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Iran Oil Show 2019: 'Iran not alone in oil market'

Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — European exhibitors participating in the 24th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran Oil Show 2019) believe that the recent U.S. pressures for isolating Iran's economy wouldn't stop them from trying to find a way for collaborating with Iran's

oil, gas and petrochemical sectors.

The exhibition, which was held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds from May 1 to 4, hosted some 1150 domestic and foreign companies from 21 countries including Azerbaijan, Spain, Germany, Britain, Italy, Turkey, China, Russia, the Netherlands, Ukraine, and etc. **→5**

U.S. has sent message to Iran saying it's not seeking war: source

TEHRAN — U.S. officials have told Tehran that the United States is not seeking to engage in any military face-off with Iran, the Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

Quoting international affairs analyst Sa'adollah Zarei, the news outlet said the official message was sent to top Iranian officials recently.

The expert underlined that there is no sign that the U.S. is seeking war with Iran. "To the contrary, there are a lot of indicators suggesting that America is avoiding military conflict with Iran and instead focusing on economic, political, and media wars."

He also said the fact that Iranian military officials constantly state their readiness to face threats is part of the nature of their job. **→2**

Larijani says Saudi Arabia, UAE unable to boost oil output

TEHRAN — Ali Larijani, the speaker of the Iranian parliament (Majlis), believes that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates cannot increase their oil production in absence of Iran despite what they claim.

"Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates don't have the capacity to sell more oil. If they had had the capacity, they would have used it before," he said during a conference in Tehran on Saturday.

In its most recent measure, following

Washington's withdrawal from JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), U.S. officials announced that they will not issue any further waivers for countries who want to import Iranian oil, meaning that every state which buys Iranian oil is going to be punished by the U.S. Meanwhile, U.S. allies in the region, namely Saudi Arabia and the UAE have expressed readiness to increase their oil export to cover up the slump in the global supply. **→2**



PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari
Head of the TehranTimes
Politics Desk

Europe's wrong calculation of the White House

The European Union remains confused by Donald Trump. European countries did not respond decisively to the White House in some cases, such as the US customs tariff, the withdrawal of the Trump government from a nuclear deal with Iran and the withdrawal of the Paris Pact. While US National Security Advisor John Bolton and Trump have repeatedly expressed their opposition to the existence of the European Union and the Eurozone, Europe has not taken any steps towards independence from the United States.

Many analysts of the international affairs have recently had a special focus on US-EU relations! Some signals and speeches by the President of the United States which are addressed to the European authorities indicate the full opposition of the White House to the European Union. Over the past few months, there has been news about the specific talks between the President of the United States and some of the European Union's member states. Trump called on French President "Emmanuel Macron" to leave the European Union and thus build wider bilateral relations with the United States! On the other hand, Trump has officially asked the British Prime Minister "Theresa May" to sue the European Union rather than interacting with it. These are indications of the wide and extensive opposition of the United States to the United Europe. This confrontation can become a full-fledged dispute in the future. However, the European Union has not yet made a firm response to the United States, and it has adopted a policy of "having interactions with Trump," but this policy can't be adopted for a long time!

The reality is that the European Union is going through a dangerous path! The European officials haven't yet understood the extent of Trump's hostility to the existence of the United European! This is while the trade war between Trump and the European Union has entered a new phase. European officials are now faced with a president who sees "economic protectionism" as a major policy in the field of commerce, and in the future he will try to pursue this policy even more seriously. **→6**

WFP Iran, S. Korea join hands to build refugees' self-reliance

By Maryam Qarehgozlou

TEHRAN — On Wednesday the Republic of Korea made a generous contribution of \$2 million to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to build refugees' self-reliance through vocational training in Iran.

The money is aimed to support over the coming two years 30,000 of the most vulnerable Afghan refugees living in settlements in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to WFP Representative in Iran, Negar Gerami, the Republic of Korea remains WFP's top donor in Iran having contributed

\$9.6 million to WFP operations since 2014.

The funds is planned to be used to create income-generating opportunities for vulnerable Afghans living inside and outside of settlements. WFP will provide refugee men and women with the technical and vocational training they need to start small businesses. They will receive start-up capital after completing their training.

Moreover, those who already have the necessary skills will receive either WFP cash transfers or equipment to help them start up a small business such as carpet and kilim weaving, embroidery, tailoring and other handicrafts.

Will recently returned Persian lion survive threats once pushed it toward extinction?

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Long-lost Persian lion is back to the country to conserve the rare species by reproduction, the species which once gone extinct due to excessive hunting and habitat loss, so the question arises, will the endangered species survive the threats which once pushed it through eradication?

Disappeared for 80 years, Persian lion once prowled from

the Middle East to India, while currently only a fraction of these magnificent animals survive in the wild, which range is restricted to the Gir National Park and environs in the Indian state of Gujarat.

On the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, it is listed under its former scientific name *Panthera leo persica* as Endangered because of its small population size and area of occupancy.

Conflicts with humans, wildfires, poaching, habitat loss, canine distemper virus, decreases in population sizes of native ungulates were among the threats pushed the lions toward extinction in Iran, while lack of protection measures and plans is not deniable either.

A male Persian lion, born 6 years ago, was sent to Tehran Zoological Garden from Britain's Bristol Zoo a week ago, under a population

management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA).

Under the program, European Endangered Species Programme recommended that a lion couple to be brought to Iran in order to conserve and recover the species once again in their original habitat employing disease control measures. **→12**

Russia warns of U.S. plan to set up a quasi-state in Syria

TEHRAN — Russia has denounced a recent meeting of tribes in Syria, organized by U.S.-backed Kurdish militants, saying Washington is using the Kurds to split the Arab country and continue its illegal military presence there.

"The United States and its allies have been consistently carrying out a course towards settling the Syrian crisis only with the goal of ensuring its long-term presence in Syria," Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement Saturday.

To that aim, it added, Washington and its allies are using Kurdish militants who "are now seeking

to set up a quasi-state on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River with the U.S. assistance."

The statement came one day after the town of Ayn Issa, situated in Syria's northern Raqqah Province, hosted the so-called Syrian clans conference. The event was organized by the so-called Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), the political wing of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) - a U.S.-backed anti-Damascus alliance of mainly Kurdish militants.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said the majority of Arab tribes' leaders in the Eastern

Euphrates opposed the meeting, but the U.S. used tactics such as force, blackmail and bribery to gather the participants.

The event's organizers had even recruited participants from refugee camps, including the al-Hawl camp in Hasakah Province, it added. "This event, which is obviously aimed at splitting the country, blatantly violates the declared UN principles of preserving territorial integrity and state sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic, including those stipulated by Resolution 2254 of the UN Security Council," the statement read. **→13**



ARTICLE

Imrana Sheme Umar
Journalist from Nigeria

United States of africa for the greater good

The first come in mind is border, religious sects, tribalism, language diversity, political affiliation and other potential conflicts. Just by so mentioning "United states of Africa". Let take look of current situation of our country individually in more details;

In African continent there's 55 states which claim independence in one way or another at least decades ago ranging from 4 to 7, through this time we experienced a lot and learned from the history but unfortunately the achievements are way back beyond what we were capable of achieving.

In this article I'll like to look at broad-spectrum of the whole African continent, I'll use individual state to have good picture of what we'll be discussing "unity".

To provide good and adequate solution to any problem we must first have to understand the problem crystal clear, in achieving unity always there's must be some obstacles. Here we are today discussing the problem discussed long time ago instant implementing the solution, this is due the failure to understand it clearly, by this I mean the consequences of failing to address it sooner.

Problem;

As I mentioned in the first paragraph of this article the problem is quite clear, meaning we all believe disunity among African states is catastrophic but the issue of ethnicity, tribalism, religion etc. stand in the way of doing what supposed to be done in coping the malignant behavior of this problem.

Colonialism cut Africa up into bits and pieces. When it ended following the Second World War, the new leaders of Africa struggled to institute political unity for the sake of both social and economic development. This proved to be an extremely challenging endeavor and some 20 years later at a 1963 African leaders' summit, the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah declared that if unity was not achieved soon, the result would be even more division and dissension for the African people. **→7**

Invitation to Tender

Persian Gulf Star Oil Company (PGSOC) is going to sell part of its products Heavy End) through running a public tender in two different terms of delivery) Ex-work (80,000 Mt ton) and FOB Shahid Rajaee port in Bandar Abbas (120,000 Mt ton). Therefore all interested individuals and legal entities are invited to referred PGSOC's legal and contracts department (address: PGSOR - 13th kilometer of Bandar Abbas high way To Bandar Khamir- Bandar abbas , Iran and the Site Address www.pgsoir.ir for receiving more details) during office hours from 5 May 2019 until 20 May 2019 to collect the documents against letter to be signed by managing director of the entity containing the .intention to participate in the tender

tel: **00987631310000**, postal code: **7931181183** (Email: legal@pgsoir.ir)

Public relations and international affairs of Persian gulf star oil company



Oil sanctions on Iran will fail, Hatami predicts

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami predicted on Saturday that the U.S. move to drive Iran's oil exports to zero will fail.

Speaking at a ceremony in his ministry, he said sanctions on Iran's oil sale and economic pressure fall within the U.S. plots against Iran.



Reminding that Iran has been under sanctions for 40 years, the minister said many achievements in defense industry have been made under sanctions.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on April 24 that Iran would do whatever it could to sell oil to provide for its citizens. "I mean there are always ways of going around the sanctions. We have a PhD in that area," he told Reuters during his trip to New York.

The U.S. announced on April 22 that Washington has decided not to extend waivers allowing

major importers to continue buying oil from Iran. The waivers ended on May 2.

■ 'IRGC pioneer in fighting terrorism'

Defense Minister Hatami also said that the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) is a pioneering organization in fighting terrorism in West Asia.

U.S. President Donald Trump labeled the IRGC as terrorist organization on April 8.

Immediately after the announcement, the Iranian Supreme National Security Council named the CENTCOM a terrorist organization, and the U.S. government a sponsor of terror.

President Hassan Rouhani said on April 10 that the U.S. is aware of the consequences if it takes more steps than "slogans" against the IRGC.

Iranian lawmakers uniformly appeared on the Majlis floor on April 9, wearing outfits of the IRGC in a move to show contempt for the U.S. move.

All MPs, including Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and presiding board members, participated in the symbolic move.

U.S. has sent message to Iran saying it's not seeking war: source

1 → Zare'i's comments came in the wake of the commander of the Iranian Army asking his forces to be ready as though an attack on the country was imminent.

IRNA quoted General Abdolrahim Mousavi on May 2 as saying, "All forces should prepare themselves as though an attack can occur tomorrow and continuously engage in war exercises".

Mousavi was also quoted saying that "today's threats are serious". He added, "Of course these threats will not begin on land, but land forces must be ready".

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned on May 1 of "the enemy's war posture" and said that the enemy "only in appearance does not have a combat posture".

Iran advises Bahrain not to talk big

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Friday responded to remarks by the Bahraini foreign minister who had claimed Iran will not be allowed to close the Strait of Hormuz "even for a single day", asking Bahrain to "know its place" before threatening others.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the security of the Strait of Hormuz as a lifeline for the supply and transit of global energy, so long as the Iranian nation's interests are secured through the important and vital strait," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi, according to Press TV.

Calling Bahrain a "tiny dependent country", Mousavi said Iran as a show of "goodwill" and respect for neighbors advises officials in Manama "to know their place when threatening those bigger than themselves."

Mousavi made the comments after Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifah claimed Iran "will not be allowed to close for one day the Strait of Hormuz".

Mousavi likened the tiny island of Bahrain to a "fly" which cannot withstand Iran which is like an "eagle".

"Centuries ago Persian scholars have said: How can a fly topple an eagle," Mousavi stated.

In an interview in Paris with Asharq Al-Awsat, Sheikh Khalid said the 2015 nuclear deal addressed Tehran's nuclear program but did not address its missile program and what he called its "interventions in regional countries".

The U.S. has vowed to zero out Iran's oil exports, prompting Tehran to warn that it will not allow any other country to export oil through the Strait of Hormuz if Tehran cannot sell its crude.

On April 28, Iran's military chief said Tehran wants the strait — through which nearly one-third of all oil traded by sea passes — to remain open and secure, warning that the country will not allow anyone to destabilize the Persian Gulf.

"As oil and commodities of other countries are passing through the Strait of Hormuz, ours are also moving through it," said Major General Mohammad Baqeri, Armed Forces chief of staff.

Iran "will definitely confront anyone who attempts to destabilize the Strait of Hormuz, and if our crude is not to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, others' [crude] will not pass either."

The top general added, "This does not mean [that we are going to] close the Strait of Hormuz. We do not intend to shut it unless the enemies' hostile acts will leave us with no other option. We will be fully capable of closing it on that day."

The U.S. said in a statement on April 22 that buyers of Iranian oil must stop their purchases by May 1 or face sanctions. The move ended six months of waivers, which allowed Iran's eight biggest buyers -- Turkey, China, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan -- to continue importing limited volumes.

The U.S. also said Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) would "more than make up the oil flow difference" to make sure that global markets were not unsettled. The two OPEC members are Washington's close allies and firmly back U.S. President Donald Trump's hostile acts against Iran.

During in an interview with Al Jazeera, which is to be aired Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran will "continue to sell" its crude oil and will seek customers.

Zarif added, "We will always remember those who worked with us during times of difficulty."

Takht Ravanchi: Iran to give a proper response to U.S. actions

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, has said that Iran will give a proper response to the U.S. sanctions moves.

In an interview with IRNA published on Saturday, he described the U.S. actions against Iran as "illegal" and "contrary to international law".

He criticized Europe's performance in preserving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"We cannot just rely on Europe's political support. They [the Europeans] should practically make up for harms caused by the U.S.," he said.

He added, "We have told the Europeans about this. It may be too late if the Europeans delay (their actions) much."

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

Also, on April 22 the U.S. announced that



Washington has decided not to extend waivers allowing major importers to continue buying oil from Iran. The waivers ended on May 2.

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

During a meeting with a group of Austrian MPs in Tehran on April 29, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi criticized European delay in implementing its special mechanism to save the JCPOA.

Iran has given enough time to Europe to make up for consequences of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Araqchi said.

Araqchi said Iran's patience is not limitless and will give a proper response to the U.S. illegal actions soon.

"The Islamic Republic's patience is not limitless and will give proper response to the U.S. illegal actions soon by comprehensive assessment of the current situation and without emotional reactions."

Araqchi added, "We welcome political position of the European Union, but political support will be no help to keeping the JCPOA. The JCPOA is not an economic agreement and has security nature. If it matters to Europe, it should also pay the costs to keep it."

Araqchi and Takht Ravanchi acted as a senior nuclear negotiators with the 5+1 group and the European Union.

Elsewhere, he noted that Iran will not allow any country to become an alternate to Iran in the oil market.

Speaking at the 9th round of Iran-Norway political consultations on April 30, Araqchi said the international community has not responded properly to the U.S. illegal act in withdrawing from the JCPOA.

"The U.S. proved that it does not understand language of respect and interaction and can just talk with language of bullying," he said.

Rouhani says U.S. has launched 'war on hope'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that the U.S. has launched "war on hope" by tightening sanctions measures against Iran.

"They seek to break our hope but we should break their hope," he said during a speech marking Teacher's Day.

Rouhani added, "They (the Americans) seek to take our hope and we should fight this weapon of America. I am hopeful about the future of the system, the country and the youth."

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

Also, on April 22 the U.S. announced that Washington has decided not to extend waivers

allowing major importers to continue buying oil from Iran at a reduced rate. Waivers ended on May 2.

Rouhani said that the U.S. administration reneges on its promises and violates international law.

"The U.S. final objective is to prevent Iran from being great, independent and influential in the world. The U.S. cannot bear such Iran. They seek an Iran which is like 40 years ago. They seek to help Iran on the condition of its submission," he explained.

Rouhani also said that the U.S. seeks

"The U.S. final objective is to prevent Iran from being great, independent and influential in the world. The U.S. cannot bear such Iran. They seek an Iran which is like 40 years ago. They seek to help Iran on the condition of its submission," Rouhani notes.



Via sanction, he said, the U.S. administration intends to reduce Iran's exchange revenues.

"The Americans will see for themselves in the coming months that our oil exports will continue. America may shut one door to us, but there is not just one way to doing this business. There are other ways which America does not know about," Rouhani remarked.

U.S. analyst: Trump trading with tools of pressure on Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A U.S.-based political affairs analyst believes that President Donald Trump is a businessman who uses his Iran push instrument to advance his goals inside and outside the States.

Barbara Slavin, the director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council, said in an interview with IRNA published on Saturday that Trump is also looking for the support from neo-conservatives and pro-Israel Jews in the United States, as well as Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

On what Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called the "B_Team" and their influence on Trump, she said: "Trump

is not looking for a war, but he puts pressure on Iran to collect votes."

Zarif recently warned that the B-Team, comprised of national security advisor John Bolton, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Bibi [Benjamin Netanyahu], are following dangerous scenarios against Iran and they use Trump to push their schemes.

In a tweet, he uploaded a video of the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who confesses to lies, cheats, and stealing while being the CIA director. Addressing Pompeo, Zarif then said, "You continue to do the same at State."

The top Iranian diplomat tagged Trump,

saying, "You campaigned against costly stupid interventions" but "the conniving cabal of warmongers & butchers, the infamous #B_Team, are plotting for way more than what you bargained for."

On Zarif's suggestion to swap prisoners with the United States, Slavin said: "This is an important step, to my opinion, the channels of communication between the two countries should not be cut off. Dialogue and diplomacy between the two sides should continue."

"Trump is interested in the release of prisoners, and creates an interior image for him. It even seems to me to be moving towards inclusive talks," the international affairs analyst stated.

Zarif said during a recent interview in New York that Iran is ready to swap prisoners with the United States.

"I put this offer on the table publicly now. [Let's] Exchange them", Zarif said during an interview at the Asia Society in New York. Zarif said he has the authority to swap prisoners.

Slavin went on to say that by talking to Fox News and making a distinction between the B-Team and Trump, Iran's foreign minister clarified that Trump had no desire for another military conflict in the Middle East.

"Fox News is Trump's favorite network and he sees the plans for this network. Wise words were spoken smartly," added Slavin in reference to Zarif's interview with Fox News.

U.S. renews Iran sanctions waivers for civilian nuclear work

The Trump administration on Friday renewed five of seven sanctions waivers that allow Russia and European nations to conduct civilian nuclear cooperation with Iran but revoked the other two as it steps up pressure on Tehran, the State Department said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo extended the waivers, which were due to expire on Saturday, for 90 days, shorter than the 180 days that had been granted in the past. The waivers permit work at several Iranian nuclear sites to continue without U.S. penalties. Under the terms of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Russia and several European nations help maintain the facilities and are engaged in converting equipment there for exclusively civilian use.

Facilities included in the waiver extensions include the Bushehr nuclear power plant, the Fordow enrichment facility, the Arak nuclear complex and the Tehran Research Reactor, the State Department said.

However, the Bushehr waiver is being tightened so that any assistance to expand the plant could incur sanctions.

The other two waivers — one that allowed Iran to store excess heavy water produced in the uranium enrichment process in Oman, and one that allowed Iran to swap enriched uranium for raw yellowcake with Russia — were not renewed, the department said. That decision is aimed at forcing Iran to stop enriching



Iranian technicians, work with foreign colleagues at the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, just outside the southern port city of Bushehr, on Nov. 30, 2009. Mehdi Ghasemi / ISNA via AP file

uranium, something it was allowed to do up to certain limits under the nuclear deal, it said.

"Iran must stop all proliferation-sensitive activities, including uranium enrichment, and we will not accept actions that support the continuation of such enrichment," State Depart-

ment spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said in a statement. "The United States will continue to impose maximum pressure on the Iran and remains committed to denying Iran any pathway to a nuclear weapon."

President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal last year, re-imposed sanctions that had been eased in November and has steadily ramped up pressure on Iran in the months since.

Last month, his administration announced it would no longer renew sanctions exemptions that allowed China, India, Japan, Turkey and South Korea to continue importing Iranian oil. Those waivers expired Friday, although it was not immediately clear whether the administration would impose sanctions on some or all of those countries if they take delivery of previously purchased oil.

Some hard-liners on Iran in Congress and outside the administration have called for the elimination of all sanctions waivers, including for civilian nuclear cooperation, in order for the administration to make good on its "maximum pressure" campaign.

Supporters of the Iran deal say the cooperation waivers are important to maintain because they give the outside world additional eyes on what Iran is doing in its nuclear facilities.

(Source: AP)

Larijani says Saudi Arabia, UAE unable to boost oil output

1 → "This psychological war will work for a few days but after that, oil shortage in the market will start and problems will face the oil market in the following weeks," Larijani noted.

On May 2, Bloomberg reported that oil refiners in Asia are asking Saudi Arabia for more crude as the world's top consuming region deals with supply disruptions from Iran to Venezuela, citing

people with knowledge of the matter.

Customers are seeking additional cargoes for loading in June and July from OPEC's biggest producer, the people said, asking not to be identified because the information is confidential.

The requests are for supplies on top of what the refiners are due as part of term contracts with state-run Saudi Aramco, they said.

In the meantime, Iran's oil minister has warned that OPEC is "likely to collapse" because some members of the 14-nation group are working against their fellow producers.

The comment by Bijan Zanganeh appears to be a thinly veiled reference to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. As the Trump administration tightened energy sanctions against

Iran on Thursday, the White House says the Saudis and Emiratis will work with the U.S. to offset the anticipated drop in Iranian oil supplies.

In response to U.S. sanctions, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has said that his country will continue to sell oil in different ways, adding that there are "six other ways" to sell oil of which Washington is unaware.

Navab named Leader's representative for Hajj affairs

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has appointed Hojatoleslam Abdolfatah Navab as his representative for Hajj affairs, replacing Ali Qazi Askar.

In a decree, Ayatollah Khamenei thanked Qazi Askar for his successful efforts during his tenure and wished success for Navab in the new post, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

Qazi Askar had earlier made assurances that Iranians who planned to go on pilgrimage to the holy cities in Saudi Arabia later this year should not worry about their security.

“Due to the severance of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, there are public concerns about the security of the Hajj,” he said in a speech in the northeastern holy city of Mashhad on Friday.

“However, (in talks) with the Saudis, we



have raised the issue that they should separate the Hajj from political issues, and they have accepted this in practice,” he added.

“There is no (security) problem facing our pilgrims with the grace of God and, of course, in this regard, the experience of the last two years has proven this,” he stated.

During a visit to Saudi Arabia in December 2018, Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization chief Alireza Rashidian held meetings with officials from the kingdom's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah about the 2019 Hajj season.

The two sides signed an agreement at the conclusion of the meetings to make better arrangements for Iranian pilgrims and preventing the problems they faced in previous years.

The agreement stipulates that 86,500 Iranian pilgrims would go on pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia in the coming Hajj season.

‘I’ve grown concerned about accession to FATF’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – A member of the Expediency Council says while he used to be only uncertain about Iran's accession to the Paris-based FATF, he has gradually become “concerned” about the move.

“We gradually became concerned... I myself was uncertain for long until the Europeans took a stance and said that we had to pass the bills,” Morteza Nabavi said, Mehr reported on Saturday.

In this way, he said, the Europeans interfered in Iran's internal affairs.

Nabavi, a former lawmaker, further explained that as time passed, the arguments of “the concerned” – conservatives who have opposed joining the FATF and some other agreements including the 2015 nuclear deal –overcame other arguments.

Nabavi also criticized the European countries for failing to secure Iran's interests under the nuclear deal, saying, “The Europeans not only didn't do anything for Iran, but also expanded the sanctions and imposed new ones.”

The FATF announced on February 22 that Iran has until June to fix its anti-money laundering and terrorism financing

rules or face increased international scrutiny of its banks.

