

China's Sinosure signs co-op MOU with Iran's CBI **4**

Traditional medicine expounds on temperaments: Phlegmatic or melancholic **12**

Iran win 2nd Asian Men's U23 Volleyball Championship title **15**

Tehran exhibit to review works by land artist Ahmad Nadalian **16**

'You invited your child to your home, so be a perfect host!'

By Setareh Behroozi

Parents invite their children to their home so they should spend time with them and be patient toward them, the Iranian renowned children author Mostafa Rahmadoost said in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times.

"We should fulfill the children's needs in the best way we can. Spend time with your children. Talk to them. Listen to their stories. If you do this, the relation between children and parents is strengthened," he added.

Rahmadoost suggested book reading for children as a part of interaction between parents and children. "Parents who don't have patience to deal with their children make them busy with cellphones and tablets but in all parts of the world wise parents reserve a time for watching TV or playing with tablets and cellphones with their children," he added.

"We prefer to work hard in order to provide facilities for our household. However, this is not the proper way. Children need you to allocate time to them," he mentioned. **->12**

Iran 'informed' of Turkish decision to build border wall



See page 2

Europeans see huge potential in Iran's energy market

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — European exhibitors participating in the 22nd International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran Oil Show 2017) believe that there is huge potential for business in Iran's oil, gas and petrochemical sectors.

The exhibition, which was held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds from May 6 to 9, hosted some 2500 domestic companies and 1500 foreign participants from 37 countries including Germany, France, Spain, Britain, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, China, South Korea, Australia, the U.S. and Canada.

To find out the viewpoints of European companies willing to do business in Iran, the Tehran Times conducted interviews with a number of European participants of the exhibition which is among the most significant oil and gas events in the world in terms of the number of exhibitors and its diversity.

'High potential, possibilities for growth'

Edwin Chen, head of global projects division in Buhlmann Group, a German premium distributor specializing in steel pipes and tubes, pipe-fittings and accessories with global operations, **->4**

IMF singles out Asia's top problems: aging population and productivity

Asia-Pacific's long-term growth outlook remains the strongest in the world, but the medium-term picture is weighed down by an aging population and sluggish productivity, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned in a new report on Tuesday.

Regional economic output is projected to hit 5.5 percent this year and 5.4 percent in 2018, well above the organization's global estimate of 3.5 percent in 2017 and 3.6 percent in 2018, but "to sustain long-term growth, structural reforms are needed to deal with challenges from the demographic transition and to boost productivity," the IMF said.

****A demographic hit
China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand — known as post-dividend economies, where the working-age population is shrinking in terms of its share in the total population and in absolute numbers — are seen reaching some of the highest old-age dependency ratios globally by 2050, the report explained.

And on the other side of the spectrum are early dividend nations that boast some of the youngest populations in the region, including India, Indonesia, and the Philippines. **->4**

Foreign novels more appealing to Iranian teens: publisher

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN — A manager of Peydayesh, a major Tehran-based company active in children's publications, has said that foreign novels are more appealing to Iranian young adults.

"Although some good Persian writers have emerged in children's literature over past few years, the foreign novels being published by our company are more appealing to Iranian teenagers," Maral Karimi told the Tehran Times at their pavilion in the Tehran International Book Fair earlier this week.

"Children are smarter nowadays and they have an unlimited access to other media so they don't enjoy simple stories anymore," she added.

"To satisfy their desire for foreign novels, we try to find works, which have received positive feedback in their countries of origin," she noted.

The novels are usually selected from among the bestsellers and works that have been honored by literary awards, she added.

Due to demands from Iranian teenagers, most of the foreign novels published in Persian are in the fantasy, horror and detective genres.

"Iranian children's writers are trying their best but we are still one step behind our children. They are wiser than before and they need more information with updated books," Zahra Khoini, the manager of the Cultural Department of Qadyani Publications, another Iranian publisher of children's book, said.

She noted that publishers make great efforts to find interesting books, which are adaptable to Iranian culture as well.

She said that they sometimes have to make slight alterations to the stories to make them appropriate for Iranian children.

"If we don't translate and prepare the books for teenagers, they can find unauthorized versions from different sources on the net, which are not acceptable to their parents, but the parents can fully trust our translations and editions," she explained.

In addition, to achieve an acceptable standard for their children's books, most publishers hire an art director to supervise the illustrations created for their publications.

Due to the fact that Iran does not hold a membership in any international copyright convention, publishers face several problems.

"Not having any agreement with foreign publishers and writers causes us problems as several translations of one book may be published by Iranian companies at the same time," Khoini explained. **->16**

In Benghazi offensive, 11 soldiers fall: report

Eleven soldiers were killed and 55 wounded on day one of an offensive against extremist groups in Benghazi, the news agency loyal to the authorities in eastern Libya said on Tuesday.

Forces loyal to military strongman Khalifa Haftar on Monday began the attack aimed at ousting extremists from their final two strongholds in Libya's second city.

"There were 11 dead and 55 wounded among the armed forces in different parts of Al-Sabri and the town center," Special Forces

spokesman Colonel Miloud Zouai told the agency.

These forces form part of Haftar's self-proclaimed Libyan National Army.

Forces loyal to Haftar, who does not recognize a United Nations-backed unity government in Tripoli and backs a rival parliament, have retaken most of the coastal city since it was overrun by extremists in 2014.

Benghazi was the birthplace of the 2011 revolution in which strongman Moamer Gaddafi was toppled and killed.

Libya has been wracked by chaos since the uprising, with rival authorities and militias battling for control of the oil-rich North African country.

Extremist groups in Benghazi, 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) east of Tripoli, include the Revolutionary Shura Council of Benghazi, an alliance of terrorists among them suspected members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group and the Al-Qaeda-linked Ansar Al-Sharia.

(Source: AFP)



Rose harvest season in southern Iran

Harvesting Damask rose, known as Gol-e Mohammadi in Iran, is an annual practice in Meymand, a city in the southern province of Fars.

The city produces over 10,000 tons of rose water out of the flower, accounting for over 60 percent of Iran's rose water export.

Iranians use Damask rose in cooking, tea serving, and celebrations in its various forms, although it doesn't play much part in the Western societies.

The flowers are also renowned for their fine fragrance, and are commercially harvested for extracting rose water and oil.

ARTICLE

M.A.Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

Mahdi Garshasbi
Tehran Times editor

Trial and error detrimental to economy

Whoever emerges victorious in the current month's presidential election must act within the framework of the 20-Year Outlook Plan which has set policies until 2025.

