matches,” Buffon told PSG TV.

“In the league our chances might have been 80-20, in the final it’s more like 60-40 or 65-35, because it’s a final where anything can happen.”

Rennes won the trophy in 1965 and 1971, but the Brittany club have painful memories of their past two finals -- finishing as runners-up to neighbours Guingamp in both 2009 and 2014.

“We have a bit more experience now than we did during our first games in Europe but it’s still a totally different game,” said Rennes captain Benjamin Andre.

“Lifting the trophy at the Stade de France would be great. We know the expectations at Rennes. We’ll obviously give it our all like we do in each match.”

(Source: Guardian)

Iran’s Shahrdari Varamin crowned Asian Club Volleyball champion

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Shahrdari Varamin from Iran claimed the title of the 2019 Asian Men’s Club Volleyball Championship after edging past Japan’s Panasonic Panthers in the final match.

The Iranian team came back from two set deficits to beat Panthers (25–20, 25–16, 22–25, 20–25, 14–16) at the University of Taipei (Tianmu) Gymnasium on Friday.

“We are very happy of winning the match because we had lost to Panthers in the early stage. We hope we can be a good representative for Iran in the FIVB Volleyball Men’s Club World Championship,” Shahrdari Varamin coach Rahman Mohammadirad said.

The 2019 Asian Men’s Club Volleyball Championship, an annual international volleyball club tournament, organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Chinese Taipei Volleyball Association (CTVA).

The tournament was held in Taipei, Chinese Taipei, from 18 to 26 April 2019.

Shahrdari Varamin will represent Iran at the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men’s Club World Championship.

Since the championship’s inception in 1999 in Hefei, China, Iran has made it to the final round for 15 editions. Their first debut final showdown dated back to 2000 in Suphanburi, Thailand, when they picked up silver medal after going down to Korea’s Samsung Fire.

Among these 15 editions where teams from Iran had made it to the final round, they captured 14 Asian Men’s Club Championship titles altogether – Paykan Tehran (7 titles), Sarmayeh Bank Tehran (2), Sanam Tehran (1), Kalleh Mazandaran (1), Matin Varamin (1), Khatam Ardakan (1) and Shahrdari Varamin (1).



Mousavi snatches silver at Asian Weightlifting Championships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ayoub Mousavi claimed Iran’s second silver at the Asian Weightlifting Championships underway in Ningbo in China.

Mousavi, who finished third in the snatch with 166kg and second in the clean and jerk with 207kg, claimed the silver with a total of 373kg in the 96kg weight category.

China’s Tian Tao managed 181kg in

the snatch and 220kg in the clean and jerk for a total of 401kg.

The bronze medal went to South Korea’s Han Jung-hoon with 366kg after posting 160kg in the snatch and 206kg in the clean and jerk.

Ali Miri of Iran had claimed a silver medal in the men’s 89kg category on Wednesday.

Miri seizes silver at Asian Weightlifting Championships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ali Miri of Iran claimed a silver medal at the Asian Weightlifting Championships in Ningbo in China on Wednesday.

In the men’s 89kg category, South Korea’s Yu Dong-ju claimed the overall crown with 367kg.

He posted 160kg in the snatch and an unrivalled 207kg in the clean and jerk.

Miri was the overall runner-up with 366kg having finished third in the snatch with 161kg and second in the clean and jerk with 205kg.

The bronze medal went to Japan’s Toshiki Yamamoto with 358kg, comprising 203kg in the snatch – enough for the bronze medal – and 155kg in the clean and jerk.

Iran and Vietnam deadlocked, Korea Republic cruise past Lebanon

Group hosts Vietnam were held to a 1-1 draw by Islamic Republic of Iran, while Korea Republic put nine goals past Lebanon on the opening day of Group B action in Round 2 of the AFC U-19 Women’s Championship Thailand 2019 Qualifiers.

VIETNAM 1-1 ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

An equalizer from captain Zahra Khodabakhshi gave Islamic Republic of Iran a share of the spoils, and a fighting chance of reaching the finals after a 1-1 draw with Vietnam.

Khodabakhshi’s 54th-minute strike was just reward for an Iranian side who surged home in the second half, after Ngan Thi Van Su had given Vietnam the early advantage.

Two years after Vietnam’s senior women’s national team had beaten Iran 6-1 on the same ground, Team Melli’s new generation showed their improvement, coming close to claiming all three points on a number of occasions in the dying stages.

Earlier, there was little indication of the struggle that lay ahead for Vietnam, with Van Su opening the scoring in the 14th minute to punish Iranian goalkeeper Mahdiyeh Mahmoudinia, who had spilled a teasing cross from Tran Thi Thu Xuan.