In October 2018, the global watchdog had given Iran until February to complete an action plan of reforms that would bring it in line with global norms, or face consequences.

The FATF concluded at its February 22 meeting that “there are still items not completed” and said in a statement it “expects Iran to proceed swiftly in the reform path”, according to Reuters.

One of the actions Iran is required to take to appease the FATF is joining the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which is also called the Palermo Convention, a 2000 United Nations-sponsored multilateral treaty against transnational organized crime.

The other action is to ratify the CFT, the convention combatting financing of terrorism.

On October 7, 2018, the parliament voted in favor of the CFT. However, the oversight Guardian Council rejected the bill by finding 22 faults with it.

To become a law, the Guardian Council should vet the bill for compliance with the Constitution.



In cases when the parliament and the Guardian Council disagree on a bill, the issue is referred to the Expediency Council for final arbitration. The bill is now under study by the Expediency Council.

Washington will fail to push Iran toward internal crisis: expert



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – An international affairs expert believes the U.S. cannot drive Iran's oil exports to zero and it won't also be able to push Iran toward an internal crisis.

Mohammad Ali Basiri said due to numerous reasons, Iran would be able to manage the crisis and reduce the impacts of U.S. sanctions, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Basiri also dismissed the notion of talks, saying holding dialogue with the U.S. government at the current situation would be “very humiliating” for Tehran.

He pointed out that Iran has 15 neighbors which can help it circumvent the sanc-

tions. “Iran has a long history of fighting sanctions.”

“Today, there are no multilateral sanctions and only unilateral sanctions of the U.S. exist,” he said.

On April 22, the United States said it would stop waivers for countries buying Iranian oil, in an attempt to push Iran's oil exports to zero. On April 8, the U.S. also blacklisted Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization.

Efforts by the Trump administration to isolate Iran politically and economically began with last year's U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal it and other world powers negotiated with Iran in 2015.

Spokesman hails self-sufficiency in arms production



TEHRAN (FNA) – Spokesman for the Armed Forces Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi has underlined that Iran is standing on its feet in the production of different military equipment.

“We have displayed over 700 achievements of the Islamic Revolution in three exhibitions. Today, we are 90% needless (of foreigners) and self-sufficient in the military field, thanks to the efforts of our youth,” Shekarchi said in Tehran on Saturday.

The general further said that Iran cannot display a number of its secret military achievements to the public.

In relevant remarks in February, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, Armed Forces chief of staff, praised Iran's independence

in defense industry, saying Tehran helped Baghdad in the war against terrorists with fighter jets completely overhauled by Iranian experts.

Baqeri said that some Sukhoi fighter jets overhauled by Iranian experts were used in Iraq to combat terrorists.

“Some of our aircrafts, including Sukhoi Su-22 and Su-25, were overhauled (by Iranian experts), and used by our brothers in Iraq to combat terrorism,” he explained.

He also said Saudi Arabia, the Zionist regime, and some other countries “spend hundreds of billions of dollars on their armed forces, and their only objective is to oppose Islam.”

New Tajik envoy submits credentials to Zarif

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – The new ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to Tehran met with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Saturday.

During the meeting, Ambassador Nizomiddin Shamsiddin-zoda Zohidi handed over a copy of his credentials to Zarif, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

Principlist faction in House of Parties opposes provincial parliamentary polls

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Members of the principlist faction of the House of Parties have criticized the plan to hold parliamentary elections at provincial level, saying the plan is “premature” and needs further study.

According to Fars, the principlist politicians reached a consensus in their first meeting on Tuesday that the plan is “ill-considered” and “deep expert work” has not been done on it.

Also, Guardian Council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said on Saturday that the council will mull over the bill on Thursday.

Kadkhodaei had earlier said the council neither opposes nor favors provincial elections.

“We have had meetings with the Interior Ministry with this regard,” Kadkhodaei said, adding, “The bill on amending the Majlis election law was on the agenda last week, but we couldn't finish it due to its lengthiness.”

“I cannot predict whether the bill would be implemented by the [2020] parliamentary elections,” he stated.

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

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

Top reformist MP says Iran able to sell as much oil as it wants

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Chairman of the pro-reform Hope faction in the parliament has said Iran is the final decision-maker of how much oil it needs to export.

“If we decide to export oil, we can do this under any circumstances and the path is not closed,” Mohammad Reza Aref said, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Aref further said Iran will not succumb to the sanctions.

The former vice president said Iran has gained successful experience on how to survive sanctions. “Whenever we fought against sanctions, we succeeded and moved toward self-sufficiency and reduced dependency” upon other countries, the veteran politician remarked.

Since the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal a year ago, the White House has reimposed the sanctions that were lifted as part of the agreement against the Islamic Republic.

Senior MP says Iran must hold talks with JCPOA parties on 20% nuclear fuel

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said on Saturday that Iran needs to commence a new round of negotiations with JCPOA parties about production of nuclear fuel to purity of 20 percent.

Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh made the remarks in reaction to Washington's Friday announcement about banning exports of heavy water and any further uranium enrichment from Iran.

“Iran must start fresh talks with JCPOA members and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for production of 20-percent modern nuclear fuel,” the top parliamentarian suggested.

As he described, the U.S. intends to halt the development of Iran's nuclear industry via imposing new sanctions; however, Iran has remained committed to the JCPOA, expecting removal of sanctions. “According to the JCPOA, Iran is authorized to export its nuclear productions to Russia and Oman and continue importing raw materials under the supervision of the Agency, but the U.S. recent decision is intended to push Iran's nuclear industry into recession,” he explained.

“Iran has the ability and the permission to produce 20-percent modern nuclear fuel,” he underlined.

Iran able to offset American pressure: former Pakistan diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Former Pakistan's ambassador to Russia says Iran is a sovereign state that has the capacity to counter American sanctions pressure.

In an interview with IRNA published on Saturday, Ambassador Mohammad Khalid Khattak said the U.S. is in a habit of putting sanctions on this or that country.

After withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and re-imposition of unilateral sanctions against Iran in May 2018, the U.S. had agreed to let eight countries, including China, Japan, India and South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Italy and Greece keep buying Iranian oil limitedly. However, later it decided not to renew waivers. The waivers ended on May 2.

“Look, Americans are playing with Iran because Iran is a sovereign country,” the former diplomat said, adding sanctions is a tactic to put pressure on Iran. “Ending waivers against Iran is big news, but for me it is not a breaking news; it is usual as the U.S. is in a habit of putting sanctions on this and that country.”

He went on to say that politics is an alignment of interests, convergence of interests and divergence of interests.

Calling the U.S. move “immoral”, he said the basic reason that the U.S. is pursuing a very aggressive policy towards Iran is because of the Zionist regime's influence on American politics.

Zarif's ‘B-Team’ reference aimed to expose divide in Trump admin: analyst

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif made a well-calculated “B-Team” reference to expose the divide within the Trump administration in regard to Iran, a senior analyst said on Saturday.

Speaking with IRNA, Ali Vaez, director of the Iran Project at the International Crisis Group, said the “calculated tactic” by the Iranian foreign minister displayed a deep gap between U.S. President Donald Trump and his national security team and regional allies, who are pushing for regime change in Iran.

Vaez said Trump is not willing to get involved in another conflict in the Middle East, therefore Zarif's revelation on the intentions of the U.S. president's advisors and allies was

an effort to make Trump aware of the issue.

“By exposing the intentions of Trump's advisers and allies, Zarif intended to put the president on notice,” he remarked.

Vaez did not rule out an unwanted escalation between Tehran and Washington, particularly when there is much friction between Iran, on one side, and the U.S. and its allies in the region, on the other.

“The [U.S.] president probably believes that at the end of the day, he would not fall into anyone's trap,” he said, warning, “There is plenty of precedent in U.S. history when clueless presidents have been easily manipulated by much more experienced executives.”

Moreover, the analyst continued, there is so much friction between Iran and the U.S.



and their respective allies in the region that a clash could happen even unintentionally.

In his recent interviews, Zarif has also voiced Iran's preparedness to swap prisoners with the United States.

Vaez described the move as another direct message to Trump and an “appealing offer” for him who is seeking to take credit for bringing the American forces back home.

He also argued that it was too late for talks as the presidential elections in the U.S. approach.

“I'm afraid it might be too late for opening such talks as in the run up to the 2020 U.S. presidential elections, Trump is likely to be more risk averse in engaging in controversial dealings with U.S. adversaries,” he concluded.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	224589.7
IFX	2665.07

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,985 rials
GBP	55,327 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$70.85/b
WTI	\$61.94/b
OPEC Basket	\$70.98/b
Gold	\$1,280.20/oz
Silver	\$15.01/oz
Platinum	\$875.05/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

MOU signed between Iran, Germany on exhibit organizing

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) and the German company IMAG (one of the pioneers in international exhibition industry) signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in organizing exhibitions, IRNA reported.



The MOU was signed on Friday on the sidelines of the 24th Iran International Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2019) in Tehran.

Exchanging trade delegations, holding joint exhibitions and conferences on various industrial fields as well as convening technical forums on railway, automobile, renovation of industries, renewable energies, the latest technological achievements and updating the managers are among the content of the MOU.

IMAG is one of the pioneers in international exhibition industry with 14 international exhibitions, more than 40 technical exhibitions and some 250 guest exhibitions that are held at its main base in Munich.

The company with 9 international branches is also the organizer of over 40 technical exhibitions in other countries.

Asian stock valuations surge to 14-month high in April

Valuations of Asian equities reached a 14-month high at the end of April as regional shares rallied on optimism about Chinese economic data and the prospects for a U.S.-China trade deal, Reuters reported.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares gained 1.6 percent in April. According to Refinitiv, the region's forward price-to-earnings ratio (P/E) was 13.2 times at the end of last month, the highest since February 2018.

Despite gains in April, the regional index was still trading at a discount to the MSCI All Country World index's forward P/E of 15.2, suggesting Asian stocks were still cheaper than global peers.

At end-April, Indian and Malaysian stocks were the most expensive with price-to-earnings ratios of 17.2 and 15.6 respectively, according to Refinitiv. South Korea and China were the cheapest, with ratios of about 11 each.

SoftBank mulls IPO of \$100 billion Vision Fund: source

Japan's SoftBank Group Corp is considering an initial public offering of its \$100 billion Vision Fund, a source familiar with the matter said on Friday.

Reuters reported that, the fund was set up in 2017 and has become the world's largest technology investment fund. Its investments include ride-hailing pioneer Uber, chip designer ARM and shared workspace firm WeWork.

The company has publicly stated it plans to set up a second investment fund. The senior banking source said Softbank was now talking to banks about helping it raise money, confirming an earlier report in the Wall Street Journal.

Softbank has spoken to half a dozen banks over the last month about a potential listing of the Vision Fund but has yet to start a formal process, the source said, adding he was not expecting such a process in the near term.

"They asked banks questions on how they could possibly do it. It is still very much in exploration mode," the source said, adding that Softbank had been possibly given the idea by fellow tech investor Naspers, which plans to list some of its assets.

The "big difference is that the biggest asset in the Naspers portfolio is Tencent, which is listed, whereas the portfolio of the Vision Fund is all private," the source said.

SoftBank is also in talks with Oman for an investment in the fund, which has raised nearly all of its funding so far from Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi, according to the WSJ report.

Oman was not immediately available for a comment when contacted by Reuters, nor was there an immediate response from the Japanese conglomerate.

SoftBank is seeking to raise new funds for "informal deals" chief executive officer Masayoshi Son negotiated in China for Vision Fund, one of the people told WSJ.

Iran has 3rd largest GOR among region's oil exporters: IMF

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest Regional Economic Outlook titled "Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia" puts Iran's Gross Official Reserves (GOR) at \$108.3 billion for 2018, marking it the third biggest oil exporting country in terms of GOR.

According to the international body, despite the U.S. efforts to pressure Iran's

economy, the country's foreign exchange reserves in 2019 will remain above \$100 billion, and Iran will keep its position in the region.

The IMF sees Iran's gross official reserves at \$103.2 billion in 2019, falling \$5.1 billion compared to 2018.

The data presented puts the total foreign exchange reserves of the region at \$1148.6 billion, nine percent of which is Iran's share.

Mega export projects on agenda for identifying target markets

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran plans to launch 15 mega export projects to identify more target markets, the acting head of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced on Saturday.

Mohammadreza Modoudi said with the implementation of these projects, which mainly focus on the markets of neighboring countries, identifying professional trade and promoting export of non-oil commodities will be put on agenda, Mehr news agency reported.

The official further referred to the \$1.7 billion positive trade balance in the country's non-oil trade in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), and said this positive balance was achieved through cooperation with the private sector.



Toward Japan's economic endgame

By Dan Steinbock

Japan's economy is coping with half a decade of Abenomics, monetary injections, huge debt, and a proposed sales tax that could make things a lot worse.

Ever since Shinzo Abe started his second stint as Prime Minister, Japan has focused on positive economic signals, which has sparked futile hopes, including a bad sales tax proposition.

Japanese officials vow to stick to the planned tax hike in October (it has been delayed twice), barring a big economic shock. With the 2019 budget, Abe hopes to offset adverse impact of the sales tax by returning much of the extra revenue to consumers via \$18 billion of offsetting measures, instead of faster debt-reduction.

But recently, the Cabinet downgraded its headline economic assessment for the first time in three years. Manufacturing, housing and retail indicators reflect signs of weakness, while first-quarter figures, expected in May, could show a contraction — especially as the impact of Trump's tariff wars is spreading in Asia.

In December 2012, when the Liberal Democratic Party returned to leadership, Abe campaigned on renewed fiscal stimulus, aggressive monetary easing, and structural reforms. The devaluation of the yen, critical to Japanese exporters, was the tacit denominator of the proposed changes.

Fiscal stimulus in 2013

In addition to a huge liquidity risk, Tokyo took another risk in timing, as I argued then. It

sought to implement the fiscal stimulus in 2013, while consolidation would follow. Obviously, unease increased in 2014. As Abe went ahead with the sales tax hike that spring, it triggered a sharp slump. Instead of strong expansion, consumers were hit hard and Japan began its third lost decade.

Yet, recently, international observers have been remarkably optimistic. Last November, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported Japan has had an "extended period of strong economic growth."

As the growth rate, supported by huge monetary injections and rapidly-rising debt, increased to 1.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018, upgraded from preliminary data, and inflation seemed to be strengthening in early fall, the Abe administration began to flirt with another tax hike, again. The "sales tax hike to 10 percent is needed the most to secure stable financial resources to pay for social security for all generations," says Finance Minister Taro Aso.

That is a pipe dream. Huge monetary injections and rapidly-rising debt will undermine Japan's economic future.

More than half a decade ago, the new governor of Bank of Japan (BoJ), Haruhiko Kuroda, pledged to do "whatever it takes" to achieve the 2 percent inflation target. Under his reign, the BoJ boosted quantitative and qualitative easing with negative interest rate policy.

In 2018, BoJ's bond and stock holdings topped 100 percent of GDP. Now the BoJ is adjusting the pace of bond purchases so that



The foreign reserves of some other countries in the region include Algeria \$55.6 billion, Bahrain \$2 billion, Iraq \$53.2 billion, Kuwait \$37.2 billion, Libya \$77.7 billion, Oman \$16.1 billion, Afghanistan \$8.4 billion and Pakistan \$10 billion.

In its previous Regional Economic Outlook titled "Regional Economic Outlook Update: Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan" IMF predicted that Iran's gross official reserves would reach \$108.4 billion in 2018.

its holdings would not surpass 50 percent of the GDP, which is seen to herald the eclipse of monetary accommodation.

In 2018, foreigners held an all-time high of 12 percent share of outstanding debt, yet most debt is in Japanese hands and in yens. In turn, falling rates in the U.S. and elsewhere have made Japanese bonds attractive, as long as their yields are not expected to fall much because of BoJ policy.

But times may be changing. At year-end 2018, the BoJ reduced slightly its holdings to 43 percent of all issued Japanese government bonds. It was the first quarterly fall in almost seven years. In the past five years, Japan's government debt has climbed to 255% to GDP. As long as interest rates remain ultra-low, servicing it is affordable. But nothing lasts forever.

Moreover, the original target — sustained 2 percent inflation — has proved elusive and some argue that the BoJ's purchase of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) are distorting the stock market.

Japan faces more urgently the same dilemma that today burdens most advanced economies: How to support high living standard with low or no growth?

Japanese living standard

In the past three decades, Japanese living standard has increased from over \$30,000 to nearly \$45,000. Yet, Japan's trend growth has plunged from 5 percent to less than 0.5 percent — over 90 percent.

Nevertheless, the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD), the advanced economies' think tank, is urging Japan to triple its tax to 26 percent to achieve a large primary surplus, by spending cuts, tax increases and curbing healthcare services. In reality, such austerity could derail remaining support structures for growth, inflation and average prosperity in Japan.

Japan is the first advanced economy in secular stagnation, but others remain in the same path. Penalizing the remaining middle-classes and working people, while sustaining the kind of privatization, liberalization and deregulation, which led to the income gap in the first place, is foolish.

To resolve structural challenges, a more realistic program is required to ensure fiscal sustainability, while raising productivity and reducing all unnecessary barriers to employment. But that's only a start.

Japan needs a national drive to reduce its gender income gap (it ranks 110th in the 2018 Gender Gap Index) and another to attract far more immigrants (with faster naturalization). In both cases, a change of magnitude is needed; policy nibbling will go nowhere. And instead of rearmament, militarization and conflicts, Japan needs accelerated job-creation, economic development and regional cooperation.

As the world's third-largest economy and the second-largest debt market, Tokyo's future choices will have repercussions across the world — in good and bad.

(Source: foreignpolicyjournal.com)

Venezuela should follow Germany and Japan's path to wealth

By Nathan Lewis

Despite how bad things are right now, I think that Venezuela could become happy in prosperous in a very short time; and become the wealthiest country in Latin America within fifteen years, or even ten. In 1948, what you are now seeing in Venezuela -- hyperinflation and general economic collapse -- was happening in Germany and Japan. Two years later, both countries' economies were roaring to life, and they continued roaring throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

They were among the greatest economic comebacks of all time. Venezuela could do the same today.

The solutions implemented in Germany and Japan were very similar:

First: In 1948-49, the hyperinflationary mark and yen were linked to the dollar at fixed rates. Since the dollar itself was linked to gold at \$35/oz. within the Bretton Woods system, this meant that the mark and yen were effectively linked to gold. Stable Money.

Second: Both Germany and Japan had huge tax reductions in 1948-1950, and followed up with several more rounds of tax cuts in the 1950s and 1960s.

Third: Price controls, rationing, labor restrictions, and other socialistic interventions were eliminated in 1948-49.

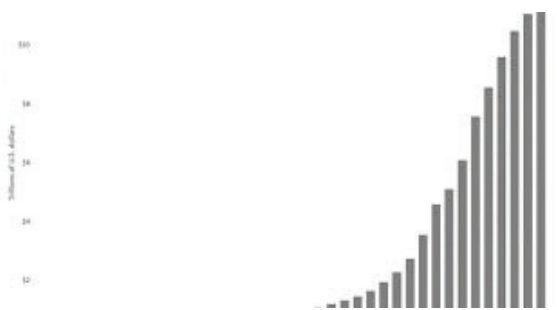
Fourth: In 1948-49, both Germany and Japan outlawed all deficit spending and bond issuance, to eliminate the urge to finance the government with the printing press. The government was to spend out of current income only.

I described this process in Japan in more detail in Gold: The Once and Future Money (2007), and for Germany in The Magic Formula (2019).

The solution for Venezuela

The solution for Venezuela must involve what I've called "the Magic Formula": Low Taxes, and Stable Money.

The Stable Money aspect should include a link to a major international currency, probably the dollar although the euro could also be used. This should be either a formal currency board, such as used by Bulgaria, or adoption of the currency itself, i.e. "dollarization" or "euroization." Unfortunately, such a step would probably induce some fears of excessive political influence by the United States or EU; and these fears have some justification. However, Venezuela could adopt a dollar-linked currency board, or even dollarize, without any other



U.S. influence on policy.

Hong Kong today, which is of course part of China, has a dollar-based currency board. El Salvador is dollarized, but maintains its sovereign independence in other spheres. The introduction of euro-based currency boards in Estonia and Bulgaria stopped hyperinflation overnight.

For Low Taxes, I suggest an aggressive approach that is suited to Venezuela's present crisis condition.

A review of successful emerging market economies around the world shows a common pattern of a tax revenue/GDP ratio between 10% and 20%. Although developed economies often have a revenue/GDP ratio much higher than this, they do not have high-growth economies. France or Denmark can stagnate in apparent comfort with these heavy taxes, but when such systems are applied to emerging markets, the result tends to be stagnation at poverty levels. For Venezuela to get rich, the "tax burden" or revenue/GDP ratio should be in the teens.

The next question is: what is the best way to generate this level of tax revenue? I suggest that Venezuela should have a one-tax system: a VAT of 20%. This is only a little above today's VAT of 16% in Venezuela, and all the administrative structures are already in place. The present personal income tax (34% top rate), corporate income tax (34% top rate), and payroll tax (24.5% combined) can be eliminated.

With the addition of a few other taxes such as property taxes or tariffs, the result should be a revenue/GDP ratio around 15%-18%. This is enough to provide basic government services and also some social services including public education, health and welfare. It is about the same as China and Singapore today.

With no income or payroll taxes, and Stable Money in the form of a dollar link, Venezuela should be one of the best places to do business in the world. GDP would quickly grow; and with that, tax revenue would also grow, which would allow a broader range of government services.

The Magic Formula

People have little idea how much an economy can grow, when it has the Magic Formula. Between 1994 and 2004, China's economy, in terms of nominal U.S. dollars, grew 24 times larger. Tax revenue, naturally, also got about 24 times larger. But this sort of thing has happened before: between 1950 and 1970, Japan's economy got about sixteen times larger.

With Low Taxes and Stable Money in place, there would be no more need for the various socialistic band-aids that seem necessary in an environment of hyperinflationary collapse. Price controls, rationing, restrictions on hiring and firing, and other such measures can be eliminated overnight.

In 1948, the German government announced on the radio that price controls and rationing would be eliminated. German citizens were surprised to hear that the changes would apply the next morning. In the next ten months, Industrial Production grew 71%.

The last element in the successful German/Japanese example was a hard ban on all government deficit spending and bond issuance. Until 1965, all Japanese government bond issuance was outlawed. The country had no government debt. But the soaring economy quickly produced so much tax revenue that they had to have a special meeting each year (a "supplementary budget") to get rid of the excess money. They cut taxes further, and also increased their spending plans, especially on public works. Hong Kong -- which combined its dollar currency board with a 16% "flat tax" and a tax revenue/GDP ratio of 13% -- enjoyed so much revenue that, not only did it have no government debt, but years of budget surpluses accumulated into a "fiscal reserve" of assets that was recently 67% of GDP.

I would add one more principle for Venezuela:

Fifth: Ignore everything the International Monetary Fund says. (I would normally add the World Bank also, but David Malpass, the World Bank's new president, would probably agree with every element in my plan.)

The Magic Formula works. It worked for Germany. It worked for Japan. And it would work for Venezuela today.

(Source: forbes.com)

Iran Oil Show 2019: ‘Iran not alone in oil market’

I → To get an idea about the viewpoints of the companies participating in this year's exhibition, Tehran Times conducted interviews with representatives of a number of European companies. What follows is a brief collection of those interviews.

■ ‘Iran, still a gold mine’

Asked about the presence of Italian companies in Iran Oil Show 2019, Andrea Zucchini, former Italian politician, President of I-Pars, company that collaborates with the ICE agency, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Italian Embassy and Consulate and also cooperate with the Confindustria Emilia (the major representation association of manufacturing and service companies in Italy), said, “This year we are here with a delegation comprising 14 Italian companies and there are also companies which are also attending as visitors”.

