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# Iraqi, Iranian military officials meet in Tehran

Baqeri calls Iran, Iraq two key powers of Islamic world



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## Excluding Iran from oil market impossible: Barkindo

**TEHRAN**— The secretary-general of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said it is "impossible" to eliminate Iranian crude from the global market, Shana reported.

Mohammed Barkindo made the remarks Thursday on the sidelines of the 24th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran

Oil Show 2019) at Tehran.

He said, "There is no need to repeat it. It is impossible to eliminate Iranian oil from the market."

Last month, the Trump administration announced it will end waivers on crude purchase granted to Iran's primary oil buyers in a bid to push Tehran oil sales to zero. **→5**

## Zarif does not think Iran-U.S. military war is imminent

By staff and agency

Iranian Foreign Ministry Mohammad has said that he does not think war between Iran and the United States is imminent.

However, he told Independent in an interview published on Thursday, that "accidents can happen" that then spiral into a military conflict.

He gave the example of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway where most of the world's

oil exporters pass through, when he was asked about these "accidents".

Zarif also mentioned the January 2016 incident in the Persian Gulf when two U.S. Navy boats entered Iranian waters and were captured by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Back then, Javad Zarif and his American counterpart John Kerry had a direct line of communication following their two years of nuclear negotiations. **→2**

## Israeli forces will be annihilated if they dare attack Lebanon: Nasrallah

**TEHRAN** — The secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement has cautioned the Tel Aviv regime against launching a new military aggression against his country, stressing that "Israeli forces will be destroyed" in such a case.

Addressing his supporters via a televised speech broadcast live from the Lebanese capital of Beirut on Thursday evening, Sayyed

Hassan Nasrallah dismissed the possibility of a new Israeli war on Lebanon this summer, describing such speculation and related media reports as "psychological warfare."

"All in Israel know that any war on Lebanon needs to be decisive and swift. Hezbollah remains fairly capable and utterly determined irrespective of sanctions imposed on it. **→13**

## Trump's decision on IRGC has nothing to do with international law: prof. Zonis

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
By Payman Yazdani

**TEHRAN** — Professor of international political economy in the University of Chicago believes Trump's move against the IRGC is based on the advice of his evangelical supporters and hardline advisers.

The White House's increasingly aggressive approaches towards Iran came to a head as the administration of US President Donald Trump designated the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization through an official statement.

In light of this development, we reached out to Marvin Zonis, Professor of international political economy and leadership in the University of Chicago.

Commenting on the legitimacy of the Pres-



ident Trump's decision to designate the IRGC as a terrorist group and the reasons behind his unprecedented move, he said, "The US President's decision is based on the advice he has been receiving from his hardline advisers — most especially from John Bolton. Bolton seeks the overthrow of the clerical establishment and the

new sanctions are meant to diminish the business success that the IRGC has enjoyed."

He went on to add, "The decision is also a communication to his evangelical supporters who seek a powerful Israel to prepare for the return of the Christ. It is also a communication to Israel and Saudi Arabia that the US remains an enemy of their enemy. It has nothing to do with international law."

Zonis also emphasized that the reflection of Trump in 2020 US presidential election is another reason behind his decision on the IRGC.

Touching upon the consequences of the White House's move and its effects on the security and stability of the region he noted, "Iran is left with bitter choices. It may take steps that would provoke Trump to retaliate with the real possibility of an escalation to a shooting war."

## Pentagon warns on risk of Chinese submarines in Arctic

**TEHRAN**- Deepening Chinese activities in the Arctic region could pave the way for a strengthened military presence, including the deployment of submarines to act as deterrents against nuclear attack, the Pentagon said in a report.

According to Reuters, the assessment is included in the U.S. military's annual report to Congress on China's armed forces and follows Beijing's publication of its first official Arctic policy white paper in June.

In that paper, China outlined plans to develop shipping lanes opened up by global warming to form a "Polar Silk Road" - building on President Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road Initiative.

China, despite being a non-Arctic state, is increasingly active in the polar region and became an observer member of the Arctic Council in 2013. That has prompted concerns from Arctic states over Beijing's long-term strategic objectives, including possible military deployments.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will attend the meeting of the eight-nation Arctic Council in Rovaniemi, Finland, starting on Monday, which comes amid concerns over China's increased commercial interests in the Arctic.

The Pentagon report noted that Denmark has expressed concern about China's interest in Greenland, which has included proposals

to establish a research station and a satellite ground station, renovate airports and expand mining.

"Civilian research could support a strengthened Chinese military presence in the Arctic Ocean, which could include deploying submarines to the region as a deterrent against nuclear attacks," the report said.

The Pentagon report noted that China's military has made modernizing its submarine fleet a high priority. China's navy operates four nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, six nuclear-powered attack submarines and 50 conventionally powered attack submarines, the report said. **→13**

**PERSPECTIVE**  
**Hanif Ghaffari**  
Head of the TehranTimes  
Politics Desk

## The endless concerns of Trump

The popularity of Trump has dropped in recent polls in the United States. Donald Trump's calculations have been incorrect in many cases! This has exacerbated Republican concerns over next year's presidential elections. An overview of the results of recent polls in the United States shows that Trump has a difficult path to re-election.

As The Hill reported, More than 50 percent of respondents in a new survey say they will not vote for President Trump when he seeks reelection in 2020. The ABC News-Washington Post poll released Monday found that 55 percent of respondents said they will not vote for Trump next year, with only 39 percent approving of his work since taking office.

Of respondents who were asked if they would vote from Trump in 2020, 14 percent said they would consider it and 28 percent said they definitely would vote for him to have a second term in the White House. Of those respondents who said they wouldn't vote for Trump, only 29 percent said they would for sure vote for his eventual Democratic counterpart.

The fact is that the President of the United States is having a hard time! Undoubtedly, Trump will now take steps to win White's votes and gray votes for the 2020 presidential election. Meanwhile, opponents of the U.S. president have begun their campaign to defeat Trump. The popularity of Trump in crucial states such as Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin can make this change in the results of the presidential elections of 2020 at his own expense.

Trump is now worried about the upcoming presidential election. He will take any action in order to get public votes. Most of these actions have a populist aspect. The president of the United States is trying to implement the same formula for the presidential election of 2016 in 2020.

**ARTICLE**  
**Martin Love**  
Political analyst from  
North Carolina

## U.S. undermines itself clinging to hegemonic notions

Anyone looking at Iran from afar could presume conditions have not been worse in the past 30 plus years, or since the end of the Iraq-Iran war, a war which never would have occurred if the U.S. had not urged Saddam Hussain on and given him chemical weapons. Little did Saddam know that in a few more years he would be hung by the Americans after the U.S. military had killed hundreds of thousands of his countrymen and destroyed much of Iraq's infrastructure.

Any good student of history knows that the U.S. has been the most destructive, murderous country in world history. The numbers simply bear it out, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki are examples. It's indisputable. One might have said the same about the Mongols in the mid 13th century CE. The Mongols wrecked much of Baghdad (and other Muslim cities east and west) and ended the Abbasid Caliphate, but it was not much later that the Mongols assimilated and were spiritually seduced by Islam and the glories of Islamic culture and civilization. Americans, if truth be known, are neither sophisticated nor knowledgeable enough to realize their culture is primarily shallow and crude and without particular merit, at least in recent decades, compared to the Muslim world in its best iterations over the centuries. Rampant materialism does not a sublime culture make.

One is reminded of Mahatma Gandhi, who once was asked by an American reporter in India not long before he was assassinated: "What do you think of Western civilization?" (Gandhi as a young man had trained and worked as an attorney in both South Africa and England and knew both East and West.) Gandhi looked squarely at the reporter and answered: "I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA."

Indeed, if the U.S. has in the past tried to don some veneer of respectability with propaganda about respect for "democracy" or "human rights" or whatever, those days are over. There was never much under the veneer anyway in recent decades, but now even the veneer is gone. **→6**



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## Horse beauty contest wraps up in Golestan province

A horse breeder handles horses during a beauty contest festival dedicated to Turkmen horses, which wrapped up in Sufian village, Golestan province, on May 1, 2019.

Some 190 horses were trotting in the event, which brought together horse breeders, dealers, trainers, riders and owners from all over the country.

The Turkmen horse is noted for its endurance, bravery, smartness, and slender bodies yet its breeding is actually one of the toughest in the world.



## Iran condemns U.S. military threats against Venezuela

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has condemned the United States for threatening to use military force to topple the legitimate Venezuelan government.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the U.S. attempts to cause a coup in Venezuela or take any military action in the country and also Washington’s officials’ remarks to incite chaos and violence,” he said in a statement published on Thursday.

Mousavi said threatening to use force against a country is a violation of international law and urged the international community to respond to such remarks.

“Unfortunately, the international stability is under threat by some warmonger and lawless vandals in the U.S. administration, and it is essential that all members of the international community use what’s in their power to resolve the issue,” he added.



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday that U.S. military action in Venezuela is an option.

“The President has been crystal clear and incredibly consistent. Military action is possible. If that’s what’s required, that’s what the United States will do,” Pompeo said on Fox Business Network.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan also noted that the Pentagon had carried out “exhaustive planning” for possible operations in Venezuela.

The Pentagon even announced Wednesday that Shanahan was calling off a planned trip to Europe in order to “more effectively coordinate” with the U.S. National Security Council and State Department on Venezuela.

U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton told reporters on Wednesday that “all options” for Venezuela are under consideration at the White House, according to Politico.

Trump tweeted on Wednesday that the U.S. would impose a “full and complete embargo” on Cuba if it does not halt support for Nicolas Maduro.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has told Pompeo that the U.S. influence over Venezuela is destructive and a violation of international law.

## FM says Iran won’t bow to sanctions pressure

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that Iran will never bow to sanctions pressure by the United States.

The remarks by Zarif comes as the U.S. has withdrawn from the 2015 nuclear agreement and reimposed the toughest ever sanctions under the policy of “maximum pressure” on Iran.

On April 22, it also announced that Washington is ending sanctions waiver on Iran’s oil export, threatening to drive Iran’s oil exports to zero by May 2. It threatened any country that buys oil from Iran will be punished.

“We will find a way. We have [done that] for 40 years, and will [do so] now too,” Zarif told the Doha-based Al-Sharq newspaper on the sidelines of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) hosted by Qatar.

Acknowledging that the approach adopted by Iran to neutralize U.S. sanctions pressure is not easy, he said, “We will never accept pressures against our nation...We will never bow under pressures.”

However, Zarif said, Iran would welcome all those extending a hand of friendship towards it, according to Press TV.

Zarif attended the ministerial ACD summit on Wednesday, where he warned the participants about the “existential threat” that the United States’ unilateralism poses to the entire international community.

The “rising and aggressive unilateralist wave” threatens to affect the entire world, in which case, the rule of jungle would quickly replace the rule of law, Zarif told the delegates.

On a plan by the U.S. to label the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement as a “terrorist organization”, Zarif said, “The U.S. is supporting the biggest terrorist in our region, namely the Zionist regime [of Israel]. Therefore, Washington is in no position to designate others as terrorists either in word or in deed.”

Tehran condemns whatever action that Washington may take in this regard, Zarif added.

On April 8, the U.S. designated the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), a branch of Iran’s military, as terrorist.

Politicians and analysts say the designation against the IRGC, which has emerged as a strong force against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, as a gift to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who was facing reelection on April 9.

The Islamic Republic has gravely warned about the repercussions the move has for regional and international security, and reciprocally has designated American forces based in West Asia, known as the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), as terrorist.

Zarif added, “Whatever action that the U.S. has taken so far has been in line with sabotaging the region’s stability. I cannot even recall one instance, where the U.S. might have taken a step towards [contributing] to our region’s stability.”

## Qatar: Sanctions on Iran won’t bring positive results

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said on Wednesday that ending sanctions waivers on Iran’s oil exports by Washington would have an adverse impact on countries benefiting from Iranian oil, IRNA reported.

“In Qatar, we do not believe unilateral sanctions bring positive effects for crises which must be resolved through dialogue and dialogue only,” he said, Russia Today reported.

He maintained that the U.S. decision to end Iran’s oil waivers will deal a blow to the countries relying on the country’s oil.

# Zarif does not think Iran-U.S. military war is imminent

**1 →** That direct line let the two top diplomats control the situation, secure the quick release of American sailors, and prevent a potential escalation. But today there is no such line of communication between the Iranian foreign minister and his U.S. counterpart.

Zarif implied that he wants to reach out directly to the American public and warn them of the possibility of another war in the Middle East.

Commenting on his interview with Fox News, he said he wanted to reach out to Trump’s base in mainstream America “because it is important to speak to the other side sometimes”.

He added that this was not his first interview with Fox and that he had talked to the channel years ago when he was Iran’s ambassador at the United Nations in New York.

Zarif told IRNA the interview was in line with establishing connection with a layer of the U.S. society which supports Donald Trump’s administration.

“It should have been noted that the U.S. interests are being ignored for interests of Israel and a war mongering group. This reality is not something new, but the atmosphere have been poisoned by propaganda to the extent that many people who believe this reality do not dare to say it. So, it was necessary to say such reality [in Fox News] to make an influence on atmosphere created by suppressing news,” the chief diplomat noted.



Zarif told Fox News on Sunday that the “B-team”, that includes U.S. national security advisor John Bolton and number of regional leaders including of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) and Abu

Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, are trying to inflame U.S.-Iranian tensions and push Trump “into a confrontation he doesn’t want.”

In a tweet on Tuesday, Zarif said, “Today the world’s catching on to Amb. John Bolton’s chronic warmongering.”

Zarif said “Iranians didn’t need to read

a 10,000-word New Yorker profile to be convinced” that Bolton is pushing for a war with them.

With a reference to Bolton’s speech to a gathering of Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO or MEK) in Paris in 2016, Zarif said, “We’ve seen him shill for a cult terror group, and—along with his B\_Team accomplices—target Iranians with Economic Terrorism.”

MKO, a notorious cult group which professes an eccentric variant of Islam, was on the U.S. terrorist list until September 2012.

In a report on its website on April 29, the New Yorker said, “In Bolton’s financial disclosure, he listed a forty-thousand-dollar payment, for a speech that he gave, in 2016, to Mujahideen-e-Khalq, an Iranian exile group dedicated to overthrowing the government in Tehran.”

In its report, headlined “John Bolton on the Warpath”, the New Yorker said during his speech, Bolton told the crowd, “I just say again what I have been saying for ten years that I’ve been coming to this rally: the regime in Tehran needs to be overthrown at the earliest opportunity!”

Also on February 11, Bolton released a video on Twitter, in which he said, “I don’t think you’ll have many more anniversaries to enjoy.”

Iranians celebrated the 40th anniversary of their revolution on February 11.

## Takht Ravanchi says Iran’s missile program is non-negotiable

### Tehran slams U.S. for violating Resolution 2231

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran’s permanent representative to the United Nations, said on Thursday that Iran’s missile program is non-negotiable, noting it falls within “national defense”.

“We will not back down from our position on this program which is an issue of the national defense,” Takht Ravanchi told IRIB.

He noted that Iran’s conventional missile program will never be included in the 2231 resolution, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal.

“This resolution which was approved by the U.S. itself and other countries explains that only missiles which are designed to carry nuclear warheads are banned,” stated Takht Ravanchi who acted as nuclear negotiator with the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany).

He added that Iran’s missiles do not carry nuclear warheads. Reportedly, the U.S. Special Representative for Iran, Brian Hook, was in New York on April 30 and May 1 and held meeting with UN Security Council members against Iran’s missile program.

Iran has repeatedly said that its missile program is deterrent. The U.S. officials have consistently claimed that Iran’s ballistic missile tests have violated the UN Security Council Resolution 2231. Iran has dismissed the charges.

Mohammad Ali Jafari, the former commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), said in June 2018 that the range of Iranian missiles is 2000 kilometers and the country does not need to extend it.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said in March that Tehran decides about its missile program based on its interests and the issue is “non-negotiable”.

“We take decision about range, precision, speed and destruction power of our missiles based on our interests and threats and this process is not negotiable,” Shamkhani stated.

**■ Tehran slams U.S. for violating Resolution 2231**  
Iran’s mission to the UN has blasted the U.S. for violating Resolution 2231 and “shamelessly” threatening other UN members to do the same, saying such an approach is “destructive and hypocritical.”

In a press release on Wednesday night, the mission censured the U.S. for attempting to portray Iran’s ballistic



**U.S. abandoned deal in “serious and blatant” violation of Resolution 2231, adopted with Washington’s own support.**

missile program as inconsistent with Resolution 2231, which was unanimously approved by the UN Security Council in 2015 and endorsed the multilateral Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

It added that the U.S. abandoned the deal in a “serious and blatant” violation of Resolution 2231, which had been adopted with Washington’s own support, and is now “shamelessly” threatening other world countries into violating the international document.

After withdrawing from the JCPOA, the U.S. reinstated the anti-Iran sanctions that had been lifted under the accord.

It has also been attempting to dissuade other signatories to the JCPOA from living up to the accord, threatening “secondary sanctions” against the firms that refuse to abide by Washington’s restrictive measures against Iran

The administration of President Donald Trump said

## Iraqi, Iranian military officials meet in Tehran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — General Hamed Atiyeh Khwain, the commander of the Iraqi Army’s Aviation, traveled to Iran on Wednesday at the head of a high-ranking military delegation.

On Thursday, he sat down for talks with General Mohammad Baqeri, the commander of the Joint Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces.

During the meeting, Baqeri highlighted the role of Iran and Iraq as two key powers of the Islamic world, calling for expansion of ties between the two neighboring countries.

“We know Iraq’s security as our own security and we will stand by your country with all our power,” Baqeri told his guest.

The Iraqi official, for his part, expressed thanks to Iran for their help during the Daesh invasion of Iraq in 2014.

“Baghdad was on the verge of collapse and all our allies and friends had retreated and we found nobody else in the field except for our Iranian brothers,” General Khwain said.

Khwain on the same day met with Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami. There, the Iranian defense minister called for the enhancement of military and defense cooperation with Iraq, saying collaboration between the two neighbors would serve regional security and stability.

According to a report by Tasnim, Hatami

said the common threats and opportunities necessitate closer consultations between Tehran and Baghdad for protecting the interests of the two nations and ensuring regional security and stability.

Highlighting Iran’s contribution to stability and safety in Iraq, Hatami said the Iranian and Iraqi forces’ devotion guarantees security in both countries. He added that Iraq would have disintegrated without steadfast cooperation between the two neighbors.

Defense cooperation between Iran and Iraq will bring about peace, stability and security to the region, General Hatami stated, adding that the two sides are determined to broaden ties.

Also on Thursday, Khwain met with Commander of the Iranian Army Ground Forces Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, according to IRNA.

Heidari said that Iran and Iraq are set to broaden military cooperation in line with both sides’ interests.

Heidari added the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Aviation is regarded as the first military power in the region and there is no rival for it in the Middle East.

Iran is self-sufficient in various military fields and is able to train pilots and rendering highly standard technical training to Iraqi

forces, he said.

Sharing a very long borderline with Iraq, Iran is ready to help Iraq to “eradicate global arrogance” in the region for ever, he said.

The Iraqi commander, for his part, highlighted significant capability of the Iranian Army and said the grounds for expansion of cooperation between the two countries are well prepared and both forces can play their prominent role to help increase security of the region.

The Iranian military is highly sophisticated and both sides can help improve security in the region, the Iraqi commander said.

Iraqi Navy Commander Major General Ahmed Jasim Maarij and Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Commander Rear Admiral Ali Reza Tangsiri also held a meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, discussing ways to enhance military cooperation and holding joint naval programs, Mehr reported.

In July 2017, Iran and Iraq signed an agreement to boost military cooperation on a host of issues, including ways to counter terrorism.

Based on the deal, Tehran and Baghdad will try to promote interaction and share experiences in the fight against terrorism and extremism, work together to ensure border

security, and provide each other with training and logistical, technical and military support.

Iraqi Air Defense Commander Lieutenant General Jabar Obeid Kadhim Jabbar also met on Friday with IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Amir Ali Hajizadeh.

Hajizadeh said that Iran’s aerospace force is ready to transfer experience and technical knowhow to Iraqi defense forces.

General Hajizadeh pointed to Iran’s advisory help and support to Iraqi aerospace forces in the fight against ISIL. “From the first days of Iraq’s fight against Daesh and Takfiri terrorist groups, Iran’s aerospace force stood by the people, government of armed forces of Iraq at the request of Iraqi government.”

The IRGC Aerospace Force chief added Iran and Iraq have established long-standing and amicable relations with each other, which have been a “thorn in the eyes of Global Arrogance, the Zionist regime and also reactionary Arab countries.”

By acquiring world’s latest technology in manufacturing various types of radar systems, command centers and control of ground-to-air missile systems as well as electronic warfare equipment, Iran’s aerospace forces are ready to help Iraqi side boost its defense capabilities, Hajizadeh maintained.



# ‘Nobody can show the true face of terrorism better than the victims’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — “We want the world to see the true face of terrorism, and nobody can do that better than the victims of terrorism,” says Mansoureh Karami, the chairwoman of the board of an Iranian NGO called Association for Defending Victims of Terrorism (ADVT).

Karami made the remarks on Wednesday in a meeting in Tehran on “Restoring Justice and Preventing Terrorism”.

The meeting was organized collaboratively by ADVT and the law department of Allameh Tabataba’i University.

“Once, I told an Algerian woman how I was a victim of terrorism, she was shocked and told me she thought Iranians are terrorists, rather than the victims of terrorism, (but) when I told her about how my husband died, she cried and hugged me,” Karami explained.

Karami’s husband, Masoud Alimohammadi, was assassinated on the morning of January 12, 2010 in front of his home in Tehran, while leaving for university.

Alimohammadi was an Iranian quantum field theorist and elementary-particle physicist and a distinguished professor of elementary particle physics at the University of Tehran.

ADVT, first established in 2007, is a humanitarian organization that is comprised of the families of victims who died in terrorist attacks. In general, the NGO has a consultative status with Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.



Mansoureh Karami

According to Karami, ADVT regularly attends the UN Human Rights Council sessions, publishes statements and organizes panels which are all aimed at discussing the problem of terrorism and how it affects the victims.

## ■ ‘NGOs reveal the grave impact of terrorism’

NGOs play a key role in revealing the grave consequences of terrorism to the world, especially when the NGOs are comprised of direct

victims of such attacks, said Mohammad Javad Heshmati, the deputy attorney-general for judicial affairs.

At the meeting, Heshmati noted that such NGOs are the voice of real victims and can help show the world the true face of terrorist groups and terrorism.

“One of the reasons that some terrorist groups such as Mojahedin-e Khalq are freely working in Europe is that their true face and their crimes are not yet revealed to the

world, and this is also true about many other terrorist groups,” he remarked.

Heshmati added, “There should be an international determination for counter-terroring terrorism.”

“The problem is that the West has a biased approach toward terrorist groups, claiming some of them as the good ones and the others as the bad ones.”

“We can see that the West is using many of such terrorist groups only for gaining its own benefits. With such an opportunistic approach, terrorism can never be defeated,” he lamented.

## ■ ‘A black book of Western policy in the Middle East’

During the conference, the Persian translation of the book “They that Sow the Wind Shall Reap the Whirlwind” was revealed for the first time.

The book is written by German author and journalist Michael Luters, who has been described by FALTER magazine as “Germany’s sharpest and most influential Middle Eastern commentator to date.”

According to Neues Deutschland, “it is a black book of Western policy in the Middle East that reads like a thriller.”

It tells the story of Western interference in the Middle East since the colonial era, and explains how it has given birth to the current political situation. His book reads like a political thriller – yet, tragically, it’s all true.”

## U.S. misdemeanors won’t go ‘unanswered’, cleric promises



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami said on Friday that U.S. misdemeanors against Iran will not remain “unanswered”.

Addressing worshippers in Tehran, Khatami said Iran succeeded in foiling U.S. plots to draw up a new Middle East, Mehr reported.

Commenting on the U.S. move to drive Iran’s oil exports to zero, the cleric said, “U.S. officials should know that Iran will produce oil as much as it wants.”

The U.S. is struggling with crises and “we are dealing with a madman who would take ten steps forward if we take one step back,” said Khatami in reference to U.S. President Donald Trump.