The hosts took their lead to half-time, but Team Melli - coached by Katayoun Khosrowyar, who had been among Iranian staff during the 6-1 defeat of 2017 - produced an exemplary second half to claim a point.

The impressive Khodabakhshi stole in behind the Vi-



etnamese defence to beat Tran Thi Ngoc Anh and squeeze home the equaliser just before the hour mark, then saw her towering header go agonisingly wide of the goal with the goalkeeper stranded in the 78th minute.

Vietnam’s task became more difficult when Tran Thi Hai Linh was given her marching orders for a second bookable offence with 10 minutes remaining, and Iran spurned a glorious late chance when substitute Negin Zandi rounded Ngoc Anh, only for a desperate clearance from Pham Thi Lan Anh to save the hosts from opening night defeat.

KOREA REPUBLIC 9-0 LEBANON

Korea Republic made a striking early statement in their bid to return to the AFC U-19 Women’s Championship, beating Lebanon 9-0 in their opening fixture.

Striker Kang Ji-woo helped herself to a personal haul of four goals, while five other players also found the back of the net as the Koreans put themselves in a strong position to take one of the two qualifying spots on offer in Group B.

Lebanon had reached this stage after impressing on home soil in the first round of qualifying last October, but they found Hur Jung-jae’s well-drilled side too much to handle, as Kang opened the scoring on 10 minutes, before Choo Hyo-joo doubled the lead four minutes later.

Further goals to Jung Min-young, Kim Eun-soul and a second for Kang had Lebanon staring down a five-goal deficit at half-time, before Kang completed her hat-trick eight minutes after the break to bring up the half-dozen.

Kim Soo-jin ensured the goals kept flowing in the 64th minute, before Kang netted her fourth 15 minutes later, with the ninth and final addition to the scoresheet coming five minutes from time through Jeong Yu-jin.

Korea can potentially seal their place in the Finals with another win over Islamic Republic of Iran on Sunday, while Lebanon must act urgently to salvage their campaign against group hosts Vietnam.

(Source: the-afc)

Pouya Idani wins GuoTai Cup Open Chess Tournament

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Pouya Idani (2590) won the 2nd GuoTai Cup Open Chess Tournament in Qinhuangdao, China on Thursday.

He won the tournament with 7.5/9. Chinese Wang Hao 2726) and Wu Wenjin (2345) came second and third with 6.5 and 6 points respectively.



Idani, who was awarded the title of Grandmaster (GM) by FIDE in 2014, won cash prize of USD \$18,000.

Then 2nd Guotai Cup Belt and Road International Open is a 9-round Swiss tournament which took place in Qinhuangdao, China from April 16 to 25.

The players had 90 minutes for all their moves with a 30-second increment per move from move 1.

Iran’s Heydarinejhad takes silver at Asian Snooker Tour

Ehsan Heydarinejhad from Iran claimed a silver medal at the inaugural Asian Snooker Tour on Thursday.

Heydarinejhad lost to Indian player Pankaj Advani 6-4 at the final match.

Advani, a 21-time world snooker and billiards champion, beat Heydarinejhad 52-40, 66(58)-0, 1-63(62), 78-4, 35-47, 0-51, 47-35, 38-39, 53(49)-35, 51(50)-20 in the final.

The competition was held in Bengaluru, India.

“Ehsan is a worthy opponent who is one of the most improved players on the circuit. I’m happy to have changed the result in this match when it mattered most,” Advani said.

(Source: Firstpost)

Jamshidian claims bronze at Asian Cycling C’ships

TASNIM — Amirhossein Jamshidian from Iran claimed a bronze medal in the 40-km men’s under-23 individual time trial of the Asian Cycling Championships on Wednesday.

Yevgeniy Fedorov from Kazakhstan won the gold medal.

The silver medal went to TU Chih Hao from Taiwan.

The 39th Asian Road Cycling Championships started on Tuesday in Uzbekistan.

More than 500 athletes from 40 Asian countries and regions are taking part in the most prestigious cycling competition of the continent.

The Asian Cycling Championships (ACC) is an annual continental cycling championships for road bicycle racing and track cycling since 1963, exclusively for Asian cyclists selected by the national governing body (member nations of the Asian Cycling Confederation).

Gol Gohar, Shahin Bushehr win promotion to Iran Professional League

Persian League — Gol Gohar Sirjan and Shahin Bushehr won promotion to the Iran Professional League (IPL) in the penultimate game of the First Division.

Gol Gohar defeated Shahrdari Mahshahr 1-0 thanks to Peyman Ranjbari’s injurytime goal in Kerman.

Gol Gohar advanced to IPL and Shahrdari Mahshahr were relegated to Iran’s Second Division.