Promises such as a sharp increase in cash subsidies by any presidential candidate falls outside the terms of the outlook plan.

Handing out cash subsidies to the majority of the people, as promised by certain candidates, will only drain the country's coffers and leave a meager budget for developing the country's infrastructure.

Currently, an absolute majority of the 80-million Iranian population, both rich and poor, are being paid about 12 dollars per month, and in April 2014 only a very small percentage of the citizens voluntarily did not register again to receive the subsidy.

To be fair this meager money is essential for some poor families or individuals, however with this money, which amounts to \$40 billion per year, hundreds if not thousands of jobs can be created per month. This amount of money was equal to Iran's oil revenues in the previous calendar year which ended on March 20, 2017.

Economy Minister Ali Tayyebnia said on Tuesday that payment of subsidy will not "uproot" poverty.

Paying money to citizens in certain very rich countries like Kuwait and Qatar with small populations may have justifications but in a country like Iran with more than 80 million population is not advisable. It is even irrational. In Iran the cash subsidy should only go for those really in need.

There is a view among many citizens that the cash subsidy is "oil money" which belongs to the entire nation and there is no reason that if somebody is rich or can make ends meet does not receive his or her share of it. **->4**

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See page 5

ELECTION COUNTDOWN



Electoral crimes less than previous round: attorney general

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's attorney general **d e s k** said on Tuesday that the number of electoral crimes in 2017 has been lower than that of the 2013 election.

By Sunday a total of 236 suits were filed with the prosecutor's office, Mohammad Jafari Montazeri said, IRIB reported.

He added 27 of the suits were filed by the Interior Ministry and the rest by the campaign offices of candidates.



Rouhani, Jahangiri have declared properties to Judiciary: spokesman

POLITICS TEHRAN — The government **d e s k** spokesman has said that President Hassan Rouhani and First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri have already reported their properties to the Judiciary, responding to their presidential candidacy rival Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf who asked that they do so in a live TV show.

He also said according to the 6th Development Plan, tax exemption have been revoked and therefore the Imam Reza custodianship (under Ebrahim Raisi, another candidate) would have to pay taxes.



'Why didn't anybody talk of UNESCO 2030 before Leader?'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Presidential candidate **d e s k** Mostafa Mirsalim has asked why nobody talked about the UNESCO 2030 education document before the issue was raised by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday.

"The government gentlemen bow to the UNESCO 2030 document while we have talks to talk in the education field," Mirsalim said, Fars reported.

He stressed that a domestic document defining a master plan for the Ministry of Education should be implemented instead.



Galibaf: I will start tackling unemployment from underprivileged areas

POLITICS TEHRAN — Presidential candidate **d e s k** Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has said he will start tackling unemployment in underprivileged areas.

"Today economic crisis has afflicted all. Joblessness does not know Kurd, Turk, Baluch, Arab, or Fars," he said during a trip to Kurdistan province on Tuesday, Mehr reported.

"The first thing I would address would be joblessness," he said, adding, "We have good potentials among the youth, but some are looking to the West."



56 million Iranians eligible to vote

POLITICS TEHRAN — 56 million Iranians are **d e s k** eligible to vote in the council and presidential elections on May 19, according to the Interior Ministry election headquarters chief.

Speaking to ISNA on Tuesday, Ali Asqar Ahmadi said 1,350,294 people are expected to vote for the first time.

Ahmadi said he was speaking based on a 2016 census, adding all with a minimum age of 18 years can vote.

He also said Iranian expatriates who have lost their national IDs can use their passports to vote.



Hadi Khamenei endorses Rouhani

POLITICS TEHRAN — Seyyed Hadi Khamenei, **d e s k** brother of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, on Tuesday voiced his support for Hassan Rouhani as presidential candidate.

"I would like to ask all to vote for Mr. Rouhani for the country to thrive and have peace and for Iranians to be proud," he said in an announcement, the Iran Students News Agency reported.

"This time negligence will have much greater consequences," he said, adding, "We should dispel adventurism and lack of plan and ethics."

Zarif urges respect for national dignity

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian **d e s k** Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that the people's dignity should be respected in the political campaigns.

The remarks by the chief diplomat came as the presidential rivals are trading barbs.

"When the regional countries announce that they cannot compete with Iran because of the JCPOA (the Persian acronym for the international nuclear deal), we should not question the people's dignity in parochial political campaigns for some short-term benefits," he said during his speech at a conference of association of surgeons in Tehran.

The Iranian people have dignity and pride in spite of all the pressures, he said adding that Iran has made advances in the area of science and people's living conditions have been improved.

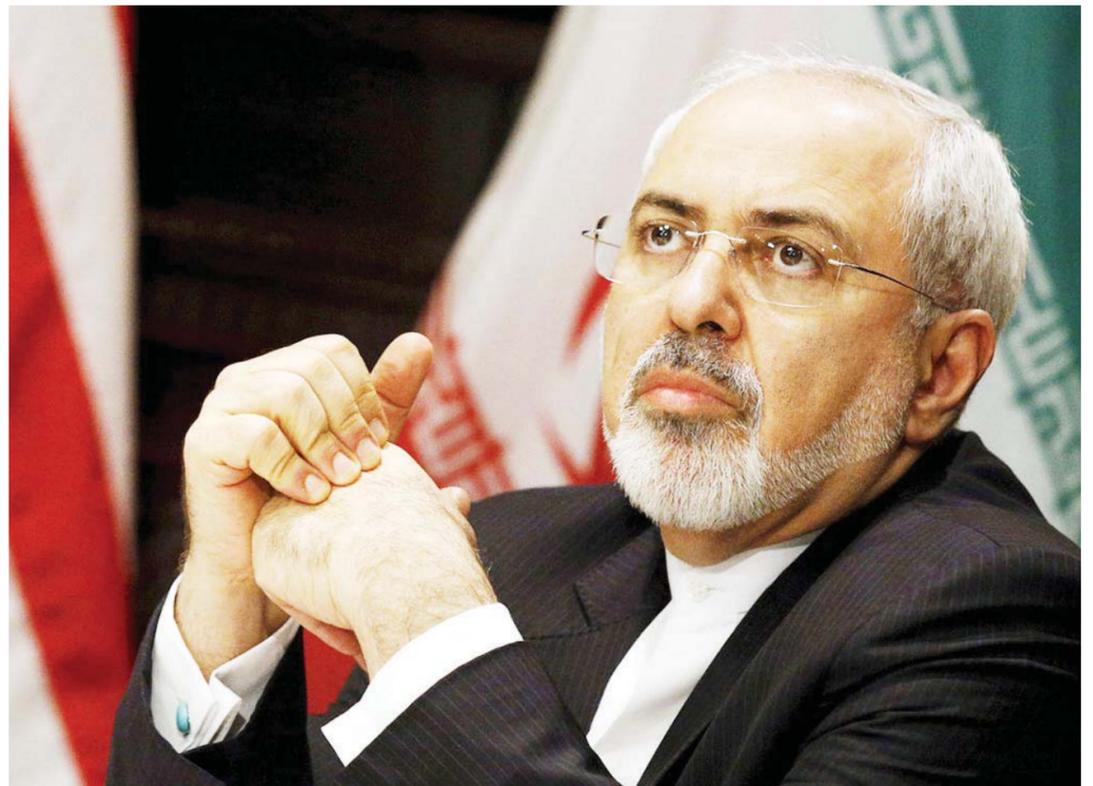
He added, "Definitely, it is not possible to make up for pressures that were exerted on the people's living conditions during eight year (of the Ahmadinejad presidency) in just one year and four months after the removal of sanctions."