“The Iranian nation will hit this madman’s head to the rock,” he added.

He went on to say that under the current circumstances, holding talks with the Trump administration is as good as surrendering.

He emphasized that the Iranian nation will not be humiliated.

Khatami pointed to Trump’s threats against Iran, saying such threats have become “threadbare” and will not move the Iranian nation.

He also pointed to U.S. designation of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization, saying the move unified the Iranian nation and increased the IRGC’s popularity.

“The U.S. labeled the Guards a terrorist group during the peak of the Guards’ popularity and while the armed forces and the Guards were helping the people in the floods,” the cleric added.

## Top MP backs provincial parliamentary polls



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Deputy Parliament Speaker Masoud Pezeshkian says the bill to change parliamentary elections from local to provincial level would lead to better coordination among lawmakers.

The move “would drive lawmakers toward being coordinated with a team and then that team would have to find a common ground and a common language,” Tasnim on Friday quoted Pezeshkian as saying.

Such heightened commonalities in the parliament is a step forward, he added.

The top reformist lawmaker also criticized the growing number of parties in Iran, saying, “We should have at most 2 or 3 parties, rather than having groups of very few people who gather round and call themselves parties.”

He argued that having fewer parties is similar to having fewer constituencies in terms of leading to better decision-making.

Last week, Guardian Council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said the council neither supports nor opposes parliamentary elections at provincial level.

According to Iran’s constitution, any bill passed by the parliament must be reviewed and approved by the Guardian Council to become law.

Kadkhodaei also warned that provincial elections should not lead to a reduced communication between representatives and their constituencies or decrease voter turnout.

Meanwhile, Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein-Ali Amiri has announced that the Rouhani administration is in favor of the bill.

## Advisor: U.S. pressure on Venezuela proves Iran oil ‘irreplaceable’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the parliament speaker, has said Washington’s pressure on oil-rich Venezuela proves that Iran’s oil cannot be replaced.

In a Thursday tweet, Amir Abdollahian wrote, “Mounting pressure of the #US Admin. for ‘regime change’ in oil-rich #Venezuela proves Iran’s oil can’t be replaced. #Iran will strongly continue to export oil with no limitation.”

“Venezuelans will turn down #Trump who is thirsty for petrodollar & will make decisions by themselves,” he added.

In recent days, Venezuelan army forces loyal to President Nicolas Maduro have been putting down unrest caused by several defectors who had joined the opposition camp led by self-proclaimed president Juan Guaido.

As the apparent coup attempt continued, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated that Washington was

prepared to take military action on President Donald Trump’s order.

Tehran later condemned U.S. attempts to stage a coup or any other type of military action in Venezuela.

“The Islamic Republic condemns U.S. attempts to stage a coup or any other type of military action in Venezuela,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said, according to Press TV.

## Iran, Uzbekistan discuss dangers of ISIL relocation to Afghanistan

**TEHRAN (Fars)** — Kamal Kharrazi, chief of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, in a meeting with Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov, discussed the threats posed to Central Asia after ISIL’s transfer from Syria to Afghanistan.

Kharrazi and Kamilov, in their Thursday meeting in Tashkent, exchanged views on the security provisions to counter the threats posed by terrorism, especially after the relocation of ISIL to Afghanistan.

They cautioned that ISIL terrorists will cause serious security problems for Central Asia, asserting that the new threats necessitate more security cooperation between the countries of the region to exchange intelligence and prevent heinous incidents.

Iran on many occasions has warned of the threats and dangers posed by the transfer of ISIL terrorists to Afghanistan.

Last month, President Hassan Rouhani warned of Washington’s new plots against the regional states by transferring terrorists to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

“The problem of terrorism has not terminated yet ... The Americans have hatched a new plot against the region and are transferring the terrorists to Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Caucasus,” Rouhani said.

### ■ Common cultural identity

The former Iranian foreign minister also said Iran and Uzbekistan should recognize their common cultural identity and build their modern civilization based on it.

Iran attaches great importance to its relationship with its neighbors, he said, adding, “Iran strives to broaden its relationship with neighboring countries in line with spreading stability and security in the region.”



The relationship between the two countries is on the rise, Kharrazi added.

Iran and Uzbekistan enjoy a rich cultural and civilizational heritage, he said, adding, “When different Uzbek cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khwarazm are

listed, we observe that each of these cities were home to distinguished and outstanding scientists.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Kharrazi touched upon the way of construction of road and rail infrastructures between the two countries, saying, “Setting up an airline, which can connect capitals of the two countries directly, is essential.”

For his part, Kamilov pointed to the amicable ties between Iran and Uzbekistan and said that a brief look to the history of the two countries shows that Iran and Uzbekistan are on the path to development.

To prevent regional threats and hazards, a comprehensive roadmap should be formulated between the two countries, he said, adding, “Uzbekistan is ready to cooperate with Iran to establish security and stability in the region.”

## Larijani, Motahari on running for president

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani and his deputy Ali Motahari have made remarks on whether they would run for president in the 2021 elections.

Larijani, who unsuccessfully run for president in 2005, said on Thursday, “I’m not considering [running for president]. Rest assured.”



He made the remarks after the governor of Khorasan Razavi Province, Alireza Razm Hosseini, introduced him as Iran’s next “president”.

“Pardon me for jumping to 1400 (2021),” Razm Hosseini said humorously.

On the other hand, Motahari did not rule out candidacy for president, saying it will “depend on the circumstances.”

In an interview with Shafaqna published on Friday, the deputy Majlis speaker said he might run if he feels he has chances of winning the election and that others whom he sees fit for the post don’t run.

## Admiral: Iran to stand against threats to protect interests

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, the deputy army chief for coordination affairs, said on Thursday that the Iranian nation will firmly stand against any threat in order to protect its national interests.

“History has proven that the noble nation of the Islamic Iran will firmly stand against any threat to protect its interests and values,” Sayyari reiterated, Mehr reported.

He pointed to National Persian Gulf Day held on April 30, saying, “The Persian Gulf has long had geopolitical and strategic importance and for this, the arrogant powers have sought to dominate this area.”

On the name of Persian Gulf, the admiral said, “The Persian Gulf will remain with this glorious name forever.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sayyari described Iran’s military power as one of the most important components of its national power, adding, “In the nuclear talks with world’s six major powers, which continued for more than a decade, the Islamic Republic of Iran showed its enormous power and strength to the world.”

## Salehi says Iran will overcome the difficult time

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, says his country is facing a difficult period in the current calendar year but the Iranian nation will overcome the problems, ISNA reported.

“If we move behind the Leader, we will definitely win,” Salehi said on Thursday, addressing a meeting on Iran’s nuclear achievements.

He also pointed to disagreements between Iran and the West, saying Iran’s disagreement with the West is beyond the nuclear program.

The difference is an intellectual one, because they oppose the Islamic Revolution, he said.

The West would raise issues about Iran’s missile program, democracy and human rights if the nuclear issue gets resolved, he added.

Recently, the Trump administration has ratcheted up pressure on Iran. On April 8, it designated the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as terrorist; also on April 22, it ended sanctions waivers on Iran’s oil exports, threatening to punish any country that buys oil from Iran after May 2.



## Amendment to election law could go into force in next election: Kadkhodaei

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Abbasali Kadkhodaei, spokesman of the Guardian Council, has said the amendment to Iran’s election law could be implemented in the next elections provided that the parliament addresses the faults found in it by the council.

Kadkhodaei said the amendment has yet to be reviewed by the council in the coming days, expressing the hope that the council would be able to present its views to the parliament in due time, Mehr reported on Thursday.

In the past two years, the council has offered advice to the parliament about the amendment and “we expected the Majlis to be able to pass the amendment earlier than this, but unfortunately it didn’t happen.”

The Guardian Council vets candidates for presidential, parliamentary, and Assembly of Experts elections and monitors elections.

The parliamentary election will be held on February 21, 2020.



STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	220109.0
IFX	2643.16

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,070 rials
GBP	54,832 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES	
Brent	\$70.59/b
WTI	\$61.86/b
OPEC Basket	\$72.00/b
Gold	\$1,271.30/oz
Silver	\$14.70/oz
Platinum	\$854.65/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

## CBI drafts plans for shielding economy against sanctions

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati announced on Friday some of CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy, IRNA reported.



In an Instagram post, the official pointed out some of the approaches that CBI is following to counter the U.S. sanctions and to control inflation.

Maintaining and strengthening the relative stability of the foreign exchange market by strengthening and improvement of the performance of Iran's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), setting foreign currency exchange policies to support non-oil and oil exports and providing liquidity and working capital to maintain

and boost domestic production and finally establishing a financial mechanism with neighboring countries are some of the plans which CBI is going to execute.

Explaining CBI plans for managing inflation, the official noted that previous monetary policies regarding the controls over cash flow will be modified using the new structure of monetary policy and consequently uncertainty over controlling the cash demand is going to decrease.

## No oil leak, no injury by break-down Iranian oil tanker in Red Sea

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian oil tanker carrying over one million barrels of oil suffered a malfunction in the Red Sea off the coast of Saudi Arabia.

Shana reported that the incident began on Tuesday morning when the tanker issued a distress call.

"On Tuesday, the vessel, with 26 crew members aboard, was sailing in the Red Sea towards the Suez Canal when its engine failed due to water leakage to the engine room," Shana said. It said the crew were 24 Iranians and two Bangladeshis.

National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) said that the vessel is now safe and no injury has been reported so far.

NIDC also said that no environmental damage was caused by the incident.

## Ending Iran sanctions waivers hits Indian economy: analysts

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Analysts say that the end of U.S. sanctions waivers for purchases of Iranian oil is likely to hit India's economy hard, increasing fuel costs and quickening inflation, Channel News Asia reported.

Last May, President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal with world powers that had given Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

The United States reimposed oil sanctions on Iran in November but initially gave eight countries - including India and several other U.S. allies - six-month reprieves.

Washington announced last week that the waivers, which have also benefited China and Turkey, would expire on May 2.

"U.S. sanctions on Iran is a double whammy for India after the Venezuelan sanctions," said Vandana Hari, founder of Vanda Insights, a global energy markets portal.

"It will have to pay more for imports and face higher foreign exchange outflows," she told AFP.

India-- Asia's third-largest economy - imports over 80 percent of its crude oil requirements, leaving it vulnerable to oil price surges.

A barrel of crude recently hit a six-month high of \$75 due to America's sanctions on Iran and Venezuela.

India buys mostly from Saudi Arabia but has a long history of purchasing Iranian crude.

New Delhi announced last month that it would acquire additional supplies from elsewhere but analysts say it won't be able to fill the gap left by Iran.

"No one is going to give charity to India in the oil market. Even Saudi Arabia has no plans to replace Iranian crude in the global market," Madhu Nainan, editor of PetroWatch, told AFP.

Oil is paid for in dollars and soaring crude prices puts pressure on India's rupee.

# Iran's petrochemical industry unsanctionable: NPC head

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** — The managing director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said the petrochemical industry is not like the oil industry and it is practically unsanctionable.

"For oil, the ways of selling and the customers are specific and limited, but that is not the case with petrochemicals. There are hundreds of holdings which are eager for buying our diverse petrochemical products," Behzad Mohammadi told the Tehran Times in a press conference on the sidelines of the 24th Iran International, Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2019).

"However, we are holding meetings with our customers to explore various aspects of possible impacts of the U.S. sanctions on our trade," he added.

**Exporting 21 million tons of petrochemicals**

The official put the country's current petrochemicals output at 55.5 million tons, of which 21 million tons is being exported to 30 different destinations across the globe.



According to the NPC managing director, the value of Iran's petrochemical exports stands at \$17.1 billion.

Mohammadi further said that the total value of petrochemical exports and domestic sales is planned to reach \$25 billion by the end of Iranian calendar year of 1400 (March 2022).

**18 new petchem projects to go operational in 2 years**

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mohammadi noted that three new petrochemical projects will be inaugurated in the current Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020) while 15 projects are expected to go operational by the end of the next Iranian calendar year (March 2021).

He said the mentioned projects will include development projects in Parisian Special Economic Zone and also in Mahshahr Petrochemical Special Economic Zone both in southern Iran.

Mohammadi also mentioned the petrochemical industry's potentials in creating job opportunities across the country, saying "currently over 108,000 direct employees are working in various fields of the petrochemical industry."

## Significant annual jump in minerals production, exports

By Mahnaz Abdi

**TEHRAN** — Iranian mining sector witnessed some prominent growth both in production and export during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019).

According to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), 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.

The organization has also reported that production of iron ore concentrate has increased 17 percent year on year as the country produced over 45.4 million tons of the product during the past year.

Also, iron ore pellet output has reached 6.3 million tons, registering a nine-percent annual growth.

Meanwhile, Iran produced 276,575 tons of aluminum ingots in the past year.

The released data show that Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) accounted for producing 53 percent of the total aluminum ingot output in the previous year.

As the world's 18th producer of aluminum, Iran plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

The rising trend of growth in this sector is planned to be continued in the current calendar year, as IMIDRO Managing Director Khodadad Gharibpour last week announced that projects worth \$3 billion are planned to be inaugurated in Iran's mining sector in the current year.

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

He said 20 projects implemented by IMIDRO in the previous year created 4,440 direct jobs and 25,300 indirect jobs.

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 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.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world's largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron ore, which are tempting international investors.

## Iran's annual non-oil exports to Pakistan hits record high

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The value of Iran's non-oil export to Pakistan in the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019) hit \$1.247 billion, showing a considerable 36 percent hike as compared to the same period the year before, Mehr news agency reported.

Despite lack of banking channels between the two countries and various customs and tariff barriers, Iran's export of non-oil products to Pakistan recorded a 36-percent growth.

Packed or conserved foods, various types of dairy and meat products, detergents, different carbonated soft drinks, types of fresh fruits and kitchen wares are considered as Iran's most favorite products in Pakistani markets.

During an Iran-Pakistan business forum held at Tehran on April 22, the two sides emphasized the necessity of using all available opportunities to expand bilateral trade relations.

The business forum, which was held by Tehran Chamber



of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) in cooperating with the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran, was attended by a number of Iranian and Pakistani officials including Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Iranian Transport Minister Mohammad Eslami, TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, and some businessmen from the both sides, TCCIMA website published.

Imran Khan along with a delegation visited Iran in a two-day stay at the invitation of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to strengthen political and trade ties between the two countries.

Addressing the business forum, the Pakistani prime minister said: "In the new Pakistani government we are seeking to open a new chapter in trade with Iran and we are determined to expand economic ties with Iran despite the sanctions."

## U.S.-China negotiators near deal to roll back some tariffs

The United States and China are closing in on a deal that includes broad agreement on how the Trump administration will roll back a portion of the tariffs it has imposed on more than \$250 billion-worth of Chinese goods, according to two people close to the talks.

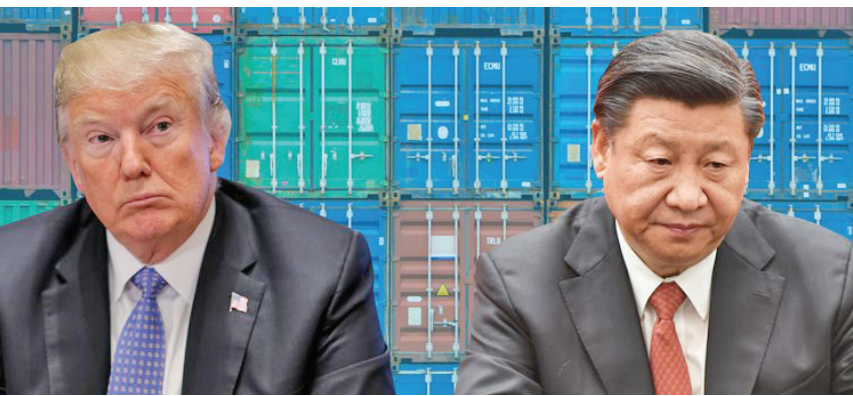
As reported by South China Morning Post, the two sides have also reached an understanding on how to enforce the agreement, although the sources cautioned that details still need to be worked out when a Chinese delegation arrives in Washington on May 8. Expectations are high that the two sides could announce a deal by the end of next week, setting the stage for a summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping to sign it.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin wrapped up a quick visit to Beijing on Wednesday where they met with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He for a working dinner and a formal discussion the following day. Mnuchin tweeted that the meetings were "productive".

The two sides have reached general agreement on a plan for the U.S. to immediately remove a 10 percent tariff on a portion of the \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports affected by the penalty and then phase in lifting the duties on the rest of the items "quickly", said one of the people familiar with the discussions.

A 25 percent tariff the U.S. has imposed on roughly \$50 billion-worth of other Chinese goods would likely stay in place longer, possibly until after the 2020 election, leaving it to a second term Trump administration or a new president to deal with, the source said.

The Trump administration imposed the



25 percent tariff on goods such as chemicals and machine components in response to a U.S. investigation that concluded China was forcing U.S. companies to hand over technology and intellectual property as a condition of doing business there.

The two countries continue to debate the terms of leaving tariffs in place. It's still unclear whether China would lift its retaliatory tariffs on U.S. exports like soybeans and pork or shift retaliatory tariffs to other products, the people said. China has imposed counter-tariffs on roughly \$110 billion worth of U.S. goods.

The two countries have also made progress toward a plan for enforcing the deal, the sources said.

The process would track closely to what Lighthizer has described to U.S. Congress: a series of regular meetings to address complaints about China's compliance. If a complaint cannot be resolved, the U.S. could move forward unilaterally with tariffs.

China would not be able to retaliate as long as the U.S. showed that it had followed the consultation process, one source

explained.

But China would have the right to take its own actions against the U.S. for failing to comply with the deal using the same process. Beijing could also challenge the U.S. if it felt the process for resolving a complaint had been circumvented, the source said.

Lighthizer, in responses submitted Tuesday to written questions from Senate Finance Committee members, said the option of pursuing unilateral action after a series of meetings "did not exist in past dialogues." He said issues would be prioritized on a case-by-case basis with continued consultations with Congress.

**The enforcement mechanism**

Mnuchin told Fox Business on Monday that the enforcement mechanism was "close to done" adding that there is a "fundamental understanding in that area". In April, he said enforcement would work "in both directions".

Liu, who is leading the talks for the Chinese side, will return to Washington next week with a delegation of about 100

officials, said one of the people familiar with the talks.

China is expected to include promises to end forced transfers of technology and provide equal treatment to U.S. firms, in line with a foreign investment law the government approved in March. But critics say it's still unclear how effectively it will implement those pledges. An agreement will also include commitments by China to purchase a significant amount of U.S. exports including soybeans and natural gas.

But the two sides are still struggling to bridge the gap on a number of issues including China's subsidies for domestic industries, market access for cloud services and the willingness of Beijing to ease restrictions on data flows and data localization requirements, the people said.

U.S. businesses are supportive of the administration's efforts to rein in Chinese policies but are also keen to see a de-escalation in the trade fight that has led to widespread uncertainty in global supply chains.

The U.S.-China Business Council released a new report on Wednesday showing that U.S. goods exports to China declined by 7 percent in 2018 after reaching an all-time high the year before. China remains the third largest market for U.S. goods exports after Canada and Mexico.

A "sustainable agreement must provide a way to verify that commitments are implemented, including for further market opening, intellectual property protection, and equal treatment for U.S. companies," USCBC president Craig Allen said in a statement. "That agreement must also include a plan of action for the removal of all or most of the tariffs to reverse the damage we saw in 2018."



# Excluding Iran from oil market impossible: Barkindo

**1 →** Referring to the U.S. recent threats regrading purchase of oil from Iran, the official said OPEC Secretariat and the Iranian Oil Ministry are negotiating with each other in order to examine possible strategies.

Islamic Republic of Iran has faced such of these challenges in the past years, he said, adding, since its establishment, OPEC has faced several challenges but unity and amity among member states played a leading role in order to overcome problems.

**■ OPEC tries to depoliticize oil** Barkindo also highlighted that OPEC tries to depoliticize oil.

"I have told my colleagues at OPEC that you must leave your passports home when coming to this organization," Barkindo was quoted as saying.

He said "We have faced troubles in the OPEC in the last 60 years, but we have resolved them by unity."

"What is happening in Iran, Venezuela or Libya has an impact on all the market



and the energy sector."

**■ U.S. unilateral decisions against Iran ineffective**

Also in a meeting with Iranian Oil Min-

ister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Thursday, Mohammed Barkindo said that the U.S. unilateral decisions taken against Iran would not be effective.

"There is no doubt that we face major challenges today but I am sure that the Islamic Republic of Iran can resolve all problems properly", he stressed.

In response to a question on his evaluation of unilateral moves taken by some OPEC member states against the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said, "Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has always taken decisions collectively and we have repeatedly seen in the past that when member states took unilateral actions, their moves have not been effective."

All data and statistics of secondary sources will be studied and decided in June and generally speaking, OPEC considers interests of all member states in order to meet the demand of individual members in the field of oil supply, Barkindo stressed.

OPEC is not just an organization, rather, it affects oil industry in the world, he said, adding, about 100 million barrels of oil is consumed in the world daily and OPEC plays an important role in meeting requirements of international markets.

## Turkey cannot quickly abandon Iranian oil, foreign minister says

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Turkey will be unable to diversify oil imports quickly after the United States ended waivers on purchases from Iran, the Turkish foreign minister said on Thursday, a day after a U.S.-imposed sanctions deadline passed.

Turkey's statement follows comments by China, which said last month it opposed "long-armed jurisdictions implemented by the United States" and would continue "rational and legal" cooperation with Iran.

The United States told buyers to stop oil purchases by May 1 or face sanctions, ending six months of waivers that had allowed Iran's biggest customers to import limited volumes.

Turkey and China are the only two countries so far to have expressed a desire to continue large purchases of Iranian crude.

Turkey has reduced its heavy reliance on Iranian crude in the past year, but Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said its refineries were not suited to handling oil from some other countries.

"It does not seem possible for us to diversify the sources of



the oil we import in a short time," he told a news conference, adding that Washington should review its decision.

"We have to renew the technology of our refineries when we buy oil from third countries. That would mean the refineries remaining shut for some time. This, of course, has a cost."

The White House has put pressure on its strategic Persian Gulf ally and top global oil exporter, Saudi Arabia, as well as the United Arab Emirates to export more oil to meet potential shortages arising from Iranian sanctions.

Turkish imports from Iran have dropped gradually since May 2018, when the United States first mentioned possible sanctions.

Turkey, which is almost completely reliant on imports to meet its energy needs, imported 912,000 tons of oil per month on average from Iran until May 2018, making up 47 percent of its total oil requirements.

In the four months after the imposition of sanctions in November, Turkey imported an average of 209,000 tons of oil per month from Iran, or 12 percent of its needs, according to Reuters calculations based on regulatory data.

Turkey last week said it was working to convince Washington to allow oil refiner Tupras to continue crude imports from Iran.

Tupras did not respond to a question from Reuters about how the sanctions would affect its operations.

## Oil prices slip on way to weekly drop amid surging U.S. output

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Oil prices dipped on Friday, paving the way for a weekly decline as surging U.S. output was expected to start hitting global markets soon.

According to af.reuters.com, Brent crude oil futures were at \$70.49 per barrel at 0646 GMT, down 26 cents, or 0.4 percent, from their last close.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were down 11 cents, or 0.2 percent, at \$61.61 per barrel.

Brent is set for a weekly fall of over 2 percent, while WTI has declined almost 2.5 percent so far, its second straight weekly drop.

"Oil prices have fallen as the pressure of record U.S. output levels continues to weigh," said Mihir Kapadia, chief executive officer of Sun Global Investments.

U.S. crude oil production reached a record 12.3 million barrels per day (bpd) last week C-OUT-T-EIA, rising by around 2 million bpd over the past year. U.S. crude exports broke through 3 million bpd for the first time this year, according to data from the Energy Information Administration.

Traders said prices also fell as Russia started sending clean oil through a pipeline towards Western Europe, after several countries last week halted imports because of contamination. In Poland, the government released strategic reserves to ensure supply.

"In Eastern Europe, countries have secured supplies to offset shipments halted due to contamination," said Sukrit Vijayakar, director of energy consultancy Trifecta.

In the United States, analysts say supply will rise further as its export infrastructure is improved.