He further mentioned the negotiations underway between the Italian company representatives and their Iranian counterparts and said, “There are many negotiations in progress but Italian companies are very reserved at this point because of the U.S. sanctions.”

About the future of cooperation between Iranian and Italian companies considering the recent U.S. pressures, Zucchini said, “I think it is possible to work for Italian companies in Iran even during the unjust U.S. sanctions. The Iranians are strong people and used to being subjected to external pressure, so they will resist.”

Asked about the INSTEX (the Europe's financial mechanism for trade with Iran) and its impact on the trade between Iran and Europe, the official said “The Instex system is a correct solution. At the moment however it is still not clear how it can be used. It is therefore important for Europe



to hurry and make this system operating. Our companies are waiting for it and I think it could give further confidence to the whole system.”

“This year's fair went very well and I still think that Iran is and will be a gold mine for Italian companies”, he added.

■ ‘A great trade partner for Europe’

Arjen Mosselman, a company representative from the Netherlands, believed that considering Iran's geopolitical position in the region, the country could be a great trade partner for Europe.

“Iran is the country with the highest potential for growth in the Middle East and I believe the future is bright despite all the hurdles.”

The representative of the Spanish pavilion Cecilio Castro Lopez, who works as the

international trade advisor to the embassy of Spain in Tehran, had similar viewpoints with the Dutch official regarding Iran market.

When asked about the number of Spanish companies attending this year he said “Spain has been here [the exhibition] for many years however this year due to the U.S. sanctions only two companies are participating.”

Regarding the INSTEX, Castro said Europe and Iran have always had a good relationship and so despite the U.S. efforts INSTEX was inevitable and hopefully it is going to be operational soon.

“Economically speaking it is going to be very important for both sides because right now the situation is a little difficult and with INSTEX we hope that things get better”, he added.

He said, “Iran is a very good market and there are a lot of Spanish companies which are interested in collaborating in Iran's oil and gas industry.”

A German Partner of the ATAC Company which asked to remain anonymous believed that “There is big hope among German companies for trade with Iran and that's the reason we are here.”

“We are not going to disappear...we are standing by Iran.....Iran is a great market the situation is disappointing [mentioning the U.S. sanctions]”, he added.

■ ‘Together we are stronger’

Anastasia Rudenok, a leading trade expert at United Engine Corporation said “This is the fifth time that we are participating in this exhibition, this is a rather traditional exhibition for us now.”

Asked about the exhibition, she said “This is much bigger than what I expected....it is a great opportunity to showcase your products.”

Regarding the sanctions, Rudenok said, “Well of course due to sanctions it is much harder to conduct trade internationally, but I believe we [Russia] and many other developing countries like Iran are in the same boat so have to stick together and together we are stronger.”

Valerie Kobeeva, the deputy chief of foreign trade department at JSC Proton which is a renowned Russian manufacturer of optoelectronics in Russia, said, “There are 14 Russian companies participating this year... we are all really interested in Iran's market.”

Regarding the impact of the U.S. sanctions Kobeeva said, “Surely the U.S. sanctions are affecting the both sides' trade but considering the good political relations between the two countries it will be easier to maintain trade relations.”

South African firm sees no limitation for direct co-op with Iran

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — The sales director of a South African firm said despite unilateral U.S. sanctions on Iran, his company has no limitation for direct cooperation with Iranian businesses and corporations.

Speaking to Shana on the sidelines of the 24th Iran Oil Show in the Iranian capital of Tehran on May 3, Jason De Araujo, the sales director of JDA Diamond Tooling, added over the past 25 years, his company has been largely involved in the fields of exploration, digging, mining and oil and gas.

He noted that his firm's capabilities in manufacturing digging equipment for oil and gas industry projects have provided it with a large number of opportunities

in the Iranian market.

“Despite being a newcomer in Iran's market, over the past 30 months, we have managed to supply digging equipment to Iranian firms and closely cooperate with a digging company in the country. We hope to be able to have a more expanded presence in the Iranian market.”

He said they are very proud to be taking part in the current edition of the Iranian exhibition as South Africa's sole representative, adding the high quality of the expo and its size have surprised them.

The 24th Iran International Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2019) began on May 1 and wrapped up on May 4.

Dutch firms cooperating with Iran's oil industry despite sanctions

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Despite unilateral U.S. sanctions on Iran, Dutch oil and gas companies still have a significant presence in the country, said an oil expert and the representative of a Dutch firm in the 24th Iran Oil Show.

Speaking to Shana on the sidelines of the exhibition in the Iranian capital of Tehran on Friday (May 3), Khosrow Salour, who is also the managing director of Sayeh Gostar Pars Managers Economic and Business Consultancy, said despite the U.S. sanctions and threats and concerns expressed by Dutch banks, the European state's firms still have an active presence in Iran.

Dutch companies cooperate with Iran's oil industry in different forms, he said, add-

ing many of them are directly carrying out activities in the country's market.

Salour noted that the Dutch government does not prevent the country's companies from cooperating with Iran's oil industry and is committed to the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed between Iran and P5+1 in July 2015.

Last May, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the JCPOA and reimposed the White House's unilateral sanctions on Tehran in two phases, both already in place.

Two Dutch firms have participated in the 24th Iran Oil Show, including Dutch Energy Solutions, he said.

Representatives of a large number of firms from the European country attended the exhibition as visitors, Salour added.

NIOC to open representative office in Iraq

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will set up a representative office in Iraq to facilitate activities by Iranian producers and constructors in the neighboring state.

The issue was discussed in a meeting between Iranian oil industry equipment producers and senior managers of the Iraqi Ministry of Oil on the sidelines of the 24th Iran Oil Show in the Iranian capital of Tehran on Friday (May 3).

The meeting was attended by Iraqi Deputy Oil Minister Mahmoud Abdul Amir Hashim, the NIOC director for support, construction and goods supply, Ramin Qalambor Dezfooli,

and a number of oil equipment producers.

Speaking in the meeting, Qalambor Dezfooli said the gathering was aimed at providing Iranian constructors and producers with the opportunity to establish a closer connection with their Iraqi counterparts.

“We have been seeking to achieve this goal for about three years as Iranian producers and constructors are acting independently in Iraq. Currently, we aim to establish an NIOC representative office in Iraq to represent the Iranian Oil Ministry in the country.”

He added, “We are seeking to work out solutions to enable

Iranian producers and constructors to cooperate with Iraq's private sector.”

Qalambor Dezfooli said the office will be responsible for connecting Iranian oil industry's constructors and producers with the Iraqi Ministry of Oil.

“Given that Iranian constructors do not have international certificates and licenses, we are cooperating with the Iraqi Ministry of Oil to set up a mechanism through which those Iranian companies that are approved by the NIOC, receive approval from the Iraqi Ministry of Oil and, thus, be able to participate in the implementation of oil projects in the neighboring state.”

Russia to cut more oil production as exports restricted

Russia's oil production will be cut by another 1 million barrels per day over the next week after its oil exports were restricted due to contamination issues, according to Reuters.

As per oilprice.com, the contaminated crude oil was shipped through Transneft's Druzhba pipeline, causing the pipeline operator to call on Russian oil producers to request reduced volumes — a 10 percent reduction.

The contamination issue — which Transneft says was deliberate — has been quite a headache for Russia, but European refineries are taking most of the brunt, and have caused Poland, the Czech Republic,



and Hungary to release 8 million barrels of oil reserves to keep their refineries refining, and comes at a time when the market is already nervous about tightening supplies as crude production falls in Iran and Venezuela.

Russia's oil production had already fallen in April to 11.23 million barrels per day, although the levels were still above its production quota that it agreed to with

OPEC of 11.191 million bpd.

Russia has dropped hints over the last month that it may be reluctant to extend the oil quotas past June — although it has yet to reduce production to those levels.

Saudi Arabia has vowed to respond to market needs as they arise should a shortage occur, but Saudi Arabia was referring to the production losses in Venezuela and Iran — not Russia.

Transneft is largely expected to resume oil flows over the next couple of weeks, although it may take some time to repair any damaged refinery equipment as a result of the corrosive contaminants found in the crude oil.

Ownership of wind and solar farms is “great for utility credit quality” because it allows these companies to earn a fixed return on the assets, according to the analysts led by Andy DeVries.

The Green New Deal's promotion of electric vehicles is another perk for utilities, DeVries wrote, because “increased EV ownership leads to obviously higher electric deliveries and related investment in the grid.”

CreditSights Inc. analysts wrote in a note Friday, May 3.

Utilities including Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Energy and NextEra Energy Inc. are increasingly looking to own wind and solar assets that are now among the cheapest electrical sources. That's a stark change from the early days of renewables, when expensive projects were mandated by several states, and many utilities were reluctant to buy their production.

U.S. not successful in zeroing Iranian oil exports: Reuters

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Although Iranian oil exports are expected to fall in May but the United States has not been successful in driving Iranian oil exports to zero, Reuters reported, citing industry sources.

Washington, aiming to cut Iran's sales to zero, said all sanctions waivers for those importing Iranian oil would end this week. Iran says this will not happen, although its officials are bracing for a drop in supplies.

Iran is determined to keep selling oil and according to Iranian oil minister, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, “is examining new ways of doing so.”

Kayros, a company that tracks oil flows, put Iranian crude exports in March at 1.40 million to 1.65 million bpd.

“The uncertainty band around the decline reflects residual uncertainty about the exact number of Iranian tankers that have been operating under the radar,” Kayros said in a report.

Iran would likely be able to maintain some shipments for to China and India, and into storage in China, analyst Sara Vakhshouri said.

Digging operation of South Azadegan oilfield's 10 new wells begins

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Digging operation of ten new wells of South Azadegan oilfield was started sooner than the schedule, the deputy managing director of National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) announced.

Hamidreza Khoshayand made the announcement on Friday on the sidelines of the 24th Iran International Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2019) which was held at Tehran, IRNA reported.

South Azadegan is one of five major oilfields Iran shares with Iraq at the western part of Iran's southwestern region of Karoun, known as West Karoun fields.

West Karoun holds great importance for the country's oil industry since according to the latest studies, its in-situ deposit is estimated to be 67 billion barrels containing both light and heavy crude oils, and therefore it could have a big impact on Iran's oil output increases in the future.

With the fields fully operational, their output could add 1.2 million bpd to the country's oil production capacity.

Having an estimated 67 billion barrels of in-situ oil, West Karoun fields definitely deserve the spotlight which has been put on them recently.

Canada's Baytex looks at small-volume crude-by-rail contracts: CEO

Baytex also has 5,000 b/d of crude by rail so far contracted for next year, CEO Ed La Fehr said during the company's Q1 earnings conference call.

As stated by spglobal.com, “We look at rail through the current year,” La Fehr said. “Just this week we were able to put on another 1,000 b/d moving from Peace River (a Baytex heavy oil operation) to the U.S. Gulf Coast, so we'll be up from 7,500 b/d to 8,500 b/d 9of (railed volumes) in the second half.”

That contract should begin in July, he said.

In fact, the company is layering on rail deals “right now,” he said, but did not elaborate.

“I'd say the full cost of rail for us should be C\$16-C\$18” per barrel, La Fehr said. “That's the kind of level at which we'd like to put on rail and guarantee our egress.”

Roughly 70% of Baytex crude-by-rail commitments are WTI-based contracts with no WCS pricing exposure, Baytex said in a statement.

“We believe when you look at the forward strip on WCS, differentials are attractive in the mid-to-high teens,” La Fehr added. “We layer on rail just as we layer on hedges when we get the right pricing on terms and volume.”

Late in 2018, the Alberta government imposed a production limit of 3.56 million b/d that began January 1 as Western Canada's heavy crude differential was trading at a record discount to WTI.

A lack of pipeline and rail capacity out of Canada pushed prices as much as \$51.50/b below front-month WTI at Cushing in early October 2018.

For the last couple of weeks, that spread has been in the \$10-\$13/b range.

First Announcement



Permit No.1398.719

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHV/IRAN

TENDER NO. : 02-30-9350022

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
20	P/F”MASONEILAN” PRESSURE CONTROLLER .REF.MASONEILAN REGULATOR CO	457

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 2,653 EURO or 125,183,916 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

Tel. No.: 061 341 25010 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

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Trump's foreign policy war on Americans



by Sheldon Richman

Antiwar—Beyond any reasonable doubt, in substance if not in appearance, Donald Trump is a thoroughly conventional American politician. It's a wonder that anyone requires proof at this late date.

This couldn't be clearer than in foreign policy. Some of us who understand the links among freedom, free trade, durable prosperity, and a noninterventionist foreign policy always doubted the sincerity of Trump's occasional renegade soundbites during his presidential campaign. But some fantasists fell for them, and they refuse to let go of their tissue-thin hope that this execrable man will liquidate the American empire. Nothing will convince them, so efforts at persuasion are futile.

The funny thing is that Trump himself seems to be working hardest to persuade those supporters that he has no intention of changing U.S. foreign policy. He would no more liquidate America's global empire than liquidate his own global business empire. Alas, America is not going anywhere. Sure, he may hector imperial allies to spend more on their militaries (while insisting he respects their sovereignty), but that's just a show. He's an all-in imperialist, so we shouldn't be fooled by the staged populism that sometimes is mistaken for come-home-Americanism. America First in practice embodies George H. W. Bush's summation of America's foreign policy: "What we say goes."

As Glenn Greenwald writes about Trump's disgusting relationship with Saudi Arabia, it's "a perfect example — perhaps stated a little more bluntly and candidly than usual — of how the US has conducted itself in the world since at least the end of World War II."

Forgive me for repeating myself: Trump is a caricature of a conventional American politician — which is why the political establishment despises him so. He lacks the diplomatic costume that makes brutality acceptable or at least enables people to live comfortably with their heads in the sand. But he's just another faithful defender of the empire, and as such, he needs an enemy. In fact, he has plenty; take your choice: China, Iran, — and, yes — Russia. If someone thinks North Korea is a counterexample, I can only laugh. He has unsavory friends too: Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, assorted right-wing politicians in other regions. (He is indifferent to what appears to be the barbaric state murder of Jamal Khashoggi, giving the crown prince an out by calling Khashoggi an "enemy of the state" and a Muslim Brotherhood sympathizer and saying that the whole world is really to blame. He also praises the kingdom for lowering oil prices. Does he not know how stupid and naive that sounds? Or does he merely believe his fans are stupid and naive? And why does he not praise low prices for other imports?)

Markers of his devotion to the empire include big boosts in military (please, not defense) spending; his doubling down on the endless Middle East wars (including Yemen); his insane withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, which Reagan and Gorbachev struck in a major step back from the Cold War; continued expansion of NATO (which he pretends to disdain), and his arming of the fascist-infested Ukrainian government.

The latest exhibit in the case confirming Trump as a conventional American politician comes from the New York Times. It reported yesterday that the current White House occupant is doing what his predecessors have done at least since the onset of the Cold War: insisting that countries have no choice but to side with the United States or with one of its perceived enemies, in this case China.

"The rivalry, which has reached a new pitch and scope, is now centered on the trade war that President Trump started this year [which is actually a war on Americans]," the Times reported. "But tensions have also sharpened over a broad range of diplomatic and military issues, like Taiwan, the South China Sea and economic sanctions on North Korea and Iran.

"Across the globe the United States and China are jockeying to build alliances or partnerships and shut out the other power."

That China plays such games is not a good reason for the Trump administration to do so. The Chinese want to sell to us, not annihilate us, but for the ignoramus Trump, that amounts to war by other means. However, China's moves are easily seen as responses to Trump's aggressive measures in its neighborhood. For every pro-détente member of the administration, there seemingly are two members who think war with China is inevitable. For Trump, trade has nothing to do with individual freedom and prosperity. It's just part of the arsenal with which to wage war against perceived rivals and reward friends. A charge of "unfair trade practices" is one of the first reflexes of scoundrels.

Viewed as a whole, Trump's foreign policy is nothing but inimical to individual liberty, peace, long-term prosperity, and the right of Americans and others to pursue their private lives beyond the reach of meddlesome rulers. As the Jeffersonian Abraham Bishop said in 1800: "A nation that makes greatness its polestar can never be free."

Europe's wrong calculation of the White House

1 → Undoubtedly, in the near future and ahead of the European Parliamentary elections (next month), Trump and the White House will do more to confront the EU. The president of the United States and his entourage support the victory of radical and nationalist parties in the European Parliamentary elections.

As noted above, tensions between the United States and Europe are not just about political issues! Undoubtedly, there will soon be more economic disputes between America and Europe. In other words, the Trade war between these two will become more intense in near future. Furthermore, countries like China and Canada will also enter this confrontation with the United States. At their most recent meeting, European officials argued that they have the right to respond to Trump's actions.

However, some European authorities, including Theresa May, believed that amid the existing disagreements raised between Brussels and Washington, EU leaders should attempt to negotiate and hold talks with Trump. Obviously, the British Prime Minister's views can't be accepted by other European players, and that's because now Britain is on the brink of leaving the European



Union, and this country has now become a symbol of inconsistency in this block.

It is as if the European authorities have closed their eyes to the facts that have been observed since 2016! In the course of the 2016 presidential elections in the United States,

Trump had expressed his opposition to the "existence of the United Europe." Trump's particular support for "Brexit" and beyond that, his support for nationalist and far-right extremists in European countries, indicated the full opposition of the US President with

the European Union and the Eurozone. The evidences suggest that the relations between Trump and the nationalist groups and the opponents of the United Europe remain strong. Thus, the conflict between the White House and the United Europe is a kind of fundamental conflict, one that will continue until the collapse of the United Europe or the end of Trump's time at the White House. Trump publicly calls for the destruction of the United Europe, and he doesn't hesitate to express this opposition to this block. On the one hand, he intends to support the nationalist and anti-EU alliances, which will pave the way for the economic weakening of Europe, and, on the other hand, he's after increasing the security costs of Europe under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thus we can see that there's a full consistency between US economic and security policies.

Finally, European officials have made mistakes in their calculations and attitudes toward the US government. This big mistake could lead to the loss of the European Union and the Eurozone. Undoubtedly, people like the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron once realized their mistake will be too late....

Sudan's problems not to end if corruption continues: U.S. analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A senior political expert based in the US city of Atlanta highlighted the reasons behind a recent military coup in Sudan and said if the corruption in the North African nation does not end, "then neither will the country's problems".

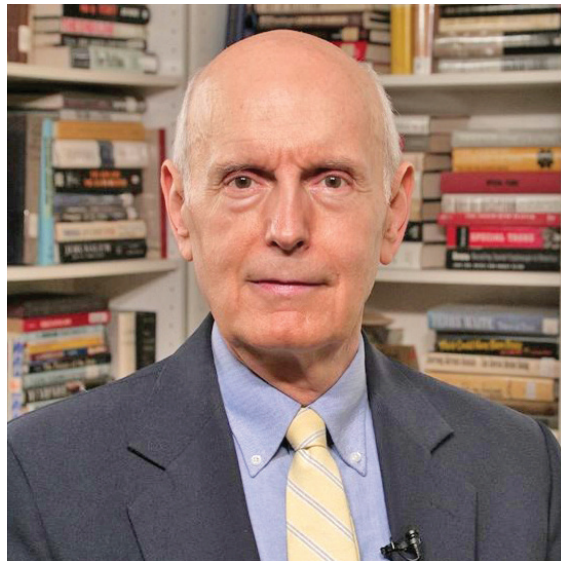
Jim Dean is a regular geopolitical commentator on various media outlets around the world. He and Sr. Editor Gordon Duff have begun their own bridge building campaign with Iranian university youth via Skype conferences. Jim comes from an old military family going back to the American Revolution. Following is the full text of the interview:

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

A: We have the expected standoff, where the opposition wants power turned over immediately, which can be a destabilizing situation to have the entire government turned over. The military made a mistake with its initially stating a two-year transition period. That is plenty of time for them to loot the country and retire, which the opposition does not want. A six-month transition would be plenty of time to avoid the chaos of having too many new people come in at once. Hopefully, both sides will compromise for the good of the country, so it can move forward.

But the military may be stalling, hoping the infighting will develop inside the opposition camp, so it will not be able to present a united front. So far, it is holding firm.

■ According to media reports, there have been some middlesome measures by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in



Sudan. However, Sudanese protesters have declared their strong opposition to the two countries. What do you think about the future of relations between Sudan and the two Arab countries and do you think that the next Sudanese government would be an ally of the two?

A: Sudan was historically part of Saudi Arabia, and that cannot be ignored as part of the history. Neither can their pocketbooks be ignored. The borders are just lines in the sand drawn by colonialist military powers and were designed to keep the tribes separated and at each others' throats, making them easier to rule over. There is a somewhat realistic background chatter going around that all leaders and potential leaders in the Arab Mideast have a price written in invisible

ink on their foreheads. This is based on the long history of leaders being bought off by outside powers, in a variety of ways. Political allegiances can change quickly and often, if enough money is put on the table, and that includes being given control over ministries which are fountains of graft.

The suitcases with millions of Euros in them found at al-Bashir's house are the most recent example. Apparently, he left home in a hurry, or was afraid to risk picking them up. No matter who takes over, if the corruption never ends, then neither will the country's problems.

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

A: Saudi Arabia is using the Sudanese mercenaries because the Saudi army has no stomach for fighting. It is made up with what we call "paycheck soldiers", ones that could not fight their way out of a paper bag. The Sudanese are not only the cheapest on the market but include large numbers of children. This is a multi-phase international crime, but one for which the Saudis will never be called to account, at least not for now. But for those young boys who survive the Yemen war, reverting back to a civilian life of unemployment and poverty will not be agreeable to them.

When boys of this age become gunmen, as they transition to their late teens and manhood, they will be vulnerable to being used as cannon fodder in the next war. Sadly, the old anti-war Intel professionals see no end to that, as chaos and regime change are the weapons of choice by the unipolar power and its allies.

Only a coalition can stand against an offensive coalition; and Iran, Syria, and Iraq have to get their defensive one going as quickly as possible. Hence, you will see the US, NATO, Israel and the Persian Gulf States trying to delay that process to their utmost ability.

Will former prime minister choose exile in UK?

By IMAD ZAFAR

Asiatimes — In a recent political development in Pakistan, the main opposition party Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) appointed Rana Tanvir Hussain as the new Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman, replacing Shahbaz Sharif. Nawaz Sharif's close aide Khawaja Asif has also been appointed as the parliamentary leader of the PML-N.

The move came amid two rumors. The first one is that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who has been released from prison on bail, has made a deal with the establishment that will allow him to go to London for medical treatment with his daughter Maryam Nawaz.

Over the last few months, the PML-N has been very silent and has abandoned its narrative of Respect the Vote. Sharif's younger brother Shahbaz Sharif, who is already in London, is believed to be staying there, and like during the Pervaz Musharraf era, the whole Sharif family will eventually go into exile. However, the dynamics of politics have changed, and if Sharif at this juncture leaves home and surrenders in front of the invisible forces, his party could be dismantled very easily.

The PML-N has remained intact despite establishment oppression because Sharif has until now been boldly facing the wrath of establishment, steadfastly refusing to surrender. However, if he makes a deal, it will be the end of the PML-N, as many Punjabi members will leave the party.

The plan seems simple: the invisible forces are waiting for the annual budget of the Center and Punjab to be presented and passed by the assemblies and then they

will remove the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief minister, Usman Buzdar, from Punjab. Brigadier Ijaz Shah, who has been appointed as an interior minister, has only been brought back to launch a new political party in Punjab and the Center. Brigadier (retired) Ijaz Shah was instrumental in building the Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) during the Pervaz Musharraf era. The PML-Q consisted of members of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and PML-N who, due to pressure from state agencies, shifted their loyalties to avoid having cases lodged against them by the National Accountability Bureau. However, it seems unlikely that Sharif will surrender at this point in time and let his detractors prevail over his narrative.