Furthermore, Shahin Bushehr edged past Sorkhpooshan Pakdasht 1-0 and sealed promotion to IPL.

Mohammad Mohebbi scored the only goal of the match in the 59th minute.

Claim Nottingham Forest forward is considering leaving the City Ground

Greek website Sdna.Gr claim Nottingham Forest’s Iranian forward Karim Ansarifard is considering leaving the club after less than a season.

The Iran international joined Forest on a free transfer last November but he’s failed to replicate the form he showed in Greece.

Sdna report despite the managerial change at Nottingham Forest his situation hasn’t improved at the City Ground and the Championship side are also looking to part ways with the player.

The Greek website claims despite his good memories in Greece, Ansarifard is not looking for a return to the country as he wants to continue his career in a different league next season. The 29 year old spent four seasons in the Greek top fight before his move to England.

Ansarifard only managed to make 10 Championship appearances with Nottingham Forest this season and scored one goal.

The former Olympiacos striker is under contract with the English club until June 2020 but his future looks uncertain.

(Source: Sdna.gr)

Nottingham Forest fans will love Karim Ansarifard’s latest comment after win

Nottingham Forest ran out comfortable 3-0 winners against Middlesbrough on Monday, with the Reds dominating the game from start to finish.

A brace from Joe Lolley and a late goal from Alexander Milosevic proved to be enough for Martin O’Neill’s side on the day.

The Forest boss made a number of changes to his starting XI as he keeps his squad fresh in a busy period of the season, and one player that came into the squad was Karim Ansarifard who started the game up-front ahead of Lewis Grabban and Daryl Murphy.

Ansarifard took to Instagram following the win and praised the Nottingham Forest supporters for their contribution in helping the team over the line on the day.

Ansarifard put in a solid display against Boro, but was unable to get his name on the scoresheet and was substituted after shortly after the hour mark for Lewis Grabban.

He’ll be hoping that he can be given a consistent run

in the Forest starting XI heading towards the conclusion of this year’s campaign though, with Forest not having anything to play for now.

This was only his second league start of the season, in a disappointing spell with the Reds since arriving in the summer of 2018 after being released from Greek side, Olympiacos.

Nottingham Forest are next in action against QPR at the weekend, in a game where they’ll be hoping to come out with three points against a QPR side that have struggled towards the back end of this season.

The Verdict:

It has been a season to forget for Ansarifard.

He’s only made 11 appearances in total for the Reds, and he’ll be keen to put this disappointing spell behind him at the earliest of opportunities.

He’ll be keen to keep the pressure on Lewis Grabban for a starting spot in the Nottingham Forest team next season,



where they’ll be hoping to be challenging for a top six finish.

(Source: Footballleagueworld)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Beware of making friends with a fool for he tries to attract you by his behavior and make you like himself.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Mosaic painting



■ Negar Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of mosaic paintings by Afsaneh Tavusi, Sara Valipur, Maryam Baqeri, Mahbubeh Sabur, Ahmad Shadkani and several other artists. The exhibition titled "Van Gogh" will run until May 1 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

Painting



■ An exhibition of paintings by Ava Salehi is underway at White Line Gallery. The exhibit named "Abstraction and Tank" will run until May 6 at the gallery located at 22 Parvin Alley, off Jame Jam St. off Vali-e Asr Ave.



■ Paintings by Azim Morakkabatchi are currently on view in an exhibition at Negah Gallery. The exhibit titled "Autopsia" will be running until May 8 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.



■ A collection of paintings by Heros Bandari is on display in an exhibition at Elaheh Gallery. The exhibition will be running until May 6 at the gallery that can be found at 47 Golfam St., off Afriqa Ave.



■ Mina Sabzi is displaying her latest paintings in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery. The exhibition will run until May 8 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



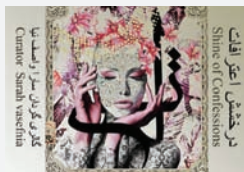
■ Homa Gallery is showcasing paintings by Kasra Golrang in an exhibition named "Plants". The exhibit runs until May 7 at the gallery, which can be found at 8, Forth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ Elham Shafaei is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Saye Gallery. The exhibit titled "We Are Lost" will run until May 1 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.



■ Paintings by Mohammad Nurian are currently on display in an exhibition at Farmanfarma Gallery. The exhibit titled "The Song of the Night in the Golden Garden" runs until May 10 at the gallery located at 2nd Araabi St., North Kheradmand St. in the Karim Khan neighborhood.



■ Bahman Puya, Zahra Tabrizi, Shima Hesami, Maral Soltani and four other artists are displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Shalman Gallery. The exhibit name "Shine of the Confessions" will run until May 1 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.