"One of the things that we can see in the near future is the de-bottlenecking of the Permian basin in the U.S. through new pipelines and export capacity. This will connect the world's largest shale basin to the global oil market," said Will Hobbs, chief investment officer for Barclays Investment Solutions.

Rising U.S. oil production has helped offset some of the disruptions from U.S. sanctions against Iran and Venezuela, and from supply cuts led by the Middle East-dominated Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which started in January.

Despite these disruptions and sharp oil price rises in the first months of this year, some analysts say the long-term price risk to crude oil is skewed to the downside.

Erik Norland, senior economist at commodity derivative exchange CME Group, said "the 130 percent rise in U.S. production due to the shale oil revolution" during the past decade had created a strong and constant downside risk to oil prices, which was visible in exchange trading positions.

## World Bank in push to ensure clean supply chains for renewables

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — The World Bank has unveiled a multi-million scheme to minimize the impacts from a global rush for mineral resources, expected as renewables surge to become a core part of the energy mix.

As per pv-tech.org, over the next five years, a US\$50 million pot will be invested to promote a sustainable supply chain for lithium, graphite and the other minerals and metals powering fast-growing PV, wind and battery storage.

Structured as a multi-donor trust, the so-called Climate-Smart Mining Facility will finance mineral recycling across the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the other key global sources for these commodities.

The scheme will promote renewable-powered mines across developing states, an approach already witnessed in South Africa and others. Funding will also be made available for mining projects fighting deforestation and ensuring land is used sustainably.

The World Bank's push follows its own predictions two years back for a huge surge in the demand for lithium (965%), cobalt (585%), graphite (383%) and others by 2050, sparked by a boom of low-carbon technologies.

**■ The wind power**

Wind power, for one, is poised to

jump by 63% between 2017 (515GW) and 2023 (839GW). According to the World Bank, a single 3MW turbine will require 1,200 tons of concrete, 335 of steel, 4.7 of copper, 3 of aluminum, 2 of rare earth elements and unspecified amounts of zinc and molybdenum.

Solar PV won't be impact-free, either. The industry's well-documented growth trajectory is set to continue, hitting additions of 575GW by 2023. A PV roll-out consistent with a 2°C global warming scenario would push up the industry's demand for silver, aluminum and others by around 300% by 2050, according to the World Bank's forecasts of 2017.

For battery energy storage, the institution's estimates at the time were that the jump in appetite for lithium and other commodities would reach 1,000-1,200% under the same scenario. Speaking this week, the World Bank adopted a similar line as it said uptake across electric vehicles and power grids mean batteries will be "ubiquitous" and demand significant volumes of minerals.

However, the forecast contains a caveat. As the World Bank has noted, the future market for energy storage is the hardest to predict and demand for commodities will be ultimately dictated by how widespread storage systems end up becoming, the choice of technologies and other factors.

## Iran will respond to any threat from fellow OPEC members: Zanganeh

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said his country will respond to any threat by fellow OPEC member states, Shana reported.

Iran will respond if other OPEC members threaten its interests, the Iranian minister said on Thursday amid rising pressures from Washington to bring Iranian crude sales to zero with the help of Tehran's regional rivals.

Zanganeh made the remarks after his meeting with Mohammed Barkindo, the secretary-general of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), who traveled to Tehran for visiting the 24th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran Oil Show 2019) and also negotiating with the Iranian oil officials.

"Iran is an OPEC member just for its interests and if certain OPEC members want to threaten and endanger Iran, the country will not refrain from responding to them," the minister stressed and said, "I told Mr. Barkindo that OPEC is being threatened due to unilateralism by certain members and this organization is likely to collapse."

Zanganeh said he exchanged views with Barkindo about the oil market, challenges as well as the fragility of the market.

## Iran, Oman to discuss energy co-op amid U.S. pressures

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh left Tehran for Muscat on Friday in a bid for the establishment of bilateral cooperation on energy between Iran and Oman, IRNA reported.

The minister is accompanied by a team of senior managers and officials of Iran's oil industry.

The bilateral talks come at a time that the U.S. is trying to tighten pressure on Iran's oil exports.

Washington has tried to intensify the economic pressure on Iran by refusing to extend sanctions waivers for major buyers of Iranian crude.

Iranian officials, including the oil minister, have said that they would continue selling the crude despite the U.S. attempts on halting the oil import flow by adding pressure on Iran's main oil customers.

## Global energy M&A activity to start rising again in 2 years

A new report by law firm Baker McKenzie shows that merger and acquisition (M&A) activity in the energy sector has decreased by 20% last year and is expected to drop further in 2019 before rising in 2020.

According to renewables.com, the Global Transactions Forecast 2019, in association with Oxford Economics, says that M&A deals in the energy industry have declined in value to USD 255 billion (EUR 228bn) in 2018 from a peak of USD 306 billion in 2017. The report blames this on regulations and sanctions. The initial public offering (IPO) value in energy also went down, to USD 8 billion from USD 10 billion.

Baker McKenzie projects that energy M&A will further plunge to USD 171 billion this year before beginning to rise again in 2020 and stabilizing in 2021.

Still, it is likely that there will be increases in M&A and IPO activity in the renewables sub sector.

"As the world's energy mix transitions to electricity, electric vehicles and batteries proliferate, and sustainability becomes a more critical focus, we expect to see more energy companies investing in the renewable space to generate new lines of business or to build organic growth in renewables," said Jose Moran, chair of Baker McKenzie's Global Energy, Mining & Infrastructure Group. Paul Curnow, partner and head of renewable energy and clean technology practice for Asia Pacific, added that companies, especially large multinationals, will become drivers for new investments in renewables.

"Globally, we are expecting to see only a slight drop in Energy-related IPOs in 2019, before increasing again in 2020 — but this remains counter to the overall strong sentiment for IPOs expected this year," said Adam Farlow, partner and head of capital markets for Europe, Middle East & Africa. He mentioned that for renewables there will be a strong IPO market, particularly in EMEA.

In Latin America alone, M&A activity in energy is expected to rise to USD 94 billion in 2019 and USD 98 billion in 2020. Developing economies such as those in Asia are seen to experience high levels of activity in the five years ahead due to increasing energy demand.

## Shell beats estimates and rivals in strong Q1

Royal Dutch Shell (NYSE: RDSA), one of the last supermajors to report Q1 earnings, was the one that stood out among the crowd with better-than-expected results, as its trading and natural gas businesses offset weak oil prices and depressed refining margins that plagued the other majors this earnings season.

As stated by oilprice.com, Shell reported on Thursday earnings on a current cost of supplies (CCS) basis — its closest metric to a net profit closely watched by analysts — of US\$5.3 billion in the first quarter this year, down by 2 percent annually, but beating by a lot the consensus forecast of US\$4.5 billion.

While Shell's profits were hit by lower chemicals and refining margins and lower realized oil prices — the factors that weighed on all supermajors in Q1—the Anglo-Dutch group reported stronger contributions from its trading division and higher realized liquefied natural gas (LNG) and gas prices compared to the first quarter of 2018.

Yet, Shell's cash flow from operating activities fell by 9 percent to US\$8.630 billion, while free cash flow dropped to US\$4 billion in Q1 2019 from US\$5.178 billion in Q1 2018.

"Shell has made a strong start to 2019, with the first quarter financial performance demonstrating the strength of our strategy and the quality of our portfolio of assets," chief executive Ben van Beurden said, commenting on the Q1 results.

In a sign of confidence in the direction of its business, Shell has also announced the next tranche of its share buyback program. Under the next tranche, Shell will repurchase up to US\$2.75 billion worth of shares.

The "company's intention is to buy back at least \$25 billion of its shares by the end of 2020, subject to further progress with debt reduction and oil price conditions," Shell said.

## World's second-biggest LNG tanker-class vessel to transit Panama Canal for first time

A 'Q-Flex' LNG tanker, the world's second-largest class of liquefied natural gas carriers, is set to pass through the Panama Canal for the first time, the canal's CEO said, expanding the Americas to Asia trade route for the fast-growing commodity.

The 'Al Safliyah', which can carry about 210,000 cubic meters of LNG, is on its way to Panama from the North Pacific after discharging a cargo from Qatar into Korea Gas Corp's (KOGAS) Tongyeong terminal on April 21, shipping data in Refinitiv Eikon showed.

As per Reuters, "This is the first Q-Flex to transit the Panama Canal," Jorge Quijano, chief executive of Panama Canal Authority told Reuters.

It comes after the canal was expanded in mid-2018 to handle larger oil and gas tankers.

"This size of vessel ... could be deployed to carry LNG from the natural gas liquefaction plants in the U.S., Trinidad and Tobago and Peru," Quijano said.

The ship is on a long term charter to Qatargas, the world's biggest LNG producer, according to LNG trading and broker sources. Qatargas did not respond to a query for comment.

The vessel's owner, Qatar Gas Transport Co (Nakilat), said in March that it had assessed the ability of 'Q-Flex' class LNG carriers to safely pass the Panama canal's new



locks in the near future.

At 120,000 deadweight tons, the 'Q-Flex' LNG tanker, is not the biggest ship to have passed through the Panama Canal, which has accommodated container ships of around 140,000 tons.

**■ Exporting LNG to Europe or Asia**

'Q-Flex' type tankers are able to carry up to 50 percent

more volumes than conventional LNG tankers, and are typically used by Qatargas to export its LNG to Europe or Asia.

The biggest LNG carriers, known as 'Q-Max', are able to carry up to 266,000 cubic meters of LNG, but are too large to use the canal.

"Qatar has been pushing to use 'Q-Flex' to utilize their vessels more efficiently," a source with a North Asian buyer said.

Qatar and partner Exxon Mobil Corp earlier this year gave the go-ahead for their jointly-owned U.S. Golden Pass LNG project, which could boost demand for such vessels when the project starts up in 2024.

"If it can successfully transit Panama even if empty, it could in the future be used for triangulations where it discharges a cargo in Japan or Korea and then from there goes to load a new cargo in the U.S. Gulf," said Ralph Leszczynski, head of research at ship broker Banchemo Costa in Singapore.

Quijano said 687 LNG tankers have transited the Panama Canal since July 2016 following an earlier expansion. Volumes rose to 11.5 million tons last year from just 300,000 tons in 2016.

"We expect further growth this year of another 22 percent over last year," he added.



## U.S. undermines itself clinging to hegemonic notions

**1 →** Look what has been witnessed in the past month! Mike Pompeo, probably the absolute worst U.S. Secretary of State ever, was caught bragging about how when he was chief of the CIA he helped establish training classes in theft, lying and murderous subterfuge. He thought this was amusing, too. Worse is John Bolton, who was literally telling the truth when he said forthrightly that the U.S. was not sanctioning Venezuela and hurting its people or trying to install Juan Guido because the U.S. wanted to see more “democracy” there, but because the U.S. coveted Venezuela’s oil. An active coup attempt is allegedly underway now in Caracas.

And for all the world knows, Julian Assange, who has done nothing wrong, may never emerge from some odious prison in Britain or the U.S. Not to mention the U.S. government’s primary allies, both condemned by most of the world: A Saudi hellhole that this past month beheaded 37 people, some of them juveniles and most of them Shi’a, and an Israeli racist apartheid machine that can’t stop destroying the lives of the native Palestinians. The Trump Administration uttered not a single word about the Saudi executions and has been Zio-nized all along by money, political brobery and flattery. Yes, some of Trump minions have actually said U.S. Mideast policy is in fact directed by Netanyahu.

On the other hand, U.S. sanctions and other measures against Iran are said to be exerting maximum effectiveness right now, but Iran has not gone begging to the U.S. to desist, but Javad Zarif in the U.S. has appealed to reason.

From now on the damage of sanctions could wane. They will lose efficacy, but this will take time and patience. Iran can use its diplomacy and its excellent diplomats to continue to line up support from Russia and China, for one thing. A significant part of and reason for any U.S. attack on Iran is the aim to disrupt or block the Chinese “Belt and Road” initiative across Asia, where Iran is a key country in this grand economic scheme. The U.S. should be joining the program, but it’s jealous and will eventually be left out in the cold. Moreover, the ace up Iran’s sleeve is its last resort option to close the Straits of Hormuz and drive oil prices into the stratosphere...and set off a worldwide economic Depression. Iran’s many and growing sympathizers certainly don’t want that, and interestingly, Russia is setting up joint naval maneuvers with Iran in the Persian Gulf and Iran’s Navy has recently conducted joint naval maneuvers with Oman. Technocratic advice and exchange between Iran, Russia and China and neighbors is likely to expand powerfully in the months and years ahead. Many countries are desperately figuring out ways to carry on creatively despite the U.S.

Meanwhile, the U.S. use of the world reserve status of the dollar as a sanctions and trade weapon means that countries will fast seek alternative ways to conduct bilateral business and when they do, they will never return to the dollar. Trump has done little but accelerate the U.S. decline because he hired Pompeo and Bolton, who from the beginning may have been promoted to check Trump, do Israel’s bidding completely, scuttle the re-unification of North and South Korea, and make stupid demands on Lebanon and Syria and many other countries, too.

It is a shame that Washington cannot so far accept any other role in the world except as a punishing dictatorial hegemon. A shame because the role is eroding U.S. influence just as bankruptcy does for individuals: slowly at first, then all of a sudden.

## U.S. Wars and Regional Repercussions

**TEHRAN (FNA)**— According to a new report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, global military expenditures rose 2.6 percent between 2017 and 2018, to hit a total of \$1.82 trillion dollars.

The Report says 60 percent of global military spending came from five countries: The United States (\$649 billion), China (\$250 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$67.6 billion), India (\$66.5 billion) and France (\$63.8 billion). Russia (\$61.4 billion) and the United Kingdom (\$50 billion) were the other two countries to spend \$50 billion or more on defense. There is now a clear link between the biggest reckless spender and arms exporter and the conflicts in the Muslim world. The consequences have been ruinous for the long-term economic stability of the Middle East, but they go far beyond the economic. Massive levels of war-related humanitarian sufferings have had lasting repercussions of all sorts in places like Syria and Yemen as well. One potentially devastating effect is more societal inequality, instability, famine and despair.

The staggering costs of the U.S. wars and arms - almost 18 years running, since the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 - are being deferred to the future. Greater Middle East - and still spreading, through Africa and other regions - is far larger and more ruinous than most American officials recognise.

These wars have been caused by the War Party’s wish to take control of other countries’ wealth. Whatever the other geopolitical reasons for the endless wars may be, there have been almost always an economic motive underlying most of these conflicts, even if the stated aim of the wars was presented to the public as something more noble like democracy and liberty.

It’s interesting to note that U.S. arms exports during the same period increased by 50 percent (2013-2018). The new deals and further major contracts signed in 2018 with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states will ensure that the United States remains the largest arms exporter in the coming years. It will also make sure that under-development, instability and human suffering will remain business as usual.

U.S. arms exports to the Middle East will continue to fuel war and conflict in the region. Widespread violent conflicts in the Middle East and concerns about human rights won’t lead to any political decisions in restricting arms sales either. The United States and European states will remain the main arms exporters to the region and supply the highest percentage of weapons to Saudi Arabia.

According to a SIPRI study, which monitors arms deliveries by volume every five years to iron out short-term fluctuations, Saudi Arabia continues to be the world’s largest importer of arms, and the United States continues to account for almost all arms exports to Saudi Arabia, followed by Britain and others.

In the prevailing circumstances, expect more U.S.-backed conflicts and greater man-made humanitarian crises in the region. Also expect greater defeats and bankruptcies for U.S. allies. The officials at the department of Pentagon see it – they have learned a lesson or two from their own failed wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. But they don’t care. Saudi Arabia and its allies are paying the price and the astronomical bills for America’s endless wars on Syria and Yemen.

# Einar Tangen: Trump Ignorant about Geo-Economics Principles, U.S. to Experience Major Job Losses

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Einar Tangen, Political and Economic Affairs Commentator, says U.S.-China trade war is an evidence supporting that U.S. President Donald Trump is unable to perceive the difference between the real estate branding business and geo-economics.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, Einar Tangen said he believes the U.S.-China trade war will eventually hit the U.S. more than China, saying, “U.S. consumers, especially lower and middle class families, who have used cheaper international goods to offset their stagnant real disposable income will be faced with sharply higher costs of clothes, furniture, shoes and appliances... [resulting in] more expensive U.S. exports and significant job losses.”

Einar Tangen is an American-Chinese Political and economic affairs commentator based in Beijing. He served as the President of the U.S. State of Wisconsin International Trade Council, and the Vice-President for the American Association of Cost Engineers International (AACEI).

Below is the full text of the interview:

■ What evidence is there for the impact of the U.S. tariffs, and what could the U.S.-China trade war entail in terms of the ultimate outcomes?

A: According to Bank of America, the first tranche of Tariffs hurt China more than the U.S.. The temporary increase in U.S. orders from China, in an effort to beat the tariff deadline, increased the U.S. deficit with China in 2018, but left uncertainty and a dearth of future orders behind. Hence the 20% decline in Chinese exports reported this month.

The first tranche of unilateral Trump tariffs, targeted intermediate goods (for example: parts shipped from China which



were used in the final assembly of American goods) agriculture products like soybeans and energy exports.

They also created global uncertainty, which saw a modest increase in capital investment in the U.S. and a dramatic decline worldwide. Business took an investment pause as they tried to figure out the long term geo-economics/political landscape.

This will result in a global recession which will hit, now, more expensive U.S. exports and create significant job losses, if things go

to the next tariff tranche.

The second tranche of tariffs, if enacted, is set to impact the U.S. more than China. U.S. consumers, especially lower and middle class families, who have used cheaper international goods to offset their stagnant real disposable income (0.9% last year) will be faced with sharply higher costs of clothes, furniture, shoes and appliances. Farmers, already struggling under the first tariffs, will be hit even harder as the international market for agriculture adjusts and they are closed out

of one of their largest export markets. U.S. exports that use steel, aluminum or components from China will be uncompetitive price wise and result in a sharp economic decline.

U.S. companies in China, that sell in China, can expect a strong consumer backlash that will cripple their profits and investments.

Internationally, the recession that appears to have already started in the EU will intensify, only marginally offset by additional business gained at the expense of the U.S..

A major issue will be the lack of economic ammunition, as the EU has little left, as it is still trying to emerge from the malaise caused by the 2008-09 financial crisis.

■ While China’s trade with the U.S. decreased markedly, the country managed to increase trade with Europe and ASEAN. Is Beijing replacing the U.S. market with elsewhere?

A: Yes! Regardless of how the trade talks turn out, given U.S. White papers identifying China as a military and economic threat, both countries and businesses will be rerouting their businesses and relations to avoid political risk. For China that means finding and supporting new markets which cuts their exposure to U.S. Trade.

■ U.S. President Donald Trump says “a good deal or it’s not going to be a deal.” How realistic do you find Trump’s views?

A: Realistic is not a term easily applied to Donald Trump. His approach to issues depends on creating chaos and uncertainty, in order to extract transactional value. His goal is to maximize the value of each deal. He does not appear to understand that while this was able to drive his success in his real estate branding business, the same principles do not work for geo-economics or geopolitics, which depend on predictability.

## New approaches needed to improve China-Australia relations

By Chen Hong

**Global Times** — During a reception held at the Australian Embassy in Beijing, Frances Adamson, Australia’s top representative at the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, discussed her country’s outlook and position regarding the relationship with China, as Australia her country heads into their national elections next month.

As Australia’s former ambassador to China and current Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Adamson is au fait with the history and reality of the bilateral relationship, which has experienced a few ups and downs in the last two years.

The veteran diplomat is aware of the changes that need to happen to strengthen diplomatic relations. Adamson pointed out that “whatever the outcome of the election, Australia’s national interest lies in a constructive relationship with China.”

Adamson stressed the importance of more frequent and smooth communication and idea exchanges at various levels to clarify misinformation and prevent misunderstandings.

When Premier Li Keqiang met with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison in Singapore at the sixth annual meeting between the heads of government of the two countries in November 2018. During the meeting, Li noted there are far more common interests than differences between China and Australia, calling on both sides to see the bilateral ties from a perspective of win-win cooperation.

As comprehensive strategic partners, China and Australia have common interests and shared prospects. In today’s

global marketplace, both countries are indispensable to one another.

China’s reform and opening-up have benefited from its cooperation with Australia. And yet for Australia, China’s economic emergence has served as the catalyst for uninterrupted development and prosperity.

China continues to be Australia’s top trading partner and biggest source of international students and tourists.

Adamson recalled in 2011 when Australia announced it would attract 1 million Chinese tourists by 2020. Last year, the country surpassed that mark with 1.43 million Chinese visitors.

Customs data show that China imported 28.26 million tons of coking coal from Australia in 2018, accounting for 43.5 percent of this country’s total import of the fuel. The two countries have been proactively working in conjunction to tap their complementary strengths, promoting further and more rigorous cooperation and elevating the two-way investment and trade.

China and Australia do not have a history of conflict or territorial disputes between each other and have enjoyed longstanding government and people-to-people collaboration, communication, and exchanges that have generated significant profits for both sides.

The positive development of bilateral ties has been conducive to peace, stability, and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the world.

China respects Australia’s traditional alliances with other countries and would never impose its values or systems on any other country within the country or in any other nation. We agree with Adamson, the positive relationship relies on

mutual respect and trust, as it is the cornerstone of practical and fruitful relations.

As Australia’s envoy to the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Adamson indicated that Australia welcomes China’s contribution to infrastructure development through BRI.

Indeed, China is engaged in mutually beneficial efforts with nations in the Pacific region to improve infrastructure and provide a higher quality of life and well-being. We do share the understanding that all countries need to observe the rules of transparency and international governance, crucial for world order and international cooperation.

China is open to constructive feedback and comments from any country, including Australia, regarding BRI projects. China also welcomes Australia to become more involved with BRI at various levels and in multiple forms.

The changing world calls for new methods and ways of thinking. Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement against British colonial rule, once said, “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

China and Australia need to find innovative and proactive ways to steer bilateral relations on the right course. The Australian government’s recent initiative to create a new National Foundation for Australia China Relations aims at strengthening? one of Australia’s most significant bilateral relationships.?

The Foundation can serve as a conduit for increased mutual understanding that will lead to trust and positive relations. We hope the new steps taken by Australia to thaw and improve bilateral relations are sincere and deliberately long-term.

## Venezuela: U.S. Coup Will Go Nowhere



presidential election on May 20, 2018. Who was to blame for the boycott?

In retrospect, people can easily conclude that the U.S. and the Venezuelan opposition orchestrated the whole drama so that, they wish, Maduro’s presidential victory could be annulled, paving the way for Guaido’s swearing-in.

One of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and international law is non-interference in other nations’ domestic affairs. In the age of globalization, as the world has become a global village, non-interference has

become all the more important and relevant, while this international principle has lost its meaning to the U.S. and its allies like Saudi Arabia and Israel more than ever.

That is to say, Venezuela’s affairs must be and can only be dealt with by the Venezuelan people.

Following the clashes between supporters of Guaido and Venezuelan government security forces, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that “violence” could not be a solution to political disagreements in Venezuela.

Spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said the Islamic Republic is closely following the developments in the South American country, stressing that “chaos and violence can, by no means, be a solution to political differences” in the country.

Whether or not the U.S. will overthrow the Venezuelan government with military force is anybody’s guess. But people in Venezuela and elsewhere will not forget that the U.S. militarily intervened with the domestic affairs of the Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1983, and Panama in 1989.

Luckily, this time, all the Latin American countries are opposed to U.S. invasion against Venezuela despite the fact that some of them support Guaido and the opposition.

Needless to say, people have elected Chavez and Maduro in the last two decades to show their choice, leaving the U.S. and its allies no pretext to intervene in Venezuela’s internal affairs. Intervention in other countries’ internal affairs has long been a norm of conduct for the U.S. and its allies all throughout the last several decades, an illegal move that has been happening in flagrant violation of the UN and its charter.

Hence, the U.S. is showing no different policy nowadays, but these are the other world powers that are at the focus of the world public opinion since they seem to be duty-bound to deter Washington’s continued disrespect for the international community as the UN is too weak to counter the U.S. bullying and aggressions and given its veto-wielding power at the council.