The other rumor emanating from the corridors of power is that Sharif has virtually sidelined Shahbaz Sharif, as his younger brother believes in working with the establishment. Since Shahbaz's strategy of bowing down to the establishment has confused PML-N voters and did not yield the desired result for the party and his daughter, and Sharif was getting more popular with each passing day, it is possible that the former premier made a call and put his weight behind Maryam.

If this is true then Sharif would be going back to jail and his daughter Maryam would also have to face the music in the coming days. However, in both scenarios, it is evident that the PML-N is divided into two factions. There is a group in the party that wants to bridge its differences with the establishment so the PML-N can seek power again. This group is backing Shahbaz, while the other group is comprised of Sharif loyalists who at any cost want to

carry on the fight with the establishment to its logical conclusion.

If there is no possibility of a deal between Sharif and the invisible forces, why is he so tight-lipped and why is Maryam not actively participating in politics?

If there is no possibility of a deal between Sharif and the invisible forces, why is he so tight-lipped and why is Maryam not actively participating in politics? In fact, it is quite the opposite, it is the son of Benazir Bhutto, Bilawal Bhutto, who is taking on both the PTI government and the invisible forces with his aggressive speeches and stance in the National Assembly. Since power politics are all about seeking power there is a possibility that Sharif may wish to buy some time to come up with a new move on the political power chess board, and in order to do so he might bow down to the invisible forces for the time being. However, the fact remains that if at any time Sharif leaves for London and stays there for a long time along with Maryam, the game will be all over for the PML-N, as the divided party will be a very soft target for the establishment, which will be able to dislodge it quite easily.

If Sharif compromises or surrenders, it will be game over for him and the PML-N, and if he does not surrender, he and Maryam will be behind bars again. The Supreme Court has started its hearing on Sharif's petition seeking permission to go to London for medical treatment. The Supreme Court's decision will determine whether Sharif will be allowed to go to London or not. The political history of the country, however, tells us that courts are always being used to victimize political opponents or for giving them safe passage on behalf of the establishment. So there is a probability

that Nawaz will be allowed by the judiciary to go to London and once he reaches there he should stay there for a long time. This will allow all the three players — the establishment, the PTI government and the PML-N — to save face.

The PML-N information secretary and close aide of Sharif Mushaidullah Khan, while talking told this correspondent, said he did not reject the possibility that Sharif could be going to London as a result of a decision by the court. When asked whether Sharif will be going to London, his reply was "maybe." Since Khan is from a breed of politician who do not like to lie, his "maybe" can be taken as a yes. However, If Sharif prefers to stay behind bars and Maryam can break her silence, the entire political chessboard will be changed. New public gatherings held by Maryam and the PML-N will reinvigorate the vote bank and the party will be ready to protest in September or November against the incumbent government and its benefactors.

Which way Sharif chooses to go is the million-dollar question and it is time to hedge your bets on what will happen next in the never-ending episode of Pakistan's game of thrones. A deal between a Sharif and the establishment or the end of the Shahbaz Sharif's narrative of mending fences with the establishment? Will Maryam Nawaz take charge of the party from the front and adopt her traditional aggressive narrative against the establishment and the PTI government, or will she be going to London with her father as a result of a deal? It is time to hedge your bets and put your 50 cents on whether we will see another compromise or another nerve-wracking round of political fighting on the power chess board.

United States of Africa for the greater good

➡ But why despite that political unity would strengthen Africa and many great people have called for it, yet it not reality?

If you recall, there are formidable obstacles in place that prevent the unity in the African continent. Both externally and internally. In particular, the current world system, characterized by an increasing militarization of neoliberal globalization, presents overwhelming challenges for the African continent.

Borders cause major problems for people, African nations regarding matters as divergent as citizens visa rules or territorial boundaries have prevented major trade and the development of resources.

Gaddafi has been pushing for an African unity government for years, saying it is the only way Africa can develop without Western interference, but many African states say the idea is impractical and would encroach on their sovereignty.

In unity lies strength. African unity can be traced back to the formation of Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 now the African Union (AU) has two main agendas.

The first is to ensure the decolonization or political emancipation of the African continent, and the second is to ensure the economic integration of the continent.

It is only with the achievement of both of these that one can confidently say that the dream of African unity has been realized.

The decolonization of the African continent has been achieved; what is yet to become a reality is economic integration.

In my opinion African unity is still a dream worth pursuing, however problems such as ethnicity, quest for power, amassing of wealth by corrupt leaders, diseases, ethnic conflict, and manipulation of data on Africa by African leaders, unhealthy rivalry between ruling governments and oppositions, and international trade conditions are likely to delay this dream.

Though we will be discussing about the solution to the problem stated.

Self-sufficiency

Now that we understand as well as African leaders fear their continent is becoming increasingly powerless in a tough global economic environment.

Many believe that unless Africa can talk and act with greater cohesion, it will continue to be virtually ignored by the richer countries.



“Nobody will come clean your house, you have to clean it yourself”

I think the most important step in re-shaping African economic, social-value, good health, healthy environment, is by mobilizing our people to work hard to provide what the community need.

It was reported Britain took away far more money from sub-Saharan Africa than it gave in aid and debt relief last year, despite pledges to help the region. In all, it took away £27 billion from Africa. In the 12 months since an annual Group of Eight (G8) summit in Scotland last July, the British economy gained a net profit of more than £11 billion (\$20.3 billion) from the region. The charity calculated that almost £17 billion flowed from Britain to sub-Saharan Africa in the past year, including donations, remittances from salaries earned by Africans in Britain and foreign direct investments. At the same time, more than £27 billion went in the opposite direction, thanks to debt repayments, profits made by British companies in Africa and imports of British goods and capital flight.

This give some idea on parasitic behavior of those claim give aid to Africa and this is just one example of the financial hemorrhage hurting Africa.

And then the US so called “war on terror” deprived Africa more than that globalization

and privatization of national assets to the benefit of multinational corporations. Trade and industries, the creation of a US military command for Africa - Africa Command (AfriCom) - is a major step toward expanding and strengthening the US military presence in Africa through more aggressive policies to enlist support from African countries for its ‘war on terror’. According to George W. Bush, “the new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa.”

While the objectives of the Africa Command are to be found in the US drive for global dominance and its growing appetite for Africa’s oil. In fact, several studies have forecast that the United States may depend for up to 25% of its needs on crude oil from Africa over the next decade or so. Thus, oil is one the main driving forces behind the US activism on the continent. It has nothing to do with Africa’s ‘security’. On the contrary, this is likely to increase the insecurity of the continent!

Therefore, the US strategy aims to secure strategic positions in Africa by using the threat of “terrorism” to gain military facilities and bases to protect its interests.

Now we realized that all those “developed” country are here in Africa to depend

their interest, not in African interest. Several countries still depend on western countries for their “security”. France is intervening in the Central African Republic in an attempt to help the government push back attacks by rebel groups.

These countries are home to foreign military bases and have signed defense agreements with their ‘protectors’. These military bases are also used to launch criminal aggressions against other African countries, as the United States did when it launched air strikes against innocent civilians in Somalia from their air base in Djibouti! France is using its military bases in West Africa – Senegal and Togo- to destabilize Cote d’Ivoire.

These examples underscore the vulnerability of the continent and the fragile nature of many States, in large part as a result of structural adjustment policies. Africa’s vulnerability is also reflected in the widespread poverty affecting its population, in the deterioration of the health and educational systems and in the inability of many States to provide basic social services for their citizens. Poverty is the result of policies imposed by the IMF and World Bank, using the pretext of the illegitimate debt with the complicity of African governments. This has aggravated economic, financial, political dependence on western countries and multilateral institutions. Food dependency has dramatically increased. According to the FAO and other UN agencies, more than 43 million Africans suffer from hunger, which kills more people than HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined! As a result, Africa spends billions of dollars in food imports, paid for by credits and ‘aid’ from western countries and multilateral institutions.

The external dependency and the extreme vulnerability of the continent are also reflected in the surrender of economic policies to the World Bank and western “experts” by many countries.

In a strange way both African and western governments fear a strong, united, democratic Africa. For the west such unity would mean it could no longer do whatever it wants with Africa’s resources. It would no longer be the sole determinant of the prices for exports to, and imports from, the continent. Its oil and mining companies would no longer continue to be the sole, invisible masters of Africa’s vast oil and mineral resources.

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 US wars and arms - almost 18 years running, since the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 - are being deferred to the future. Greater Middle East -

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.

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 US 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.

US 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 US-backed conflicts and greater man-made humanitarian crises in the region. Also expect greater defeats and bankruptcies for US 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.

Frank Smith: Pompeo, Bolton move U.S.-North Korea talks to dead-end

TEHRAN (FNA) - Frank Smith, Journalist and Political Commentator, believes the influence of the US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor has resulted in Washington-Pyongyang talks being taken to a hardline position from where the negotiating sides are unlikely to easily move.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, Frank Smith said North Korea does not trust the US Administration to fulfill its lifting sanctions promises, as “[the current US leadership] has as recently as 2016 threatened North Korea’s total destruction... and has withdrawn from several international agreements.”

Frank Smith is a Canadian Journalists and Political Commentator based in Seoul. He has been a multimedia news producer and correspondent for several international and domestic news outlets. Also, he is an adjunct lecturer in media studies at Ewha Womans University.

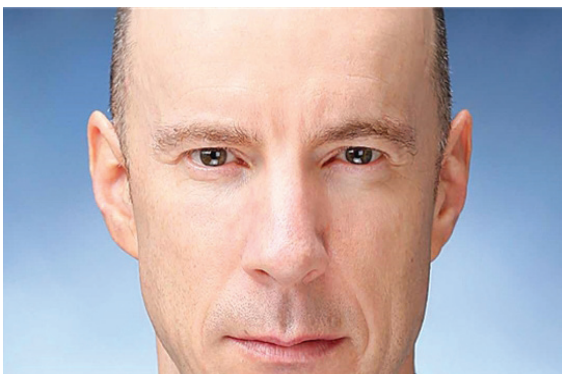
Here is the full text of the interview:

■ Trump and Kim met at a historic summit for the first time in June 2018, agreeing to cooperate to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. Why has subsequent diplomacy between the two sides made little progress?

A: To understand why diplomacy between the US and North Korea has failed one need look little further than the outcome of the second Trump–Kim summit in Vietnam February 27 and 28. In most comments from American officials, the stated position of Washington was that North Korea would have to first denuclearize before it could expect to receive relief from US–led United Nations sanctions. However, in the period immediately prior to the second summit there had been comments from US officials that suggested the US would be willing to provide some incentives, that is, lift some sanctions, as Pyongyang took steps to denuclearize. North Korea has always maintained its commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

However, at the second summit, according to their own accounts, the US stuck to the hardline position that any relief from sanctions would only take place after North Korea’s Final Fully Verifiable Denuclearization. Furthermore, despite North Korea offering to dismantle its Yongbyon nuclear complex in the presence of international and US inspectors, the US walked out of the summit.

While some agreement on a step by step process involving corresponding measures may have been possible in the past, undoubtedly the influence of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and especially National Security Advisor John Bolton has moved the US to a hardline position from which they are unlikely to easily move. North Korea is not going to relinquish its existing - albeit incomplete - nuclear deterrent, without a number of corresponding measures along the way, likely including an end of Korean War declaration, a peace treaty, a non-aggression agreement and the removal of sanctions. While Western media and analysts often highlight North Korea’s tendency to break agreements and international norms, its principal negotiating partner is the United States, which has as recently as 2016 threatened North Korea’s total destruction, and under the current leadership has withdrawn from several international agreements.



The most constructive step that Washington has taken in terms of lowering the tension on the Korean Peninsula is suspending some joint US–South Korea military exercises and changing the size of the drills. Over the past several decades the US and South Korea have conducted routine large-scale military drills in South Korea and in waters surrounding the Korean Peninsula.

■ So far, Pyongyang has taken several steps by suspending missile and nuclear testing and demolishing at least one nuclear test site. What steps has Washington taken, and have they been effective, if at all?

A: The most constructive step that Washington has taken in terms of lowering the tension on the Korean Peninsula is suspending some joint US–South Korea military exercises and changing the size of the drills. Over the past several decades the US and South Korea have conducted routine large-scale military drills in South Korea and in waters surrounding the Korean Peninsula. While these drills were always labelled “defensive in nature” they included obvious aggressive tactical drills such as amphibious landings. So these drills alarm North Korea definitely, and yes, their suspension has contributed to a reduction in tension.

■ South Korea has been improving relations with the North, after Kim and Moon Jae-in met in January 2018. Do you believe such relations will be tightened after Trump’s walking out of Hanoi summit?

A: South Korean President Moon Jae-in campaigned

on a pledge of reducing tension on the Korean Peninsula and engaging with North Korea. While the outcome of the Vietnam Trump–Kim summit is disappointing to Seoul, engagement efforts with North Korea will continue. Additionally, Moon will also redouble efforts at mediating further talks between the US and North Korea, mostly with the hopes of getting Washington to accept corresponding measures for North Korea as it takes denuclearization steps. And yes, South Korea will also seek to increase its level of exchanges with North Korea. In particular, Seoul may seek sanctions waivers for two inter-Korean projects that are currently shut down. It would like to restart tours to Mount Kumgang as well as reopen the Kaesong Joint Industrial Complex.

While the US walking out of the summit may have played well with conservatives in South Korea and much of US President Donald Trump’s supporters and even American Democrats wanting to appear principled concerning human rights, it did not play well with the majority of South Koreans or the government here, let alone China and Russia, North Korea’s traditional supporters.

First Announcement



Permit No.1398.721

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TENDER NO. : 08-21-9740016

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

Material Description	Quantity
TUBING, API GRADE 80, SEAMLESS VAM FLUSH JOINT THREAD, RANGE 2, AS PER API 5 CT/ISO 11960, MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACC. WITH API 5 CT SIZE (OD), WEIGHT (PPF), THREAD AS SPECIFIED. NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 1 (L.O.I-1) "QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM" TTP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION" 3-1/2 IN. 9.3 PPF	5000 LE

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 59,921 EURO or 2,870,480,400 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

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rooms, unfurn, spj
lobby, parking
Price: negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Zafaranih
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Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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7th floor, 275 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
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yard, nice view, **\$1350**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in South Dibaji
5th floor, 125 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
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good light, elevator
storage, parking
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Triplex Villa in Zafaranih
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2 rooms, modern design, furn 60
sq.m terrace, parking
\$6500
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Aqdasieh
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with 2 Bdrs.
\$6500
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

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furn/unfurn, 500 sq.m built up
Beautiful garden, parking
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Villa in Shahrak Qarb
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semi furnished/unfurnished
green yard, parking
large terrace, backyard
outdoor swimming pool
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Shariti-Mirdamad
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Shahrak Qarb
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swimming pool
storage, parking, **\$1200**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

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

Apt in Jordan
1st floor, 90 sq.m
1 Bdr., furn, parking, **\$800**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Fereshteh
125 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., furn, spj
billiard table, parking
\$1300
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in Darous
3 floors, 700 sq.m land
900 sq.m built up, unfurn
outdoor swimming pool parking,
\$11000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Vanak
9th floor, 80 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
furn, spj, elevator, parking
\$1100
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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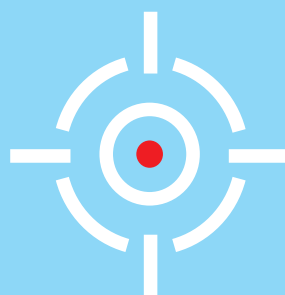
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The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

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

For more information contact:

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Rare recording captures Einstein talking about music and the atomic bomb

A one-of-a-kind recording offered at auction presents a rare and fascinating glimpse of physicist Albert Einstein.

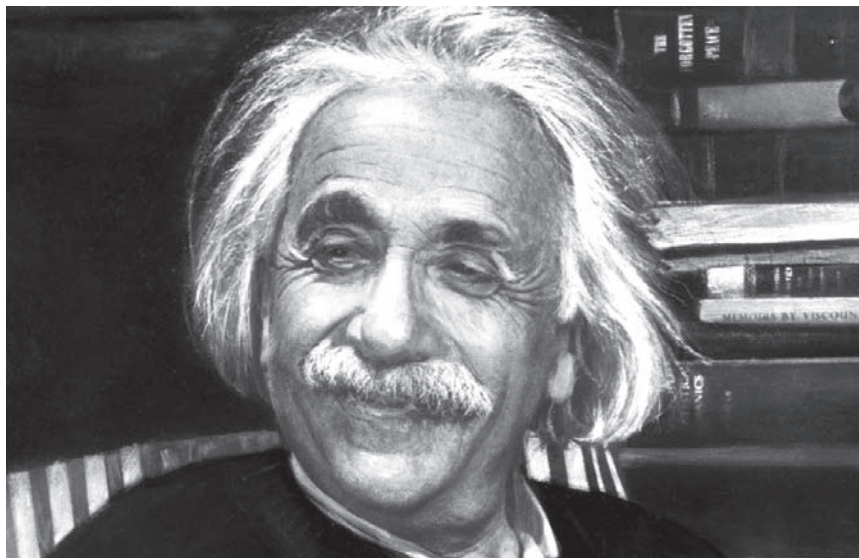
Though Einstein was known around the world, he was notoriously publicity-shy, so there is little audio evidence of his life outside of the usual media spotlight. But in a casual conversation recorded more than 60 years ago, the scientist cracked jokes, discussed his love of music and delved into global politics.

Recorded in 1951 on long-playing vinyl discs at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, New Jersey, the intriguing conversation between Einstein and his friends Jack and Frances Rosenberg has never been accessible by the public — until now.

On Saturday (May 4) bidding opened online at Heritage Auctions for a reel-to-reel tape containing the 33-minute conversation between Einstein and his two friends. Einstein speaks in English that is heavily accented — “as expected” — and the serious topics that he tackles are interspersed with laughter and jokes, according to a description in the auction listing.

Einstein was known for his appreciation of music, and in the recording, he described a love of Brahms, Schubert and Beethoven. He praised a favorite musical composition, “Violin Concerto” by the Romanian composer George Enescu, saying, “In my youth, I had heard nothing better.”

Heritage Auctions shared a 3-minute preview of the recording on their website, featuring Einstein’s thoughts on



A recording of Albert Einstein made in 1951 during a casual conversation reveals the famed physicist’s humorous side.

the espionage trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg — U.S. citizens who were accused in 1951 of sharing classified nuclear weapons information with the Soviet Union.

The case against the Rosenbergs was controversial, with prosecutors seeking severe penalties for crimes that many said were unsupported by solid evidence, according to the Atomic Heritage Foundation. On the tape, Einstein

suggested that what was happening to the Rosenbergs was “unfair” and that the actions against them were “unwise.” The Rosenbergs were later found guilty and sentenced to death. They were executed in 1953.

Originally recorded on long-playing discs, the historic conversation was transferred to magnetic audio tape about 30 years ago. The whereabouts of the original discs is unknown.

Originally recorded on long-playing discs, the historic conversation was transferred to magnetic audio tape about 30 years ago. The whereabouts of the original discs is unknown.

In the complete recording, Einstein also expressed regret about his own role in ushering the U.S. toward the development of atomic bombs, through a letter that he sent to FDR in 1939.

“I believe it was a great misfortune,” he said, adding, “I repent it very much.” Einstein then mused that if FDR had lived, the president would never have used the atom bomb. “This I am convinced,” he said.

However, Einstein thought it was good that the Russians had recently developed their own atomic bomb, declaring it “better for world welfare” if the U.S. were not the only nation to possess these terrible weapons. This perspective would likely not have been popular in America at the time, Don Ackerman, a consignment director in the Historical Department at Heritage Auctions, told Live Science.

A copy of the recording resides in the Einstein collection at the California Institute of Technology, but the auction offers an opportunity to own a unique interview with the renowned scientist “that’s not available to the general public,” Ackerman said.

Bidding for the audio tape starts at \$3,500, and the winner will also receive a CD containing the recording, according to the Heritage Auction website.

(Source: *Livescience.com*)

Neutron star collision 4.6 billion years ago sent gold, platinum to Earth



Two neutron stars collided 4.6 billion years ago near the Earth’s solar system, sending the planet some fraction of its most precious metals, a new study says.

The cosmic episode provided Earth with about 0.3 percent of its gold, platinum and uranium, according to research published Wednesday in Nature.

“This means that in each of us we would find an eyelash worth of these elements, mostly in the form of iodine, which is essential to life,” Imre Bartos, a researcher at the University of Florida and study author, said in a news release. “A wedding ring, which expresses a deep human connection, is also a connection to our cosmic past predating humanity and the formation of Earth itself, with about 10 milligrams of it likely having formed 4.6 billion years ago.”

To come up with their findings, the researchers contrasted numerical re-

productions of the Milky Way, which is 100,000 light years in diameter, with the makeup of meteorites.

The researchers say this work may provide clues into the origins of the Earth and human life.

“Our results address a fundamental quest of humanity: Where did we come from and where are we going?” said Szabolcs Marka, an astrophysicist at Columbia University and study author. “It is very difficult to describe the tremendous emotions we felt when realized what we had found and what it means for the future as we search for an explanation of our place in the universe.”

The violent collision of two neutron stars provided Earth with about 0.3 percent of its gold, platinum and uranium.

(Source: *UPI*)

Half the Earth’s oceans may have come from asteroids



Arizona State University researchers recently found water in fragments of an asteroid called Itokawa.

Asteroids may have provided up to half of the Earth’s ocean water, new research shows.

Arizona State University recently found water in fragments of an asteroid known as Itokawa. This discovery suggests impacts from other asteroids during the early parts of Earth’s history may have sourced much of the water for the planet’s oceans.

Researchers published the findings Wednesday in the journal Science Advances.

“We found the samples we examined were enriched in water compared to the average for inner solar system objects,” Ziliang Jin, a researcher at Arizona State University and study lead author, said in a news release.

The samples were taken from an asteroid known as Itokawa during Japan’s Hayabusa space probe mission. Itokawa is approximately 1,800 feet long and between

700 and 1,000 feet wide.

ASU researchers got a hold of the samples and found they contained a mineral called pyroxene. Terrestrial samples analyzed by the researchers also had pyroxene. This similarity hints that water from other asteroids may have helped populate the Earth’s oceans.

“Until we proposed it, no one thought to look for water,” said Maitrayee Bose, a researcher at ASU and study co-author. “I’m happy to report that our hunch paid off.”

To further this research, NASA has scheduled a mission to collect samples from the asteroid Bennu in summer 2020 and bring them back to Earth by 2023.

“The Hayabusa mission to Itokawa has expanded our knowledge of the volatile contents of the bodies that helped form Earth,” Bose said. “It would not be surprising if a similar mechanism of water production is common for rocky exoplanets around other stars.”

(Source: *UPI*)

SpaceX confirms crew capsule destroyed in April test accident

Nearly two weeks after a fiery explosion during a ground test of its new crew capsule, SpaceX confirmed on Thursday that the vehicle was destroyed, but neither the company nor NASA, its primary customer, have publicly acknowledged the nature of the mishap.

Instead, Hans Koenigsmann, vice president of flight reliability for California-based Space Exploration Technologies Corp, known as SpaceX, continued to refer to the accident simply as an “anomaly” — science jargon for when something goes wrong.

The April 20 accident occurred at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station as SpaceX was about to test eight emergency thrusters designed to propel the capsule, dubbed Crew Dragon, to safety from atop the rocket in the event of a launch failure.

“Just prior, before we wanted to fire the (thrusters), there was an anomaly and the vehicle was destroyed,” Koenigsmann told reporters on Thursday at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center. “There were no injuries. SpaceX had taken all safety measures prior to this test, as we always do.”

The news conference was called ahead of Friday’s scheduled launch of an unmanned resupply mission to the International Space Station using a cargo-only capsule built by SpaceX, the private rocket venture of billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk.

When pressed about the accident, Koenigsmann



declined to say whether an explosion or fire was involved. NASA has likewise declined to describe the mishap.