■ A collection of paintings by Goli Omidvar is on display in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery. The exhibition will run until May 1 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

“A Russian Youth” crowned best at Fajr filmfest

A R T **TEHRAN** — “A Russian Youth”, Russian director Alexander Zolotukhin’s World War I drama won the award for best film at the 37th Fajr International Film Festival on Thursday as the director of the festival scorned Donald Trump’s sanctions on Iran.

The movie, which received the Critics’ Circle Award at the festival earlier on Wednesday, is about 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.

“Our team made this movie with love,” Zolotukhin said and added that he is happy that his film received an award from an Iranian festival.

Ayrat Yamilov who has worked as a cinematographer in the film received the award on behalf of Zolotukhin during a ceremony held at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall.

This film also received the award for best directorial movie.

The closing ceremony of Fajr, which is Iran’s major international event in film industry, began with a speech by the festival’s director, Reza Mirkarimi, who denounced the U.S. government’s sanctions against Iran.

“This year we were confronted with unjust unilateral sanctions, which not only have targeted our economy but also our culture,” he lamented.

“However, despite all the problems and due to the elevated position of Iranian cinema, we managed to organize a magnificent festival with our friends from across the world who didn’t abandon us,” he added.

The award for best director remained at home as Iranian filmmaker Soroush Sehat won the award for his latest film “Dance with Me”.

In his brief speech, Sehat asked people to show tolerance towards their opponents. “If this would occur in the world, that is, if we befriend each other and understand our opponents, we will feel fine and the world will become good and then the world will begin to dance with us like now as the world is dancing with me.”

The award for best screenwriter went to Oliver Haffner and Gernot Kräã for “Wackersdorf” directed by Haffner from Germany.



Soroush Sehat (L) from Iran speaks after accepting the award for best director for his film “Dance with Me” during the 37th Fajr International Film Festival at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on April 25, 2019.

The film tells the story of residents in Wackersdorf, a municipality in the district of Schwandorf in Bavaria, who are concerned over plans to build a nuclear reprocessing plant in their small, but financially strapped community.

Martina Apostolova was picked as best actress for her portrayal of a part-time waitress in a small Bulgarian town in “Irina” directed by Nadejda Koseva.

“Before the Frost” by Danish director Michael Noer won its star, Jesper Christensen, the award for best actor. The jury honored Chinese director Jingxiang Li with their special award for her “Spring Sparrow”.

The award for best short film was presented to “Excess Will Save Us” by Swedish filmmaker Morgane Dziurla-Petit.

Chinese illustrator Xiong Liang eager to work with Iranian writers

1 → Liang’s works have been awarded in several national and international events. His book “The Little Stone Lion” received the China Times Best Children’s Book of the Year Award in 2005. In addition, he also won China’s Most Beautiful Book of the Year Award for “Lotus Back” in 2008.

In 2018, he became the first Chinese

shortlisted for the Hans Christian Andersen Award for illustration.

“I want to tell my people’s stories and introduce Chinese culture to children through painting. Children are more impressionable and can understand messages more easily, and when they grow up, they can pass it on to the next generation,” he concluded.

As a special guest, China is participating in the book fair with the motto of “Getting to Know China”.

Almost 200 Chinese cultural figures and officials, as well as over 100 publishers, writers, translators and illustrators from the country, are taking part in the book fair, which will run until May 4.



Chinese illustrator Xiong Liang in an undated photo.

Iranian artist Ali Buzari selected for BIB jury

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Friday that illustrator Ali Buzari has been selected for the jury of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) 2019.



Iranian illustrator Ali Buzari.

Buzari, who is also an art researcher, was on the jury during the 2017 BIB. He has previously given speeches at the Bratislava symposiums in 2013 and 2015.

Buzari’s fellow artist, Mohammad-Hossein Matak is also scheduled to hold a workshop during the biennial, which will be held in the capital of Slovakia from October 25 to January 6, 2020.

In addition, Iranian scholar Hossein Sheikhrezai will deliver a speech about the school of original illustration in the digital world.

The Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava is supported by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), the Slovak Ministry of Culture and UNESCO.

“My Second Year in College” star Soha Niasati named best actress at Moscow festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Soha Niasati, the star of Iranian director Rasul Sadr-Ameli’s drama “My Second Year in College”, was crowned best actress for her role in the film at the 41st Moscow International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Thursday.

The film is about two close friends who go on an excursion to Isfahan. When one of them falls into a coma, the other one finds that any confrontation turns out to be a new challenge.

Tommi Korpela won the award for best actor for his role in “Void” by Finnish director Aleksi Salmenperä.

“The Secret of a Leader” by Farhat Sharipov from Kazakhstan was named best film, while Valerio Mastandrea from Italy won the award for best director for his film “Ride”.



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