# Biden and Trump's political debate begins

By Hanif Ghaffari

**TEHRAN** — Joe Biden will have a great chance to reach the final round of presidential elections next year. Surveys in the United States show Biden has been able to surpass his rivals at public levels. He is the first Democrat now! However, the presidential elections in 2020 is based on the state and the electoral structure. In the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton won 3 million more votes than Donald Trump, but eventually Trump became president of the United States! Although the credibility of polls in the United States can not be verified now, it appears that US President Donald Trump and his entourage are preparing themselves for a tough competition with Joe Biden.

As CNN reported, Former Vice President Joe Biden's announcement of a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination earned him an 11-point polling bounce, leaving him head and shoulders above the rest of the Democratic candidates. A new CNN poll conducted by SSRS after Biden's announcement on Thursday shows 39% of voters who are Democrats or Democratic-leaning independents saying he is their top choice for the nomination, up from 28% who said the same in March. That puts Biden more than 20 points ahead of his nearest competitor, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont -- who holds 15% support in the poll -- and roughly 30 points ahead of the next strongest candidate, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren (8%).

Warren ranks about evenly with South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg (7%), former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke (6%) and Sen. Kamala Harris of California (5%), who



round out the list of those earning 5% or more in the poll. The remaining 17 candidates tested all held the support of 2% or less.

Biden's surge in support solidifies his status as the front-runner in a race that now has 20 candidates in the Democratic field. Biden's early campaign message has been centered around taking on President Donald Trump more directly rather than his Democratic counterparts -- and the President has noticed, spending time attacking Biden repeatedly on Twitter and Fox News in recent days. Biden also has highlighted his close personal ties to former President Barack Obama, releasing a campaign video on Tuesday that interspersed images of his

vice presidency with Obama's remarks during his Medal of Freedom ceremony.

What is certain is that Biden and Trump will have no easy way to win the presidential election next year. Trump is worried about losing votes in fatal states such as Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. Biden is worried about the inability to unite Democrat supporters in the upcoming presidential election.

Many analysts believe that Biden and Biden's direct debates on Biden's and Trump's direct debates can be very crucial if Biden comes to the final stage of the upcoming presidential election race.

In these debates, Trump tries to focus on

economic issues, while Biden will focus on US foreign policy issues.

Trump and Biden from now on consider each other as their rival in the next presidential election. Biden has now condemned Trump's policies towards countries like China and criticized these policies and behaviors. Congressional Republicans are pushing back against White House hopeful Joe Biden after the former vice president dismissed the notion that the U.S. should be worried about China as a geopolitical competitor, writes the Washington Post.

"China is going to eat our lunch? Come on, man," said Biden at a campaign stop in Iowa City on Wednesday. Saying Beijing has its hands full dealing with its own domestic and regional problems, Biden said, "guess what? They're not competition for us." Republicans including Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah and Rep. Bradley Byrne of Alabama, who is running for Senate, rebuked Biden. "Joe is plain wrong. China is absolutely a threat," said Byrne in a tweet. A Biden spokesman said the ex-vice president "believes it's never a good bet to bet against America and the fundamental strength, resilience, and ingenuity of its people."

Anyway, the competition between Trump and Biden has actually started now! The only thing that can change this equation is Biden's defeat in the Democratic primaries. Of course, given the growth of Biden's polls in polls, this is unlikely.

Finally, in the coming weeks, more explicit statements by Biden and Trump are made against each other. This could lead to the creation of an early electoral space in the United States. The issue will continue until November 2020.

## Procedural democracy leads to Brexit dilemma



By Ding Gang

**Global Times** — The Brexit dilemma has offered us a good opportunity to observe the Western political system. A referendum is always regarded by some Western politicians as one of the most important ways to gauge public opinion. In their view, as long as the voting procedure is correct, the result will be accurate. Brexit is a product of the ballot, but it has led the country into a swamp.

There are serious differences over Brexit within the two major political parties - the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. In June 2016, British Prime Minister David Cameron decided to solve the problem through a referendum.

People may have forgotten the proportion of votes cast in the Brexit referendum. This is the deceptive nature of a ballot politics, which has put Britain on the horns of a dilemma.

The number of votes in support of Brexit was 17,410,742 (51.9 percent), 1,269,501 more than the negative vote 16,141,241 (48.1 percent). However, out of the 46 million registered voters, about 28 percent or 13 million did not vote. Isn't it ridiculous that the direction of the country's future was decided by such a voting game? It had the roots of trouble buried from the beginning.

The ballot is the foundation of the Western democratic system. Any major political decision that cannot be agreed on can be decided by a vote. Everything must be determined by the number of votes even if the leader knows it will not solve the problem and sow more confusion, even leading to a dead-end, yet he or she must follow the course set by the ballot.

Voting politics legitimizes politicians, but also limits the space for the right decision.

Thus, the government is constrained by votes and is likely to become irresponsible and inefficient.

Thirteen million voters - certainly not a small number - did not cast their ballot. For whatever reason at least, they felt that it was not so important, or did not know which choice they preferred. But they were part of the Brexit process together with those who supported or opposed it. The fate of this old empire was thus determined by a minority of its population. Even if savvy and intelligent British leaders knew that the aim of the referendum was defeated or it was not in the interest of the nation and its people as a whole, they had to follow the path, which probably led to nowhere. All state machinery was directed in that direction. Is this democracy or perversion of democracy? Perhaps, the procedure is democratic, but the result is not. The entire country was hijacked in the name of a referendum.

Those who voted would not have thought that trade with EU member states might stop, foreign exchange rules and trading would change, airlines might be suspended, ports might be closed, food and medicine would be short... they were only concerned with the procedure. Now, when the UK is on the edge of a cliff, it feels the heat and believes that Brexit will derail normal life. They probably never thought that the vaunted process would bring the country to this denouement. Some of them made the choice just because they do not like or even hate globalization. To take such a crucial decision on the basis of a referendum is farcical.

It is only now they suddenly realize that Brexit is so complicated and resistance to globalization will exact its price. Anyway, democracy is not an easy game. They exercised the right of democracy and must face the result.

Brexit has put British political parties on a collision course. As for whether Brexit is right or wrong, good or bad for the country, beneficial or harmful to the people, is no longer critical. What is important is that both sides must fight each other until the last bullet is fired.

In the past, politics of the ballot lent an edge to the British Empire, but today, it has pushed the country into chaos.

A plebiscite or referendum is a legitimate way of taking decisions in Western liberal democracies, but a flawless procedure does not imply a perfect result. Western scholars used to observing the political mechanisms of developing countries through the procedure don't pay much attention to the outcome, which leads to them attaching importance to the process but disdain for the development strides taken by other countries. Misunderstanding China starts from here.

## The United States of Incarceration

By Maj. Danny Sjursen

**Antiwar** — You've got to give it to the Defense Department — they're assiduous planners. I know: I used to be one. So the latest news that the DOD is preparing its 40 remaining forever prisoners at the extralegal detention center of Guantanamo Bay for nursing home and hospice care, should come as little surprise. It still shocks the senses a bit, though, doesn't it? The U.S. military, at the behest of the Bush-Cheney axis of secrecy, initially chose to detain post-9/11 "terror" suspects at Gitmo specifically, in order to keep the inmates "beyond the reach of usual US law." How's that for human rights and America's self-proclaimed status as the world's "beacon of freedom?"

To be honest, I actually appreciate the candor of the Trump administration and its soldiers-turned-prison-guards. It's almost refreshing (if utterly disturbing). They're essentially admitting what those who follow the darkly absurd terror wars have long known — that these final prisoners are never being released. Ever. Nope, DOD is simply planning to keep these folks under lock and key forever. The reason why is more than a little unsettling: most were tortured into confessions that can't be used in a jury trial, despite the habeas corpus ruling of the court in favor of the Guantanamo inmates. Leave it to the US government to simply refuse to try them or to let them go — consider it penal purgatory without due process.

By the way, almost no one cares. These are "bad guys," right? Perhaps. Though many scores of earlier detainees were released without charge, so I'm skeptical of America's record on the issue. Still, a great author — Dostoyevsky — once wrote, presciently, that "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." Well, if that's true than God help the collective American soul.

These forever prisoners will die without a trial — the oldest is 71 years old — because the Justice Department is afraid to charge them (due to the torture), and the US Congress — in a rare bipartisan vote — blocked every one of President Obama's attempts to transfer them to US supertax prisons. The uni-bomber, the 1993 World Trade Center mastermind, serial killers like Jeffrey

Dahmer and Ted Bundy, and even Timothy McVeigh (of OKC Federal building bombing fame): all these and more were safely held in these maximum security facilities, but somehow we were led to believe that the Guantanamo detainees would pose an escape threat to society. It was all bunk, and the congressmen knew it. The vote was a political move to protect their own you-know-whats from angry, bigoted constituents. Don't look for any courage on Capitol Hill, you'll be searching indefinitely.

Reading about the DOD's plan for geriatric detention without trial down at GITMO, I was initially angry and disgusted, plus a little embarrassed. Only then I realized something: locking foreigners up and throwing away the key makes perfect sense because, after all, we now live in the United States of Incarceration. That's right: incarcerating folks — usually our own people — is one of the last things were still #1 at...USA, USA! America leads the world in its incarceration rate — higher than Russia and a few times higher than China. So, we're in good company.

We also still execute folks here in the land of the free and the home of the brave, even though nearly every Western, industrialized nation quit the barbaric practice long ago. In fact, in 2017, the US was the only country in the Americas to kill an inmate. As of the same year, more than two-thirds of the world's countries had abolished the death penalty. Still, the US has plenty of compadres among other top state executioners like China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq! There's a group to be proud of!

Getting back to America's record mass incarceration, let's remember that we don't apply the practice equally. Indeed, blacks are incarcerated at five times the rate of whites in America, and black men are imprisoned at ten times the rate of the average Russian. Come on Mr. Putin, live up to your evildoer reputation and catch up!

Now as for locking up foreigners for long stretches, the US doesn't have such a great track record here either. Let us not forget that Al Qaeda in Iraq, which later morphed into the Islamic State, was birthed in the American military's detention facilities during the euphemistically titled Operation Iraqi Freedom. Oh, and the internationally acknowledged abuse of Iraqi

prisoners at Abu Ghraib — that also proved a boon for Al Qaeda recruiting. The US military: creating the people it is then obliged to kill, since 2001. Consider it an apt slogan for future recruiting.

Look, I'm prepared for the retorts: the folks still at Guantanamo — regardless of their advanced ages — are the "worst of the worst," and can never be released. If so, I say, follow the law and try and convict them in a federal court of law. Wars are supposed to end, prisoners of war are supposed to be released at some point. Read the Geneva Conventions — that's how it works.

Even Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombers — many with British blood on their hands — were released after the Good Friday Accords were signed (some even before). Even the Nazi prisoners of World War II — many of whom were served in southern restaurants in which their black American guards were disallowed — were released in the years immediately following the surrender. The Russians took a bit longer, and also worked many Nazi soldiers to death, but even they, after some ten years, released the survivors. The US tops the list here too: keeping some of the Guantanamo detainees for seventeen plus years now!

None of this is a question of whether you, or I, "like" the accused terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. It's about two far more profound ideas: sober strategy, and the national soul. We already know, categorically, that prison abuse (Abu Ghraib) and the very existence of Gitmo bolsters Islamist extremist recruiting throughout the world. You see there's a reason AQ and ISIS tend to dress up Western detainees in orange jumpsuits prior to their gruesome beheadings — its meant as a symbol of the uniforms donned by Guantanamo prisoners!

Mainly, though — and call me an idealist — but how we treat the "worst" of our prisoners reflects the spirit (or lack thereof) of our very laws. Is this — perpetually locking up detainees without trial — who we really want to be? Certainly no, as far as I'm concerned — and I've fought the Taliban and AQI to bloody stalemates on the battlefield.

But, given the apathy of most citizens and how quickly this story will likely be erased from the news, I'd say the evidence demonstrates that yes, apparently, this is who Americans want to be...

First Announcement



Permit No.1398.687

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TENDER NO. : **08-21-9740011**

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4-1/2 IN., 13.5 PPF DRIFT: 3.795 IN.		

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](http://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 226,225 EURO or 12 , 755,376,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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## Deadline extension of call for Prequalification of Contractors No.98-1

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Zagros Kowsar Power Plant Production and Management Company intends to identify the well-experienced and capable contractors in the field of construction of livestock biogas power plant with the production capacity of 1 MW along with all accessories, ancillaries and systems on the basis of EPC.

All necessary activities for the construction of project (including design, procurement, civil construction, installation) shall be borne by the selected contractor. Therefore, contractors who have the terms of rules of classification and qualification of an EPC contractor are invited to participate in the public call of bid of the project.

Interested applicants can receive documents by representing a letter of introduction from their company to the following address:

Zagros Kowsar Power Plant Production and Management Company, Sixth floor, No. 20, Bozorgmehr St., Valiasr Ave., Tehran.

Foreign companies can send their introduction letter to company by email to the address at the end of this announcement.

According to this call the deadline of the above tender for receiving RFQ documents is extended until May 7, 2019.

The deadline for the delivery of filled-in documents is until May 25, 2019

Delivery of filled-in documents does not create any obligation for the Zagros Kowsar Power Plant production and Management Company to invite and choose contractor.

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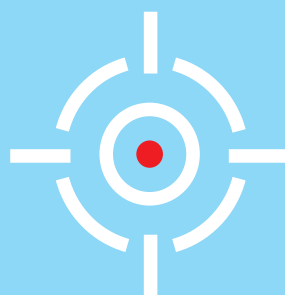
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# Theorist calculates the incalculable siren song of merging black holes

Just a month into a renewed observing campaign with a trio of detectors, physicists today announced they have spotted more gravitational waves—fleeting ripples in space set off when two massive objects such as black holes spiral into each other. The collaboration has now bagged 13 merging black hole pairs, as well as two pairs of neutron stars. But even as detections accumulate, one theorist has made an advance that could change how the team analyzes the signals and make it easier to test Albert Einstein's theory of gravity, general relativity.

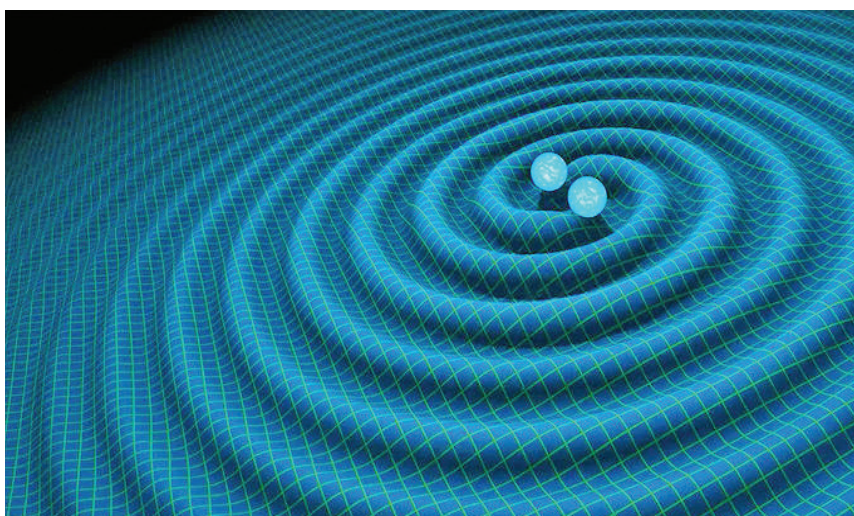
To interpret their signals gravitational wave hunters compare them to computer simulations. Now, Sean McWilliams, a theoretical astrophysicist at West Virginia University in Morgantown, has calculated an exact mathematical formula the signal, or waveform, produced by two merging black holes.

"It's a big step forward," says Neil Cornish, a gravitational wave astronomer at Montana State University in Bozeman who was not involved in the work. "It's going to allow for more accurate waveforms for doing analysis. But it also gives us more insight into what's going on" in a black hole merger.

In 1916, Einstein predicted that as two stars orbit each other they'd radiate gravitational waves, although he figured the waves would be too feeble to detect. In 2015, physicists with the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) spotted a burst of waves from two black holes that merged 1.3 billion light-years away, using their huge optical instruments in Hanford, Washington, and Livingston, Louisiana. The Virgo detector near Pisa, Italy, joined the hunt in August 2017, enabling the collaboration to triangulate to the sources of the events on the sky.

As two black holes spiral ever closer, they emit ripples in space that speed up. The waves' intensity peaks as the two objects collide, and then peter out as the final, merged black hole undulates and settles down. To decipher the signal and determine the black holes' masses and other parameters, scientists compare it to a catalog of simulated signals, a task they have taken because of the complexity of the problem.

According to general relativity, gravity arises



when mass and energy warp spacetime. And a black hole is the ultraintense gravitational field left behind when a massive star collapses to an infinitesimal point. So when two black holes swirl together, warping begets warping and renders the mathematics "nonlinear" and intractable.

Or so many scientists assumed. McWilliams says he has found a way to calculate the signal mathematically after all, as he reports in a paper in press at Physical Review Letters.

The calculation involves special distances from the center of the black hole. Famously, nothing can escape a black hole if it draws closer than a characteristic distance called the event horizon. At a distance about 1.5 times that of the event horizon, the black hole's gravity will bend passing light into a circular orbit, defining the "light ring." A distance roughly three times that of the event horizon marks the limit for a massive object to maintain a circular orbit and not spiral in, a threshold called the innermost stable circular orbit (ISCO).

Previous attempts to calculate the exact waveform from a black hole merger relied on a standard mathematical transformation, turning the problem of two orbiting black holes into one of a single body spiraling in a funnel-shaped energy landscape. But within the ISCO, the body stops spiraling, forcing

researchers to correct its path with numerical simulations. McWilliams realized he could avoid that problem by skipping to the final merged black hole. He then used general relativity to calculate how a tiny test mass spirals into and perturbs the final black hole, enabling him to calculate the radiated signal from the ISCO inward.

Once the test particle reaches the light ring, tracing its trajectory becomes mathematically untenable. But McWilliams says the physics there can be ignored for a simple reason: All the churning of spacetime within the light ring cannot escape to influence the spreading gravitational waves. Essentially, the black hole itself slurps up all the nasty nonlinearities. McWilliams provides a pair of formulas that neatly match the simulations. "I'll be honest," he says, "I was rather floored how well it agrees with the results of numerical relativity."

Those formulas could prove valuable in tests of general relativity, McWilliams says, especially as black holes are objects made of pure gravitational energy, with no messy matter to get in the way. LIGO's and Virgo's observations have already confirmed general relativity's accuracy to an unprecedented level, but researchers should be able to push further as they hone their instruments' sensitivity. They'll need more precise predictions of the

waveforms from general relativity, McWilliams says, and the exact formulas should be more accurate than the numerical simulations.

Lionel London, a gravitational wave theorist and LIGO team member at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, isn't so sure. McWilliams still has to rely on simulations to model the spiraling outside the ISCO, he notes, and that part of the signal is key to determining the masses of the initial black holes. The calculations also depend on certain simplifying assumptions, but do not provide estimates of the uncertainties carried with them, he says. The formulas are more of an "ansatz"—an educated guess at how the signal should look—than an exact solution to the problem, London says.

Cornish agrees it's too early to replace numerical relativity. Still, he says, the formulas will be useful and should spur physicists to explain why black hole mergers seem to be simpler than they had anticipated. "There's more to be learned."

In the meantime, LIGO and Virgo researchers will have no shortage of signals. During the first month of their third observing run, they have detected five new candidate events, including three black hole mergers, a second neutron star merger, and a possible black hole-neutron star merger spotted last week. The mixed merger would be another gem for scientists, as they lack even good estimates of how often such things should occur. "Because it's such an interesting astrophysical object, it's generating a lot of excitement, which I think it deserves," says Jessica McIver, a physicist and LIGO team member from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

Still, the tantalizing signal is relatively weak. Researchers estimate that random noise should produce a similar spurious signal about once every 20 months, and there's a 14% chance that it originated in terrestrial vibrations. "If you ask me, 'Would you bet a coffee, your car, or your house on this?' I would say, 'I'd bet your car,'" says Salvatore Vitale, a physicist and LIGO member from MIT. To nail the case for the supposed mixed merger, astronomers would likely have to spot light and electromagnetic waves from it.

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

## A dinosaur's running gait may reveal insights into the history of bird flight

An early winged dinosaur couldn't fly, but it could run. Now, with assists from a robotic dino and young ostriches wearing artificial wings, a study suggests that the dinosaur's running gait caused its wings to flap, in what may have been an evolutionary precursor to flight.

Caudipteryx was a peacock-sized dinosaur with feathered and winglike forelimbs that lived about 125 million years ago. Running at speeds of about 2.5 to 5.8 meters per second sent vibrations through its body, causing its wings to flap vigorously, scientists report online May 2 in PLOS Computational Biology. If true, the results suggest that some dinosaurs had to run before they could fly—adding a new wrinkle to a long-standing debate over whether the earliest fliers were flappers or gliders.

Some researchers have suggested that the delicate, thin shafts in the feathers of primitive birds such as Archaeopteryx, which lived about 150 million years ago, wouldn't have stood up to rigorous flapping, and so those animals probably glided between trees. Other researchers analyzing the wing length, light bodies and powerful hind limbs of early winged dinosaurs such as Microraptor, which lived about 120 million years ago, suggest that these early fliers could have launched themselves into the air rather than needing to gently glide. And a recent study of the wings of Archaeopteryx found that, feathers aside, its arm bones were strong enough to withstand short bursts of active, flapping flight.

The new study takes a different tack, turning from the anatomy of early fliers to that of a dinosaur unable to fly, although it had an early form of wings. Caudipteryx looks about as much like Archaeopteryx as an ostrich does a sparrow, with a body far too large for its small, winglike forelimbs. But like Archaeopteryx, it was a maniraptoran, the group of dinosaurs that includes birds and nonavian dinosaurs. Caudipteryx also had several birdlike features, including pennaceous feathers on its forelimbs like the feathers of modern birds, with barbs spreading out to the side from a central quill.

Like modern ostriches or emus, Caudipteryx was probably a pretty fast runner, says study coauthor Jing-Shan Zhao, a mechanical engineer at Tsinghua University in Beijing. These factors made the dinosaur the right candidate to examine how

running might have played a role in the evolution of flight.

In particular, Zhao and his colleagues wanted to see how Caudipteryx's running gait might have jostled its forelimbs, perhaps causing them to flap involuntarily. Hypothetically, with strong enough vibrations—and if the wings were large and strong enough—such flapping could generate enough lift to leave the ground.

That's a mechanics problem, so the researchers took a mechanical approach. Led by Yaser Saffar Talori, a mechanical engineer also at Tsinghua University, the team considered the dinosaur as a simplified system of masses and springs. The researchers divided the dino into different bits of mass—body, right and left wings, right and left legs, neck and head, and tail—and then imagined that each of those bits of mass were attached to the others by springs. Jostling caused by running would produce vibrations throughout the body.

Based on its skeletal proportions, the team estimated that Caudipteryx could reach a maximum running speed of about 8 meters per second. But simulations suggested that even at lower speeds from about 2.5 to 5.8 meters per second, the dinosaur's gait would have created strong enough vibrations that caused its wings to flap.

Robo-dino and living ostriches put that conclusion to the test. After building a life-size robotic Caudipteryx, the researchers put it to work on a treadmill. And they outfitted several young ostriches—each about the same weight as a middling Caudipteryx, at 5 kilograms—with artificial wings equipped with sensors that could detect the forces of lift and thrust, or drag, and watched the birds run. The team also tried out five different feather sizes on the wings.

These additional tests, Zhao says, validated the simulation's results: Caudipteryx would have flapped its wings as it ran. And the artificial ostrich wing tests revealed that the longer the feathers were, the greater lift that the ostriches could get, although they never got nearly enough lift to actually get off the ground. The results suggest that this passive wing flapping may have been an evolutionary precursor to later active wing flapping, Zhao says.

Other researchers aren't so sure. Caudipteryx lived about 25 million years after the first bird ancestors, such



as Archaeopteryx, began to fly, so the dinosaur isn't a direct ancestor of birds. "We cannot consider its morphology as a 100 percent valid model for the ancestral bird," says Andrea Cau, a vertebrate paleontologist who is a collaborator with the Giovanni Capellini Paleontological Museum in Bologna, Italy. But, he adds, "it would be interesting to apply this model to a large sample of feathered dinosaurs."