A leaked video of the accident, which a NASA contractor has acknowledged as authentic in an internal memo obtained by the Orlando Sentinel newspaper, showed the capsule blasting into smithereens. A pall of smoke was also widely observed from a distance at the time of the ill-fated test.

SpaceX’s reluctance to describe in plain terms what happened to the capsule was at odds with NASA’s long history of transparency surrounding accidents involving

its human spaceflight program.

The Crew Dragon had been scheduled to carry U.S. astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley to the space station in a test mission in July, although April’s accident, as well as some vehicle design hitches, are likely to push that launch to later in the year or into 2020.

“It’s certainly not great news for the schedule overall, but I hope we can recover,” Koenigsmann said.

The destroyed vehicle was one of six such capsules built or in late production by SpaceX, and the first flown into space. A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launched it without crew to the space station in March for a six-day visit before returning to Earth, splashing down safely in the Atlantic for retrieval.

Koenigsmann said initial data from the accident showed the mishap occurred during activation of the emergency thrusters, which SpaceX calls the SuperDraco system.

“We have no reason to believe there is an issue with the SuperDracos themselves,” Koenigsmann said, adding that the engines have been tested nearly 600 times in the past.

NASA has been awarded \$6.8 billion to SpaceX and rival Boeing Co to develop separate capsule systems to fly astronauts to space, but both companies have faced technical challenges and delays.

(Source: *Reuters*)

Backstory: How to capture a rocket

“It’s a challenge to describe that noise,” says Reuters senior photographer Mike Blake, after witnessing his first rocket launch.

“It’s a sound of rippling energy. Reverberating, cracking. It’s something that stays with you.”

Blake worked with Joe Skipper, a veteran of more than 200 launches, to produce Reuters visual coverage of SpaceX out of Kennedy Space Center in Florida in March.

Apart from the visual thrill of a launch, readers want to know as much as possible about Elon Musk’s SpaceX, which resupplies the International Space Station and ultimately aims to put people on other planets.

Providing images is key to capturing the drama of a launch and whether it is successful, with hundreds of millions of dollars at stake.

NASA, which has run the Kennedy Space Center from Apollo missions in the late 1960s through the Space Shuttle era, takes photographers to a few select spots nearby where they can set up remote cameras with a view of the rocket, which is as tall as a 23-story building.

The cameras are housed in boxes to protect them from the elements as they have to stand at the ready for eight hours or more, exposed to potentially drastic temperature and weather changes.

Inside the boxes, small electric fans blow on the camera lenses to prevent dew forming, which could result in blurry images. The Reuters crew adjusts focus, exposure, tests the automatic triggers and secures the tripods to the ground.

The cameras are connected to sound sensors and take shots automatically when something loud occurs, like a rocket with 1.7 million pounds of thrust launching nearby.

“Setting up cameras with triggers is not rocket science itself but having them sit there for up to 24 hours and keeping moisture off them and not having batteries fail is a little more complicated,” says Blake.

The media area to observe launches is about 3 miles (4.8 km) away. After setting up the remote cameras, photographers disperse to take up positions to get longer-range images.

The top of NASA’s Vehicle Assembly Building gives a direct view of the launchpad across the low-lying wetlands. Another photographer will stand on top of the Reuters building in the media site. The combination of close-up and long-range viewpoints is designed to produce a variety of shots.

“We’re there close-up in case something happens,” says Skipper.

At the same time, it is important to capture the bigger picture. One Reuters shot of the launch in March, used by media outlets worldwide, showed the boosters returning to land from the vantage point of a beach, as birds fly past and a crowd of people watch, giving a wider perspective to the event.

“That’s the one we wanted to do,” says Skipper, who researched locations from a previous launch and instructed one of his photographers to take up his position on the beach. Another Reuters shot from 2000 showed surfers watching the shuttle going up.

“That shows something a little different from what people think is going on,” says Skipper.

(Source: *Reuters*)

Denisovans, mysterious extinct humans, conquered high altitudes

A jawbone found in a cave on the Tibetan Plateau in China is providing surprising insights into Denisovans, the enigmatic extinct cousins to Neanderthals and our own species, including that they were pioneers at enduring high-altitude environments.

Scientists on Wednesday described the pivotal new fossil: the right half of the lower jaw of an adolescent, including two teeth, dating from 160,000 years ago.

The only previously known Denisovan fossils were three teeth and some bone fragments unearthed 1,500 miles (2,400 km) away in Siberia at a site called Denisova cave.

The Chinese fossil, found by a Buddhist monk in 1980 in China’s Xiahe county and later turned over to scientists, revealed intriguing details about the geographic spread of Denisovans, their physical appearance and their unexpected ability to conquer extreme environments.

The fossil from Baishiya Karst cave, situated 10,760 feet (3,280 meters) above sea level, showed not only that Denisovans once were widely distributed in eastern Eurasia but also that they inhabited an inhospitable high-altitude, low-oxygen setting.

“It must have been really tough to live there as a hunter-gatherer, and still they managed to be there,” said University of Copenhagen molecular anthropologist Frido Welker, one of the researchers in the study published in the journal Nature.

Our species, Homo sapiens, did not populate that area until about 40,000 years ago, having first appeared in Africa a bit more than 300,000 years ago.

“Denisovans might have adapted to a wide range of different environments,” archaeologist Dongju Zhang of China’s Lanzhou University said.

The researchers were unable to extract DNA from the fossil, but extracted proteins from one of the molars to determine its Denisovan identity.

“Proteins can survive about 10 times longer than DNA in fossils,” paleoanthropologist Jean-Jacques Hublin of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany said. The proteins came from collagen, a component of connective tissue in body parts including dentin, a part of teeth.

The existence of Denisovans was unknown until researchers in 2010 announced the discovery of the Siberian remains, with DNA tests showing them to be a sister group to Neanderthals, the stoutly built extinct human species that resided in parts of Eurasia. Both experienced significant interactions with Homo sapiens, including interbreeding, before vanishing for reasons not fully understood.

The new fossil offers clues about what Denisovans looked like. “The chin area is strongly receding and the preserved teeth were exceptionally large,” Hublin said.

Some far-flung modern Asian populations, particularly in Papua New Guinea, possess small but significant amounts of DNA derived from Denisovans, suggesting they had a broad geographical presence.

(Source: *Reuters*)

Sri Lankan Airlines puts flight marshals on planes, tourist numbers to drop by 500,000



One week after the attacks in Sri Lanka, executives from the country’s Tourism Development Authority and national airline attended the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai.

Vipula Gunatilleka, the CEO of Sri Lankan Airlines, told Euronews that whilst the national air force had taken charge of ground security, the state-owned carrier was looking to bring air marshals on board some flights.

Despite increased security measures, a drop in visitor numbers to the island nation following the attacks would be inevitable, the airline chief added.

“Business, if you look at it in terms of the passenger numbers and the forward bookings, we have seen about a 10 percent decline,” said Gunatilleka. “Of course, we see cancellations coming from the European destinations, but our other markets like India and the Middle East have been holding on.”

The CEO added that despite the current situation, day-to-day operations at the company couldn’t be ignored, emphasizing that the strategy to turn the loss-making airline into a profitable one was still in place.

“In the turnaround plan that we submitted to the government, we were expecting to reach a breakeven situation in three years time,” he said. “They have been looking for a private investor, but that will get delayed I believe, with the current situation. The biggest problem is that 45 percent of our losses are due to interest financing costs.”

Kishu Gomes, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, told Euronews that in the wake of recent events the situation on the ground had been brought, “under control”.

“Our military has been doing a lot of raids and search operations, in order to apprehend the culprits,” he said. “They were able to take over 100 suspects into custody, and they are being interrogated. Such operations are ongoing day in, day out, by the military forces and the police together.”

When asked if the government was right to block several social media networks in the aftermath of the attacks, Gomes said:

“In a difficult situation, you want to take all the measures necessary in order to stay calm. You know, create that calm environment. I guess that’s why the government took that decision, but I’m sure over the next few days they’re going to relax it with the military being able to come out and say the situation is under control.”

Gomes also spoke about gradually rebuilding the country’s tourism sector by looking at popular destinations that have also suffered attacks. He cited Bali, Paris, Bangkok and London as similar cases.

The Chairman said that an official statement, “over the next two to three weeks,” would go some way towards helping nationals and tourists, “regain that lost confidence”.

The country’s Tourism Authority has revised down this year’s projected visitor numbers by 500,000 people to 2 million.

(Source: euronews)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic center of Brugge

Brugge is an outstanding example of a medieval historic settlement in Belgium, which has maintained its historic fabric as this has evolved over the centuries, and where original Gothic constructions form part of the town’s identity.

Brugge in medieval times was known as a commercial metropolis in the heart of Europe.

In the 15th century, Brugge was the cradle of the Flemish Primitives and a center of patronage and painting development for artists such as Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling. Many of their works were exported and influenced painting styles all over Europe. Exceptionally important collections have remained in the city until today.



Even after its economic and artistic peak at the end of the Middle Ages, building and urban development continued, although Brugge mostly missed the 19th-century industrial revolution.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, many medieval parcels were joined to larger entities and new quarters were also developed.

Brugge is characterized by a continuity reflected in the relative harmony of changes. As part of this continuity, the late 19th century renovation of facades introduced a Neo-Gothic style that is particular for Brugge.

The Brugge ‘neo’ style of construction and its restoration philosophy became a subject of interest, study and inspiration.

Still an active, living city today, Brugge has preserved the architectural and urban structures which document the different phases of its development including the central Market Place with its belfry, the Béguinage, as well as the hospitals, the religious and commercial complexes and the historic urban fabric.

(Source: UNESCO)

Tourism chief cuts ribbon on major tulip festival

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iran’s tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan on Saturday inaugurated the 21st Gachsar Tulip Festival which puts on show tens of thousands of flowers, CHTN reported.

The opening ceremony was also attended by a number of cultural and tourism officials, their local fellows, and avid visitors in a garden located at kilometer 54 of the Karaj-Chalous road, Asara district of Alborz province.

The annual festival, starting a time between late April and early May, attracts thousands of domestic and international holidaymakers to the one-hectare garden, the report said.

Free training courses are being held for visitors on how to preserve ornamental flowers and become familiar with history and species of tulips.

A wide variety of floral species such

as tulips grow or being bred across the Iranian plateau particularly on the central slopes of Alborz mountain range.

Inverted tulips are among the most unique and indigenous flora of Iran’s mountainous areas.

Tulip, or “Laleh” in Farsi, is known for its therapeutic abilities. It is also deeply rooted in the history and culture of the nation. The Tulip is a national symbol of martyrdom as well.

Flowers have also thrived into the Persian language. Many girls are named after flowers: Ra’na (Blanket Flowers), Shaghayegh (Anemone), Banafsheh (Violet), Yaasaman (Jasmine), Niloufar (Lotus flower), Nastaran (Eglantine), Laleh (Tulip), etc.

Some say that European tourists took the unique tulip species for the first time from Iran’s Zagros region to Austria and other European areas in 1576.



Iran tourism flourishing despite U.S. sanctions

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Figures disclosed by Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization shows that over 7.8 million foreigners traveled to the Islamic Republic during the past Iranian year (ended on March 20), a 52% hike year on year.

According to CHHTO Director Ali-Asghar Mounesan, inbound travelers brought some \$11.8 billion of revenues to the country during the period, Mehr reported.

The boost, however, comes in the face of re-imposed U.S. sanctions, which potentially inflicts a serious threat to the tourism sector, Mounesan said.

“Despite all the external restrictions, mostly from the U.S., we have managed to attract more foreign travelers to the country,” Mehr quoted the tourism chief as saying.

The lower costs of Iran travel packages have been a key factor in making the country more attractive to foreigners, he stated.

A huge depreciation of the rial against foreign cur-



An international couple pose for a photo while staying in a traditional eco-lodge in Iran.

rencies, which is due to the sanctions targeting its economy, has been made traveling to Iran for foreign tourists

considerably cheaper. This seems to be an opportunity for fostering the promising industry of tourism in Iran.

The restrictions have also had some negative impacts to the sector, but to combat the hurdles, Iranian authorities have introduced different initiatives, including the one that eliminates the need to put official stamps on passports of foreign tourists visiting the country.

For another step, the Iranian government has sharpened its focus on improving tourism infrastructures by expanding the number of high-quality hotels and providing cheap loans to players in the sector.

The country has also made its best to boost marine tourism; for instance two major passenger sea routes have been activated with the country’s southern neighbors in recent months and as many as half a dozen more are in the pipeline.

Many experts, including Mounesan, believe that revenues from tourism can replace those of the oil sector.

Italian experts on way to Anahita temple

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A team of Italian restorers and cultural heritage experts is planning to carry out an in-depth survey on the Temple of Anahita, an ancient monument in Kangavar, western Kermanshah province, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The project is set to be implemented under an agreement between the Sapienza University of Rome and the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (CHHTO) of Iran, said Farhad Azizi, the CHHTO director of the office for World Heritage affairs.

“A memorandum of understanding is to be signed with Italy’s Sapienza University in order to conduct a series of research and studies on the historic site.”

“A large amount of research and practical work had been carried out in the Temple of Anahita until [the

Iranian calendar year] 1365 (March 1986-March 1987),” Azizi said in an interview with ISNA.

The official explained that in order to provide needed facilities within the site, a series of infrastructure investment have been made over the past couple of years particularly since it was inscribed on the national heritage site.”

The Temple of Anahita was built on a rock platform overlooking the plain of Kangavar. It is a huge building measuring 220 by 212 meters. The monument has a two-sided stairway on its southern front and a one-sided stairway at its northeastern corner.

According to UNESCO, some historical sources and archaeological evidence attribute this monument to the Achaemenid period until the Islamic period.



The ruined Temple of Anahita in Kangavar, Kermanshah province

Fall of Troy: the legend and the facts



How the ruins of Troy look today.

ple whose empire was centered in north and central Anatolia from around 1600-1200BC. The Hittite empire, at its high point, included modern Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. The city of Troy was part of a small independent confederation named Assuwa that tried to resist the Hittite expansion but which eventually yielded and became a sort of vassal state to the Hittite empire.

Archaeologists working in Greece and Turkey have discovered a great deal of evidence of this complex political system, of the kind that might have inspired Homer’s epic. Political treaties discovered in the Hittite capital city, Hattusha dating back to the Late Bronze Age confirm the existence of a very powerful city not far from the Dardanelles strait called Wilusa (Greek Ilios/Troy) ruled by a king called Alaksandu (maybe the Trojan prince Paris – whose birth name, according to Homer, was Alexander). And archaeologists working in Troy have discovered skeletons, arrowheads and traces of destruction which point to us a violent end for Troy Level VII – as the late Bronze Age city has been designated

by archaeologists (so far levels I to IX have been excavated).

At that stage, the political and economic system in the Mediterranean was disintegrating. A series of factors – states’ internal turmoil, mass refugee migrations, displacement of people, trade disruption and war – led to the collapse of the political system and to a new era. Because of new technology being adopted by the powers of the time, this has become known as the Iron Age.

The beginning of this new era witnessed destruction throughout the Mediterranean basin. Wealthy cities such as Troy as well as Mycenae and Tiryns in Greece were destroyed and abandoned. These events were so significant that the memory lasted for centuries. In Greek mythology, the tale of the fall of Troy was recorded in two epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey, traditionally attributed to Homer and written about 400 years after these events.

■ What history tells us

More than a century of archaeological and historical research in the eastern Mediterranean basin appears to confirm that there was a war on Troy when Homer says there was. His account centers around the affair between Paris and the Spartan queen Helen, that is said to have triggered the conflict.

But contemporary sources from the Hittite archives in Hattusha tell a different story. Greek kingdoms conducted a number of military campaigns in western Turkey. Hittite records mention raids and mass kidnapping of people to be sold as slaves. There is a record of a peace treaty between Greeks and Hittites over the city of Troy. These records do not in themselves confirm the accuracy of Homer’s account –

but they suggest that something important happened in the area at some point around 1200BC.

■ Outstanding value

The location of Troy, at the crossroad between the East and the West, is not only a center of challenge (embodied by the Trojan war), but also of dialogue. Troy, in the past, was a bridge between cultures and its importance to the world has been confirmed by UNESCO. The site of Troy was enlisted in the World Cultural Heritage List in 1998 and it is considered a site of “Outstanding Universal Value”.

Excavations on the site of Troy started more than 150 years ago. The site was discovered in 1863 by Frank Calvert but it really became famous thanks to the excavations conducted by the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann in 1870. The work of Schliemann made the story come true and resulted in renewed interest in Troy and its history. Some 24 excavations spread over 150 years have now revealed many levels of occupation of the site – from the Early Bronze Age (Troy Level I, about 3500BC) to the Roman era (Troy IX, about 500AD).

An award-winning project “Troia Museum” will open this year as part of Turkey’s 2018 year of Troy. Turkey’s culture ministry has invited some of the actors from the 2004 epic Hollywood movie Troy to lend the event some star power.

We’ll probably never know if Helen’s beauty really did launch a thousand ships, but in decades to come Troy will continue to yield up its fascinating and romantic history and millions of people will thrill to retellings of Homer’s epic fables of the long-passed Age of Heroes.

(Source: Heritage Daily)

National digital banking document drafted

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – Iran's national digital banking document has been drafted, the deputy economy minister for banking and insurance, Abbas Memarnejad, said during a Post Bank meeting in Tehran.

"Today, the world focuses on digital banking rather than electronic banking and the document is based on smart economy," he noted, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Digital banking is part of the broader context for the move to online banking, where banking services are delivered over the internet, he explained.

"There is no banking system but a banking ecosystem, which is possible through emerging technologies."

Fintechs, startups and regulatory companies are the members of these banking ecosystem, he explained.

"In addition to new technologies, the new processing technologies also considered in digital banking."

"We urged banks to announce their digital transformation mapping road ac-



ording to which, we assess their services afterward," he said.

The Iranian banks should provide their business plans according to digital banking system and provide services on

smart phones, he added.

Digital transformation possible through banking, insurance

The digital transformation in businesses would be possible through banking and

insurance systems, the information and communication technology (ICT) minister announced during the meeting.

Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said that the banks should invest in venture capitals (VC), which is very important in development of startup ecosystem and digital transformation.

The insurance companies should use the capacity of startups for their services.

"The insurance companies can provide different ranges of services to different startups which has different types of members," he said.

According to fivedegrees.com, digital banking contains a full transformation to a digital environment — frontend and backend and anything in between — for both customers and employees. Digital banking relies on big data, analytics and embracing all new technologies to improve the customer's experience. You will only be considered a digital bank if you have digitized all the functions you have — from product development to customer service.

'Infrastructure needed for emergency management startups'



TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – Necessary infrastructure should be provided for the activity of startups in the field of crisis management, the head of the University of Tehran's science and technology park said, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Abbas Zarei said "I believe that 80 percent of loss and problems can be overcome during and after crises".

"Iran has not many experiences like recent flood and we plan to solve problems like this through startups," he said.

These challenges should lead to establishment of startups and turn into businesses, he said.

Management of resources and attraction of investors to this market is one of the main aims of science and technology parks, he said.

From mid-March to April 2019 widespread flash flooding affected large parts of Iran, most severely in Golestan, Fars, Khuzestan, Lorestan, and other provinces. Iran has been hit by three major waves of rain and flooding over the course of two weeks which led to flooding in at least 26 of Iran's 31 provinces according to the officials.

According to data from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, these staggering figures are the total economic and human impact of global disasters from 2002 to 2012. With a steady growth in annual climate-related disasters, emergency management strategies are of high priority. Disaster management technologies is a must, which should be on high agenda to decrease losses in the future.

Zafar satellite to run final tests by mid-Sept.



TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** –Iran University of Science and Technology has manufactured Zafar satellite and will deliver it to the Iranian Space Agency for running final tests during the month of Shahrivar (August 22-September 22), the head of the university Jabar-Ali Zakeri announced, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Technical preliminaries for launching the satellite are also underway at the Iranian Space Agency, he said.

"We have already manufactured different parts and assembled them for initial testing and now we are at the final stage of testing," he said.

As the agreement for manufacturing of the satellite was signed four years ago, the expenses are needed to be revised, he lamented.

The 90 kg satellite is equipped with four color cameras with 80 meter resolution and

the equipment have average lifespan of 18 months, he explained.

Before launching the satellite into the main orbit, the satellite will be launched into 500-km orbit for testing, he explained.

In January 2019, Iran launched home-grown Payam satellite, however, the satellite's carrier rocket could not reach the "necessary speed" and so neither reach the orbit, the information and communication technology (ICT) minister told the state TV.

Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said that the satellite successfully passed the first and second stages of the launch, but could not reach the "necessary speed" in the third stage.

Payam, a 90kg non-military satellite, was planned to be sent into a 500km orbit using domestically-made Safir satellite-carrier rocket.

Over 60% of taxis in Tehran equipped with e-payment system

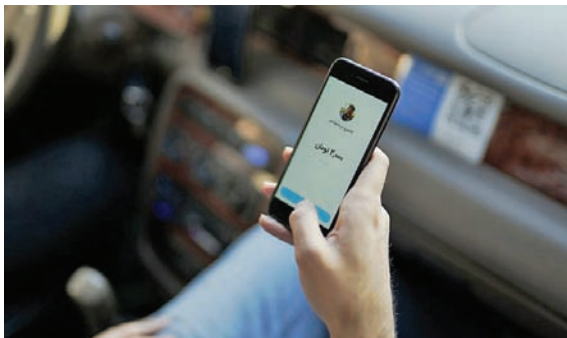
TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – Over 60 percent of taxis in Tehran are equipped with e-payment system, Tehran Taxi Organization CEO Alireza Qannadan announced, ISNA reported on Saturday.

There are some 80,000 taxis moving in Tehran, turning Tehran taxi fleet as one of the biggest taxi fleets in the Middle East, he said.

Startups that are working in the field of e-payment in Tehran updated the annual increase in taxi fares automatically, he said.

Since past year, payment applications have been making their way to taxis in Tehran, as a step toward the goal of cashless society.

The high speed of technology is taking over taxis and telephone taxis in Iran. In this way, the riders are saved from the headache of not having enough cash, and drivers



don't have to worry about having enough change or fret about carrying a large amount of cash.

The Ride hailing startups, which began their activity in Iran in 2014, were soon accepted as an alternative for traditional taxi services in Iran just like other countries.

However, as for most new emerging events, they face several social and economic challenges in the society. Traditional taxi services struggle for retaining their share of customers, which seems very hard with emergence of new rivals.

The e-hailing services solve the problem of haggling for the price between drivers and passengers, which was very common in Iran.

The low price, accessibility and time-saving system, which is beneficial both for driver and passengers are factors, which makes ride hailing applications successful in Iran.

You can find the nearest car by a touch of finger on your mobile screen and this is a great option both for passengers and riders.

Swiping on your smartphone reveals a lot about you to your social media company

Tech experts claim that some social media companies are using this feedback to tweak the content on the users' display.

You as a user don't understand how much of personal information you are actually giving away on your smartphone by simply swiping alone.

When you swipe on your phone, be it a simple advertisement, a game, a video, or even scrolling through an app or flicking around, you are actually giving away a lot of important details about yourself. And this information is actually being passed on to the website or app that you are using. How? It's simple, yet complicated! Similar to your online browsing habits that are tracked to display advertisements to you, some social media websites can track how you swipe on your smartphone display and send back important data about your current mood, you're your personality, and even your physiological state.

ABC news points out that there are some tech experts who claim that some social media companies are using this feedback to tweak the content on the users' display.

You as a user don't understand how much of personal information you are actually giving away on your smartphone by simply swiping alone. When you interact with your app on the smartphone, you need to swipe at most places, either to scroll around or alike. Using the way you swipe is enough for the websites to reveal things about you, says Dalton Combs, a neurobiologist. For example, if you are paused on a particular page on the screen, it is enough to tell that you like something there.