The July 2015 nuclear deal between Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany and the European Union went into effect in January 2016.

Zarif said the people can witness a better prospect if they become hopeful about the future.

Elsewhere, he said that decisions on the country's future cannot be made by relying on "old patterns and thoughts."

"In a situation in which the tools for power and also interaction in the international community have been



changed fundamentally, it is the people who are the permanent element of the country's power," he added.

He noted that the people deserve respect and should be the main motivators behind any decision.

Zarif added "adopting people-based policy", "serving the people" and "removing burden from the people's shoulders" form the most important factors of the country's national power. "Being people-based is a policy

not a slogan. When it comes to the international relations, this policy means that you should sacrifice yourself for the future of the people (and) not sacrifice the people for your political future," the chief diplomat noted.

Canadian political delegation in Iran for talks

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign **d e s k** Ministry announced on Tuesday that a Canadian political delegation is in Tehran for talks on bilateral relations.

Also in a phone conversation with his Canadian counterpart Chrystia Freeland on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said it is necessary to provide the condition for Iranian residents in Canada to vote in the May 19 presidential elections.

"Iranian residents abroad are strongly willing to participate in determining their country's future," Zarif said.

Freeland said that the Canadian government is aware of the importance of presidential elections for the Iranian residents.

However, she said that some issues should be studied given the lack of political relations between the two countries.

Iran and Canada cut diplomatic relations in 2012.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who took office in 2015 has reportedly been reviewing relations with Iran and, like most countries, lifted most of its economic sanctions following the Iran nuclear agreement in July 2015.

Iran and the 5+1 group - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany - finalized the text of the deal - known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)- in Vienna in July 2015. The agreement went into effect in January 2016.

Iran 'informed' of Turkish decision to construct border wall

By Ali Kushki

TEHRAN — An official with the Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that Turkey has "informally informed" Tehran of a plan to construct an Iran-Turkey border wall.

"Iran is informally informed of Turkey's intention to construct a wall along parts of its borders with Iran," the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told the Tehran Times.

"Apparently, Turkish officials intend to apply new measures to tighten border security."

The official did not elaborate on diplomatic contacts over the issue.

On Tuesday, the Turkish Hurriyet Daily News, quoting a senior official, reported that Ankara is considering plans to build a wall along the Turkish-Iranian border as part of measures against the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The PKK, which first took up arms more than three decades ago, is considered a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and European Union.

Reportedly, the wall will be constructed



Ankara is considering plans to build a wall along the Turkish-Iranian border as part of measures against the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which it says are in camps inside Iran.

along 70-km of the border near Agra and [the eastern province of] Igdir, and the rest will be protected with watch towers and iron fences, the report further said.

Iranian-Turkish border stretches from north to south for more than 300 miles.

Turkey previously constructed a wall along the Syrian border to shield PKK and ISIS terrorists carrying out suicide attacks.

Turkish officials claim some 800 to 1,000 PKK guerrillas are in camps inside Iran.

Tehran has not formally responded to the comments yet.

Like Iraq and Turkey, Iran has a large Kurdish minority, mainly living in northwest and western areas of the country.

In 2011, Iran threatened to take military action against the Iraq-based Kurdish rebel group PJAK, an offshoot of the PKK.

Tehran and Ankara support opposite sides in the conflict in Syria. Iran backs the government of President Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey has backed elements of the Syrian opposition.

Yet, the two, coupled with Russia, are directly involved in the Astana talks to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

950,000 jobs should be created annually: government spokesman

POLITICS TEHRAN — To bring the unemployment **d e s k** rate to single digit by the end of the six year development, which falls on 2021, it is needed to create 950,000 jobs per year, government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said on Tuesday.

Nobakht also told a weekly press briefing that Astan Quds Razavi is no longer relieved from paying taxes, ISNA reported.

"Under the Sixth Development Plan, Astan Quds Razavi is required to pay taxes," Nobakht said.

It came days after President Rouhani lashed out at Ebrahim Raisi, director of the foundation and one of his rivals in the May 19 presidential election, for refusing to pay taxes.

Raisi, who is the custodian of the Imam Reza Holy shrine (Astan Quds Razavi) in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad, had criticized the Rouhani administration regarding tax evasion and underlined the necessity of paying taxes.

"They talk of the need to pay taxes. Have you ever



paid taxes in the place you are managing?" asked Rouhani, addressing a huge crowd of his supporters in northwestern city of Oroumijeh on Sunday.

"You are managing an institution that no one dares to criticize," he added.

Raisi responded to the criticisms in a video published through social media just hours after Rouhani's remarks.

In the video, Raisi said the previous AQR custodian, the late Ayatollah Vaez Tabasi, wrote a letter to Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Khomeini, 30 years ago, saying the entire economic system of the foundation is based on the money received from people's endowment.

"Imam Khomeini in response said that the Astan Quds Razavi and its subsidiaries are exempted from paying taxes, and should rather spend the money on pilgrims and the poor," Raisi stated.

He added that when he was appointed as the new custodian, he himself wrote a letter to the Leader of the Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, asking what should be done about the foundation's tax exemption.