The role of passive flapping in the evolution of flight is indeed a novel question, and the suite of methods that the team used is "ambitious and creative," says John Hutchinson, an evolutionary biomechanicist at the Royal Veterinary College in London.

But, he says, he wasn't convinced by the study that Caudipteryx must have flapped its wings while running. For one thing, he says, the study's simplification of a bird into masses and springs raises the question of "how biologically relevant the motions are, since animals are far more complex than that." For example, the animal might have avoided the drag due to passive flapping by using its muscles to hold its forelimbs closer to its body.

And passive flapping may represent only a modest incremental step between two bigger milestones among the ancestors of birds: bipedal running and active flapping, Hutchinson adds. "However, this study does lay groundwork that could be built upon and tested more rigorously. So perhaps it will inspire deeper insight in the future."

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

## Fish in major shipping port make rare hybrid species to survive polluted waters

Fish in a major shipping port have managed to breed a rare hybrid species to survive its heavily-polluted waters.

The Houston Ship Channel in Texas has long posed a major challenge to fish living in the waters, such as the Gulf killifish, which need to adapt to its pollution to prevent heart deformities.

The rate of the extreme pollution has been happening too quickly for the type of minnow to evolve naturally to withstand its effects.

However, a chance meeting between the species and its long-distant relative the Atlantic killifish has produced a rare hybrid of the two which has adapted to survive by speeding up

the evolution process.

The findings were discovered by researchers at Baylor University whose study will be published in the journal Science.

"Natural populations rely on genetic variation to allow them to rapidly adapt," said one of the study's authors Dr. Elias Oziolor, a senior scientist at biopharmaceutical company Pfizer. "The huge population sizes of Gulf killifish allow them to retain a large amount of genetic variation."

"However, under radical pollution pressure, the ultimate solution was not their own genetic variation, but variation they were lucky enough to capture from their sister species, the Atlantic

killifish, through hybridization."

The Atlantic Coast killifish usually live about 1,500 miles from their Houston relatives.

But researchers believe humans may have transported them there by accident in the 1970s, possibly in ballast water from a large ship.

They seemed to appear right at the moment when the Gulf killifish were likely beginning to decline and therefore sparked an "evolutionary rescue."

"Our work demonstrates that hybridization can act as a mechanism of evolutionary rescue—likely not only in response to chemical pollution, but possibly also in response to the rapid environmental changes associated with

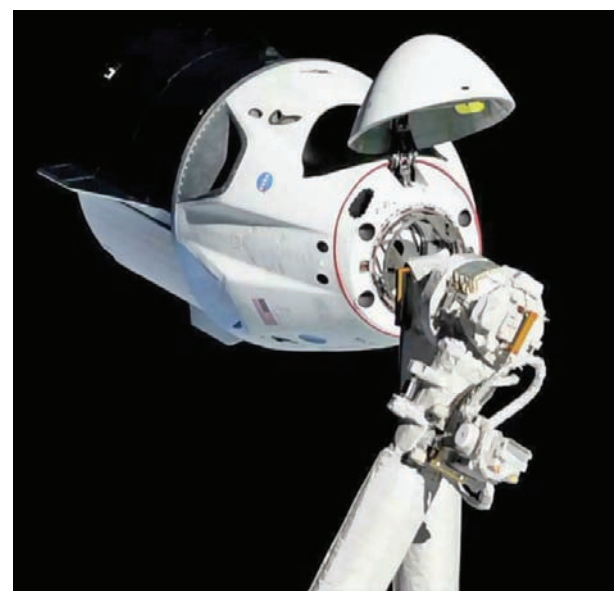
global climate change," said one of the study's co-authors Cole Matson, an associate professor of environmental science at Baylor University.

He added: "While the vast majority of research on invasive species rightly focuses on the environmental damage they can cause, this research shows that under rare circumstances they can also contribute valuable genetic variation to a closely related native species, thus acting as a mechanism of evolutionary rescue."

Prof Matson said that while hybridization is unlikely to be commonly used for evolutionary rescue, "this study clearly shows that it is possible."

(Source: [The Independent](#))

## International Space Station hit by major power shortage



The International Space Station has been hit by a major power shortage that has forced a delivery from SpaceX to be delayed.

SpaceX was supposed to launch a shipment on Wednesday. But an old power-switching unit malfunctioned at the space station on Monday and knocked two power channels offline. The six remaining power channels still worked normally, according to Nasa.

Nasa said on Tuesday that the station and its six astronauts were safe. But because of the hobbled solar-power grid, the SpaceX launch was put off until at least Friday. Nasa wants to replace the failed unit to restore full power before sending up the SpaceX Dragon cargo capsule.

The breakdown has left the station's robot arm outside with one functioning power channel instead of two. Two power sources are required—one as a backup—when the robot arm is used to capture visiting spacecraft like the Dragon.

Flight controllers will use the robot arm to replace the faulty unit with a spare later this week, saving the astronauts from going out on a spacewalk.

There is no rush for this delivery. Northrop Grumman launched supplies two weeks ago.

Solar wings collect and generate electricity for the entire space station. Any breakdown in this critical system can cut into power and affect operations.

SpaceX, meanwhile, is still investigating this month's loss of its new Dragon capsule designed for astronauts.

Six weeks after a successful test flight without a crew to the space station, the Dragon was engulfed in flames during a ground test. SpaceX was in the process of firing the capsule's thrusters on a test stand.

SpaceX and Nasa have offered few details. But the accident is sure to delay launching a crew Dragon with two Nasa astronauts on board.

(Source: [The Guardian](#))

## This shrimplike creature makes aluminum armor to survive the deep sea's crushing pressure



Amphipods—small, shrimplike crustaceans in most aquatic ecosystems—start to fall apart once they hit depths of 4500 meters. There, a combination of crushing pressures, low temperature, and higher acidity causes the calcium carbonate in their exoskeletons to dissolve, making them vulnerable to pressure and predators. Now, scientists have discovered how one species, *Hirondelea gigas*, can survive in the deepest part of the ocean: with aluminum suits of armor.

Researchers first analyzed *H. gigas* specimens found at the bottom of the Challenger Deep, more than 10,000 meters below the surface of the ocean. They found that this extreme amphipod constructs a personal suit of armor—a layer of aluminum hydroxide gel covering the surface of its exoskeleton. But aluminum isn't abundant in ocean water, making it hard to source as a building material. It is, however, abundant in ocean sediment.

To figure out how *H. gigas* accesses its aluminum, the team exposed sediment from the Challenger Deep—which the crustacean likely swallows when eating—to chemicals in its gut. Within that acidic environment, a byproduct of the plants in its typical diet reacts with the metal-rich sediment to free up aluminum ions. When these aluminum ions are released into alkaline seawater, they transform into protective aluminum hydroxide gel, the researchers report this month in PLOS ONE.

The aluminum armor appears to both relieve stress from deep-sea pressures and prevent the amphipod exoskeletons from leaching calcium carbonate and disintegrating. Thanks to these findings, scientists are one step closer to understanding how it is possible to survive in one of the world's harshest environments.

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



University of Mazandaran hosts conference on Iran’s archaeology, art history



**HERITAGE d e s k** TEHRAN — The first edition of a biennial conference on Iran’s archaeology and art history was held by University of Mazandaran on May 1-2.

The national event brought together tens of experts, archaeologists and anthropologists who discussed the latest scientific achievements, key dimensions and know-hows in that regard, Mehr reported.

Of 612 submitted abstracts of articles, 420 were approved by the biennial’s juries of the conference. Furthermore, 181 out of 278 full articles were selected to be appeared on a volume to be published in the future, the report added.

Organizers of the conference also agreed to set up workshops on various themes including zooarchaeology of indigenous animal bones; archaeology of coastal regions; iconography of Iranian music; and way to practice non-destructive laboratory methods on ancient potteries.

The enigmatic evidence of human presence on the Iranian plateau is as early as Lower Paleolithic times, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Sri Lanka to consider tax waivers to support tourism after blasts

Sri Lanka will consider a tax amnesty program for the tourism industry in a bid to help companies recover from the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks that killed more than 250 people, Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera said.

The industry has requested tax waivers, including on the importation of security gear in the aftermath of the blasts that targeted foreigners and churchgoers, Samaraweera told Bloomberg Television’s Haslinda Amin on the sidelines of Asian Development Bank meetings in Fiji.

“With the right kind of action, I would say tourism could bounce back to normalcy within a short period of one to one and a half years,” he said. That’s been the experience in destinations such as Tunisia and Bali, which faced similar attacks in the past, he added.

The terror attacks are poised to hit tourism, which accounts for 5 percent of the \$87 billion economy, as visitors flee from the nation famous for the Temple of Tooth, Dambulla Caves and coconut-fringed beaches. Sri Lanka has been struggling to revive growth following a three-decade long civil conflict that ended in 2009 and political turmoil last year. Arrivals have increased more than fivefold since the war ended and revenue from the industry is near a record.

(Source: Bloomberg)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Ngorongoro conservation area

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area spans vast expanses of highland plains, savanna, savanna woodlands and forests, from the plains of the Serengeti National Park in the north-west, to the eastern arm of the Great Rift Valley, the United Republic of Tanzania

It was established in 1959 as a multiple land use area, with wildlife coexisting with semi-nomadic Maasai pastoralists practicing traditional livestock grazing.

Inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list, the property



has global importance for biodiversity conservation in view of the presence of globally threatened species such as the black Rhino, the density of wildlife inhabiting the Ngorongoro Crater and surrounding areas throughout the year, and the annual migration of wildebeest, zebra, gazelles and other ungulates into the northern plains.

The area has been subject to extensive archaeological research for over 80 years and has yielded a long sequence of evidence of human evolution and human-environment dynamics, collectively extending over a span of almost four million years to the early modern era.

The overall landscape of the area is seen to have the potential to reveal much more evidence concerning the rise of anatomically modern humans, modern behavior and human ecology.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran foreign arrivals up over 16% in Noruz

**TOURISM d e s k** TEHRAN — The number of foreign visitors arriving in Iran rose 16.75 percent during Noruz (the Iranian new year holidays from March 21-April 4) compared to the same period last year, a senior tourism official has said.

“Our surveys in the first month of the [current Iranian calendar] year 1398 indicate a growth of foreign arrivals in the country, and we have witnessed a 16.75 hike in the number of inbound passengers during the 15-day Noruz compared to the same period last year,” CHTN quoted Vali Teymouri as saying on Thursday.

The official also pointed to the same figure regarding the fiscal year 1397 saying that seven million and eight thousand foreigners visited Iran during the past Iranian year.

“A total of 7.8 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the past year that shows a 52.5 percent increase year

on year. The country hosted 5.1 million travelers in 1396.”

“In addition to the growth in arrivals, we are also witnessing a growth, prosperity and development in the arena of domestic tourism in such a way that during this year’s Noruz, despite rough weather conditions in some provinces, we are witnessing a rise in the number of stays by tourists in different parts of the country.”

Back in April, the official announced that Iranians made over 74 million overnight stays during the two-week Noruz holidays. “On average, 18 million people have traveled throughout Noruz, which shows a six percent year-on-year increase,” he said.

Bound by tradition, hundreds of thousands of domestic trips are made in Iran during the New Year holidays, when schools and most businesses and workplaces are closed.



Foreign travelers pose for a photo during their visit to Abyaneh, an ancient village in Isfahan province.

Experts urge Macron to abandon five-year deadline for Notre-Dame rebuild

Over 1,000 architecture and heritage experts have called on France’s president to reconsider plans to rebuild Notre-Dame before the Olympic Games in 2024, saying the reconstruction should be carried out “without haste”.

Former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Philippe de Montebello is one of 1,170 experts to sign a petition calling for greater consideration over the plan to rebuild Notre-Dame before the city hosts the Olympics.

“Let’s take the time to find the right path and then, yes, set an ambitious deadline for an exemplary restoration,” reads the letter. “Let us not erase the complexity of the thought that must surround this site behind a display of efficiency.”

French newspaper Le Figaro published the open letter to president Emmanuel Macron that was signed by architecture, art and heritage experts, including president of the association of heritage architects Rémi Desalbres and general administrator of the Louvre museum Wanda Diebolt.

After Notre-Dame suffered a serious fire last month, which saw the spire collapse along with most of the roof, Macron made a televised address promising to restore the cathedral in just five years.

■ **Macron must listen to experts**

It’s a timeline has already been flagged by experts in medieval architecture as less than half the predicted time for a project of this magnitude and sensitivity.

“Let’s take the time to diagnose. The executive cannot



do without listening to the experts,” continues the letter.

“These French and international resources put the best chances on the side of France to restore Notre-Dame de Paris in its symbolic dignity. Let’s listen to them. Let’s trust them, trust them, without delay but without haste.”

In the aftermath of the fire French prime minister Edouard Philippe floated the idea of holding an international architecture competition to replace the 19th century spire designed by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, which collapsed in the flames.

News of the competition has prompted architects from around the world to release visualizations of their ideas for replacing the spire.

Mysterious ancient human found on the ‘roof of the world’

BY Maya Wei-Haas

The mouth of Baishiya Karst Cave nestles near the base of a towering crag at the edge of the Tibetan Plateau. Strands of colorful prayer flags crisscross the pale face of the hollow, a holy location where Tibetans have long retreated to pray and heal from sickness. Within the cave’s cool confines in 1980, a local monk happened on something unexpected: a jaw with two huge teeth that, while human, was definitely not like that of humans today.

A study published today in Nature reveals just how much this ancient jaw has to say. A detailed analysis of its physical features as well as proteins extracted from the fossil suggest that the mandible, dated to 160,000 years ago, comes from the enigmatic human population known as the Denisovans—a sister group to the Neanderthals previously identified from scant remains found in a single cave in Siberia’s Altai Mountains.

“I just couldn’t believe that at the moment [my colleagues] told me,” says study co-author Dongju Zhang of Lanzhou University, China. “I was really excited.”

Zhang’s excitement is justified: the jawbone, known as the Xiahe mandible after the county in China where it was found, fills a yawning gap in our understanding of this mysterious ancient. While the previous Denisovan fragments come only from the eponymous Denisova Cave in Siberia, people living all across Asia and Australasia today carry Denisovan DNA in their genomes. The discovery of the Xiahe jawbone at a locale over 1,400 miles away from this Siberian cave confirms Denisovans ventured much further across the continent.

It’s thought that after the Denisovans’ ancestors split from their Neanderthal relatives at least 400,000 years ago, they headed east into Asia, while early Neanderthals spread through Europe and western Asia. Modern humans first left Africa some 200,000 years ago, first as a trickle and then in waves. Eventually they encountered and interbred with Neanderthals in the Middle East. Those who trekked east into Asia likewise mated with the resident Denisovans, who left genetic fingerprints still present in Asians today.

One such Denisovan fingerprint helps modern Sherpas and Tibetans adapt to the



The newly described jawbone, known as the Xiahe mandible after the county in China where it was found, is the first physical evidence of Denisovans outside Denisova cave in Siberia’s Altai Mountains.

thin air on the roof of the world. But until now, evidence of Denisovans was found only at a relatively low altitude: Denisova Cave is just 2,300 feet above sea level. The Xiahe jaw, found at roughly 10,760 feet, is the first physical evidence that Denisovans ventured up into the same altitudes as living humans carrying the genetic adaptation to low oxygen environments. And at 160,000 years old, the jawbone is four times the age of the earliest evidence of human activity in the Tibetan Plateau’s challenging climes, underscoring the remarkable resilience of our ancient relatives.

“Thanks to this study we are ‘cornering’ Denisovans,” says Mar’za Martin’n-Torres, the director of Spain’s National Research Center on Human Evolution, via email. “Their portrait is progressively less blurred.”

■ **The monk and the jaw**

While the jaw was discovered back in the 80s, researchers only began studying it three decades later. In 2010, Lanzhou University’s Zhang, her newly minted Ph.D. in hand, turned to the strange hominin remains on the urging of her graduate advisor Fahu Chen, who led the recent study, and colleague Guangrong Dong also of Lanzhou University.

First up was figuring out where the mandible had actually been found. The anonymous monk who happened upon the odd bone passed it along to the sixth Gung-Thang Living Buddha, an eminent figure thought

to be reincarnated from past individuals who held the title. But the monk neglected to mention the name of the cave where he’d come across the fossil.

The team whittled the possibilities down to just one: Xiahe county’s Baishiya Karst cave, whose name translates to “white cliff” in Chinese. Excavations in the cave subsequently revealed large animal bones with cut marks and stone tools. Research on these artifacts is ongoing, Zhang says, so she can’t yet say whether the Denisovan group represented by the fossil actually made the tools or left their marks in the faunal remains.

“It takes us step by step a long time,” Zhang says of the project.

Analysis of the jaw itself turned up even more surprises. Its morphology suggests it is neither Homo erectus nor Homo sapiens, whose remains are widespread across mainland Asia. The shape of its row of teeth, for instance, was not elongated, as they are in H. erectus. And the jaw lacks a chin—a unique trait of modern humans. Most telling of all was the sheer size of the teeth, which are similar to those from Denisova Cave bearing Denisovan DNA.

“To me it hits the expected morphology really well,” says paleoanthropologist Bence Viola of the University of Toronto, who is an expert on Denisovan fossil morphology. “It really looks like what one would have hoped for.”

■ **Notre-Dame should not become “a gesture of architecture”**

But the experts cautioned against making the restoration process simply about the architectural grandeur of the landmark.

“The world is watching us. It is not a gesture of architecture but of millions of gestures, humble and experts, governed by science and knowledge” said the letter.

The signatories also reminded the French president that the government had failed to priorities the preservation of the landmark building.

“Throughout this history, France has long played a leading role, relying on institutions of excellence training protection specialists, recognized internationally and attracting students from around the world,” said the open letter.

“Unfortunately, this excellence has also been somewhat forgotten by previous governments.”

Before the fire Notre-Dame had been undergoing urgent restoration work, which may have accidentally led to the fire. In 2017 an appeal called Friends of Notre Dame was launched to try and raise the €1 million (£860,000) needed to restore the gothic cathedral’s crumbling flying buttresses and spire.

Now over €1 billion (£860,000) has been donated towards the rebuilding project, mostly from French billionaires.

(Source: dezeen.com)

For confirmation, the researchers first attempted to extract DNA from the fossil jaw. When the analysis revealed that the ancient DNA had degraded, they turned to a more durable, if less sensitive, molecular tool: the proteins built from DNA codes.

The researchers extracted proteins from both the jawbone and the tooth dentine. They then used an enzyme to cut the proteins into short strands to identify the amino acid building blocks encoded by DNA. Overall, the dentine proteins appeared much closer to the Altai Denisovans than to Neanderthals or modern humans, says Frido Welker of the University of Copenhagen, who specializes in ancient hominin proteins and led this phase of the work.

“I love the way cutting-edge techniques have been put together to make the dead speak,” says Martin’n-Torres, who was not involved in the work. “Paleo-genetics was a revolution in the paleoanthropological field and now proteomics constitutes another frontier [of] research, opening a door to unforeseen dimensions of knowledge.”

■ **Chasing the Denisovan ghosts**

There are, however, limits to what can be said from proteins. Denisovans had a stunning amount of diversity. A study published earlier this year suggested that what we call Denisovans might actually be three distinct genetic lines, one of which is nearly as different from other Denisovans as they are from Neanderthals. But the similarity of proteins across groups and through generations makes it difficult to pinpoint precisely how similar the owner of the jaw is to these three Denisovan lines—or if it was from yet another sister group.

“This mandible, one way or another, will fit into this story,” Welker says.

The tantalizing connection the jaw makes between what was once thought of as a low altitude group of humans and their mysterious role in modern high-altitude adaptations also remains fuzzy, explains Emilia Huerfano-Sanchez, a population geneticist at Brown University and lead author of the 2014 Nature study that first identified this genetic link.

“I agree with the authors that it could be that this hominin group was high altitude adapted,” she says. “But I don’t think we know for certain.”

(Source: The National Geographic)



# New computer server installed for brain simulation, fast neuroimaging

**HEALTH** **TEHRAN** — New calculation computer server to facilitate complicated brain simulation and processing brain images was installed by Iranian researchers, ISNA reported on Thursday.

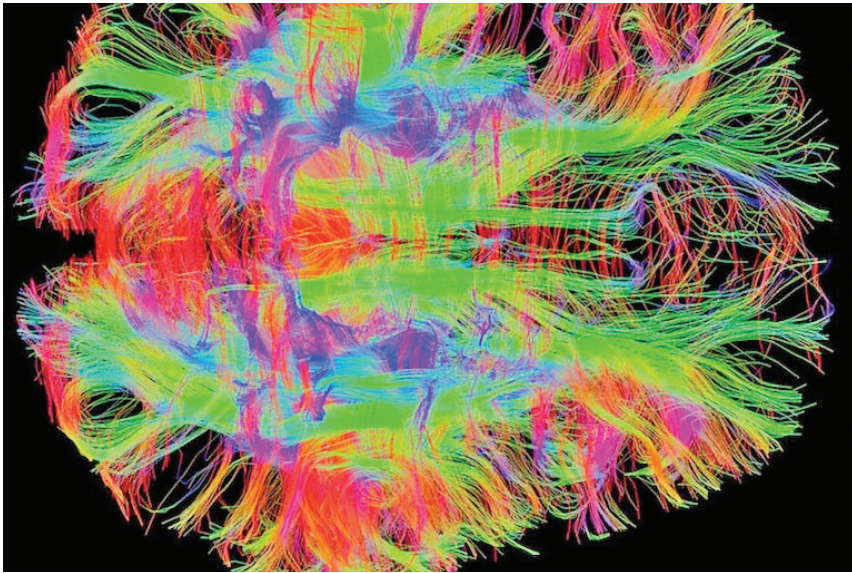
According to Dr. Reza Khosrowabadi, this server can make the analysis and calculations of brain data, easier and faster.

Installing this server was based on the international Human Connectome Project (HCP).

HCP is a project to construct a map of the complete structural and functional neural connections in vivo within and across individuals.

"The brain mapping data are very large and their analysis in regular computers takes a lot of time, but by using the new calculation server, processing of data will become much faster," said Dr. Khosrowabadi.

According to him, the project was part of National Brain Mapping Plan and the new server was installed in Iran National Brain Mapping Laboratory (NBML).



The hardware can save large sizes of brain structural and functional images. The Linux software operating system and advanced image processing software also help the researchers in brain mapping, he added.

"Usually when brain images are processed, some noises might interrupt the analysis due to server movement or other reasons, but by using calculation servers, we can clean the process and extract some models to detect many kinds of interruptions," he said.

"Brain modeling can help us in doing research about a wide range of brain disorders. For example, by designing neuron-feedbacks or using brain stimulations we can better understand brain mechanisms."

"We are trying to use our findings to find better treatments for disorders such as Autism and Obsessive Compulsive disorders (OCDs)," said Khosrowabadi.

Reza Khosrowabadi is an Assistant Professor at the Institute for Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Shahid Beheshti University.

## Hot tea raising esophageal cancer risk in Golestan province

**HEALTH** **TEHRAN** — A new study has revealed that drinking hot tea has substantially increased the prevalence of esophageal cancer in Iranian province of Golestan, said the deputy health minister for research, technology and medical education.

Golestan Province, located in the northeast of the country south of the Caspian Sea, has one of the highest rates of esophageal cancer in the world.

According to Reza Malekzadeh, the study

surveyed 50,000 people over the age of 40 in cities of Gonbad, Aq Qala and Kalaleh and the villages surrounding them, ISNA reported.

According to Medical News Today, the research was led by Dr. Farhad Islami, the strategic director of Cancer Surveillance Research at the American Cancer Society.

The researchers clinically followed the participants for an average period of 10.1 years, between 2004 and 2017. During this time, 317 people developed esophageal cancer.

The researchers divided tea temperature

into "very hot" — meaning a temperature of over 60°C, and "cold or lukewarm," that is, a temperature that is or falls below 60°C.

Overall, the study found that drinking 700 milliliters of "very hot" tea per day increased the chances of esophageal cancer by 90 percent compared with drinking the same daily amount of cold or lukewarm tea.

The results substantially strengthened the existing evidence supporting an association between hot beverage drinking and esophageal cancer risk.