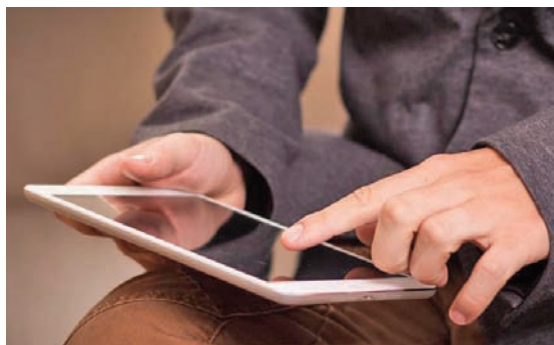
ABC also highlights Matt Mayberry, a behavioral designer

who works with Combs for an artificial intelligence company called Boundless Mind. The two are AI experts who help companies design apps and websites which use behavioral science in the background to engage consumers efficiently. They say that the data from the swiping habits sent back from the phone reveals information they need about the user. Indirectly, they use the phone to read the user's mind. Similar to how a human's behavior changes with regards to speech, breath, posture, etc when he or she is angry, they say that swiping methods can also reveal a lot more.

The way a person swipes across the screen reveals his mood. The tracking module in the app or website captures these unique points and can also tell how a person is holding his or her phone, in real time.

If your social media company is using this data, it is very easy for them to know if you are liking some content on the screen or if you are particularly looking for something. So, for example, if you have paused on a particular content, video or advertisement, the website can track it in real time and target you with similar content or ads to ensure they keep you engaged. It is similar to what YouTube is presently doing. If you have watched a particular video, the website will target your next video to be similar to the first one or will simply recommend you something alike. They do this to ensure that you are engaged and spend more time on the platform.

Facebook, which owns Instagram, told ABC News in a statement, "We want people to find the time they spend on Facebook to be valuable, even if that means they spend less time overall. We're doing more to help



people actively connect with others, rather than passively consuming content. That includes prioritizing posts that spark conversations and meaningful interactions between people in News Feed and offering controls that encourage intentional use and help people manage their experience."

The report also goes ahead with more disturbing example where a retail company can track your finger moving towards the close button and instantly pop up a notification on your phone with a discount or something to ensure that you are kept engaged back into the app or website.

The report also states that there are thousands of these engineers who work behind the websites and apps. Their main job is to figure out how they can keep you engaged with the site or app. This is how they make their money.

(Source: ABC News)

Iranian medical startup crowned best at Silk Road Startup

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – An Iranian medical startup active in the field of rehabilitation for patients with special needs won the first prize at the 2nd Silk Road Startup, which was held in Tehran on May 2 and 3, IRNA reported.

The startup is initiated by a group of students and professors of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

The startup provides smart devices with new technologies like smart spoons for people suffering from hand tremors.

A startup from Tabriz city, which provides online market for buying natural honey from producers won the second prize.

The third prize went to a startup active in the field of job vacancy from Tehran.



The Silk Road Startup is the pioneer and one of the biggest international startup events in Iran. The event aims to gather local and international entrepreneurs, startups, investors, financial institutes, VCs together each year.

Silk Road Startup consists of three main stages namely the Road Trip, Silk Road 100 and Silk Road Startup Summit.

At the Road Trip stage, the country is broken into different regions consisting of a couple of provinces. To select the best startups in each region, the event organize local pitch competition events. The organizers travel with foreign and local jury members to these regions to hear the startups pitching in English.

At the next stage, Silk Road 100, the online acceleration program kicks off. In the program, the local and international entrepreneurs and experts mentor the selected startups for a three-month period.

At the last stage, Silk Road Startup Summit, the main event is held. The summit consists of pitch competition between the best-selected startups, keynotes, panels and networking which all happens in English.

Farming startup begins selling vegetables grown by a ROBOT

Vegetables sold by California-based startup Iron Ox might be organic, but the farmer cultivating them is far from it.

The company behind the robotic and hydroponic farming system is now taking the first step towards going to market in California.

According to a report from The Verge, Iron Ox is partnering with Bay Area produce purveyors Bianchini's Market, to put several varieties of its robot-grown leaf greens on shelves for the first time.

For now, Iron Ox's greens will come in the three different varieties: red-veined sorrel, Genevieve basil, and baby lettuce, at prices that are competitive with those at shoppers' average Whole Foods.

Iron Ox is an automated farming system capable of hydroponically growing plants.

While an automated porter delivers plants on a pallet, a robotic arm is capable of planting seedlings.

A computer then automates light, water, nutrients, and more to help raise the seedlings into full-grown plants.



While the system is mostly automated, humans hands still need to pick the produce and package it.

The company's robotic farms use a chorus of automated tools to bring their produce to life that include a 1,000 pound porter used to cart pallets of seedlings, a robotic arm that is capable of picking and planting seedlings, and a computer system named 'the brain' that provides the automated instructions for the farming process.

Among the advantages of its robotic systems, says Iron Ox, is the ability to offer fresh and organic produce at a reduced footprint.

According to The Verge, Iron Ox says that because of its compact operations, lettuce sold at Bianchini's will travel just 0.6 miles to get to the store, which compared to the average distance traveled by a head of lettuce is about half the distance.

This could also create a number of benefits from, both from an environmental standpoint by reducing the amount of fossil fuels used in transporting produce and from a cost perspective -- fewer miles means less money spent.

Being able to buy Iron Ox's produce on shelves marks a major step not only for the startup, but for a growing sector of robotic farming companies who are looking to revolutionize the industry.

According to Iron Ox, their system is capable of delivering about 30 percent more produce per acre than a regular farm.

As the human population continues to expand and a changing climate threatens food production, the efficiency and production of farms will likely only become more critical.

"What will a farm look like in 50 to 100 years?" David Slaughter, a professor of biological and environmental engineering at UC Davis told Engineering.com.

"We have to address population growth, climate change and labor issues, and that has brought a lot of interest to technology."

This process will likely involve a constellation of technologies like automated tractors, unnamed aerial vehicles, and smart irrigation systems. One \$36,000 Japanese drone is capable of spraying a field with pesticides in just 15 minutes which is a quarter of the time a human needs.

For now, however, even the automated systems will required some human input.

According to Iron Ox, while robots tend to the planets during the growing process, humans are still required to pick and plant the produce.

(Source: dailymail.co.uk)

Biodiversity crisis is about to put humanity at risk, UN scientists to warn

The world's leading scientists will warn the planet's life-support systems are approaching a danger zone for humanity when they release the results of the most comprehensive study of life on Earth ever undertaken.

Up to 1m species are at risk of annihilation, many within decades, according to a leaked draft of the global assessment report, which has been compiled over three years by the UN's leading research body on nature.

The 1,800-page study will show people living today, as well as wildlife and future generations, are at risk unless urgent action is taken to reverse the loss of plants, insects and other creatures on which humanity depends for food, pollination, clean water and a stable climate.

The final wording of the summary for policymakers is being finalised in Paris by a gathering of experts and government representatives before the launch on Monday, but the overall message is already clear, according to Robert Watson, the chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

"There is no question we are losing biodiversity at a truly unsustainable rate that will affect human wellbeing both for current and future generations," he said. "We are in trouble if we don't act, but there are a range of actions that can be taken to protect nature and meet human goals for health and development."

The authors hope the first global assessment of biodiversity in almost 15 years will push the nature crisis into the global spotlight in the same way climate breakdown has surged up the political agenda since the 1.5C report last year by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Like its predecessor, the report is a compilation of reams of academic studies, in this case on subjects ranging from ocean plankton and subterranean bacteria to honey bees and Amazonian botany. Following previous findings on the decimation of wildlife, the overview of the state of the world's nature is expected to provide evidence that the world is facing a sixth wave of extinction. Unlike the past five, this one is human-driven.

Mike Barrett, WWF's executive director of conservation and science, said: "All of our ecosystems are in trouble. This is the most comprehensive report on the state of the environment. It irrefutably confirms that nature is in steep decline."

Barrett said this posed an environmental emergency for humanity, which is threatened by a triple challenge of climate, nature and food production. "There is no time to despair," he said. "We should be hopeful that we have a window of opportunity to do something about it over these two years."

The report will sketch out possible future scenarios that will vary depending on the decisions taken by governments, businesses and individuals. The next year and a half is likely to be crucial because world leaders will agree rescue plans for nature and the climate at two big conferences at the end of 2020.

That is when China will host the UN framework convention on biodiversity gathering in Kunming, which will establish new 20-year targets to replace those agreed in Aichi, Japan, in 2010. Soon after, the UN framework convention on climate change will revise Paris agreement commitments at a meeting in either the UK, Italy, Belgium or Turkey.

Watson, a British professor who has headed both of the UN's leading scientific panels, said the forthcoming report will delve more deeply than anything before into the causes of nature collapse, chief among which is the conversion of forests, wetlands and other wild landscapes into ploughed fields, dam reservoirs and concrete cities. Three-quarters of the world's land surface has been severely altered, according to the leaked draft. Humanity is also decimating the living systems on which we depend by emitting carbon dioxide and spreading invasive species.

Watson said the authors have learned from attribution science, which has transformed the debate on the climate crisis by showing how much more likely hurricanes, droughts and floods have become as a result of global heating.

The goal is to persuade an audience beyond the usual green NGOs and government departments. "We need to appeal not just to environment ministers, but to those in charge of agriculture, transport and energy because they are the ones responsible for the drivers of biodiversity loss," he said.

A focus will be to move away from protection of individual species and areas, and to look at systemic drivers of change, including consumption and trade.

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Mir space station

(June 3, 1999)

The Russian government decided to abandon its space station Mir. The BBC's Moscow correspondent Robert Parsons reported. The decision to **call time** on Mir's occasionally **eccentric** orbit around the earth **marks** the end of an era in Russian space exploration. **By the time** it re-enters the earth's atmosphere and disappears beneath the waves of the Pacific Ocean, **it will have been** in space **close on** fourteen years - an unrivalled achievement. But its age and the limitations of the Russian budget, have **forced the government's hand**. It says it will finance Mir until the end of August. Thereafter the station will be allowed to fly **unmanned** until February or March, in the hope that private **sponsors** can be persuaded to extend its life.

Russia may now **focus its attention on** the international space station which is **due to receive** its first crew next year. U.S. officials have complained that its construction has been delayed because the Russian space industry has **devoted** so much of its resources to trying to save Mir.

■ **Words**
call time : bring something to an end
eccentric: here, irregular: also used to describe people who behave in an unusual way
marks: draws attention (to an event or occasion)
by the time...it will have been: an example of the Future Perfect tense, which is used to refer to a past event, but from the future
close on: nearly, almost
forced the government's hand: if you force someone's hand, you oblige them to do something
unmanned: without a crew
sponsors: if an organization sponsors something or someone it pays some or all of the expenses
focus its attention on: concentrate on
due to receive : expected or scheduled to receive
devoted: it has spent a lot of time and money

(Source: BBC)

WFP Iran, S. Korea join hands to build refugees' self-reliance

➡ Income-generating opportunities for refugees

The Korean ambassador went on to say that "As you know the World Food Program is one of the most outstanding UN agencies in Iran. They have a long history for supporting refugees and vulnerable people here, so this time we thought about enhancing refugees' self-reliance and their livelihood through vocational training and education."

Gerami, the WFP Representative in Iran, for her part, highlighted that "this time the contributions made by Korea is earmarked for self-reliance activities. As his Excellency mentioned the people of the Republic of Korea have been generous towards the World Food Program and the people the World Food Program is assisting for many years. This contribution is above and beyond a contribution that was made by the Republic of Korea for food assistance.

"So this \$2 million is on top of the \$2.2 million contribution that we received recently which was earmarked for food assistance and for cash for food which we will be distributing among the refugees under our assistance in settlements in Iran.

"This contribution is going to be focusing on building their self-reliance, on vocational training and on livelihood activities. It's important for the people receiving the assistance as they will be able to take care of themselves. One of the issues about food is that you cannot give a person food once and stop. It has to be continuous and sustainable in order to maintain the level of food security which is acceptable.

"At the same time if we help people in need to be able to take care of themselves that would in the end contribute to get into zero hunger which is the goal that we have. This contribution will be focusing on that.

"We are having a two-tier two-pronged approach, if the person already has the skills and the skill-sets to create a livelihood opportunity for him or herself we will provide through the contribution of the Republic of Korea a start-up capital. So that they can actually start a business with the small money that they have. The Afghans are really entrepreneurial, and they have proved in the past that they are really resilient. So if they already have a skill-set they will be provided with a start-up capital.

"If they don't we will again through the contributions provide training opportunities to them, so that they can develop their skills and be able to get into a livelihood opportunity and take care of themselves.

"It may seem that World Food Program



WFP Representative in Iran, Negar Gerami (R), and Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Iran, Ryu Jeong-Hyun

is about food only, yes it is but it goes a step beyond that, we have actually moved away from food aid as we call it unconditional food to food-assistance which is using food as a purpose for creating capacity-building and livelihood opportunities so we do use food in that sense in order to build up capacities. We have various projects all over the world what we call food for assets, so we give people food to create assets, we have food for work as we give people food in lieu of the work that they provide, and we also have food for education, so again we provide food for them to be educated."

■ Humanitarian assistance to flood victims

Commenting on humanitarian assistance to flood victims in Iran Ambassador Jeong-Hyun stated that recently following the damages recent floods caused in Iran in 25 provinces the Korean government donated a small money [\$200,000] to the flood victims.

"We keep close cooperation and coordination with the Iranian authorities both the government as well as the Red Crescent Society," he highlighted.

Gerami also said that "floods were devastating, they affected 25 out of 31 provinces, and many of the people who were affected, in Golestan province for example, were also from the refugee communities. However, we do not make any distinctions, if the person is in need we assist.

"They UN very quickly stepped in and offered its condolences and assistance. We

were part of an assessment team that went to the field on April 10. Three assessment teams were sent into the fields in Lorestan, Golestan and Ilam provinces which were among the most affected. Speaking with the people and authorities and seeing for ourselves the extent and level of damage, each UN agency, given its mandate, developed a project, for assistance.

"Here in WFP we mobilized from our own immediate response account for the purchase of food parcels to be delivered through the Iranian Red Crescent Society to the people in need.

"The food parcels that we will be distributing will go to Khuzestan province because it was announced as one of the most hard-hit and most in need. At the moment we are in the process of purchasing the food parcels, there is about 30 kilogram in each parcel of mixed commodities and we are buying it and delivering it to the Iranian Red Crescent Society and we will be present during the distribution. It will be enough to feed about 40,000 people for one month. It's very important that this happens now because we are fast approaching the month of Ramadan and it's very important for the people to have nourishing and nutrient commodities in their food basket.

"The majority of the flood victims are Iranians and the assistance is both provided to the Iranians as well as refugees. This is part of our mandate. In Iran we usually concentrate on issues related to the refugees but we are

always present during natural disasters and offer assistance to the people of Iran when there is a need to do so and this is one of those circumstances. We also did the same during the Bam earthquake back in 2003.

■ Impacts of sanctions on humanitarian assistance

Inquired about the negative impacts of sanctions on humanitarian assistance, particularly during the time of disaster, the Korean ambassador highlighted that "humanitarian assistance is not a matter of a certain country. It's kind of a universal issue and a noble endeavor that we should all cooperate to address them.

"Sanctions would inevitably impact regional stability and also free trade globally. The Korean government has put and also will put great importance on its relations with Iran. Iran is a very important friend and partner for Korea not only in the area of economics but also in cultural and political arenas as well as people to people exchange. We are facing more difficult situation now but I think we can overcome these difficulties through our close cooperation and collaboration.

"To my knowledge, European countries are also considering ways to overcome these difficult situations, for example by designing INSTEX. I think the problem can be solved through peaceful dialogue and these situations can be solved through diplomacy I think."

Gerami also stated that "WFP is a humanitarian agency, we are not political, and we are there to help people in need, and that's exactly what we are doing, we have continued with our operation thanks to the generous contributions from donors such as the Republic of Korea.

"We are assisting the Afghan population in Iran who are in need of assistance and we also stepped in during the floods. So due to the humanitarian nature of our operations I do not see any problems in that sense. We stand by the people and we assist whoever is in need," she concluded.

Iran hosts the world's fifth largest refugee population, with nearly one million registered Afghan and Iraqi refugees.

WFP has been providing assistance to refugees in Iran since the arrival of the first asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Iraq in the late 1980s.

The United Nations World Food Programme - saving lives in emergencies and changing lives for millions through sustainable development. WFP works in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters, and laying the foundations for a better future.

Will recently returned Persian lion survive threats once pushed it toward extinction?

➡ Iran will soon host a female lion of the same subspecies from Ireland to accompany the recently returned male lion through the conservation program.

However, questions come up that will the world's last ranging population of Persian lion raises hope for the species conservation? Does it ensure a stable lion population in the country?

■ First attempts to bring back the precious species

In the Iranian calendar year 1350 (March 1971-March 1971), Iran made attempts to bring back Asiatic lion to Iran, under an international project aiming to revive the country's natural habitats, but it faced Indians opposition.

The project was called Arzhan due to the fact that lions once ranged in Dasht-e Arzhan, to Parishan Lake both located in Fars province.

Under the project, Iran was supposed to send 4 Asiatic cheetahs to the India and receive 12-16 Asiatic lions in return.

Hooshang Ziaei, an environmental expert, told Khabaronline that we made great efforts for the project which mainly focused on rehabilitation of habitats.

In this regard, we bought some of the rainforests in proper areas and enhanced the population of wild boar, gazelle and ovis orientalis in these areas, he said, adding, then we increased the population of Persian fallow deer, so that the lion's habitat was prepared.

However, India did not cooperate and the project left unattended, he regretted, adding, the area's environment also bearded severe damages that led Parishan lake to be dried up.

■ No concern rises toward the species habitat

This is while, some of the past experiences have caused some environmentalists to be concerned about the Persian lion's future in Tehran Zoological Garden, as in the Iranian calendar year 1389 (March 2010-March 2011), 14 lions died in the Zoo due to an outbreak of glanders (an infectious disease occurs primarily by ingestion of contaminated food or water), which is mainly related to not meeting the standards.

Mohammad Reza Parhizkar, head of Tehran Zoological Garden, told Khabaronline that "we put in efforts to bring back Asiatic lion for 6 years, so it can be a new beginning for the species to live in its motherland once again."

He went on to note that I believe that it was a positive attempt to help the generation of the species and revive the country's wildlife.

Lions are returned to the country due to the membership of the Tehran Zoo in EAZA, and the organization never allows the wildlife species to transfer to a zoo not meeting the internationally defined standards, Parhizkar also added.

Pointing to the traumatic event, he said that the condition is improved compared to 8 years ago, the Zoo is living up to the required standards, and take safety measure strictly to prevent such happenings.

So there is no concern about the condition and the

place where the animal is being kept, he said, adding that of course, there are still several steps to be taken to conserve Persian lion in the country, perhaps many measures needed to be carried out in this regard.

Referring to the lion couple's future habitat, he noted that Dez forests, in Dezful county located in Khuzestan province, seems to be a proper habitat for the lions due to the presence of fallow deer species, with fencing the roads taken into consideration.

Although, several studies must be carried out to determine their natural habitat precisely, he said, highlighting that if the studies demonstrate negative consequences, reproduction of the species in the country will be avoided even through captive breeding in the zoos.

■ Asiatic lions range years ago

Until the 19th century, it occurred in eastern Turkey, Iran, Mesopotamia, and from east of the Indus River to Bengal and Narmada River in Central India. Since the turn of the 20th century, it is restricted to the Indian Gir Forest National Park and surrounding areas.

Historical records in Iran indicate that the Asiatic lion ranged from the Khuzestan Plain to the Fars in steppe vegetation and pistachio-almond woodlands. It was

widespread in the country, but in the 1870s, it was sighted only on the western slopes of the Zagros Mountains, and in the forest regions south of Shiraz.

Some of the country's last lions were sighted in 1941 between Shiraz and Jahrom in Fars province, and in 1942, a lion was spotted about 65 km northwest of Dezful. In 1944, the corpse of a lioness was found on the banks of Karun River in Khuzestan province.

■ Persian lion to remain in Iran

Although, current weather and other conditions in the country seems appropriate to bring the invaluable species back to the motherland again, protection plans must be drawn up defining the related issues along with taking necessary measures to prevent the species from facing the threats resulted in their eradication before.

Studies on recognizing the favorable habitat for the lions, enhancing the protected areas as well as the rangers, increasing the species' prey, highlighting the role of NGOs on reintroducing this species, making people acquainted with the endangered species and training the locals to know the value of the Persian lion and prevent any illegal capturing of the animal are among the solutions to ensure a stable lion population in the country.

First Announcement



Permit No.1398.723

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN
TENDER NO. : 08-38-9440043

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	ROCK BITS. JET TYPE. WITHOUT CENTER JET. LESS NOZZLES WITH API REGULAR TOOL JOINT PIN CONNECTION 17-1/2 IN. I.A.D.C.1.1.1	120

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 62,317 EURO or 2,940,000,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437
Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir>
تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۸/۲/۱۵ نوبت دوم ۹۸/۲/۱۸

Syria, Iraq conduct joint border op to flush out Daesh

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) have successfully finished a joint operation clearing the Iraq-Syria border area of remaining Daesh (ISIL) terrorists.

The operation successfully cleared 230 kilometers of the two countries' border region, according to the head of the al-Anbar command of Iraq's PMU forces Qassim Moshleq.

The PMU official said the operation was done with a high level of coordination between PMU forces, Iraqi border police and Syrian forces.

"Our forces, which headed towards the Iraqi-Syrian border, met with Syrian forces in the agreed upon area," Moshleq said.

The PMU official added that the Iraqi side of the operation had covered an area spanning between the al-Qaim border crossing and the Akashat border town, north of the al-Tanf border crossing, which is occupied by U.S. forces in Syria.

On the Syrian side of the border, troops cleansed Daesh terrorists from regions stretching from the surrounding areas of the border town of Bukamal to southwest of the city of Palmyra and regions near the al-Tanf border crossing.



The operations had been simultaneously coordinated between the two countries in order to prevent terrorists from fleeing into neighboring border regions.

The successful operation comes as Iraq and Syria had previously agreed to reopen the al-Qaim border crossing.

Both countries originally recaptured the al-Bukamal and al-Qaim border region from

Daesh in November 2017 but continued terrorist presence had prevented a reopening of the crossing.

Syria and Iraq have both pledged to step up future security presence on the border in a bid to secure the strategic crossing. Iraq has planned to install thermal surveillance cameras and use aircraft to further reinforce security in the region.

The measures come as Iraq, Syria and Iran have sought to step up mutual economic ties by developing a transnational railway line, along with a road route, linking the three countries.

According to Press TV, Iraq and Syria have been expanding political and economic ties with Iran as they seek assistance in the post-war reconstruction of their countries which had large swathes of their territories overrun by foreign-backed terrorist outfits in the past years.

The U.S., however, has been engaged in a military campaign seeking to counter the emerging regional alliance.

American forces are currently deployed in the Kurdish-controlled regions of Syria, north of the al-Qaim crossing, on the pretext of protecting Kurdish forces in the region and fighting Daesh.

The U.S. has also reinforced its military presence in its al-Tanf garrison, which is situated south of the Iraq-Syria border.

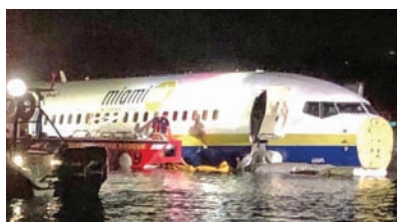
U.S. officials have claimed the region is of "strategic importance" in a push to counter Iran and the formation of "a ground line of communications from Iran through Iraq through Syria to southern Lebanon in support of Lebanese Hezbollah."