According to Raisi, the Leader replied, "What Imam Khomeini said should be observed; however, the complex should pay its value added tax (VAT) and withholding taxes."

Russian, Syrian troops celebrate Victory Day in Hmeymim

Russian and Syrian troops deployed to Hmeymim air base in northwestern Syria have held a ceremony to mark the historic occasion of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany.

The occasion, known as the Victory Day, was marked on Tuesday, when the Russian and Syrian military personnel held a parade, carrying Victory Banner, a symbol of fascism's defeat in the Great Patriotic War.

Fighter jets, military vehicles, artillery units and armored personnel carriers also took part in the parade.

The Victory Day celebrations at Hmeymim, the base from which Russian jets scramble to launch attacks against positions of militants in Syria, also marked the deepening cooperation between the military forces of Syria and Russia.

The Russian military started an air campaign against militants in Syria in September 2015 after Damascus submitted an official request.

Russia has faced criticism from the West over the military presence in Syria although it defends the campaign, saying it is necessary to prevent the return of Russian nationals who have joined militant groups in Syria over the past years.

Thousands of Russians are believed to be fighting within the ranks of Takfiri terrorist groups in Syria and neighboring Iraq.

Damascus has hugely benefited from Russia's assistance, especially in the north of the country where the Syrian military managed to purge the key city of Aleppo from militants late last year.

Russian jets have also carried out numerous sorties against positions of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group in eastern Syria.

Syria blames more than six years of militancy, which has left hundreds of thousands of people dead, on foreign governments, naming Turkey, the House of Saud regime and Qatar as the main culprits.

United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimated in August last year that more than 400,000 people had been killed in the war in Syria until then. The UN stopped its official casualty count in the war-torn country, citing its inability to verify the figures it received from various sources.

Germany arrests two suspected Syria Takfiri militants

Elsewhere, German security officials have arrested two Syrians suspected of fighting for Takfiri militants in the country amid growing concerns about the backlash of Western-sponsored militancy in Europe.

Federal prosecutors said 30-year-old Abdulmalk A.



and 23-year-old Mousa H. A. were arrested in Berlin on Tuesday based on warrants issued last week.

Both men allegedly joined the al-Nusra Front, now called Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, in 2012 to fight against the Syrian government, with Abdulmalk A. being appointed as the commander of a unit in eastern Syria.

Prosecutors said Abdulmalk A. is also accused of committing a war crime, saying the man "captured a sniper of the Syrian regime in spring 2013 near the city of Tabqa, forced him to dig his own grave and cut his throat."

Abdulmalk A. allegedly joined ISIL in mid-2013 and was put in charge of the Euphrates dam near the city of Tabqa, prosecutors pointed out.

Germany has been on high alert since July 2016, when a spate of attacks killed 15 people, including four attackers, and left dozens injured.

In December 2016, a Tunisian man drove a truck into a crowd at a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 12 people. ISIL claimed responsibility for the assault.

Germany's domestic security and intelligence agency, BfV (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz), warned recently that Takfirism is spreading in the country.

According to a recent study by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism based in The Hague, four European Union member states, including Bel-

gium, Britain, France and Germany, have been branded as the largest source of European militants fighting in Syria and Iraq.

The four European countries contributed to the militancy in Iraq and Syria by having 2,838 of their nationals traveling to those countries for joining terrorist outfits, the study said.

That is more than half of a total of 4,294 foreign fighters who have left the EU member states for those two Arab states over the past few years.

The independent think-tank, which has used data supplied by 26 EU countries, said that about 30 percent of those European militants have since returned home, while about 14 percent were killed on the battlefield. It said 17 percent of the group were women, and up to 23 percent were converts to Islam. Most of those militants came from urban areas or peripheral suburbs of the European cities.

The study warned the European governments about the risks associated with the return of those citizens, saying the states have lacked the proper policies to counter the flow.

Estimates suggest that some 30,000 foreign fighters from about 104 countries were fighting in Iraq and Syria between September 2014 and September 2015.

(Source: Press TV)

White House warned Michael Flynn was 'compromised'

The White House was warned in January that the United States President Donald Trump's national security adviser Michael Flynn was vulnerable to Russian blackmail, a top former official has told politicians, as the issue of Moscow's meddling in the U.S. election returned to the spotlight.

Former acting attorney general Sally Yates, a Barack Obama appointee who was sacked by Trump early in his presidency, made the disclosure during hotly-anticipated testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday.

Yates said she told the White House six days into Trump's administration that Flynn, a former military intelligence chief, had not been honest with Vice President Mike Pence about his discussions with the Russian ambassador to Washington, leaving him vulnerable to leverage from Moscow.

It nevertheless took 18 days before the president, pressed by Pence and others, dismissed the retired army lieutenant general, who had advised him on security

issues throughout the 2016 presidential campaign.

"We believed that General Flynn was compromised with respect to the Russians," Yates told the hearing in her first public comments on the scandal over ties between Trump's team and Russia that has dogged the opening months of his presidency.

"This was a problem because not only did we believe that the Russians knew this but that they likely had proof of this information. And that created a compromise situation, a situation where the national security adviser essentially could be blackmailed by the Russians."

The testimony by Yates, who was fired on January 30 after defying Trump over his contested travel ban, confirmed reports that she had informed the White House early on of the justice department's concerns about Flynn.

Yates did not say what Flynn had discussed with ambassador Sergey Kislyak in a number of December 2016 phone calls, which were secretly monitored by U.S. in-

telligence.

Pence said in January that Flynn denied those calls involved sanctions placed on Russia by the Obama administration in response to its election meddling.

Obama warning

Yates' comments came after former Obama officials revealed that the outgoing president himself firmly warned Trump against naming Flynn as national security adviser, only two days after the November 8 election.

Obama had cautioned against Flynn, whom he fired in 2014 as head of the defense intelligence agency, due to his poor record in administration and personnel management.

The warning was "based on Flynn's role as head of DIA," a former administration official told the AFP.

Yates' testimony returned the spotlight to the simmering controversy over Russia's meddling in last year's U.S. election.

Known as a tough and independent prosecutor, Yates has been a target of Trump's anger since her refusal in January

to support his controversial immigration ban on nationals from several Muslim-majority nations - for which he fired her.

Trump has repeatedly branded the issue of Russian interference "fake news" despite leaders of the U.S. intelligence community concluding that President Vladimir Putin himself was behind the meddling.

Investigations by several congressional committees have been bogged down for weeks amid accusations by Democrats that Republicans have stalled progress to protect the White House.