## Third of UK asthma sufferers have sacrificed food to afford medication, survey finds

Hundreds of thousands of asthma sufferers are being forced to cut back on food to pay for their medication, a charity has warned.

Around 800,000 people, or around a third of those with the condition, have at times needed to make the sacrifice to cover the cost of their prescription, according to a survey by Asthma UK.

Many are facing an «impossible» choice between essentials and life-saving medicine, said Samantha Walker, the charity's director of research and policy.

The survey of 9,000 people with asthma, including around 7,500 who paid for their prescription, also found more than one in five (21 per cent) have cut back on paying bills to pay for medication.

This equates to an estimated 480,000 people in England when the figures are extrapolated, Asthma UK said. «The stark reality is that hundreds of thousands of people with asthma are faced with an impossible choice — cut back on essentials like food and bills or cut back on the medication that could save their life,» Dr Walker said.

«People with asthma are struggling to pay for their prescriptions and around a million are cutting back on taking their medication because of the cost.

«This puts them at risk of being



hospitalized or even dying from an asthma attack.»

Around 2.3 million people with asthma pay for their prescription in England, Asthma UK said.

Support free-thinking journalism and subscribe to Independent Minds The charity has launched a campaign — Stop Unfair Asthma Prescription Charges — in a bid to make medication free for those with the condition.

Prescription charges have been scrapped in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, while those in England with long-term conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy are entitled to a medical exemption certificate to avoid the cost.

(Source: The Independent)

## Life-saving kidney delivered by drone

A donor kidney has been delivered to surgeons at a U.S. hospital via drone, in the first flight of its kind.

Many see huge potential for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) delivering medical products, with some drones already doing so in Africa.

The U.S. flight required a specially-designed drone which was able to maintain and monitor the organ.

It is hoped that it can pave the way for longer flights and address safety issue with current transport methods.

The recipient, a 44-year-old from Baltimore, had waited eight years for the transplant.

She said of the unusual delivery method: "This whole thing is amazing. Years ago, this was not something that you would think about."

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, which manages organ transplants in the US, in 2018 there were nearly 114,000 people on waiting lists, with 1.5% of organs not making it to the destination and nearly 4% being delayed by two hours or more.

"Delivering an organ from a donor to a patient is a sacred duty with many moving parts. It is critical that we find ways of doing this better," said Joseph Scalea, assistant professor of surgery at University of Maryland School of Medicine



(UMSOM), and one of the surgeons who performed the transplant.

"As a result of the outstanding collaboration among surgeons, engineers, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), organ procurement specialists, pilots, nurses, and, ultimately, the patient, we were able to make a pioneering breakthrough in transplantation."

The three-mile journey required a lot of new technology, including a custom-made drone capable of carrying the additional weight of an organ, which also needed on-board cameras and organ tracking, and communications and safety systems for a flight over an urban, densely-populated area.

It also had a parachute recovery system in case the aircraft failed.

(Source: BBC)

## Deleting just one gene may 'completely prevent' pancreatic cancer

Using a mouse model of pancreatic cancer, researchers have zoomed in on a single gene that stopped aggressive pancreatic cancer from developing when the scientists removed it.

New research sheds light on the genetic drivers behind pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic cancer is an aggressive form of cancer that tends to be diagnosed quite late and often resists treatment.

According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Some estimates predict that by 2020, pancreatic cancer will become the second leading cause of death.

The NCI estimate that in 2019 there will be 56,770 new cases of pancreatic cancer and 45,750 deaths resulting from it.

One of the main drivers behind pancreatic cancer is the so-called KRAS oncogene. But new research identifies another gene whose action is crucial for the development of this cancer.

Dr. Diane Simeone, who is the director of the Pancreatic Cancer Center at the New York University Langone Health's Perlmutter Cancer Center, is the corresponding author of this new research.

Dr. Simeone and her colleagues carried out a study in mice and human patient samples to examine the role of a gene called "ataxia-telangiectasia group D complementing" (ATDC) in pancreatic tumor formation.

The researchers will be publishing their findings in the journal Genes & Development.

### Studying how normal cells turn cancerous

The new research started from the theory that tumors arise as a result of adult cells reverting to an earlier, more "primitive" stage similar to that of high-growth fetal development cells.

Adult cells revert to this stage to repair injury and inflammation and supply the body with new cells that can replace the ones that are lost. In a healthy body, this process quickly starts and stops after it has finished repairing the damage.



However, in combination with other genetic defects, the theory goes, what our bodies intend as a healing process does not stop, but it instead goes awry and causes cancer.

In the current study, Dr. Simeone and team focused on a type of pancreatic cell called acinar cells. These cells secrete digestive enzymes that can also cause damage to the tissue in the small intestine.

To make up for this damage, acinar cells can quickly go back to a stem cell-like stage that high growth characterizes.

Acinar cells, explain the researchers, can become cancerous when they acquire DNA mutations, including those that characterize the KRAS oncogene.

More specifically, when stressed, acinar cells can transform into what is called "acinar-to-ductal metaplasia" (ADM) — an intermediary stage that leads up to primitive, high-growth cell types.

These cells can further transform into a second stage

called "pancreatic intraepithelial neoplasia" (PanIN), in which cells multiply more than they should.

### 'One of the most profound' tumor blocks

In the present study, Dr. Simeone and team first used mice to create a model of pancreatitis — an inflammatory condition that can cause acinar cells to turn into high-growth ductal cells.

Adult "ductal cells share some similarities with embryonic primitive ducts and may retain the ability to generate endocrine cells in the adult."

Dr. Simeone and colleagues found that the ATDC gene expression went up a few days after pancreatitis caused tissue damage, and it increased to the levels required for acinar cells to transform into ductal cells.

Furthermore, when the ATDC gene was present, in combination with the KRAS oncogene, all of the study mice developed aggressive pancreatic cancer.

However, when the researchers removed the ATDC gene, none of the cancer-prone mice developed cancer. What is more, acinar cells did not even progress to the ADM or PanIN stage.

Dr. Simeone comments on how surprising the findings were, saying, "We thought the deletion [of the ATDC gene] would slow cancer growth, not completely prevent it."

"We found that deleting the ATDC gene in pancreatic cells resulted in one of the most profound blocks of tumor formation ever observed in a well-known mice model engineered to develop pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, [...] which faithfully mimics the human disease."

Further experiments that the researchers conducted revealed additional details of the chain reaction mechanism that explains how the ATDC ends up triggering cancer.

Namely, the researchers also identified another signaling protein and a further gene, both of which are involved in this tumor-forming process — and that can constitute potential targets for new therapeutic and prevention strategies against pancreatic cancer.

(Source: Medical News Today)

## Why evening might be the best time of day to exercise

Can we hack into the biological clock that helps dictate our sleep cycles to get more out of our exercise routine?

We're not there just yet, but recent research is shining new light on the interplay between the body's circadian rhythm and physical exertion.

A pair of studies published in the journal Cell Metabolism conclude that there's a significant link between time of day and the benefits of exercise.

"We were expecting exercise, just like other forms of modification of our physiology, would be more beneficial, or have a stronger impact, at different times of day and night," Paolo Sassone-Corsi, PhD, director of the Center for Epigenetics and Metabolism at the University of California Irvine and senior author of one of the papers, told Healthline.

"We just didn't know when, and the simple fact that we did this demonstrates that the clock itself is rewired, or reprogrammed, by exercise in different ways — whether you do that during the day or during the night. We were expecting it, but this has never been done before," Sassone-Corsi explained.

The two studies looked at lab mice, along with 12 humans. Mice are nocturnal and seemed to get the most benefit from exercising toward the end of their active time — "mouse evening," in other words.

Humans, meanwhile, are diurnal, meaning they're active during the day. However, similar results were found between people and mice in the study.

It's too early to definitively say what time of day is best for effective exercise, but the research does help flesh out how circadian rhythms affect the body.

### Body changes throughout the day

It's long been understood that the human body undergoes hormonal changes throughout the course of a circadian cycle.

"We know a lot of things that do change from hour to hour. Some hormones change reliably. Everybody has a built-in body clock," Dr. Steven Feinsilver, director of sleep medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, told Healthline.

"It affects a lot more than just sleep. Lots of hormones change by the clock. Growth hormone is produced in the middle of the night while cortisol is produced in the early morning," he said.

Based off this, Feinsilver says it makes sense that certain times of day might work better than others for meeting specific exercise goals.

Still, exercising at times the body is unaccustomed to has the potential to disrupt the body's natural rhythms.

"A lot of people generally find it difficult to do vigorous aerobic exercise in the evenings and go to sleep," said Feinsilver. "Might be a great time to exercise in terms of burning calories, but it might be hard to fall asleep after that. Not for everybody, but for a lot of people."

### Circadian clock could affect athletes

A 2018 study on National Football League (NFL) athletes dovetails with these two more recent studies.

Data suggests that NFL teams tend to play better during night games (starting at 8 or 9 p.m.) than they do in day games (starting at 1 or 4 p.m.), likely due to circadian rhythms.

There are complicating factors — notably, frequent travel and time zone changes.

But the preliminary findings would appear to fall in line with data suggesting that early evening is the best time for effective exercise.

### Make your rhythms work for you

Humans are naturally diurnal, but many people don't rise with the sun and go to sleep at night, due to shift work or general sleeplessness.

When it comes to establishing a good sleep pattern — even for shift workers who sleep during the day — the best bet is to utilize the body's natural reaction to light.

"When you want to wake up at night, find any light you can to put on, or even park yourself in front of a light box to produce full spectrum light for maybe 20 minutes or so," advises Feinsilver. "And if you're driving home from work in the morning, wear the darkest sunglasses you can find. If you're trying to get to sleep in the morning, you don't want any light, so you need a very dark bedroom."

It also helps to get the body moving once you get out of bed. "People who aren't sleeping very well should take the time to wake up in the morning, get exposed to light, and exercise," said Feinsilver. "For most people, we tell them to get up, get out of bed, and walk outside. That's a natural way to wake people up."

It can be tough maintaining good sleep hygiene. But setting a consistent time to wake up in the morning — no matter how badly you slept the night before — is one way to improve sleep hygiene.

"Nobody can keep a perfect schedule. But the closer you can get to that, the better," said Feinsilver. "Rule number one is that if your sleep is OK, you can do whatever you want. Nobody has to follow all the rules, necessarily. But if you're not sleeping well, go back to the basic rules for sleep."

Following these rules isn't always easy — particularly when a Netflix binge occupies you long into the night. But the rewards are self-evident.

"You'll feel better, sleep better," said Feinsilver. "Sleep is a biological drive. If you don't mess it up, it tends to work. But we mess it up all the time, and the major way we mess up is not keeping a consistent schedule."

As researchers tease out more details about the body's circadian rhythms, more data will be added to the existing body of knowledge.

Sassone-Corsi says he and his colleagues intend to continue delving into circadian rhythms, with the next study incorporating bloodwork.

"The study we just discussed looks at what happens in the muscle," he said. "But the question is: what happens in other tissues? Is exercise having a similar or different type of effect in the fatty tissues, in the gut, in the brain? How much of that can we reveal by looking at the blood? This is what we're doing right now."

### The bottom line

Researchers are finding more details on the connection between exercise efficiency and time of day.

There isn't enough data to recommend exercising at one time or another, but researchers say evening might be the best time to get in your workout.

They also say it's also important to recognize the role that circadian rhythms play in sleep hygiene.

(Source: Healthline)



## 22% drop in traffic-related deaths during New Year holidays

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — During the Iranian New Year holidays (March 16-April 5), the number of traffic-related deaths decreased by 22.3 percent compared to the same period last year, Tehran traffic police chief has said.

During New Year traffic scheme, a peak travel time for Iranians, some 862 lost their lives in car crashes while in the same period last year road crashes claimed 1,109 lives, Kamal Hadianfar explained.



While this year due to poor weather conditions road conditions were not favorable, 247 less persons lost their lives in traffic-related accidents, Hadianfar said, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

Moreover, Hadianfar added, the number of those sustained injuries in accidents reduced by 11 percent as well.

He also highlighted that traffic police has set a target to decrease the number of traffic related deaths in the current year (starting on March 21) by 2,000.

As per the data published on May 21, 2018 by Iran's forensics organization Road crash fatalities have increased by 24 percent during the last Iranian New Year holidays (from March 16, 2018 to April 4, 2018) compared to a year earlier.

Distracted drivers are the top causes of car accidents. A distracted driver diverts his or her attention from the road, usually to talk on a cell phone, send a text message or eat food. traveling above speed limit, driving under the influence of drugs, reckless driving, poor weather conditions, running red lights, night driving, drowsy driving, defective automobiles, tailgating, and road rage are only some of the causes of fatal accidents.

Granted substandard vehicles and poor road conditions are also among the main causes of accidents, however, drivers play a bigger part in preventing or causing accidents.

## U.S. ‘pushed to have climate change removed’ from international Arctic policy statement

During negotiations on an international statement on Arctic policy, the United States pushed to remove references to “climate change” from the document — a position that threatened to spark a standoff between the U.S. and other Arctic nations, a new report says.

The U.S. pushed to have references to “climate change” and the Paris climate treaty moved from the policy statement, which is created by the eight Arctic nations in a meeting that occurs every eight years.

The push to remove the language, in the beginning, lead contention among the negotiators, even though the statement itself is non-binding.

The U.S. “indicated its resistance to any mention of climate change whatsoever,” one official told The Washington Post, which first reported on the effort.

“There have been challenges in the negotiations with the United States,” another official told that paper, noting that the U.S. position has appeared to soften in recent days.

“At one point they wanted to remove the expression ‘climate change’ and blocked references of the Paris agreement and other international agreements in the language. But the dialogue has improved during the last couple of days,” the official continued.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### The discovery of George Mallory’s body on Mount Everest

(May 6, 1999)

In 1924 the English climber George Mallory disappeared on Mount Everest. Seventy five years later his body was found by a team of explorers. We heard from Erin Copland, a spokeswoman for the expedition which found the body, and from Sir Edmund Hillary.

They are quite certain. They communicated to me this morning that they had **definitively** identified the body as being that of George Mallory. There were a number of **clues** that enabled them **to narrow it down** certainly to being either that of Mallory or Irvine, based primarily upon the type of clothing that was on the remains of the body. The clothing used by modern day climbers, including Chinese climbers that have been lost on the mountain, differs vastly from the clothing worn by the Great British climbers **back in the twenties**, so when this body was found the type of clothing on it made it certain to be either Mallory or Irvine, and then it was just a matter of finding certain **artefacts** that were known to belong personally to George.

For me, George Leigh Mallory was a **heroic figure**. He was the man who really inspired interest in Mount Everest. He was a great talker and a great climber and Everest and Mallory really were **synonymous**. So one has always had a faint hope that although they did disappear, that maybe they had managed to reach the **summit** before disaster set in.

■ **Words definitively:** conclusively, without any doubt  
**clue:** something that helps you find the answer to a problem or a mystery  
**to narrow it down:** to limit or reduce the number of possibilities  
**back in the twenties:** in the period of the 1920s  
**artefact (or artifact):** usually used in an archaeological context to mean a tool, ornament or other object made by a human being, but used here to describe something that once belonged to one of the climbers  
**a heroic figure:** a person who has the qualities of a hero  
**synonymous:** if one thing is synonymous with another, the two things are closely associated with each other  
**summit:** the top of a mountain

(Source: BBC)

# Increased precipitations predicted for next two decades in Iran

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — It seems **d e s k** that over the next one to two decades the number of years with above-normal precipitations will increase, eminent meteorology professor Hossein Ardakani has said.

However, this doesn’t mean that decades-long wet spell is ahead of us, Ardakani highlighted.

Following above-normal precipitations in the country speculations have gone rife linking increased precipitations of the current year with the start of a 30-year or even a century-long wet spell. However, the claims have been scientifically rejected by meteorologists and climatologists.

Based on the latest data published on Thursday by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center affiliated to Iran’s Meteorological Organization since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2018) the whole country received 294 millimeters of rain.

The number amounted to 129.9 millimeters in the previous water year and 206.4 millimeters in the long-term, the data indicated. The numbers show a drastic increase of 126.3 percent compared to last water year. It also reveals a 42.4 percent increase compared to long-term means.

Ardakani went on to explain that a wet spell is defined as a period of consecutive rainy years, and that experiencing one year



of above normal precipitations followed by years of lower-than-normal precipitations does not mean a wet spell.

Receiving higher precipitations in the country depend on various factors such as teleconnection patterns, he added.

According to the U.S. climate Prediction Centre the term “teleconnection pattern” refers to a recurring and persistent, large-scale pattern of pressure and circulation anomalies that spans vast geographical areas. Teleconnection patterns are also referred

to as preferred modes of low-frequency (or long time scale) variability.

Although these patterns typically last for several weeks to several months, they can sometimes be prominent for several consecutive years, thus reflecting an important part of both the interannual and interdecadal variability of the atmospheric circulation. Many of the teleconnection patterns are also planetary-scale in nature, and span entire ocean basins and continents. For example, some patterns span the entire North Pacific

basin, while others extend from eastern North America to central Europe. Still others cover nearly all of Eurasia.

Teleconnection patterns reflect large-scale changes in the atmospheric wave and jet stream patterns, and influence temperature, rainfall, storm tracks, and jet stream location/ intensity over vast areas. Thus, they are often the culprit responsible for abnormal weather patterns occurring simultaneously over seemingly vast distances.

Ardakani said that over the past two decades the number of years with lower-than-normal precipitations were high and now it appears that teleconnection patterns can positively affect the number of years with increased precipitations in the next 10 to 20 years in Iran.

Commenting on devastating flooding across the country Ardakani suggested that Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) could have caused increased precipitations in the country.

MJO is the major fluctuation in tropical weather on weekly to monthly timescales. The MJO can be characterized as an eastward moving ‘pulse’ of cloud and rainfall near the equator that typically recurs every 30 to 60 days.

MJO is a traveling pattern that propagates eastward, through the atmosphere above the warm parts of the Indian and Pacific oceans. This overall circulation pattern manifests itself most clearly as anomalous rainfall.

## Iran’s DOE to launch rapid response programs in fire-prone areas

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — With the onset of the warm **d e s k** season Iran’s Department of Environment (DOE) has ordered initiating rapid response programs in fire-prone areas across the country.

Headquarters for rapid response programs to address wildfires was established in the year 1394 (March 2015–March 2016) in Iran and every year and once the hot weather sets in and increases chances of wildfires the rapid response programs to extinguish the fire in various provinces nationwide will be carried out, Hamid Zohrabi, DOE deputy chief for natural environment and biodiversity directorate explained.

In the current year (started on March 21), above-normal precipitation and increased vegetation covers can dramatically heighten the risks of wildfires, however, due to lower-than-usual temperature rise in many regions in the country it is projected that wildfire season might be delayed, Mehr news agency quoted Zohrabi as saying on Wednesday.



Wildfire in forests in Marivan, western province of Kord-estan, in August 2015

Nonetheless the number of wildfires and their gravity could be worse than previous years, he warned.

The deputy environment chief went on to say that some 16 rapid response units are now equipped with helicopters for aerial firefighting.

Moreover, as per a memorandum of understanding with Ministry of Defense DOE will be provided with five aircrafts fitted with water tanks to respond to wildfires, he highlighted.

He further urged the public to take necessary precautions to avoid causing wildfires in precious forests.

■ **Dramatic drop in wildfires in the first month of spring**

Commander of forest protection unit at Forest Rangelands and Watershed Management Organization (FRWO) also said on Thursday that the incidence of wildfires have decreased by 130% in the Iranian calendar months of Farvardin (March 21-April 20) compared to the same period last year.

Ali Abbas Nejad told ISNA news agency that that spring downpours played a key role in the sharp drop.

## Rainfall brings drought-hit southeastern Iran back to life

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Long battled with drought, the **d e s k** southeastern province of Kerman benefits from heavy rainfall which filled the province’s water resources and quenched pastures’ thirst, despite causing damages to the infrastructure and farms, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

According to the Energy Ministry, province of Kerman met above normal rainfall averages amounting to 161.2 millimeters during the current crop year starting on September 23, while last year during the same period, it only rained some 47 millimeters in the province, so this year, the precipitation rates exceeded both of last year and long-term means by 238.7 and 35 percent, respectively.

Abbas Saeedi, director of Agriculture Organization of Kerman Province, said that over the past decade, at least 2,000 to 3,000 hectares of forests and gardens have dried by drought.

Agriculture will face growth in the province, as precipitation brought some qanats across the province back to life, he added, noting, many dams in the province of Kerman have been saturated with water.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Saeedi referred to flooding as an experience which must not be taken for granted, adding, river banks and beds belongs to the river and no construction project should block its way.

In addition to watershed management, water consumption in different sectors including industry and agriculture must be controlled sustainably, otherwise the province will face water scarcity again, he concluded.

Since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2018), the province’s underground water resources absorbed water 125 percent more than that of last year, Mohammad Mehdi Rajabizadeh, director general of Kerman province natural resources and watershed management department said.

Over the past 20 years, severe drought and loss of vegetation cover have made the forests vulnerable to pests and diseases, as 550,000 hectares of forests were at risk of eradication being infected, he lamented.

He went on to highlight that this year, the province received much rainfall that pest and diseases will significantly decrease in the forest area.

Last year, 90 percent of the Kerman province’s pistachio production was damaged due to unprecedented temperature rise and fall, as a result of that agricultural sector burdened a loss of 100 trillion rials (around \$2.3 billion), Rajabizadeh further regretted.

Medicinal herbs cultivation will also increase in the province due to heavy rainfall, he noted, adding that last year cultivation of herbs have been banned due to water shortages.

Moreover, average forage production in the province’s rangelands is 65 kilograms per hectare, which reached below 20 kilograms last year, he added.

This is while, forage production is expected to reach 40 to 45 kilograms per hectare, which jumped 2-fold compared to the last year, he highlighted.

Referring to the disadvantages of increased rainfall in the province, he said that vegetation covers in the rangelands also have been expanded, which may increase the risk of wildfire during the next two months when temperature rises.

“Water resources condition in Kerman province highly depends on rainfall, therefore, proper management of rainwater is a must,” he stated, adding, natural resources

conservation projects also must be drawn up.

Referring to the rainfall fluctuations, he noted that rainfall patterns are affected by climate change which contribute to intermittent rain and flooding along with soil erosion, so that underground resources water level remain low not absorbing the flood.

He explained that we must seek solutions to direct the rain water and flood to enter aquifers and subsurface resources, and enhance vegetation coverage to pace up the process, which is related to watershed management.

“So far, watersheds stretch to 10.5 million hectares in the province, 1.2 million hectares of which have undergone watershed management measures,” he said.

Northern part of Kerman province receives 18 billion cubic meters of rainfall annually, 3.6 billion cubic meters of which evaporates and forms flowing water that should be managed to prevent flooding, he stated.

He further noted that 7,412 different watershed structures have been constructed which led to storage of 290 million cubic meters of water, and it is planned to send 174 million cubic meters of water into the underground resources along with preserving 11 million tons of soil.

Since the past seven months, we have managed 160 million cubic meters of water accounting for 125 percent increase compared to the last year, he also added.

Since past 30 years, the total budget of watershed manage-



ment for the province was 800 billion rials (nearly \$20 million), while the needed budget for a 10-year period amounts to 50 trillion rials (about \$1.1 billion), he concluded.

Kerman province bearing significant impacts of climate change, has suffered low precipitation rate over the recent years, recurrent droughts also led the city to become a major sand and dust storms hotspots, generating sand and dust particles which has haunted the city over and over last year.

According to a report published by the provincial disaster management organization in late January, storms reaching speed up to 70 kilometers per hour led to particulate matter concentration heading for 20 times above the safe levels, causing respiratory problems for the residents and blocking the roads over the province.

Second Announcement



Permit No.1398.625

**NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN**

TENDER NO.: **01-31-9280038**

National Iranian South Oilfields Company intends to purchase the following goods

Material Description	Quantity
PARTS FOR “COOPER-ROLLS”POWER GAS TURBINE TYPE RT 48 SERIAL NOS.	33 ITEMS
884 RT,885 RT AND 886RT	INCLUDING 497 NO

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 3,479 EURO or 164,252,588 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

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# Israeli forces will be annihilated if they dare attack Lebanon: Nasrallah

**I→** The Zionist regime (of Israel) fears launching a new war, even on the besieged Gaza Strip, let alone Lebanon. All Israeli battalions will be destroyed under the eyes of mainstream media and the entire world, if they dare enter Lebanon. We will not compromise on even one iota of the Lebanese soil,” Nasrallah pointed out.