Boeing 737 slides off runway into Florida river, 21 hurt

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — A Boeing jetliner with 143 people aboard from the U.S. outpost at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, slid off a runway into a shallow river in Jacksonville, Florida, on Friday while attempting to land at a military base there during a thunderstorm, injuring 21 people.

There were no reports of fatalities or critical injuries. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office said on Twitter that all 21 of the injured were taken to a hospital, where they were listed in good condition, Reuters reported.

The plane, a chartered Boeing 737-800 arriving from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in Cuba with 136 passengers and seven crew members, crashed into the St. Johns river at the end of the runway at Naval Air Station Jacksonville at about 9:40 p.m. local time,



a spokesman for the Florida air base said.

"The plane was not submerged. Every person is alive and accounted for," the sheriff's office said on Twitter.

The sheriff's tweet was accompanied by two photographs showing the plane, bearing the logo of Miami Air International, resting in shallow water and fully intact.

The mayor of Jacksonville, Lenny Curry, said on Twitter that U.S. President Donald Trump had called him to offer help.

Pressure grows on Attorney General Barr over Mueller

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Donald Trump and a senior U.S. House Democrat tightened the screws on U.S. Attorney General William Barr on Friday over the Mueller report, making new demands on him after an already tough week for the Justice Department chief.

Trump said it will be up to Barr to decide whether Special Counsel Robert Mueller, author of the report on Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election, will testify to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which wants to hear from him, Reuters reported.

Earlier in the day, House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler set a new deadline of Monday at 9 a.m. for Barr to comply with a subpoena seeking an unredacted version of the report before moving to hold Barr in contempt of Congress.



The two developments ensured that Barr, Mueller and his report will remain in sharp focus next week in Washington, where Congress and Trump are on a collision course over investigations being led by Nadler and other committee leaders.

At the White House, speaking to reporters, Trump was asked whether he would let Mueller testify to the Senate panel. The president responded, "That's up to our attorney general."

N. Korea fires barrage of missiles towards Sea of Japan

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — North Korea has fired a barrage of short-range missiles towards the Sea of Japan, in first such action in over a year amid deadlocked nuclear talks with the United States.

The North "fired multiple rounds of unidentified missiles from its east coast town of Wonsan in the northeastern direction between 9:06 a.m. and 9:27 a.m. today," South Korea's Yonhap News Agency quoted the country's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) as saying in a Saturday statement.

The projectiles flew about 70-100 kilometers over the East Sea, also known as Sea of Japan, before landing in the sea, the brief statement said, adding that South Korean and U.S. authorities "are analyzing details of the missiles."

No further details regarding the projectiles were immediately available. Pyongyang has also not commented on the missile launches.

North Korea has for years been under an array of harsh sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the United Nations for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Last month, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un told Russian President Vladimir Putin during their first-ever meeting in Russia that the situation on the Korean Peninsula had reached a "critical point", warning that peace



and security on the peninsula would entirely depend on the future Washington attitude.

Back in February, U.S. President Donald Trump and Kim reached an impasse at their face-to-face denuclearization talks in the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi.

Washington demanded full disarmament and Pyongyang asked for economic incentives through partial lifting of harsh sanctions.

According to Press TV, the second summit in fact did collapse when the American president abruptly walked away from the talks without reaching a deal or even issuing a final statement.

Trump claimed at the time that he quit the talks because Kim demanded that all economic sanctions be lifted as a prerequisite to denuclearization. Pyongyang, however, quickly responded that it had never asked for the removal of all sanctions, but only their partial removal.

The two sides have been at loggerheads since the collapse of the Hanoi summit.

Trump and Kim met at a historic summit for the first time in June last year in Singapore, where they agreed to work toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Subsequent diplomacy between the two sides, however, made little progress, mainly because Washington refused to lift its crippling sanctions.

Washington has refused to offer any sanctions relief in return for several unilateral steps already taken by North Korea. Pyongyang, on the other hand, has suspended its missile and nuclear testing, demolished at least one nuclear test site, and agreed to allow international inspectors into a missile engine test facility.

Canada vows to defend its business in Cuba as U.S. opens way for lawsuits

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Canada vowed to defend its businesses operating in Cuba after U.S. President Donald Trump lifted a ban on American citizens filing lawsuits against investors working on the island nation.

"The Government of Canada will always defend Canadians and Canadian businesses

conducting legitimate trade and investment with Cuba, and is reviewing all options in response to the U.S. decision," a foreign ministry statement said.

"Canada will also continue to work with our international partners, including the EU, to stand up for our businesses," it added.

The U.S. will allow legal action against

foreign companies that have used properties seized by Cuba's Communist government since the 1959 revolution. European and Canadian companies are among the main foreign investors in Cuba.

Earlier this week, the EU said it could take the United States to the World Trade Organization or use retaliatory sanctions

to protect its companies.

Canada also said its Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act can be used to file suits in Canadian courts that "will allow Canadians to recover any amounts that have been obtained against them, including legal expenses, and losses or damages incurred," the statement said.

Trump says he, Putin discussed new nuclear pact possibly including China

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Donald Trump said he and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the possibility of a new accord limiting nuclear arms that could eventually include China in what would be a major deal between the globe's top three atomic powers.

Trump, speaking to reporters as he met in the Oval Office with Peter Pellegrini, prime minister of the Slovak Republic, also said he and Putin discussed efforts to persuade North Korea to give up nuclear weapons, the political discord in Venezuela, and Ukraine during a call that stretched over an hour.

The 2011 New START treaty, the only U.S.-Russia arms control pact limiting deployed strategic nuclear weapons, expires in February 2021 but can be extended for five years if both sides agree. Without the agreement, it could be harder to gauge each other's intentions, arms control advocates say.

According to Reuters, Trump cited the expense of keeping up the U.S. nuclear arsenal as a motivating factor behind wanting to limit how many weapons are deployed.

"We're talking about a nuclear agreement where we make less and they make less and maybe where we get rid of some of the tremendous firepower that we have

right now," he said.

Trump said China during trade talks had "felt very strongly" about joining the United States and Russia in limiting nuclear weapons.

"So I think we're going to possibly start up something very shortly between Russia and ourselves maybe to start off, and I think China will be added down the road. We'll be talking about non-proliferation, we'll be talking about a nuclear deal of some kind, and I think it'll be a very comprehensive one," he said.

The New START treaty required the United States and Russia to cut their deployed strategic nuclear warheads to no more than 1,550, the lowest level in decades, and limit delivery systems - land- and submarine-based missiles and nuclear-capable bombers.

It also includes extensive transparency measures requiring each side to allow the other to carry out 10 inspections of strategic nuclear bases each year; give 48 hours notice before new missiles covered by the treaty leave their factories; and provide notifications before ballistic missile launches.

Trump has called the New START treaty concluded by his predecessor, Barack Obama, a "bad deal" and "one-sided."



The Kremlin said the two sides confirmed they intended to "activate dialogue in various spheres, including strategic security."

The two men, who last chatted informally at a dinner of world leaders in Buenos Aires on Dec. 1, briefly talked about the report by U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller that concluded Trump did not collude with Russia during his 2016 presidential campaign.

Putin seemed amused, said Trump.

Red alert sirens in Israel as 90 rockets hit occupied lands

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Israeli warplanes have carried out fresh air raids on the blockaded Gaza Strip, killing two Palestinians and injuring several others.

The aerial assaults on Saturday followed the retaliatory firing of around 90 rockets from Gaza into the occupied territories on Saturday morning. The rocket fire activated warning sirens in multiple Israeli communities.

Palestinian sources said that the Israeli airstrikes had left two people dead and several others wounded in northern Gaza.

The rocket attacks came in retaliation for the killing of four Palestinians on Friday, two in an Israeli air raid on southern Gaza Strip and two by the regime's live fire in anti-occupation protests in the besieged coastal enclave.

The Hamas resistance movement, which runs Gaza, held Israel fully responsible for the consequences of its aggression against peaceful Gaza demonstrations.

According to Press TV, in a press release on Saturday, Hamas vowed to avenge the killing of the four Palestinians, stressing that the Gaza resistance would not allow the Palestinian blood to go in vain and would not remain silent on the Israeli blockade.

The Tel Aviv regime carries out regular attacks on the Gaza Strip under the pretext of hitting positions belonging to Hamas.

The coastal sliver of land has been under a crippling siege by Israel since 2007 and witnessed three wars since 2008.

It has also witnessed tensions since March 30, 2018 which marked the start of the Great March of Return protests, with participants demanding the right to return for those driven out of their homeland.

The Gaza violence has so far left at least 268 Palestinians dead, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Russia warns of U.S. plan to set up a quasi-state in Syria

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — "The move is clearly aimed at undermining the efforts of the international community, the UN and guarantor states (Russia, Iran, Turkey) of the Astana format on settling the Syrian crisis as soon as possible," it added.

Syria has already condemned the Ayn Issa gathering as "a meeting of treason, treachery, and subjugation."

According to Press TV, an official source at the Syrian Foreign Ministry said such events confirm that their "organizers are pursuing delusions that have been proven throughout history to be impossible to realize, especially during the final years of the terrorist war, regardless of how much foreign support they receive or how much they subjugate themselves to the U.S. or others."

The source further warned Syria militants that "accepting the dictations" of the Americans or others would only bring them "shame and disgrace."

Taliban says gap narrowing in talks with U.S.

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — The Taliban says the gap is narrowing in talks with Washington's special peace envoy over a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The two sides are continuing to meet in Qatar, where the insurgent movement maintains a political office.

In a voice message sent Saturday to The Associated Press, the Taliban spokesman in Doha says both sides have offered new proposals for drawing down U.S. and NATO forces. This would be a significant initial step toward a deal to end nearly 18 years of war and America's longest military engagement, AP reported.

U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, however, continued to press for a cease-fire, tweeting Friday: "It is time to put down arms." The Taliban has rejected any cease-fire until U.S. and NATO troops withdraw.

U.S. approves \$6 billion in arms sales to Bahrain, UAE

The US State Department has approved weapons sales to Bahrain and the UAE worth almost \$6 billion amid growing concerns over Washington's arms flow to the Persian Gulf Arab countries.

The Pentagon said that it had notified Congress of the State Department's certification of three separate arms sales packages to the regimes in Manama and Abu Dhabi, Press TV reported.

In one of the packages, Bahrain could potentially purchase various Patriot missile systems and related support and equipment for an estimated cost of \$2.48 billion.

Another package at an estimated cost of \$750 million was cleared for various missiles and bombs to support Bahrain's F-16 Block 70/F-16V aircraft fleet. Bahrain is a partner to Saudi Arabia's war on Yemen. It is also engaged in a heavy-handed crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations with the help of Saudi and UAE forces.

The tiny Persian Gulf archipelago is home to US Navy's 5th fleet which not only backs up the regime's survival militarily but also serves as a key base for Washington's interests in the region.

Under the third State Department notification, the UAE was given potential approval for \$2.73 billion worth of 452 PAC-3 MSE missiles and related equipment.

'Syria will not allow Turkey to conquer its soil'

Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad says the Damascus government "will not allow Turkey to control even one centimeter of the Syrian territory," stressing that Ankara should know that "Damascus will not accept the survival of militant groups" in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib. "The Damascus government's resolution is to liberate every inch of the Syrian territory, and Idlib is no exception," Mekdad said in an exclusive interview with the Lebanon-based Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network.

He added, "The Turks and others should know that the Syrian government is determined to recover all of Syrian soil. Turkey must also understand that its support for terrorism and its occupation of the Syrian territory will not guarantee security."

According to Press TV, the high-ranking Syrian official then advised U.S.-sponsored Kurdish militant groups active in northern Syria to stop being used as a pawn by Washington, and to prove loyalty to their homeland. (Source: SANA)

Huddersfield chairman Hoyle agrees to sell club

Huddersfield Town chairman Dean Hoyle has agreed to sell the club to businessman Phil Hodgkinson with the change of ownership expected to be completed during the close season.

A popular figure with supporters of the Yorkshire club, Hoyle took control of Huddersfield in 2009 and two years ago led them into the top flight for the first time in 45 years.

Huddersfield, who host Manchester United on Sunday, have been relegated to the Championship after a disappointing campaign during which they parted company with German manager David Wagner, who had guided them to promotion and kept them up in their first season in the Premier League.

Hoyle, who was ill with pancreatitis this year, will retain a minority stake in the club but Hodgkinson, a Huddersfield fan, will take a 75 percent ownership stake in the club.

“My heart doesn’t want me to sell the club and I believe the Manchester United game will probably be the most emotional day of my life,” Hoyle said in a statement.

“However, my head is telling me that, after 10 years of total dedication and my recent ill health, I need to do what is right for myself, my family and Huddersfield Town and that is pass the reins to a new Chairman who can take our club to a new chapter in its history,” he added.

The deal is subject to approval by football authorities but Hodgkinson, who has a long association with the club, said he was looking forward to taking over.

“Huddersfield Town is in my blood and has always been one of my greatest passions. I’m so excited to have the opportunity to take this club forward,” he said.

(Source: Reuters)

‘Everything is going against me’ - Zverev shocked by Garin in Munich



World number three Alexander Zverev complained that everything was against him after a shock defeat in the quarter-finals of the Munich Open on Friday.

Zverev lost 6-4, 5-7, 7-5 to Chile’s Cristian Garin, who sits 44 places below him in the ATP rankings, to end his hopes of a record third successive title in Munich.

“Everything is going against me at the moment, nothing is going in my favour,” said Zverev after the defeat.

“Last year, I won matches like this, but this year I am often losing them.”

The reigning ATP Finals champion survived three match points in the second set before wasting two himself in the third and ultimately suffering his first defeat in ten games on the Munich clay.

Zverev disputed a line call on his first match point, before coming within inches of hitting a winner down the line on his second.

“I thought the ball was out on the first one, and then it was out only by a few inches on the second one,” he said.

The German star said he was already looking forward to trying to regain his crown in Munich next year.

Garin will face third seed Marco Cecchinato in the semi-finals, after the Italian battled to a 1-6, 7-5, 7-5 win over Hungary’s Marton Fucsovics.

There was further disappointment for the home crowd when Philipp Kohlschreiber lost 6-4, 5-7, 4-6 to Italy’s Matteo Berrettini later on Friday.

Berrettini meets fourth seed Roberto Bautista Agut in the last four, after the Spaniard overcame Argentina’s Guido Pella 4-6, 6-4, 6-0.

(Source: AFP)

Beckham MLS team gets green light for temporary home

David Beckham’s tortuous quest to find a home for his Inter Miami Major League Soccer franchise received a boost on Friday after a Florida judge approved plans to build a new stadium in neighbouring Fort Lauderdale.

The former England captain’s ownership group was forced to go before a court in South Florida on Wednesday to obtain permission to demolish the crumbling Lockhart Stadium.

The stadium, home of the now-defunct Fort Lauderdale Strikers, is around 25 miles north of Miami. Beckham’s group plans to build a new 18,000-seat arena at the site in time for Inter Miami’s MLS debut in 2020.

Work on the new venue will begin immediately in the wake of Friday’s court ruling, which followed a legal battle with sports entertainment company FXE Futbol, which had sought an injunction against Beckham’s project.

FXE had been in talks with city officials for over a year about renovating rather than demolishing Lockhart Stadium before Beckham’s group swooped for the site.

But Judge Raag Singhal ruled Friday there were no grounds to block the Beckham group’s \$60 million project.

Inter Miami plan to use Lockhart for two seasons following their entrance into MLS next year, while a planned \$1 billion permanent home at Melreese Country Club near Miami airport, is completed.

But FXE had been sharply critical of what they called a “rushed” decision over the proposals.

FXE accused city officials of failing to adhere to state guidelines while questioning Inter Miami’s claims that the site needed to be demolished because of an asbestos problem.

Friday’s ruling is the latest development in the Beckham MLS saga which has been embroiled in legal gridlock in the five years since his intention to own a franchise became official.

(Source: France 24)

Women can hack it against the men in F1, says Wilson



Desiré Wilson sees no physical or mental reason why a woman cannot compete in Formula One, whatever the men might say, and she should know.

The only woman to win a Formula One race, a non-championship round of a long-defunct British series at Brands Hatch in 1980, the 65-year-old South African says those who raise such obstacles are talking rubbish.

“I used to drive for three hours in world endurance championship races, in monstrous Porsche 956s, and I was capable of doing it,” she told Reuters at the first race of the all-female W Series.

Wilson’s first IndyCar race in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1983, was 500km on a street course with eight pitstops for fuel and no paddle shifts.

“The cars were brutal. I finished 10th in that race and I think seven drivers pulled in and collapsed (because of the heat),” she said.

“Drivers were just passing out and there I was, a 120 pound driver but it was all in the mental strength.

“My opinion is that women are actually stronger mentally than men are. I think we can push ourselves much further than men can,” added Wilson.

“It’s the individual person, what you are made up of, what you want in life, how hard do you want to fight for it and how serious and focused you are.”

W Series, with 18 women racing identical Formula Three cars in a six-round championship, aims to raise the profile of female racers and help them take on the men further

up the single-seater ladder.

One of the ultimate aims is to see a woman compete in Formula One again for the first time since Italian Lella Lombardi in 1976, and Wilson is highly supportive of the concept.

“I think it’s a superb idea. Because ultimately you’re giving these women an opportunity to take part. A lot of them wouldn’t be racing if it wasn’t for this series,” she said.

“For men who say ‘why should it be an all-woman series?’, they haven’t had to really go through what women really have had to go through in motorsports. So they have no idea.

“I think this series will showcase women more than it ever has before and hopefully that will be a combination of finding some more sponsorship. I’d love to see somebody there (in Formula One) in the next few years.”

■ Five women

You can count on the fingers of one hand how many women have entered a world championship Formula One race, and Wilson is one of those five.

While the South African failed to qualify her Williams for the 1980 British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch, as did future world champion Keke Rosberg, she says the timing sheets told only part of the story.

She recalled the words of French driver Jacques Laffite, unapologetic after forcing her off the track on the way to a front-row slot for Ligier, who said: “No (expletive) woman should be in grands prix.”

When Wilson won the Evening News Trophy at Brands Hatch, a circuit that now has a stand named after her, she beat four F1 drivers including Chile’s Eliseo Salazar and Italian motorcycling great Giacomo Agostini.

Wilson also drove a Tyrrell in the 1981 South African Grand Prix at Kyalami, a race scheduled originally as the first round of the season but then deemed non-championship due to F1 politics. That designation still rankles.

“There’s no doubt that chauvinism and sexism was difficult in my era but we were seen a little bit more as novelty drivers,” she said.

“Every few years a woman was at least able to attempt to get into Formula One. But you still had to qualify and get the super license to be able to race.”

(Source: Reuters)

Zidane backtracks over Pogba links with Real Madrid



Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane has backtracked over his recent praise of Paul Pogba and said it doesn’t mean he wants to sign the Manchester United midfielder.

Zidane returned as Madrid coach in March talking about big changes being made to an under-performing squad, speaking openly about liking Pogba “a lot” and suggesting Madrid could be the next club for a player he knows very well.

Pogba’s future at United is uncertain amid links to Real Madrid but Zidane said: “I said Pogba was a good player, but I could say the same about other players.

“I know him, nothing else. I am not getting into something. If you ask me about Pogba, I say that he is a very good player, but he plays for Manchester United. At the end of the season we will see which players come here, and who leaves. But I did not say ‘We are going to sign Pogba,’ nothing like that. I will not say anything [about any deals] until things are done.”

Madrid’s troubled 2018-19 campaign is coming to a close, with the latest embarrassment last weekend’s 1-0 defeat at relegation-threatened neighbours Rayo



Vallecano.

Home fans are likely to vent their frustration during Sunday’s visit of struggling Villarreal and Zidane said changes are coming in the summer.

“I was very angry the other day, the players were too, they did not enjoy it. Sometimes nothing goes for you,” Zidane said.

“The season is what it is, but the fans must think about next season. There will be changes, but many of these players will stay. The fans will be the same, and most of the players, and we must stick together. We are going to have time to prepare for next season. Until August 31 anything can happen, so it will be a long summer.”

Gareth Bale has been targeted by Madrid fans in recent months and Zidane was asked if he expected better from him.

“I expect the best of all the players,” he said. “[Gareth] must train and think about playing. I cannot speak for Gareth or other players, just say that we wear the Real Madrid shirt so we all have a responsibility, even if the season is bad. I must pick the team and the bench. We will see what happens tomorrow.”

(Source: ESPN)

Blazers prevail in historic 4OT ‘battle of attrition’



After nearly three-and-a-half exhausting hours, CJ McCollum intercepted a desperation inbound heave from Paul Millsap near half court to finally put an end to only the second four-overtime game in NBA playoff history.

In a marathon affair that started at 7:46 p.m. local time and ended at 11:13 p.m., the Nuggets and Trail Blazers matched the longest NBA playoff game, with Portland left standing at the end with a 140-137 win over Denver on Friday night at the Moda Center.

Afterward, mentally and physically spent coaches and players from both sides tried to process what they had just experienced as the Blazers barely outlasted the Nuggets to take a 2-1 lead in their best-of-seven Western Conference semifinals series.

Denver coach Michael Malone called the game an “instant classic.”

“It was almost like, when is this game going to end?” Malone said in the aftermath of what was a grueling loss for his young Nuggets team. “It just kept on going and going and going.” “If I was at home watching this game tonight, I would’ve been glued to my TV,” Malone added. “This was a great basketball game. Wasn’t pretty at all times -- but the effort, the competitive spirit from both groups was outstanding.”

Not since Red Auerbach was roaming the sideline in a 1953 East Division semifinal between the Boston Celtics and Syracuse Nationals has there been a four-overtime playoff game played in the NBA. There has never been a five-overtime NBA playoff game.

The numbers from this game were simply staggering. Start with Denver’s Nikola Jokic, who played 64 minutes, 58 seconds, the fourth-most minutes in a playoff game.

“Sixty-five minutes,” Portland’s Maurice Harkless said as he looked at the final stat sheet. “That’s crazy ... [there’s] a lot to process, honestly.”

Jokic poured in an unforgettable triple-double of 33 points, 18 rebounds and 14 assists. But those numbers tell only half the story as Jokic played almost all the way from halftime through the fourth overtime, going an exhausting 43:58 consecutively until he was subbed out with 2.8 seconds left for defensive purposes at the end of the fourth overtime.

No one has ever seen a player log those kind of minutes since 1953.

“They were talking about I’m not in shape,” Jokic said of critics who have judged him off appearance of his body type and fitness.

(Source: Sky Sports)

‘I won’t take medication’: Defiant Semenya wins first race since gender ruling defeat

Caster Semenya won the 800 metres at the Doha Diamond League meeting on Friday in her first race since losing her appeal over a controversial gender ruling, claiming “actions speak louder than words”.

The South African, a two-time Olympic champion, timed 1min 54.98sec to defeat Burundi’s Francine Niyonsaba, who clocked 1min 57.75sec and Ajele Wilson of the United States in 1min 58.83sec.

Semenya’s victory could be her last over 800m with new IAAF rules governing testosterone levels coming into operation on May 8.

Asked if she intended to take hormone-suppressing treatment, she said: “Hell no. No way.

“I don’t know what will happen next. But no-one should tell me what to do, if people want to stop me from doing something that’s their problem, not mine.”

After setting a new meet record, she told the BBC: “Actions speak louder than words. When you’re a great champion you always deliver.

“With me, life has been simple. I’m just here to deliver for the people who love and support me. I’m enjoying each and every moment of my life maybe because I have the love I need from my people.”

Semenya, 28, was only added to the 800m start list in Doha on Thursday morning, a day after her appeal against a new rule regulating testosterone levels for women athletes was rejected by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).



She had challenged the measures, introduced by the IAAF, that will force women with higher than normal male hormone levels -- so-called “hyperandrogenic” athletes -- to artificially lower the amount of testosterone in their bodies if they are to continue competing.

The rules will come into effect next Wednesday and will apply to athletes competing in races over distances of 400m to the mile.