Earlier in the day Trump shot off a series of pre-emptive Twitter strikes, accusing Obama of enabling Flynn, and assailing Yates for allegedly leaking classified information.

"General Flynn was given the highest security clearance by the Obama administration," he said.

"Ask Sally Yates, under oath, if she knows how classified information got into the newspapers soon after she explained it to WH Counsel."

(Source: AFP)

Putin: WW2 started due to disunity of world's leading countries, calls on world to unite

The Nazis were able to start World War II because of the disunity of the world's leading countries, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated during a Victory Day parade at Moscow's Red Square, adding that the lessons of the past should not be ignored.

"This horrific tragedy could not be prevented, first and foremost, because of the connivance of the criminal ideology of racial superiority, because of the disunity of the world's leading countries. This allowed the Nazis to appropriate themselves the right to decide the fate of other peoples, to unleash the most brutal, bloody war, to enslave almost all European countries, putting them at the service of their deadly targets," the Russian leader said, speaking during the military parade in Moscow marking the 72nd anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany in 1945.

According to Putin, the greatness of Victory Day is "defined by the people, by their unprecedented heroic act of saving the Fatherland, and a decisive contribution to the defeat of Nazism."

"The triumphant victory over this terrible totalitarian force will remain in human history forever as the highest point of the triumph of life and mind over death and



barbarity," he stressed.

"We must remember that the victory was won at the cost of huge, irreplaceable fatalities, that the war took millions of lives," Putin concluded.

In order to effectively combat terrorism, extremism, and neo-Nazism today, the entire world community should unite, the Russian president noted.

"The lessons of the past war urge us to

be vigilant, and the Russian Armed Forces are capable of repelling any potential aggression," the Russian president said, stressing that "nowadays, life itself requires raising our defense potential."

"But to effectively combat terrorism, extremism, neo-Nazism, and other threats, consolidation of the entire international community is necessary," Putin said.

"We are open for such cooperation,

and Russia will always be on the side of forces for peace, with those who choose the path of equal partnership, who deny wars as contrary to the very essence of life and human nature."

The Victory Day parade has concluded on Moscow's Red Square, where some 10,000 people took part and 114 military vehicles were on display. After attending the festive event, Putin laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier beside the Kremlin walls to honor the fallen soldiers of World War II. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu, and other top Russian officials attended the ceremony.

Meanwhile, Thousands of exemplary servicemen and women, along with the most advanced and battle-tested equipment, paraded through Red Square in a grand military exhibit that constitutes the focal point of the annual Victory Day celebrations in Russia.

More than 10,000 soldiers and officers took part in the parade marking the 72nd anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. On show, some 100 state-of-the-art pieces of military vehicles.

(Source: RT)

Liberal Moon Jae-in expected to win South Korea's presidency

Liberal politician Moon Jae-in is expected to win South Korea's presidential election, exit polls showed, an expected victory that would end nearly a decade of conservative rule and bring a more conciliatory approach toward North Korea.

Moon, 64, is expected to beat conservative challenger, former prosecutor Hong Joon-pyo, by 41.4 percent to 23.3 percent of the votes, exit polls conducted jointly by three network television stations showed.

If his win is confirmed, Moon of the main opposition Democratic Party would replace Park Geun-hye, who was impeached in December by parliament over a sweeping corruption scandal.

The Constitutional Court upheld her parliamentary impeachment in March, making her the first democratically elected leader to be removed from office and triggering a snap election to choose her successor.

A Gallup Korea poll last week showed Moon had 38 percent support in a field of 13 candidates.



Moon favors dialogue with North Korea to ease rising tension over its accelerating nuclear and missile program. He also wants to reform powerful family-run conglomerates, such as Samsung and Hyundai, and boost fiscal spending to create jobs.

Moon, who narrowly lost to Park in the last presidential election, in 2012, has criticized the two former conservative governments for failing to stop North Korea's weapons development. He advocates a two-track policy of dialogue while maintaining pressure and sanctions to encourage change.

He said in a YouTube live stream on Tuesday South Korea should take on a more active diplomatic role to curb North Korea's nuclear threat and not watch idly as the United States and China talk to each other.

If his victory is confirmed, Moon will be sworn in on Wednesday after the release of the official result. Most candidates, including Moon and Ahn, have said they would skip a lavish inauguration ceremony and start work straight away.

The new leader is expected to quickly name a prime minister, who will need parliamentary approval, and main cabinet positions, including national security and finance ministers, which do not need parliamentary confirmation.

(Source: Reuters)

French ex-Prime Minister Valls offers to back Macron in June elections

Former French Socialist Prime Minister Manuel Valls said on Tuesday he wanted to stand for President-elect Emmanuel Macron's political movement in June parliamentary elections, the first high-profile defection since Macron's election win on Sunday.

Valls' move could be a boost for Macron, who needs to secure a majority in the elections to have a realistic chance of implementing his ambitious reform plans.

But Macron will be cautious about inviting too many prominent former Socialists into his movement as that would lend credence to the arguments of his conservative opponents that Macron's administration will be a continuation of outgoing President Francois Hollande's unpopular administration.

Valls' overture received a non-committal response from Macron's party. Party spokesman Benjamin Griveaux said Valls had not applied to the party's selection committee and had 24 hours left to do so.

"I will be a candidate for the presidential majority and I wish to join his (Macron's) movement," Valls, who was prime minister in Hollande's administration between 2014 and 2016, told RTL radio.

"This Socialist party is dead. It is behind us," he said.

"The essential thing today is to give a broad and coherent majority ... to Emmanuel Macron to allow him to govern."

The defection highlights the disarray in the Socialist party, whose candidate Benoit Hamon attracted just six percent of votes in the first round of the presidential election.

Valls, who announced in March he would vote for Macron in the presidential election, is on the right of the Socialist party and has similar pro-business views to Macron, who will assume office next Sunday as France's youngest leader since Napoleon.

Jean-Paul Delevoye, head of the committee for selecting parliamentary candidates for Macron's party, said any would-be candidate must respect the party's rules and then the committee would review the application.

"There is one extremely important criterion and that is the sincerity of (the candidate's) support for the presidential program," he told Reuters.

Macron's party currently has no seats in parliament.

An opinion poll last week predicted however that his party is set to emerge as the largest in the parliamentary elections.