Commenting on the presence of Hezbollah fighters in neighboring Syria, Nasrallah said the fighters had entered Syria in order to thwart U.S., Israeli and Saudi conspiracies there, noting, “What happened in Syria was a multifaceted scheme, and not a change for democracy.”

The Hezbollah chief then blamed certain Persian Gulf Arab states for funneling money and munitions to the Daesh terrorist group, emphasizing that the Takfiris could not have been able to overrun large swathes of land in Iraq and Syria without their support and media coverage.



According to Press TV, Nasrallah added that Daesh has its roots in the radical ideology of Wahhabism, which is being preached

in Saudi Arabia. “The United States and Saudi Arabia created and sponsored Daesh. One of

the main objectives of the West in this regard was to defeat Hezbollah. Daesh was created by Washington and tasked with standing against all those who confront U.S.-Israeli plots in the region. This is what American officials have acknowledged themselves,” the Hezbollah leader underlined.

Nasrallah said Daesh was created in a bid to provide Pentagon with an excuse to dispatch military forces to Iraq and Syria.

“Daesh has served the U.S., Israel and other enemies of our nation. It has destroyed several armies and societies in the region. The terror outfit still remains a threat as its ideology persists and its sleeper cells can be resurrected,” he said.

The Hezbollah chief finally condemned Saudi Arabia over beheading 37 of its nationals, emphasizing that petrodollars and financial gains prevented the so-called advocates of human rights from denouncing the heinous mass executions.

## UN rights experts cite concern at ‘disproportionate’ Assange detention

**TEHRAN** — United Nations human rights experts voiced concern Friday at what they called the “disproportionate sentence” of 50 weeks in prison imposed on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange for skipping bail in Britain.

According to Reuters, Assange is being held in the high-security Belmarsh prison “as if he were convicted for a serious criminal offence”, the U.N. working group on arbitrary detention said in a statement, adding that this “appears to contravene

principles of necessity and proportionality.” It described the skipping bail charge as a relatively “minor violation.”

The group, composed of five independent experts, issued an opinion in 2015 that Assange – holed up at the time at the Ecuadoran Embassy in London after skipping bail to avoid extradition to Sweden to face an allegation of rape – was being arbitrarily detained. Assange has denied the rape allegations.

## Russia confirms Lavrov-Pompeo meeting next week

A senior Russian diplomat is confirming that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will meet U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo meet next week in Finland at a time of simmering tensions between the two countries over the crisis in Venezuela.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying Friday by state news agency Tass that the meeting has been set up.

Reports say the pair will meet on the

sidelines of the Arctic Council ministerial session on Monday and Tuesday in the city of Rovaniemi.

The unrest in Venezuela is likely to be a key point of discussion. The United States views President Nicolas Maduro’s re-election last year as illegitimate and has recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as interim president. Russia is backing Maduro.

(Source: AP)

## Turkey not distancing itself from NATO with Russian missiles deal

**TEHRAN** — Turkey is not distancing itself from the NATO alliance by buying Russian S-400 missile defense systems, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Friday, adding that Ankara should not be excluded from the F-35 jet project over the purchases.

Turkey and the United States, NATO allies, have been at odds over Ankara’s move to buy the Russian S-400s, which Washington says are not compatible with NATO systems and may threaten the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets, of which Turkey is a prospective buyer and partner in production.

In an interview with broadcaster NTV, Akar said that excluding Turkey from the F-35 project would put “very serious” burdens on the other partners in the project.

“There is no clause saying ‘you will be excluded if you buy S-400s’ in this partnership. Excluding us just because any one country wants so would not be in line with justice, laws or rights. This should not happen,” Akar said.

According to Reuters, he said Turkey was trying to ex-



plain to the United States and other partners in the F-35 project that the S-400s would not pose a threat to the jets, and added that Ankara had taken measures to prevent that.

In his strongest challenge yet to warnings that Turkey

may be removed from the F-35 project, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Tuesday that the project would collapse if Turkey did not participate.

While Washington has warned of potential U.S. sanctions if Ankara pushed on with the S-400 agreement, Turkey has said it would not back down from the deal

Instead, Turkey has proposed to form a working group with the United States to assess the impact of the S-400s, but says it has not yet received a response from U.S. officials.

Akar said on Friday Turkey was still evaluating the latest U.S. offer to sell Raytheon Co. Patriot systems, which he said was more positive than Washington’s previous offers.

Turkey said two weeks ago it expected U.S. President Donald Trump to use a waiver to protect it against penalties over the S-400s, after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Ankara could face retribution for the deal under the U.S. Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

## Cyclone slams Indian temple town after a million people flee east coast homes

**TEHRAN**— A cyclone barreled into eastern India on Friday, bringing down trees and power lines and “extensively” damaging the tourist town of Puri, but there were no early reports of casualties with a million people evacuated before it made landfall.

Tropical Cyclone Fani, the strongest to hit India in five years, spent days building up power in the northern reaches of the Bay of Bengal before it struck the coast of the state of Odisha at around 8 a.m., the state-run India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Howling winds gusting up to 200 kph (124 mph) whipsawed trees, uprooting scores, and driving rain impacted visibility, while streets were deserted in the state capital Bhubaneswar and Puri.

“Damage in Puri is extensive, power supply, telephone lines disrupted,” Odisha’s Special Relief Commissioner Bishnupada Sethi told Reuters, referring to the seaside Hindu temple town that is popular with pilgrims and was directly in the storm’s path.

“No casualty has been reported so far,” he said.

Cyclone tracker Tropical Storm Risk put Fani as a powerful category four storm on a scale of one to five. The IMD said the storm was now weakening.

Close to 60 km (37 miles) inland, winds brought down electricity poles in Bhubaneswar, where authorities had ordered the airport to stay closed. Schools and colleges in Odisha were also shut. A major hospital in the city

suffered extensive structural damage but all patients and staff were safe, authorities said.

“It was a massive cyclone, like many others our house is flooded. Boundary walls of houses around us have collapsed, trees have been uprooted. It is a panic situation,” Anuradha Mohanty, a Bhubaneswar resident, told Reuters.

People packed into shelters, spreading mats to wait out the storm, television and social media showed.

## Fighting rages overnight in Libyan capital

**TEHRAN** — Heavy fighting raged through the night in the battle for the Libyan capital Tripoli, with neither side able to secure gains on the frontlines as an offensive by eastern commander Khalifa Haftar entered its fifth week.

Haftar’s Libyan National Army, which is allied to a parallel administration based in Benghazi, has in the past week brought up more troops and heavy guns to the frontline.

But it has been unable to breach the defenses in the city’s southern suburbs of forces loyal to the internationally recognized government in Tripoli, Reuters reported. Heavy fighting raged from Thursday afternoon until Friday early morning in the area of the former international airport but the frontline has again little changed, residents said.

The LNA moved up on one part of the front earlier this week but was repelled by the Tripoli forces, who had built barriers, including shipping containers, on southern roads where tanks and artillery guns are located.

The Tripoli forces have regained some ground but analysts say the threat of the LNA will persist as long as it keep its forward base in Gharyan, a town 80 km south of Tripoli.

The town is difficult to take because it lies in the mountains that rise from the coastal plain where Tripoli is located.

The LNA has been sending troops and material to Gharayn by road from Haftar’s power base in Bneghazi, the main eastern city, or via the central air base in Jufrah, military sources say.



## War czar arrives in Saudi Arabia as new US ambassador

**TEHRAN** — Retired general John Abizaid, who led U.S. Central Command during the Iraq war, has arrived in Riyadh as the new American ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

The retired general arrived in the Saudi capital on Thursday, according to an embassy statement.

“Saudi Arabia and the United States work together every day to protect the security of our two countries, promote prosperity and economic development, and build the people-to-people ties that keep our relation-

ship strong,” the statement quoted Abizaid as saying.

Washington has not had any ambassador in Riyadh for more than two years since United States President Donald Trump took office.

According to Press TV, last year, U.S. President Donald Trump nominated the retired general for the position and earlier this month, Abizaid’s nomination was approved by Senate.

As a highly decorated army officer, the

retired general took over many important consulting positions after retiring from the U.S. military, including on the president’s Intelligence Advisory Board.

Abizaid is currently a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In 2016, the he was appointed by the U.S. secretary of defense as a senior adviser to the Ukrainian defense minister as Kiev faced an ongoing conflict with pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine.

The appointment of the senior military official and adviser, specifically a former U.S. Central Command chief, to lead the U.S. mission in Saudi Arabia comes as the kingdom is mired in a four-year-long war against Yemen.

It reflects Washington’s focus on reaping the windfall of Saudi Arabia’s military engagements in the region and the kingdom’s bellicose policies under its young heir to the throne, Mohammed bin Salman.

after the majority of U.S. troops pull out of the country.

(Source: Reuters)

## Taliban: U.S. should stop violence instead of asking militants to lay down arms

**TEHRAN** — The Taliban have called on the U.S. to end the use of force in Afghanistan instead of putting pressure on the militant group to lay down its arms.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid made the remarks in response to U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, who is engaged in a sixth round of talks with the group in the Qatari capital Doha.

Khalilzad said in an opening session that this “is time to put down arms, stop the violence, & embrace peace.”

“In our opening session, I underscored to the Talibs that the Afghan people, who are their brothers & sisters, want this war to end,” Khalilzad wrote.

According to Press TV, the Taliban spokesman reacted to the remarks on Friday, saying that Washington “should forget about the idea of us putting down our arms.”

“Instead of such fantasies, he should drive the idea home (to the U.S.) about ending the use of force and incurring further human and financial losses for the decaying Kabul administration,” he added.

Mujahid said the United States must stop repeating failed strategies while expecting different outcomes.

“It would be better if @US4AfghanPeace musters the courage to call a spade a spade, not a gardening tool & accept the current realities.”

After five rounds of talks, Khalilzad claimed progress in the talks last month, saying the two sides had reached an “agreement in draft” on the issues of troop withdrawal and counter-terrorism assurances.

The Taliban, however, insist that talks cannot move ahead until foreign forces leave Afghanistan.

“Peace will require that we find common ground on four inter-connected issues: troop withdrawal, counter-terrorism assurances, intra-Afghan dialogue & negotiations, and reduction in the violence leading to a comprehensive ceasefire,” Khalilzad said in his tweet.

“Nothing will be final until we agree on all 4 issues,” he added.

The Taliban have refused so far to meet with the government of President Ashraf Ghani, calling it illegitimate.

The Taliban’s five-year rule over at least three quarters of Afghanistan came to an end following the U.S. invasion in 2001, but 18 years on, Washington is seeking truce with the militants, who still control large swathes of land.

American forces have remained bogged down in Afghanistan through the presidencies of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and now Donald Trump.

## U.S. Senate fails to end military assistance to Saudi war in Yemen

**TEHRAN** — The U.S. Senate has failed to override President Donald Trump’s veto of a congressional resolution demanding an end to American military support for the Saudi-led coalition waging war in Yemen, a country plagued by more than four years of a devastating conflict.

The vote on Thursday was 53 to 45, falling short of the two-thirds majority needed to override a veto, despite a handful of Trump’s fellow Republicans joining Democrats in backing the War Powers Act, which limits the president’s ability to send troops into action without congressional authorization.

The resolution’s passage earlier this year marked the first time both the Senate and House of Representatives supported the provision of the War Powers Act.

Supporters of the resolution said they wanted to reassert the constitutional power of Congress to declare war, and send a strong message to Saudi Arabia about the devastating civilian toll of the war in Yemen.

The Saudi-led war in Yemen has killed tens of thousands of people and spawned what the United Nations calls the world’s most dire humanitarian crisis, with the country on the brink of famine.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating military campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the aim of bringing the former Saudi-sponsored government back to power.

## Pentagon warns on risk of Chinese submarines in Arctic

**I→** “The speed of growth of the submarine force has slowed and (it) will likely grow to between 65 and 70 submarines by 2020,” the report predicted.

The report said China had built six Jin-class submarines, with four operational and two under construction at Huludao Shipyard.

In a January report, the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency said the Chinese navy would need a minimum of five Jin-class submarines to maintain a continuous nuclear deterrence at sea.

The United States and its allies, in turn, are expanding their anti-submarine naval deployments across East Asia. This includes stepped-up patrols of America’s advanced, sub-hunting P-8 Poseidon planes out of Singapore and Japan.

### ■ Taiwan contingency

The expansion of China’s submarine forces is just one element of a broad, and costly, modernization of its military, which U.S. experts say is designed largely to deter any action by America’s armed forces.

Although Beijing’s official defense budget for 2018 was \$175 billion, the Pentagon estimated that China’s budget actually topped \$200 billion, when including research, development and foreign weapons procurement. It estimated that China’s official defense budget would likely grow to about \$260 billion by 2022.

Much of China’s military doctrine is focused on self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing sees as a renegade province.

On Jan. 2, Xi said in a speech that China reserved the right to use force to bring Taiwan under its control but would strive to achieve peaceful “reunification.”

The Pentagon report outlined a number of potential scenarios that China might take if Beijing decides to use military force on Taiwan, including a comprehensive campaign “designed to force Taiwan to capitulate to unification, or unification dialogue.”

## ‘U.S. showing flexibility on planned Syria safe zone’

The United States is showing some flexibility in its approach to a planned safe zone to be established in northeast Syria

along the border with Turkey, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Friday on broadcaster NTV.

The U.S. special envoy for Syria held talks this week in Ankara. Turkey wants to set up a safe zone east of the Euphrates River



## Liverpool’s Keita set to miss African Cup of Nations

Liverpool midfielder Naby Keita has been ruled out for two months with an abductor injury, meaning he will likely miss the African Cup of Nations in June.

Guinea international Keita picked up the injury in Liverpool’s 3-0 loss at Barcelona on Wednesday.

“It was really unlucky. Bad news. High grade abductor injury. The tendon is ruptured,” said Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp.

“It will keep him out for at least two months. Bad news for us and for Guinea with the Africa Cup of Nations coming up. Not nice,” he said.

Liverpool travel to Newcastle United on Saturday as they trail Premier League leaders Manchester City by a point with two games remaining.

(Source: Goal)

## Physicians group calls on members to reject IAAF regulations

The World Medical Association has called on its members not to implement new International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) regulations that restrict testosterone levels in female athletes with differences in sexual development.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) this week dismissed an appeal by Olympic 800 meters champion Caster Semenya to set aside the regulations, which will come into effect on Wednesday.

However, the WMA, which represents physicians from 114 national member associations, said there was “weak evidence” that the regulations were necessary and that they should be scrapped.

“We have strong reservations about the ethical validity of these regulations,” WMA President Dr. Leonid Eidelman said in a statement on the organization’s website.

“They are based on weak evidence from a single study, which is currently being widely debated by the scientific community.

“They are also contrary to a number of key WMA ethical statements and declarations, and as such we are calling for their immediate withdrawal.”

Under the rules, female athletes with high natural levels of testosterone wishing to compete in events from 400m to a mile must medically limit that level to under 5 nmol/L, which is double the normal female range of below 2 nmol/L.

The IAAF has said no athlete would be forced to undergo surgery and that oral contraceptives should suffice in allowing them to reach the required level.

Testosterone increases muscle mass, strength and haemoglobin, which affects endurance.

The WMA has previously said the regulations “would constrain the athletes concerned to take unjustified medication, not based on medical need, in order for them to be allowed to compete, and accordingly require physicians to prescribe such medication.”

(Source: Reuters)

## PSG’s Mbappe slapped with three match ban

French World Cup winner Kylian Mbappe was banned for three matches Friday following his sending-off for a reckless tackle during Paris Saint-Germain’s French Cup final debacle against Rennes.

The French football Federation (FFF) said they had also opened disciplinary proceedings against Mbappe’s teammate Neymar for striking a Rennes fan following the shock defeat on penalties after extra time.

Mbappe, PSG’s gifted 20-year-old striker, lunged with his studs into the knee of Rennes defender Damien Da Silva near the close of extra time on Sunday.

Having already missed one game, Mbappe will miss Saturday’s match against Nice and the trip to Angers the following week but will be available for the last two games of the season.

The threat of further sanctions hangs over Neymar, banned for three Champions League games after insulting the referee following PSG’s exit from the last 16 at the hands of Manchester United.

This time Neymar lashed out at an abusive opposing fan as he climbed the steps to receive his French Cup final losers medal.

An online video shows the fan insulting several PSG players then telling the Brazilian superstar to “go learn how to play football.”

(Source: AFP)

## Top women’s hockey players to boycott professional leagues

More than 200 women’s hockey players, including the game’s biggest names, said on Thursday they will not play in North American professional leagues next season as part of a boycott they hope brings about a more economically viable league.

The group, which includes Olympic gold medalists Marie-Philip Poulin of Canada and American Hilary Knight, said they cannot make a sustainable living playing in the current women’s professional game.

“Having no health insurance and making as low as two thousand dollars a season means players can’t adequately train and prepare to play at the highest level,” the players said in a statement released on their social media accounts.

“Because of that, together as players, we will not play in ANY professional leagues in North America this season until we get the resources that professional hockey demands and deserves.”

The decision comes just over a month after the sudden demise of the six-team Canadian Women’s Hockey League (CWHL) left the future of women’s professional hockey in disarray with many top players without a team to play for.

The CWHL’s decision left the five-team National Women’s Hockey League (NWHL), founded in 2015 and based exclusively in the United States, as the only professional hockey option for women in North America.

(Source: Reuters)

# Iker Casillas may never play professional football again after suffering heart attack

The footballing world was rocked by the news of Iker Casillas’ health scare this week.

During a Porto training session, the legendary goalkeeper suffered an ‘acute myocardial infarction’ - more commonly known as a heart attack - and was urgently rushed to hospital.

Portuguese reports were quick to clarify that Casillas was in a stable condition, a fact that was later confirmed by the man himself, who tweeted a photograph of him smiling from a hospital bed.

Porto explained on Wednesday: “Iker Casillas suffered an acute myocardial infarction during morning practice this Wednesday, at the PortoGaia Sports Formation and Training Centre, in Olival.

“The work session was promptly interrupted so that assistance could be given to the FC Porto goalkeeper, who is at this moment at the CUP Porto Hospital.

### ■ Support and love for Casillas

“Casillas is fine, stable and with his cardiac problem resolved.”

Casillas received an outpouring of support from big sporting names such as Rafael Nadal, Sergio Ramos, Lionel Messi, Thibaut Courtois and many others.

The Spaniard is perhaps best known for



his time with Real Madrid and his former club were one of the first to react, writing in an official statement: “[we] send him all the courage of the world.”



### ■ Concerns for Casillas’ career

Reports were quick to explain that Casillas would sit out the remainder of the season, perhaps unsurprising with Porto just three

games away from completing their league campaign. However, it has now sadly been suggested that Casillas might never play football again, with a number of leading cardiologists giving their opinion in the Spanish media.

Juan Antonio Corbalan explained: “You cannot play football with a coronary stent, especially goalkeeper. Iker will return to living a normal life, but he can no longer be a professional athlete.”

CSD cardiologist Manuel Marina was also pessimistic, remarking: “The first 24 hours will be key.

“When he is discharged from hospital he will have to live life at a more relaxed pace and take things easy, he’ll also be on medication and then see how things develop from there.”

Over at AS, Jose Gonzalez gave a more cautious diagnosis: “We will have to wait to wait to see how his body heals and then study the results of the medical tests he will be put through. “His heart could return to function as normal and he might have the chance to return to his profession.”

Meanwhile, according to Marca, it’s reported that Porto sources are explained that he: “may not return to action and that his playing days are finished.”

(Source: Daily Mail)

## ‘Hopefully no one has to die’: Ex-MLS star’s fears over head injuries



Former Major League Soccer star Taylor Twellman knows the dangers of head injuries and their lingering effects better than most. Now 39 and working as media pundit for ESPN, the former New England Revolution forward was forced to retire from the sport due to multiple concussions following a devastating 2008 collision with LA Galaxy goalkeeper Steve Cronin.

And as he looks back at the injury suffered by Tottenham’s Jan Vertonghen in Tuesday’s Champions League semifinal, Twellman, who set up a foundation to raise awareness of the dangers of concussion, is troubled by what he saw.

Vertonghen was left bloodied and dazed after colliding with teammate Toby Alderweireld as the pair challenged Ajax goalkeeper Andre Onana for the ball.

“I got sick to my stomach,” the 39-year-old Twellman told CNN about his reaction to the collision and the aftermath.

After being treated on the field for some time, Vertonghen was initially cleared to continue playing, before staggering to the touchline just moments later. There, he stood retching and had to be helped from the field by the team’s backroom staff.

“Hopefully no one has to die,” said Twellman of what he sees as football’s troubling record on responding to head injuries.

“It’s irresponsible, it’s disgusting, and quite honestly it’s pathetic that we’re still

having this conversation in 2019.”

Tottenham said its medical team strictly followed the English Football Association concussion guidelines in caring for Vertonghen. In a statement, the club said, “Following testing he was judged to be alert and answered all questions correctly and lucidly, deeming him fit to return to the field of play.

Speaking earlier on Thursday in a press conference, Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino reiterated his defense of his medical team, stating: “We followed the protocol.”

He added: “Our doctor and medical staff behaved very well, they were excellent, followed the protocol. I respect [their decisions] because I think I’m professional about football, not medicine. All decisions about health are for medical staff.

“The assessments on concussion were negative, that’s why the player was allowed to play. A few seconds after that was a completely different thing, he [started] to feel no good. After that, we changed in that moment, and he was out of the pitch.

“I think the most important thing for us, is and always will be the health of the player. The game, the result, or that it’s the semifinal of the Champions League, what’s more important is the health of the player. That’s our priority always.

(Source: CNN)

## ‘In no-man’s land’: Federer taking ‘baby steps’ on clay return



Roger Federer returns to clay court tennis for the first time in three years at Madrid next week, admitting it feels like a journey into “no-man’s land”.

The 37-year-old last tested his ability on European dirt at the Rome Masters in 2016, before opting to concentrate on the world’s hard surfaces and grass courts which have yielded the majority of his 101 titles.

But with his career in its twilight, the Swiss has decided to re-enter a realm of tennis for so long dominated by rival Rafael Nadal -- and Madrid seems the logical venue.

Federer has won two of his 11 clay titles in the Spanish capital where the high altitude helps him negate the traditionally pedestrian pace of the dusty surface.

“I’m very excited. It’s a good challenge, a good test. Confidence, I don’t know, it’s in no-man’s land. I have to start from scratch,” said Federer after winning his most recent title in Miami.

His long-term aim this spring is Roland Garros where he was champion in 2009 and where he has been a four-time runner-up in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2011, losing on every occasion to Nadal.

However, with 11-time French Open winner Nadal in something of a claycourt slump, having been deposed as Barcelona and Monte Carlo champion in recent weeks, Federer saw a glimmer of hope.

That shaft of light brightened when world number one Novak Djokovic exited Monte Carlo in the quarter-finals.

“Roger is still very hungry,” Federer’s coach Ivan Ljubicic told Sky Sports Italia. “And he has got used to playing on clay again pretty quickly.”

Federer’s last clay title was in Istanbul in 2015, the same year which saw his last Roland Garros appearance end with a quarter-final exit at the hands of close friend Stan Wawrinka.

Rome in 2016 witnessed the Swiss star’s most recent competitive outing on clay, a straight sets loss to Dominic Thiem in the third round seemingly convincing him that his dirt court career was done.

“I’m not very confident going into this clay court season, I can tell you that -- I don’t even remember how to slide anymore,” said Federer.

“You know, I’m taking baby steps at this point. To be honest, I didn’t play one point -- not one shot on clay last year. Two years ago I played two days.

“Three years ago I played not feeling great in Monaco and Rome and all that. So it’s been so little that I really don’t know what to expect.”

Despite his caution, his longtime rivals are wary of under-estimating the 20-time Grand Slam champion next week.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Liverpool must dig deep to keep Man City title fight alive

Liverpool must lift themselves after being floored by a Lionel Messi master class in Barcelona if they are to take the Premier League title race against a relentless Manchester City into the final weekend of the season.