Semenya hinted at quitting the sport in a tweet Thursday, saying: “Knowing when to walk away is wisdom. Being able to is courage. Walking away with your head held high is dignity.”

After her win on Friday -- in the same city where she hopes to feature in September’s world championships -- Semenya

said she was fighting a bigger battle beyond the track.

– ‘About human dignity, human pride’ –

“This is all about inspiring the world. This is more than a game, more than sports. This is about human dignity, human pride. What you do if you’re inspiring the world.

“People fight me, I don’t fight them. I live life and I enjoy it.”

“In September, of course, my main goal is to defend my title! But I am a crazy athlete, who goes from one race to another (from 400m to 5,000m) and I will continue.

“It was an incredible race tonight, I worked hard. I felt great, I am very happy. I did what I came to do.

“1min 54sec is a very good time. Now I will go home and train hard to do better than 1.54.”

Aleck Skhosana, president of Athletics South Africa, told AFP in Johannesburg that Semenya’s performance had put her critics firmly in their place.

“We are excited that Caster has done what she is known for ... despite all the challenges that she is facing,” said Skhosana.

“We encourage her to stay focused and do what she does best -- which is to run and conquer the world.”

Elsewhere on Friday in the Qatari capital, Britain’s Dina Asher-Smith cruised to victory in the 200m.

The European champion won in a season-leading 22.26sec ahead of Jamile Samuel of the Netherlands and Nigerian sprinter Blessing Okagbare.

(Source: AFP)

Hadadi wins bronze at IAAF Diamond League

S P O R T S T E H R A N — Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi claimed a bronze medal at the Doha 2019 IAAF Diamond League meeting in the Qatari capital on Friday.

In the most dominant display of the night, Sweden's Daniel Stahl put the competition out of reach in the first round, throwing his discus 69.63m through the Doha night sky to break the meeting record set by Virgilijus Alekna in 2006. But he was just shaking off the rust.

Stahl followed up with throws of 70.49m and 70.56m, his farthest of the night, before capping the evening with efforts of 69.54m, 69.50m and 70.32m to become the first man to produce six throws beyond 69.50m in a single competition.

"I've been working a lot on my technique and training hard in the gym so I expected this," the world and European silver medalist told IAAF.org. "It was a great atmosphere."

Lukas Weissheidinger was second with 66.90m with Hadadi, who took the Asian title in Doha two weeks ago, third with 66.78m.

For the 10th consecutive year, the Doha meeting kicked off the IAAF Diamond League, a series of the 14 finest one-day athletics competitions on the planet, and with it, the season-long chase for a slice of the \$US8 million Diamond League prize pot.

Athletes earn points in the first 12 stops to earn qualification for the two final winner-takes-all meetings to be held in Zurich (29 Aug) and Brussels (6 Sep).



Iranian coach hit by stone in domestic league



S P O R T S T E H R A N — Naft Masjed Soleyman coach Firouz Karimi was "hit by a stone" in the match against Sepidrood in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Friday.

After Sepidrood striker Mehrdad Bayrami scored in the hectic match at the Behnam Mahmoudi Stadium, some of the Naft Masjed Soleyman's fans threw stones at

the team and Karimi was hit by a stone.

The ex-Esteghlal coach also lost consciousness for a while but he returned on the bench at the end of the match.

Naft Masjed Soleyman equalized the game at the dying moments of the match.

After Esteghlal Khuzestan were relegated from IPL, Naft Masjed Soleyman and Sepidrood try to avoid relegation.

Iran federation confirms Syria friendly match



S P O R T S T E H R A N — The Football Federation of Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has confirmed the friendly match with Syria in June.

The match has been scheduled for June 6 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, ffiri.ir wrote.

Team Melli will also face South Korea five days later at World Cup Stadium in Seoul.

Iran are without a coach since Carlos

Queiroz left to take over as Colombia coach after Team Melli's AFC Asian Cup 2019 campaign in the United Arab Emirates in January earlier this year.

Under guidance of the Portuguese coach, Iran lost to Japan 3-0 in Asian Cup semi-finals. Team Melli are preparing for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers that begin in the second half of this year.

Matchday Five: West Zone Preview

The 16 West Asia teams are back in action this week, with eight places in the 2019 AFC Champions League knock-out stage up for grabs ahead of Matchday Five.

All teams across the four groups are still in contention for qualification to the Round of 16, setting up some tasty encounters in the eight matches taking place across Monday and Tuesday.

■ **Group A**

A point will be enough for Islamic Republic of Iran's Zobahan to seal their place in the Round of 16 when they travel to Iraq for the clash with Al Zawraa Club on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, any result other than the three points in Riyadh means Al Wasl's slim hopes of progression will vanish, leaving their opponents Al Nassr to contest the second qualification spot with Al Zawraa.

Zob Ahan had cemented their place at the top of the group table with a 2-0 win over Al Wasl on Matchday Four, keeping their unbeaten run intact. The Isfahan-based team now have 10 points, four points clear off their nearest chasers.

There was a reversal of fortunes for Al Nassr, who had failed to win any of their first two matches, but then registered back-to-back wins to climb up the table into second place with six points, two ahead of Al Wasl (UAE).

A three-match winless run following their opening day victory over Al Nassr saw Al Wasl slip to the foot of the group with three points, meaning they need to win their remaining two matches and wait for other results to go their way if they are to advance to the next stage.

- Al Zawraa Club (IRQ) vs Zobahan (IRN)
Venue: Karbala Sports City, Karbala
- Al Nassr (KSA) vs Al Wasl (UAE)
Venue: King Fahd International Stadium, Riyadh

■ **Group B**

Doing the double over Al Rayyan across the past two matchdays sent UAE's Al Wahda to the top of the group with nine points. A point at home against PFC Lokomotiv on Tuesday will confirm the Emiratis' place in the Round of 16.

The task will not be easy for coach Henk ten Cate's men, who had lost their previous three encounters against Lokomotiv, including a 2-0 defeat on Matchday One this season



and two heavy defeats in the 2018 edition; 5-0 in Tashkent and 4-1 in Abu Dhabi.

In Doha, Al Rayyan cannot afford to lose against Al Ittihad; a third consecutive defeat would consign the Qataris to elimination before the final matchday.

Their Tuesday opponents return to continental action off the back of a disappointing domestic defeat to Al Tawoun in the King's Cup final.

The two-time AFC Champions League winners are second in the table with seven points and a win on Tuesday will see them through to the knockout stage for the first time in five years.

- Al Wahda (UAE) vs PFC Lokomotiv (UZB)
Venue: Al Nahyan Stadium, Abu Dhabi
- Al Rayyan (QAT) vs Al Ittihad (KSA)
Venue: Jassim bin Hamad Stadium, Doha

■ **Group C**

The group that boasts four of the Continent's finest sides sees all of them going through turmoil ahead of a decisive Matchday Five.

Despite a return to winning ways in the previous matchday, Al Hilal go into Monday's game with a new coach and a new club president. A 5-0 defeat to Al Tawoun in the King's Cup semi-final (the club's worst in the 21st century), and a 2-0 loss to the same side in the league days later saw Zoran Mamic sacked and Prince Mohammed bin Faisal resign as president.

Al Hilal host an Al Ain side that have officially lost their

UAE Pro League title after a five-match winless run in the league saw them drop to fifth, battling for a place in next year's AFC Champions League.

A win for the Saudi side on Monday would confirm a ninth knock-out stage appearance in the last decade, while formally ending Al Ain's already slender hopes of advancing.

Esteghlal, another side who have swapped coaches since their last continental outing, will be led by Farhad Majidi, who replaced Winfried Schafer, when they welcome Al Duhail to Azadi Stadium. Any result except a win will send the Iranians out of the competition early.

- Esteghlal (IRN) vs Al Duhail (QAT)
Venue: Azadi Stadium, Tehran
- Al Hilal (KSA) vs Al Ain (UAE)
Venue: King Saud University Stadium, Riyadh

■ **Group D**

Every team in Group D could still finish top or bottom, with just three points separating leaders Al Sadd from fourth-placed Persepolis.

Last year's finalists, Persepolis have lost both their away trips this campaign, but they need a result when they travel to Tashkent for the clash of Pakhtakor on Monday. The Iranians are bottom of the group with four points, just one behind their hosts.

The second Monday fixture sees Al Ahli and Al Sadd face-off in Doha 364 days after their last encounter at the same stadium in the 2018 AFC Champions League Round of 16. Then, Al Sadd emerged 2-1 winners, laying the foundations for quarter-final progression, having earned a 2-2 draw in the reverse fixture in Jeddah a week later.

This time around, Al Sadd are a point ahead of their opponents and the three points on Monday would put the winning side in a comfortable position, although official qualification may have to wait until the final matchday nevertheless.

- FC Pakhtakor (UZB) vs Persepolis (IRN)
Venue: Pakhtakor Central Stadium, Tashkent
- Al Sadd (QAT) vs Al Ahli (KSA)
Venue: Al Maktoum Stadium, Doha

(Source: the-afc)

Celtic eye summer swoop for Iran's Milad Mohammadi

Celtic face competition from Fulham and Bristol City to sign Iran defender Milad Mohammadi, Football Insider understands.

A Hoops source has told Football Insider that Mohammadi remains on the club's radar this summer after they considered moves for the Akhmat Grozny left-back during the last two transfer windows.

The 25-year-old is out of contract at

Russian Premier League side Akhmat Grozny this summer and his availability on a free transfer has alerted a number of clubs across Europe.

Relegated Fulham are expected to make wholesale changes to their squad this summer with a number of players set to leave following relegation to the Premier League and they have been keeping tabs on Mohammadi's

situation.

Fulham could be in the market for left-sided reinforcements as speculation continues to link Ryan Sessegnon with a potential move away from Craven Cottage this summer.

Promotion-chasing Bristol City are also in the market for a new left-back this summer in case they lose the in-demand Lloyd Kelly during this summer's window.

Celtic have continued to keep tabs on 25-times international Mohammadi, who is renowned for his raids up the left flank, and they could make a move for Iranian as they look to provide cover and competition for Kieran Tierney with Emilio Izaguirre out of contract at Parkhead at the end of the season.

(Source: Football Insider)

Katayoun Khosrowyar leaves Iran to coach Reign Academy



S P O R T S T E H R A N — Iran's U-19 women football team coach Katayoun Khosrowyar has been appointed as head coach of Reign Academy.

The Iranian team headed by Khosrowyar failed to book a place AFC U-19 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 Finals on Tuesday in the competition held in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Vietnam lost to South Korea 2-1 but qualified for the competition ahead of Iran by virtue of its lower fair play points.

"It's an honor to be a part of the Reign FC family. I'm excited to bring more diversity to the team as the first Iranian American women's coach in the DA and I am looking forward to empowering more women onto the field," she posted on her Twitter account.

Iran to participate at women futsal tournament in Russia

S P O R T S T E H R A N — Iran's women's futsal team will take part at the 10th edition of the Victory Day Women Cup 2019.

The tournament will be held in Krasnogorsk, Moscow Region, Russia from May 6 to 9.

Team Melli will start the event with a match against Portugal at the Aquarium Sport Center on Monday, while host Russia face Spain.

Iran will meet Russia on Tuesday and play Spain on Wednesday.

The Iranian team will travel to Moscow on Sunday.

Team Melli are preparing for the 2020 AFC Women's Futsal Championship.

Fereshteh Karimi, Sara Shirbeigi, Fatemeh Etedadi, Fatemeh Papi, Nasimeh Gholami, Tahereh Mehdipour, Fereshteh Khosravi, Roya Kalati, Najmeh Kariminasab, Zahra Lotfabadi, Fahimeh Zarei, Mahtab Banaei and mahsa kamali have been invited to women's futsal team for the tournament.

Iran ranks 1st in Baku int'l table tennis championship

IRNA — Iranian junior table tennis players Parham Ashrafi and Elina Rahimi ranked first in 2019 international table tennis championships held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The event was held with participation of 80 players from Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkey, Georgia, Lithuania and Iran.

Iran's Parham Ashrafi defeated his Azeri rival in final match.

Meanwhile, Iranian female player Elina Rahimi overshadowed Russia player and won the game.

Iranian athlete Samran Karimi together with his Azeri rival ranked third jointly.

Alireza Faghani to officiate Sanfrecce Hiroshima v Guangzhou Evergrande

Tasnim — Iranian well-known referee Alireza Faghani has been chosen to officiate the match between Sanfrecce Hiroshima of Japan and China's Guangzhou Evergrande on Tuesday.

Sanfrecce Hiroshima will host Guangzhou Evergrande at the Hiroshima Big Arch in Matchday Five of the AFC Champions League.

Faghani will be assisted by his countrymen Mohammad Reza Mansouri and Mohammad Reza Abolfazli.

Born in 1978, Alireza Faghani has been on the international list of referees since 2008 and has officiated important matches like 2014 AFC Champions League Final, 2015 AFC Asian Cup Final, 2015 FIFA Club World Cup Final, 2016 Olympic Football Final and 2018 FIFA World Cup third-place play-off.

Al Faisaly win Jordan title for 34th time

Ahmad Ersan's 69th minute strike sealed Al Faisaly the 2018-19 Jordanian Pro League title after they edged Al Baqaa 1-0 in their penultimate match of the season on Friday.

Al Faisaly went into the tie needing three points from their remaining two matches to seal the title for a 34th time and they made no mistake at the first time of asking.

The win took them to 50 points, four ahead of Al Jazeera with just one match remaining.

The title triumph secures Al Faisaly a place in the 2020 AFC Champions League preliminary stage.

(Source: Jordan Football Association)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Overlook the blunders of the chivalrous for
in such blunders God gives them a hand and
lifts them.

Imam Ali (AS)

Bust of actor Jamshid Mashayekhi set up in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Tehran Municipality has set up a bust of veteran actor Jamshid Mashayekhi near his house in the Velenjak neighborhood.

The bust was unveiled on Friday during a ceremony attended by Mashayekhi's family, Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi and several art and cultural figures.



Members of Jamshid Mashayekhi's family (C), Tehran Mayor Piruz Hanachi (R) and fans attend the unveiling ceremony of the legendary actor's bust in the Velenjak neighborhood on May 3, 2019. (Hamshahri/Mehdi Bayat)

Sculptor Reza Hassanzadeh, a member of the Association of Iranian Sculptors, has made the bust based a portrait selected by Mashayekhi's family.

Mashayekhi died on April 2 at the age of 85.

In addition, Jeem Street, the location of Mashayekhi's house, was renamed after the legendary actor.

The Tehran City Council gave its approval to rename the street on April 7, a few days after the death of the actor.

Hanachi in his brief remarks said that honoring those who have made great efforts in promoting the culture of the country is a public duty.

Mashayekhi's son Nader, a former conductor of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, Iranian House of Cinema director Manuchehr Shahsavari and Tehran City Council member Ahmad Masjed-Jamei were among the participating guests.

Grime star Stormzy scores first UK no.1 single with "Vossi Bop"

LONDON (Reuters) — Grime artist Stormzy scored his first No. 1 in the UK singles charts on Friday, beating U.S. songstress Taylor Swift to the top spot.



Grime artist Stormzy in an undated photo.

"Vossi Bop", which features a cameo appearance from actor Idris Elba in its music video, is the London-born rapper's first single since 2017's "Gang Signs & Prayer", which topped the UK album charts.

The Official Charts Company said in a statement "Vossi Bop" had 12.7 million listens, allowing Stormzy to claim "the biggest week of streams ever for a rapper — smashing the previous figure set by Drake's 'In My Feelings' by over two million — and the fifth biggest streaming week of all time".

"Words don't really do it justice. I'm genuinely, for once in my life, speechless," Stormzy said in a statement, thanking his fans.

Stormzy, who will perform at June's Glastonbury music festival, pushed down last week's no.1 — "Old Town Road" by American rapper Lil Nas X — to no.2 while Grammy Award winner Swift's pop duet "ME!" went into the charts at no.3.

American pop singer Pink topped the UK album charts with "Hurts 2B Human".

32nd Tehran Intl. Book Fair wraps up

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The 32nd Tehran International Book Fair, which opened on April 24 with the slogan "Reading Is Ability" at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla, came to an end on Saturday.

Deputy Culture Minister for Cultural Affairs, Mohsen Javadi, attended the closing ceremony, during which a number of publishers were honored for their strong performances at the event.

"Despite all the worries and concerns due to the current adverse economic conditions, people participated in the fair actively, and this indicates the deep cultural background of the Iranian nation," Javadi said at the press conference held at the closing ceremony.

"Our activities in the national and international sections of the event were satisfactory," he added.

Publishers from Iran showcased over 300,000 books during the fair while publishing companies from abroad presented over 140,000 books from their latest offerings at the fair this year.

He also said that public book publishers and academic publishing centers have had the most number of sales at the fair.

"Holding the book fair was a big task and we regard it as a positive achievement. The main thing about the fair is that it is not a venue for just displaying the latest books, but it is a place for selling books as well. It also gets involved in international activities and we had guests from different countries," he concluded.

China was the guest of honor at the fair

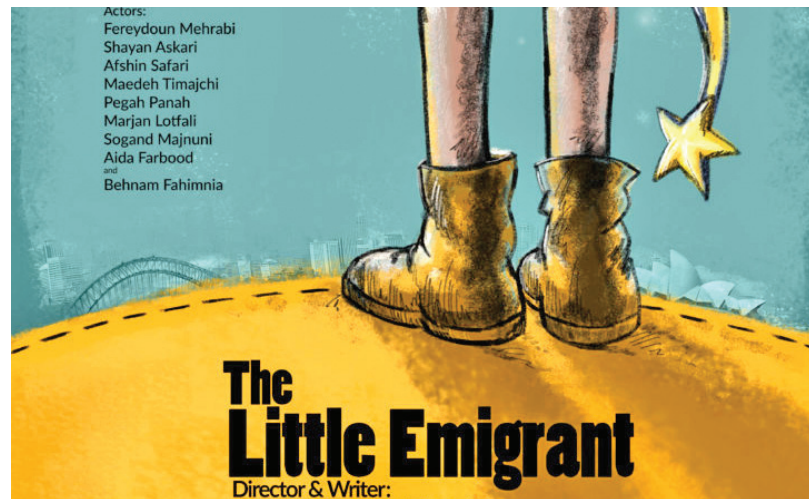


People visit the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla on April 28, 2019. (Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)

this year with the motto of "Getting to Know China".

Over 800 publishers from about 30 countries, including Japan, Germany, India, Russia, Serbia, Lebanon and Armenia, participated in the event.

Iranian troupe to perform "The Little Emigrant" in Sydney



A poster for "The Little Emigrant".

A R T **TEHRAN** — An Iranian troupe is scheduled to perform "The Little Emigrant" at Monkey Baa, an Australia's leading professional theater company for young audiences based in Sydney, from June 14 to 16.

Fereidoun Mehrabi will direct the play, which is an adaptation of Antoine de Saint-Exupery's masterpiece "The Little Prince", the Sydney House of Dramatic Arts (SHODA) has announced.

Here, the narrator is a pilot who meets the little emigrant in a chance encounter and is told the many stories of the little emigrant's journey from his home Nari to the new country.

Shayan Askari, Afshin Safari, Maedeh Timajchi, Pegah Panah, Marjan Lotfali, Sogand Majnuni and Aida Farbood are the members of the troupe.

The play is a production from SHODA co-founded by Mehrabi and Behnam Fahimnia.

Kodansha eager to cooperate with Iran's children's book publisher



An IIDCYA staff (L) speaks to Kodansha representatives during the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Representatives of Kodansha Ltd. have said that the major Japanese publishing company is eager to collaborate with Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).

Satoko Shimanaka and Miyazaki Iijima made the remarks in their visit to the pavilion of the institute at the 32nd Tehran International

Book Fair, the IIDCYA announced on Saturday. They said that Kodansha is keen to introduce books published by the IIDCYA to Japanese readers.

Kodansha is the largest Japanese publishing company, and it produces the manga magazines Nakayoshi, Afternoon, Evening, and Weekly Shonen Magazine, as well as more literary magazines such as Gunzo and Shukan Gendai.

Filmmaker Ali Donyavi Saravi wins Davud Rashidi Award

A R T **TEHRAN** — Filmmaker Ali Donyavi Saravi was honored with the Davud Rashidi Award on Friday.

He received the award from Rashidi's widow Ehteram Borumand and daughter Laili, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Saturday.

The award was launched by late actor Rashidi's family in 2017 to honor cultural figures with outstanding achievements.

This year, his family chose to present the award during the 9th Vares Short Film

Festival in the northern Iranian city of Babol in Mazandaran Province.

"We wanted to promote the festival, so we selected an artist from Mazandaran Province to be honored with the award," Borumand said at after presenting Donyavi Saravi the award.

"In his career, this man (Donyavi Saravi) has done his best to promote the culture of his motherland," she added.

"I'm so excited," Donyavi Saravi said after receiving the award.

"I'm so grateful that they viewed me as

deserving of this coveted award," he added.

Donyavi Saravi is also the writer of numerous plays about Iranian luminaries, including poets Nima Yushij, Parvin Etesami, Malek ush-Shoarayeh Bahar and Sohrab Sepehri.

Veteran actor Rashidi, star of memorable movies like Kiumars Puraahmad's "Bibi Chelchelah", Ali Hatami's "Kamalolmolk", and the acclaimed TV series "Hezardastan" and "Mokhtarnameh", died on August 26, 2016 at the age of 83.



Filmmaker Ali Donyavi Saravi.

"Intimate Audrey": Hepburn exhibition opens in Brussels

BRUSSELS (Reuters) — From personal pictures and dresses to film props and awards, an exhibition offering an intimate look at the life of late actress Audrey Hepburn has opened in Brussels, marking the 90th anniversary of the Hollywood star's birth in the Belgian city.

Put together by her son Sean Hepburn Ferrer, "Intimate Audrey" features hundreds of private and professional photos - originals and reprints - as well as some movie memorabilia, such as the scooter used in the 1953 classic "Roman Holiday" for which Hepburn won a best actress Oscar.

Hepburn Ferrer, whose father was U.S. actor Mel Ferrer, said he wanted to offer a more personal perspective of the life of the British actress, who dedicated her later years to charity work and became a UNICEF goodwill ambassador.

"She lived a humble life, a simple life, and maybe in there lies the key to why she is still so beloved today," he told Reuters.



Sean Hepburn Ferrer, poses in front of a picture of his mother Audrey Hepburn and an Oscar statuette awarded posthumously for her humanitarian work at the exhibition "Intimate Audrey" in Brussels, Belgium, May 2, 2019. (Reuters/Francois Lenoir)

Hepburn was born in 1929 in the Brussels area of Ixelles to a Dutch mother and British father. She later moved to London to pursue ballet training and eventually turned to acting, taking to the stage in New York in 1951 for Broadway play "Gigi".

"Twilight" rises again, this time as a concert tour

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — "Twilight" is coming back from the dead with a live concert that will tour the world.

Movie studio Lionsgate on Thursday announced that the vampire book and movie romance that had millions of hearts swooning is being adapted for an international live to film event.

The "Twilight in Concert" tour will feature a full orchestra performing the original movie score timed to a screening of the first of the five "Twilight" films.

The "Twilight" movie franchise, based on the best-selling novels by Stephenie Meyer, tells the story of American teenager Bella Swan who falls in love with mysterious Edward Cullen, who is a vampire.

The five movies, released between 2008-2012, took some \$3.3 billion at the global box office and launched the careers of actors Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson and Taylor Lautner. Meyer's four novels have sold more than 120 million copies worldwide.



Cast member Kristen Stewart poses for pictures before the German premiere of The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 in Berlin November 16, 2012. (Reuters/Thomas Peter)

Lionsgate said in a statement that it hoped the concert tour would "continue to expand the world of 'Twilight' and introduce it to legions of new fans around the world."

The tour will begin in Brazil in August and be followed by stops in Australia and Britain.