Macron's party chief, Richard Ferrand, told a news conference on Monday that his "En Marche!" movement will now change its name to "En Marche la République" or "Republic on the Move", so as to structure itself more like a traditional party.

Ferrand said the names of Macron's 577 candidates in the legislative elections would be announced on Thursday.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



NIOC in talks with OMV for selling 40,000 bpd of crude oil

ENERGY TEHRAN — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is in talks with Austrian OMV for selling 40,000 barrels per day of crude oil to the company, Tasnim reported on Tuesday citing Argus Media.

According to Ali Kardor, NIOC's managing director, part of the deliveries will be as payback for OMV's exploration activities in Iran a decade ago.

"The two sides are finalizing the terms of the contract," he said.



Poland ready to invest in Iran's maritime industries

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Polish private sector is ready for investment in the shipping and maritime industries of Iran's southwestern Khuzestan Province, IRIB news reported quoting a Polish official as saying.

According to Iran's Maritime News Agency (MANA), in a meeting with members of Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Ahvaz (center city of Khuzestan), Polish energy minister's counselor mentioned Khuzestan's great geographical advantages including long coasts, active ports and access to the Persian Gulf waters and said Polish private companies are ready to contribute to maritime projects in this region.



China's Sinosure signs co-op MOU with Iran's CBI

ECONOMY TEHRAN — China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation (commonly known as Sinosure) signed a cooperation MOU with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), IRIB news reported.

Vice President of the Chinese Insurance Corporation, Weimin Zha and his accompanying delegation met with the foreign exchange deputy of the CBI, Gholamali Kamyab, to sign the MOU.

According to the MOU, the Chinese export credit corporation will provide export insurance for Chinese construction and production investments in Iran.

Indonesia strives to build financial market to match its might

Indonesia has the largest economy in Southeast Asia, but you can't tell from its financial markets, which are a fraction the size of some of its neighbors.

The nation's regulators have tried to change that, and progress is being made. The rupiah's daily trading volume has climbed more than 40 percent in four years. There's also greater activity in hedging and the central bank has allowed a wider scope of derivatives. The value of money market transactions in the first quarter was nearly double the volume seen in all of 2013.

"While I'm happy about what we've accomplished, it's still not in line with expectations when compared with our peers," said Nanang Hendarsah, who last year took charge of a new central bank unit to develop the country's markets. "We still have a lot of homework."

The goal: a market where investors can be confident of getting competitive prices and executing trades in a timely fashion -- unlike during the 2013 "taper tantrum" when some had to wait days for foreign-exchange deals to go through. Greater size and liquidity in stocks and bonds would offer new channels of funding for Indonesian companies seeking to benefit from the nation's swelling middle class.

Indonesia's bureaucrats have been overhauling long-held customs. Years ago, officials would call traders chastising them for setting the rupiah at levels authorities didn't like. Hendarsah, then assistant to the central bank governor, vowed to let market forces play a greater role and to put a stop to the phone calls.

Bank Indonesia has eased trading restrictions in other ways, including allowing cross-currency swaps and expanding the scope for foreign funds' participation, and it has given the market a boost by ordering companies to hedge currency exposure. Alongside the deepening in money markets, the central bank chose the seven-day reverse repurchase rate as its policy benchmark, tying monetary decisions more closely to actual borrowing costs.

Priorities now include tightening rules on trader conduct, rolling out more complex instruments, and setting up a clearing house and electronic trading platform for currency and money-market transactions.

A bigger market can withstand shifts in capital flows and lead to more efficient pricing, lowering cross-border risks for foreign investors and attracting much-needed funding, Hendarsah said. That would be a boon for President Joko Widodo's infrastructure-investment plans, which cover construction projects from ports to railways.

The central bank's goal is to grow Indonesia's foreign-exchange market to the equivalent of about 3 percent of the value of the country's trade by 2020, around the level found in Thailand and Malaysia now, Hendarsah said. Indonesia's current ratio is only 1.8 percent.

Credibility is important, as well as the assurance that investors can enter and exit freely, said Ikhwan Fauzana, head of rates trading at PT Bank Negara Indonesia in Jakarta.

"Now we're in a virtuous cycle of more people hedging, meaning more market participants creating a more stable market that can attract inflows," Fauzana said. "The hope is this continues and slowly rebuilds trust." (Source: Bloomberg)

Europeans see huge potential in Iran's energy market

➔ said that there is high potential and possibilities for growth in the Iranian market, "There are many resources and we're really seeing things are moving forward."

He said that it was his first time of participation in Iran Oil Show, but his company has visited the exhibition several times.

Asked about his evaluation of the exhibition, the German participant said: "It is interesting and I would really say that it's a very big concentration for everyone related to oil industry. We really do see different sectors which come from the end users to the beginning of the supply chain and this is not really common in other parts of the world. So normally we don't have this full package in defined sectors."

When it came to the concerns for business activity in Iran, he said: "Of course, the political situation for Europeans is a very sensitive topic, because we would like to have a long-term business, however due to the political situation it would definitely affect financial state of having correspondence with our Iranian customers and it will result in some kind of uncertainty."

Describing Iranian market, another first-time German participant, Raphaël G.D. Murswieck, the business development manager in Oil Dynamics GmbH, a company providing turnkey pumping solutions, said: "There is huge potential, nice people, and nice to be here and provide our solutions."

About the downside of business in Iran, he said: "Maybe the currency issues, for the payments, but in general I don't see many downsides."

'Huge number of opportunities'

Markus Gumplmayr, from the Austrian Chamber of Commerce Headquarters in Vienna, who was the organizer of



Austrian pavilion in the exhibition, described the Iranian market in this way: "There is a very young generation, very interested people in innovations, huge number of opportunities in Iran and from this point of view I think it's a very attractive market for everybody."

"There is long historical tie between Iran and Austria and we'll be happy to support Iranians with the high quality products", he underlined.

"We have been here (in the oil show) several times and this is the second time after the sanctions that we are here and we plan to grow and to develop the Austrian pavilion and to enlarge the group in the next year", the Austrian participant stated.

"If I want to evaluate and compare [this edition of the event with the previous editions], I say that people are more open-minded, there are more people interested in talks, business to business talks are interesting, and I hope the contact between Iran and Austria will

also be developed in positive way, not only in business but also in politics", he commented.

"We have 14 companies here in the pavilion and three more individual exhibitors which next time will come to join us", he said and put the number of participants from his country in the previous edition of the event at 10 while they are planning to increase the figure to 20 in the next edition.