Jurgen Klopp’s men face a tricky trip to Newcastle on Saturday, two days before Pep Guardiola’s City host Leicester, with just one point separating the pair.

Below them, Tottenham, Chelsea, Arsenal and Manchester United remain in the hunt to secure the remaining two top-four places despite stuttering form.

And at the bottom of the table, Cardiff’s Premier League future is hanging by a thread as they prepare to host Crystal Palace.

AFP Sports looks at the state of play in the Premier League ahead of the penultimate weekend of the competition.

### ■ The title race

It is advantage City in arguably the greatest Premier League title race in history with neither side having dropped points for two months.

Defending champions City, after 12 straight wins, are on 92 points, one clear of relentless Liverpool, who have lost just once in the league all season.

Defeat for Liverpool at Newcastle, managed by former Reds’ boss Rafael Benitez, would give City the chance to wrap up the title on Monday.

But a win would put Liverpool back on top for at least 48 hours and put the pressure back on Guardiola’s team,



who take on a Leicester side chasing European football and fresh from thrashing Arsenal 3-0 last weekend.

“I think mentally we shouldn’t be affected,” Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk said after his side’s valiant performance in Barcelona was ruined by two late Messi goals to seal a 3-0 Champions League semi-final, first leg win for the Spanish champions.

“I won’t be. It was a tough game but we have a big game at the weekend and we are still in the race. We want the same performance without conceding the goals.”

### ■ Top-four battle

The race for the remaining two slots in the Premier League top four, which gives entry to next season’s Champions League, is the one nobody apparently wants to win.

None of the challengers managed a win last weekend, meaning Tottenham still lead the way on 70 points, two head of Chelsea.

Arsenal, who have lost their past three league games, are on 66 points, with Manchester United, still in the race despite a woeful run of form, a further point behind.

### ■ Europa League

Fifth and sixth spot offers the consolation of Europa League football, but so too could seventh if City beat Watford in the FA Cup final next month.

Wolves are in the driving seat to be the best of the rest outside the top six in their first season back in the top flight with 54 points, three ahead of Leicester and four clear of Everton and Watford.

### ■ Relegation

Fulham and Huddersfield have already fallen through the relegation trap door and Cardiff could join them this weekend.

Neil Warnock’s side are on 31 points, four adrift of Brighton in 17th spot and with a significantly poorer goal difference.

However, the Seagulls have to face Arsenal and Manchester City in their final two games, offering Warnock hope.

“We’ve got Palace and Man United, and we’ll just go and try and do our best,” Warnock said after last week’s defeat at Fulham. “We’re not out of it yet. You just don’t know in football.”

(Source: AFP)



# South Korea, Iran friendly confirmed by KFA

**TEHRAN** — South Korean men’s football team will face Iran in a friendly match in Seoul on June 11.

The Korea Football Association (KFA) said South Korea, coached by Paulo Bento, will host Australia at Busan Asian Main Stadium in Busan on June 7. And four days later, the Taegeuk Warriors will bring Iran to Seoul World Cup Stadium in the nation’s capital.

Plans to host these two Asian Football Confederation (AFC) rivals in June were first announced April 19, Yonhap News Agency reported.

South Korea last faced Iran in August 2017 during the final World Cup qualifying stage.

Iran, still without a coach after parting company with Carlos Queiroz in late January, are the top AFC team in the FIFA rankings

at No. 21, 16 spots ahead of South Korea and 20 spots above Australia.

South Korea have faced Iran 30 times, with an all-time record of nine wins, eight draws and 13 losses. South Korea’s last win over Iran came in January 2011 in the quarterfinals of the AFC Asian Cup. In ensuing meetings, Iran enjoyed four consecutive 1-0 victories over South Korea before they played to a scoreless draw during the FIFA World Cup qualifiers in August 2017.

The KFA said Australia and Iran make for the perfect sparring partners ahead of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers that begin in the second half of this year.

South Korea have six wins and one loss in 2019, the lone defeat coming in the AFC Asian Cup quarterfinals to Qatar in January.



## Ali Daei sacked as Saipa coach



**TEHRAN** — Ali Daei has been sacked as Saipa head coach, the Iranian football club announced on Thursday.

Saipa fired Daei following the coach’s comments after Zob Ahan match, criticizing the club’s officials for not paying the players’ wages. Daei’s assistant Ebrahim Sadeghi will lead the team in remaining three matches in Iran Professional League.

On Friday, Saipa general manager Mostafa Modabber said Sadeghi will also head the team in the next season.

Daei was named as Saipa coach in May 2017 as a replacement for Hossein Faraki and helped the team qualify for the 2019 AFC Champions League Qualifying Play-offs, where they lost to Al-Rayyan of Qatar 3-1. Saipa sit seventh in IPL table.

## Naft win Iran Basketball Super League



**TEHRAN** – Palayesh Naft Abadan defeated Shahr-dari Gorgan in Game 4 and won the title of the Iran Basketball Super League in Abadan on Thursday.

Naft narrowly defeated Gorgan 58-55 to win their first-ever title.

Naft Abadan had clinched the opening victory in the championship series.

Shahr-dari Gorgan defeated Naft Abadan

in Game 2 but lost the following matches.

The Iranian Basketball Super League (IBSL) is a professional men’s basketball league in Iran. It was founded in 1998.

The league follows the promotion and relegation system in which the worst two teams are relegated to 1st Division.

Zob Ahan Isfahan are the IBSL most decorated team, winning title nine times.

# Could Ansarifard be reconsidering his future at the City Ground?

A week can be a long time in football, just ask Karim Ansarifard.

Only last week, it had been reported that the striker was considering a move away from Nottingham Forest, despite having only arrived at the City Ground on a contract until the end of next season in November.

You could hardly have blamed him for considering a move, the Iranian striker had started just two Championship games for the club, making nine further appearances from the bench, scoring just once in a 3-0 win over Hull.

Then came Saturday’s trip to Loftus Road.

Against an out of sorts QPR, Ansarifard was given the chance to prove himself from the start, and duly took it. Although he missed a few earlier chances, the 29-year-old latched onto Joao Carvalho’s through ball ten minutes into the second half, and clinically finished what proved to be the only goal of the game to seal a 1-0 win for Forest and make it back-



to-back wins for Martin O’Neill’s side.

Given the success of the opportunity given to him in London on Saturday, Ansarifard may wonder now if his time with Forest needs to be quite so short after all.

The striker has shown that he can contribute to the side, and now it may be up to O’Neill to show Ansarifard that the club want his contributions.

Providing the game goes ahead – which given the circumstances admittedly still looks far from certain – Ansarifard would surely like the chance to demonstrate his abilities once more on front of the City Ground crowd on the final day against Bolton.

If O’Neill is ready to give him that chance from the start in back-to-back games, and Ansarifard is ruthless enough to take it, then his seemingly brief time at The City Ground, may yet be set to get an unexpected extension.

(Source: Football League World)

## Bielsa to pay Leeds fine for failing to control players

Leeds manager Marcelo Bielsa has said he will pay the club’s fine for failing to control their players against Aston Villa because it is his responsibility.

Both clubs were charged with failing to ensure their players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion after a second-half melee following the controversial goal with which Leeds opened the scoring in the 1-1 Championship draw at Elland Road.

Mateusz Klich scored with a Villa player down injured on the pitch, and Bielsa then ordered Leeds to allow Villa to equalize unopposed.

Aston Villa forward Anwar El Ghazi was sent off for an

altercation with Leeds striker Patrick Bamford before the equalizer. His red card was later overturned by the FA, while Bamford was banned for two games for deceiving the referee.

Speaking at a news conference ahead of third-placed Leeds’ game at relegated Ipswich on Sunday, Bielsa said he would pay the club’s fine for failing to control their players “because it’s my responsibility.”

The former Chile and Argentina coach added that he had paid an FA fine earlier in the season after a Leeds employee was caught spying at Derby County’s training ground.

“As we are clarifying things, I think it’s important to add two things not linked to this subject,” Bielsa said.

## Xavi calls time on career

Barcelona and Spain legend Xavi Hernandez has announced that he will retire from football after 21 years.

The Spanish national team veteran, who plays in Qatar for Al Sadd, confirmed in an open letter on Thursday that this will be his last season and that he will continue his career as a coach.

“It has been a privilege to play football up to age 39 and I would like to finish out the season on the top by winning the Amir Cup and reaching the next stage of the Asian Champions League.

“This is my last season as a player, but I really want to see what the future holds for me as a manager,” Xavi, who joined Barca’s senior side during the 1998-99 season, said in the letter.

The Barcelona academy product led the Catalan club to eight titles in La Liga as well as four Champions League trophies. His total silverware for club and country, 31 tro-



phies, is a number only surpassed by his longtime Spain and Barcelona teammate Andres Iniesta.

He spoke about his developing style as a manager, citing the influence of Johan Cruyff and La Masia and the style

that Barcelona gave to the world.

“I love to see teams that take the lead on the pitch, that attacking football and that return to the essence that we all know from the days of our youth, possession of the ball,” he said.

“It has been a privilege to accomplish what I have done over the past two decades. And that is why I feel that it is my duty to begin an initiative on the field and give back to football as long as I am able.”

Capped 113 times for Spain, Xavi played a key role in his country’s 2010 World Cup victory in addition to Spain’s victories at both Euro 2008 and Euro 2012. He retired from national team play in 2014.

Xavi was instrumental in Spain winning the FIFA World Cup in 2010 as well as their European Championship triumphs in 2008 and 2012.

(Source: ESPN)

## Iran unchanged in beach soccer rankings

Iran national beach soccer team stayed unchanged in the world rankings with 2490 points.

Brazil are the top team with 4135 points.

A storming maiden performance in the CFA Belt and Road International Beach Soccer Championship Haikou 2019 saw Portugal lift the trophy in China as they reduce the gap between them and Iran to just ten points in the world ranking.

Mario Narciso’s men saw off England, Czech Republic and hosts China in April to lift the trophy in Haikou, averaging around 10 goals a game.

They also won two friendlies against Poland earlier in the month.

Elsewhere in the top ten, Switzerland dropped points to allow Japan to jump into eighth position, and further down the table Nigeria fell by two places as Oman and Poland shift above them into 17th and 18th.

China move up three places into 45th after hosting the CFA Belt and Road Championship.

(Source: Beachsoccer.com)

## Iranian sportsman swims 150km from Oman on Persian Gulf Day



**IRNA** — An Iranian sportsman has swum 150 kilometers from Oman to Iran to celebrate the Persian Gulf Day, a national festivity to commemorate the end of Portuguese rule on the vital maritime artery in the 17th century.

Mohammad Amiri Roodan swam from the Omani Port of Khasab to the Iranian city of Bandar Abbas in five days, according to a local sports official.

“He swam the long distance to commemorate the national Persian Gulf Day and promote tourism in the south of Iran,” Manucher Monhani, local Swimming Association official told IRNA.

Each year, Iran celebrates Ordibehesht 10 (April 30) as the national Persian Gulf Day to remember the end of Portuguese rule on the very important world maritime body in the 17th century.

## Esteghlal Khuzestan relegated from IPL

**Persian Football** — Esteghlal Khuzestan football team was relegated from Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday.

With three games left until the end of the season, the Ahvaz-based football team lost to Esteghlal 4-2 in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.

Esteghlal Kuzetan sit at the bottom of the IPL table with 12 points.

Sepidrood and Naft Masjed Soleyman will fight to avoid relegation.

Last week, Gol Gohar Sirjan and Shahin Bushehr won promotion to the Iran Professional League (IPL).

## Sayyadmanesh to join Fenerbahce?

**Tasnim** — Iran’s Esteghlal striker Allahyar Sayyadmanesh will reportedly join Turkish football giant Fenerbahce.

The local media reports suggest that the Iranian club have reached an agreement with Fenerbahce to sell the prodigy for one million dollars in the summer.

The 18-year-old striker joined Esteghlal from Saipa on a five-year contract in the last summer.

He had been previously linked with a move to another Turkish giant Galatasaray in the January transfer window.

Sayyadmanesh was a member of Iran U-17 football team who qualified for the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup quarter-final in India in October.

He scored three goals against Guinea, Germany and Mexico.

## Al Taawoun stun Al Ittihad to win Saudi King’s Cup

Al Taawoun completed their dream run in the 2018-19 Saudi King’s Cup by stunning AFC Champions League regulars Al Ittihad 2-1 in the final at the King Fahd International Stadium in Riyadh on Thursday.

Al Taawoun came from a goal down to win, with Leandre Tawamba scoring a dramatic winner in the 89th minute.

HM King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud presented the title to Al Taawoun, their first King’s Cup trophy.

Al Taawoun defeated two of Saudi Arabia’s most successful teams - Al Hilal and Al Ittihad - en route to winning the King’s Cup.

Serbian striker Aleksandar Prijovic had given Al Ittihad the lead in the 33rd minute off an assist by Chilean midfielder Carlos Villanueva.

Al Taawoun skipper Talal Al Absi headed home the equalizer in the 54th minute and Tawamba sparked jubilant celebrations with his late winner.

Al Ittihad will now turn their attention to the 2019 AFC Champions League where they are second in Group B on seven points after four matches. They play Al Rayyan on Tuesday.

(Source: the-afc)



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The heart gets wearied like the body and spirit,  
so, provide it with art and learning to occupy it.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Kuwaiti gallery hosting Iranian artists

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian artists Siamak Azmi, Vahid Chamani and Babak Rashvand are showcasing their latest paintings in an exhibition at Den Gallery in Kuwait City, Kuwait.



A poster for "Vivid" exhibition at Den Gallery in Kuwait City, Kuwait.

Entitled "Vivid", the exhibit also features works by over 25 artists from other countries, including the U.S., Syria, Turkey, Norway, Lebanon, Iraq and South Africa.  
The exhibition will run until May 9.

## Tarantino's ode to Hollywood makes it last minute to Cannes festival

**PARIS (Reuters)** — Quentin Tarantino fans will get their latest fix at the Cannes Film Festival next month after all, after the director rushed to finish editing on "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood" in time to present it in competition, organizers said on Thursday.

Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie, the film had long been tipped as one of the highlights of this year's cinema showcase on the French Riviera, but did not make the cut when the initial line-up was unveiled in April.

Along with several other last minute additions - including a four-hour film from a previous winner of the Palme d'Or top prize at Cannes, Abdellatif Kechiche - the film was now in an advanced enough stage to be confirmed, organizers added.



Director Quentin Tarantino speaks at the opening day of the Lumiere Festival in Lyon, France, October 8, 2016. (Reuters/Robert Pratta)

"Quentin Tarantino, who has not left the editing room in four months, is a real, loyal and punctual child of Cannes," festival director Thierry Fremaux said in a statement.

The film was "a love letter to the Hollywood of his childhood, a rock music tour of 1969, and an ode to cinema as a whole," Fremaux added.

It comes 25 years after the U.S. director, 56, won the Palme d'Or for "Pulp Fiction." Tarantino also unveiled World War II epic "Inglourious Basterds" at the festival in 2009.

The 72nd Cannes Film Festival, running from May 14 to 25, will kick off with Jim Jarmusch's latest film, zombie extravaganza "The Dead Don't Die".

"Blue Is the Warmest Colour" director Kechiche will also be a contender for the top award again this year with "Mektoub, My Love: Intermezzo", a follow-up to "Mektoub, My Love: Canto Uno", which tracked the love lives of French youngsters in the 1990s.

New additions to the special screenings set to take place outside the main competition include Mexican actor Gael Garcia Bernal's second feature film as a director, "Chicuarotes".

"Birdman" director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu will this year preside over the festival's jury.

# Lack of copyright, big obstacle for Iranian publishers of translated books

By Samaneh Aboutalei

**TEHRAN** — Several major Iranian publishers have said the lack of copyright is a major problem in the way to publish translated books.

"Since we do not hold a membership in any international copyright convention, you may find several translations of a book on the market, so people should trust the major publishing companies to buy a better translation of a book," Salees sales manager Sina Jafarieh told the Tehran Times last week during the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair.

He said that for lack of copyright, companies in Iran republish bestsellers published by Salees with some minor modifications and sell the books at lower prices, as buyers don't know that the better versions of the books have already been published by the publisher.

"Novels by writers from Afghanistan, Russia, Turkey and Tajikistan, whose cultures are mostly similar to ours, are always on the list of our bestsellers, and that is the reason why the lesser-known publishers copy them," he said.

To prevent the problem, publishers are consulting with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to find a practical solution.

Furthermore, publishers are collaborating with the Ministry of Intelligence and police to remove pirated books from the black market.

To publish a book, Iranian publishers are required by law to register the book on a list named FIPA at the National Library and Archives of Iran.

"We check the list before we start working on a book," said Abazar Rezanian, the manager of Kuleh Poshty Publications.

Despite the fact that Iran doesn't hold a membership in any international copyright convention, he said that his company enters



A woman visits the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair on April 29, 2019. (Fars/Mehdi Marizad)

into negotiations with foreign writers or publishers to acquire the copyright of their books.

"However, some companies in the country republish the books, which are exclusively ours," he lamented.

For example, Kule Poshty acquired the copyright to the Persian version of Rachel Hollis's "Girl Wash Your Face", which was released at Iranian bookstores in 2018. The book turned out to be a bestseller in Iran

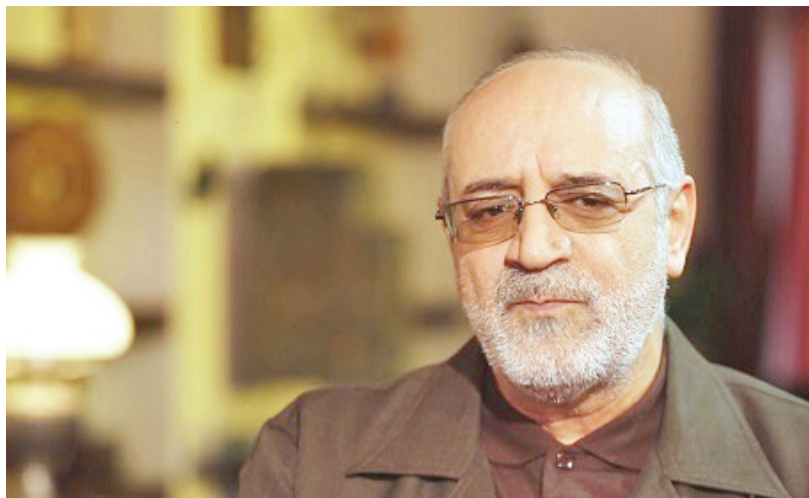
and afterward, several other translations of the book were illegally published in the country.

Tandis Publications is another Iranian company, which has chosen to respect the copyright of foreign books. But the director of the company lamented that the recent U.S. sanctions have put obstacles in the way of companies trying to legally collaborate with publishers overseas.

"Due to the sanctions, all money transfers between Iranian publishers and their foreign counterparts are impossible," Abolfazl Mirbaqeri said.

Until Iran obtains membership in some international copyright convention, readers will have to consider the reputation of translators and publishers when purchasing an original version of a Persian translation of a book by a foreign writer.

## Director Jamal Shurjeh hospitalized with brain disease



Director Jamal Shurjeh in an undated photo.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Jamal Shurjeh, director of the co-production between Iran and Algeria "Ahmed Bey", has been admitted to a hospital in Tehran following a report he suffered a brain disease.

He has been hospitalized after suffering what is described as a "brain disease" by producer Ahmad Miralai who is working with Shurjeh on a TV series, Prophet Moses (AS).

"He is now out of danger and making a recovery," he told the Persian service of ISNA last week.

He said that work on the TV series project will not stop. "Mr. Shurjeh is currently in good condition, and we enjoyed his consultations to assemble the cast for

the project."

Earlier in 2016, the project came to a halt following the death of its first director, Farajollah Salahshur, after a long battle with lung cancer.

Shurjeh filled in for Salahshur to complete a TV series in 2018 while he also directed his latest movie "Ahmed Bey", a co-production between Iran and Algeria about the last Ottoman Bey who ruled Algiers during the 19th century, which has not been released yet.

Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Managing Director Abdol Ali Ali-Asgari, Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami and several officials have visited Shurjeh at the hospital over the past week.

## Iranian director deems "Medea" reverence for women



Director Ali-Asghar Rasekh-rad.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian stage director Ali-Asghar Rasekh-rad who staged "Medea" during the 22nd International Iranian Festival of University Theater in Tehran on Friday said that the play shows a certain reverence for mothers and women.

His troupe gave two performances of the play based on a loose adaptation of the ancient Greek tragedy written by Euripides and the version by French dramatist Jean Anouilh.

"Our performance stays away from the common feministic attitudes," Rasekh-rad told the Persian service of MNA and added, "The play, in fact, inspires deep reverence for mothers and women."

"In the original story, Medea's love leads

to hatred and revenge due to a great sense of betrayal, but in our version, the betrayal led her to showcase motherly dignity," he mentioned.

Mandana Abqari, Alireza Dehqan and Minu Bahari are the main members of the cast for the play.

"Nowadays, theater has changed into the art of capitalists," Rasekh-rad lamented. "People like me who have worked in this field for years no longer are able to stage their favorite plays or to implement their ideas."

"In my view, directors are theoreticians who should not feel concern for their financial issues," he noted.

"Medea" is also scheduled to go on stage at the Qashqai Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex on May 10.

## Persian version of R.G. Grant's "Flight" introduced at Tehran book fair

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Havanavard, an Iranian publisher of books on air and space, introduced a Persian translation of British historian A.G. Grant's "Flight: The Complete History of Aviation" by Mohammad Razzazan at the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair on Thursday.

"Topics covered in the book are remarkably similar to the routine issues facing our industries, and offering this book can be viewed as an introduction to a technology," Razzazan said at the meeting for the introduction of the book.

He said that the publisher has uploaded several videos to Aparat to let readers watch films relevant to each chapter of the book.

Air and space expert Davud Rabiei who also attended the meeting said, "It's a mistake that aviation is only limited to the fields of engineering and industry."

"Aviation has always fostered its own specific culture in societies and there is no field in industry and engineering as popular as air and space in society," he added.

Havanavard has obtained the copyright to the Persian version of "Flight: The Complete

History of Aviation", originally published by the British multinational publishing company DK in 2017.

Havanavard director Alireza Shobeiri said that the publishers from abroad are keen to purchase rights to several books on aviation by Iranian authors, which will be released in the near future.

"A visual guide to aviation and man's conquest of the skies, covering the earliest pioneers of flight to modern-day space technology," Amazon wrote in an introduction to the book.



Front cover of a Persian translation of British historian A.G. Grant's "Flight: The Complete History of Aviation".

## Peter Mayhew, actor who played Chewbacca in "Star Wars" movies, dies

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — British-born actor Peter Mayhew, who played Chewbacca the Wookiee, the loyal, furry companion of space buccaneer Han Solo in five of the "Star Wars" movies, has died at age 74, his family said on Thursday.

Mayhew, whose face was never seen in the "Star Wars" films - his entire body was always clothed in his Wookiee costume - died at his north Texas home on Tuesday, according to the family's statement on Twitter. No cause

of death was given.

The lanky performer made his first appearance as the beloved, bleating Chewbacca character in the landmark 1977 sci-fi action-thriller "Star Wars," and went on to co-star in four more films in the blockbuster series - "The Empire Strikes Back," "Return of the Jedi," "Revenge of the Sith" and "The Force Awakens."

He retired from playing Chewbacca for health reasons, although his family recalled

that for Mayhew's final turn as the heroic Wookiee in "The Force Awakens," he "fought his way back from being wheelchair-bound to stand tall" once more as the woolly character in the 2015 film.

He also served as an off-camera consultant on the final 2017 film in the series, "The Last Jedi," helping to tutor his successor in the Chewbacca role, Joonas Suotamo, on the ways of convincingly playing a Wookiee. Co-stars saluted Mayhew as a perform-

er whose own inner poise and grace shone through in his character.

"Peter Mayhew was a kind and gentle man, possessed of great dignity and noble character," said Harrison Ford, who as Han Solo shared many scenes with Mayhew. "Chewbacca was an important part of the success of the films we made together."

Mark Hamill, who starred as Luke Skywalker in the franchise, called Mayhew "the gentlest of giants."