'Competitive, progressing market'

G.L. Rangnekar, a director in Italy's VRV, one of the leading global companies in design and manufacture of pressure equipment for petrochemical, refining, energy and fertilizer industries, said: "It's like the [Iranian] market is very competitive, it's progressing. We see Iranian market is a good progressive market and we are committed to this market."

"We have strong presence in Iran. It is the third time we are participating, last

two years we were here and we see Iranian market is a good potential business for our group companies", he noted.

Briefing upon their activity in Iran, he said: "There are a lot of petrochemical projects coming up; we see good collaborative ties with the local companies. It's a big market for us."

When speaking about advantages of Iran for their business, the director said: "There are always good potential, good people, technical skills available; people are very open, they know the subject, they are very focused in what they require."

Although he went on to say: "Oil price is always a cause of concern, how market will move, there are many challenges in global scenario, how to overcome those challenges is a maker of debate, but we are always optimistic and I think this market go for sure positively."

'Number of French participants doubled in 2 years'

Agnès Hagyak, the oil and gas project manager in Business France, a big agency in charge of promoting France abroad, who was the organizer of French pavilion in the exhibit, said: "We organized the French pavilion for the third year, so we began in 2015 with a small pavilion with 15 companies, we had 30 participants last year and 35 ones this year."

"We have more companies, many visitors are also coming without exhibiting, so there is the interest of working in Iran and now we wait to see how thing will go", she added.

"After the sanctions are closed we have more companies. In the French pavilion, we have 35 companies, but there are many French companies outside that work already with their Iranian partners, so they don't need us to come in the Iranian market, because they have already partners", she explained.

Trial and error detrimental to economy

➔ The distribution of money, especially after oil prices nosedived, put serious budget constraints on the government. The Parliament, aware of this fact, has tasked the government to cut cash handouts to families whose incomes is over 9,200 dollars per year. However, the government is very slow in enacting the ratification as there is not comprehensive data about families' income. Moreover, it seems that the government is of the opinion that cutting subsidies will create a bad feeling among the citizens.

Parliament speaker Ali Larijani recently

told the presidential candidates that it is impossible to increase cash subsidies by two or three times. The judiciary chief has also warned the candidates to avoid "baseless slogans", noting that promises such as increasing subsidies entail careful studies. The central bank governor has also said any increase in subsidies necessitates a rise in energy prices which automatically lead to high inflation rate.

If the government distributes the oil money among the people then what will happen if oil prices fall further as they decreased from a high of \$100 per barrel in

2013 to \$40 in 2016.

The candidates should know that oil has found serious competitors. In addition to the shale and oil gas, the renewable energy resources, which are essential to save the planet earth, are threatening the future of fossil fuels such as oil.

In the first look the majority of people welcome cash handouts but it is economic and social experts who know about its repercussions.

Instead of distributing money the government should get money from the people through taxes in order to build a

sustainable prosperous economy.

The economy got a departure from its path within the framework of the Outlook Plan from 2005 to 2013 as the sitting government did not believe in the plan and argued that it slows implementation of economic projects.

According to the April report of the International Monetary Fund, Iran's economy is projected to rank 31st among 191 countries in 2017 in terms of GDP. Now it is not acceptable to resort to trial and error in such a big economy with over 80 million population.

Top experts say TPP might happen without Trump

Reports of the demise of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement may be premature, as the deal's members consider proceeding without the U.S.

That's the wind in the air at the Institute of International Finance conference in Japan, despite U.S. President Donald Trump pulling the U.S. out of the TPP, a broad 12-nation trade deal, which he claimed was a "disaster" that would hurt U.S. manufacturing.

Although Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had initially said that the TPP would be "meaningless" without the U.S., more recently, Japanese officials have begun to second Australia's calls to proceed without the U.S.

Deborah Elms, executive director at the Asian Trade Centre, said the other 11 nations have decided they want to preserve the benefits of the deal.

"I think that's hubris on the part of the U.S. to assume that once we pull out, then everybody else is going to go home," she told CNBC's "Squawk Box" on the sidelines of the conference on Monday. "This is a 12-party agreement. The other 11 are equally important on their own right."

She noted that the TPP was skewed toward U.S. interests, which may pose challenges to shaping an ex-U.S. pact, but she still expected a deal could be reached by year-end.

Elms added that Japan may also be hoping the U.S. might rejoin the deal later.

Japan was set to be a major beneficiary of TPP, par-



ticularly the country's auto sector would have obtained cheaper access to U.S. markets.

The U.S. leader has also complained about his country's trade deficit with Japan, pointing particularly to an imbalance in auto sales: Japan exports more than a million cars to the U.S. annually, while the U.S. sells a little more than 10,000 vehicles a year in Japan.

Analysts generally attribute the imbalance not to trade barriers, but to U.S. cars being ill-suited to the Japanese market, which tends to prefer small, fuel-efficient cars, and to the lack of established dealer networks.

Charles Lake, president of Aflac International and chairman of Aflac Japan, said at the conference that TPP-11 was well within the realm of possibility.

Lake said on Tuesday that Japan was in a position to negotiate TPP-11 as the government has already done

the TPP-spurred work to lay foundations for reform.

When that new TPP deal is eventually concluded in a few years, other countries, such as South Korea and maybe even the U.S., might be ready to jump in, he added.

Trump's decision to walk away from TPP damaged at least some of Abe's structural reform drives. For example, Abe's administration managed to push through some liberalizing measures for the tightly controlled agriculture sector, with the promise of more to come to comply with TPP, in part by dangling the prospect of access to large export markets such as the U.S.

Reforming the agriculture sector has long been politically unpalatable in Japan, even though it's widely believed to be necessary in a country where food prices are considered relatively high because of the segment's inefficiencies.

That could be one reason Japan got on the TPP-11 bandwagon.

Speaking on a panel at the IIF meeting on Monday, Nobuyuki Hirano, president and group CEO for Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, said expected Japan would push for a deal.

"It's clear that U.S. economy's size and the market was the critically important point for every of the 11 nations," Hirano said. "So it's not easy, but that's the way you probably move forward. And then you invite the Trump administration to join us." (Source: cnbc)

IMF singles out Asia's top problems: aging population and productivity

➔ "Overall, demographics are likely to be slightly negative for Asian growth and could subtract 0.1 of a percentage point from annual global growth over the next three decades, or 0.2 of a percentage point if early-dividend countries are unable to reap the demographic dividend," the report said.

Aging could also add downward pressure on real interest rates and asset returns, the report added.

But labor, pension and retirement reforms can help. These include promoting

the labor force participation of women and the elderly as well as minimum pension guarantees, the IMF outlined. New financial products to reduce precautionary savings and increase the availability of safe assets would also be useful, it added.

Output vs input

Asia has experienced a productivity growth slowdown since the global financial crisis, particularly in more advanced economies such as China, the IMF noted.

"Sustained improvements in welfare and living standards ultimately require

productivity growth. Extensive growth, driven by capital accumulation, is possible for a while. But over long periods of time, only productivity growth, or intensive growth, can overcome decreasing returns to capital and lower investment."

New technologies, new ways of organizing production processes, research and development (R&D) expenditure, exports, imports, and foreign direct investment (FDI) are all key drivers of productivity growth, according to the IMF.

"The main policy issue is how to raise

productivity growth when external factors might not be as supportive as they were before the global financial crisis. In particular, further trade liberalization might be more difficult to achieve," the IMF stated.

Advanced economies must focus on strengthening the effectiveness of R&D spending while developing countries should ramp up domestic investments in education and infrastructure, the organization explained.

(Source: CNBC)

Oil steadies, but rattled by concern about OPEC's clout

Oil prices rose on Tuesday, but faced headwinds from concern over slowing demand and the rise in U.S. crude output that has shaken investors' faith in the ability of OPEC to rebalance the market.

Brent crude futures were up 20 cents at \$49.54 per barrel at 0852 GMT, above a session low of \$49.18, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate futures were up 21 cents at \$46.64 per barrel.

Weekly U.S. data on crude production and inventories, plus monthly reports on supply and demand from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and the U.S. Energy Information Administration this week, should provide a detailed picture of how quickly global crude inventories are falling.

"We really need to see some of the data starting to support the idea that global inventory levels are coming down," Saxo Bank senior manager Ole Hansen said.

"Almost as importantly, there have been some signs that there has been some wavering in terms of demand growth."

High U.S. gasoline stocks have fed some concern about demand in the United States, where consumer spending expectations hit a three-year low last month and vehicle sales have fallen year-on-year for four months in a row.

Coupled with that is faltering manufacturing activity and a drop in commodity imports in China, the world's second-largest economy and biggest raw materials consumer.



Even though OPEC has stuck to its pledge to cut production, U.S. output has risen by more than 10 percent since mid-2016 to 9.3 million barrels per day, close to the output of Russia and Saudi Arabia. "That's making it difficult to drive the stockpiles down to a level OPEC thinks will see prices rise sustainably," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at fu-

tures brokerage AxiTrader.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch said the low oil prices were also due to a slowdown in demand.

"Oil demand growth this year is underwhelming, in part explaining why crude oil prices and refining margins have sold off sharply recently," it said.

On the physical markets, barrels of

North Sea crude changed hands at their lowest levels since late 2015 on Monday.

Top exporter and de facto OPEC leader Saudi Arabia said on Monday it would "do whatever it takes" to rebalance a market that has been dogged by oversupply for over two years.

(Source: Reuters)

Libya adds to OPEC's burden as output reaches highest since 2014

Libya is pumping the most oil since October 2014 as the OPEC member restores output amid progress in mending the nation's political divisions. The increase adds pressure on the world's biggest producers who just signaled they may extend production cuts amid a slump in oil.

The North African country's production has reached about 780,000 barrels a day, according to a person familiar with the situation who asked not to be identified for lack of authorization to speak to the media. Libya was producing about 700,000 barrels a day at the end of April, Jadalla Al-Okali, a board member at state producer the National Oil Corp., said then.

A revival in Libyan output adds to the challenge that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and other major producers face after agreeing last year to pump less crude to stem a glut and shore up prices. In separate statements just hours apart on Monday, Saudi Arabia and Russia said publicly for the first time they would consider prolonging their output reductions for longer than the six-month extension OPEC is widely expected to agree to when the group meets on May 25. Libya was exempted from OPEC's cuts because of its internal strife.

Political divisions, clashes between armed groups and closures of fields have disrupted output in Libya as the



country with Africa's largest crude reserves struggles to revive its most vital industry. Libya's feuding administrations agreed last week to unite state institutions and build a national army under civilian leadership after two days of talks in Abu Dhabi.

Oil recovery

Libya's largest oil field, Sharara, is currently pumping about 225,000 barrels a day, the person familiar said on Monday. Crude from Sharara started flowing to the Zawiya refinery following a three-week closure.

El Feel, the oil field also known as Elephant, restarted last month as well, after having been halted since April 2015. The resumption of operations at Sharara and El Feel, both in western Libya, has helped lift total national output to the highest since October 2014, when the country pumped 850,000 barrels a day, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

Fighting in early March caused two of Libya's main oil terminals to close, forcing a number of fields to stop pumping. The ports, along the central coast, have since reopened. Libya pumped as much as 1.6 million barrels a day before an uprising in 2011 led to a plunge in output, and it's currently one of the smallest producers in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Sharara has a capacity of 330,000 barrels a day and is operated by a joint venture between Libya's National Oil Corp. and Repsol SA, Total SA, OMV AG and Statoil ASA. El Feel, operated by a joint venture between the NOC and Eni SpA, can pump as much as 90,000 barrels a day.

The NOC will sell about 600,000 barrels of Mellitah blend crude from El Feel in a tender to be announced after mid-May, the person familiar with the situation said. The Mellitah sale will be the first since the field halted in 2015, the person said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

5 clean energy innovations that could transform our world

Innovations in energy storage, smart grid, and electricity generation technologies will affect every part of the source-to-consumer supply chain for powering the planet. Energy storage tech improves the viabilities of wind and solar power – two energy sources that remain cost prohibitive due to expenses related to batteries that would store generated energy. Smart grids will regulate the movement of energy throughout a city or state, insuring the areas from crippling blackouts. Developments in electricity generation make sure we make the most out of fossil fuels and other energy sources to improve efficiency.

What follows is a survey of progress in the development of five different technologies that promise to change the face of the energy industry in the next 20 years.

1. Fuel Cell: Truck manufacturers Kenworth, Toyota, and UPS have begun investing in fuel cell technologies, which would allow transport vehicles to run on hydrogen and oxygen, releasing only heat and water as emissions. Modern hydrogen production still requires copious fossil fuel use, but the process could soon be powered by renewable energies, making fuel cell vehicles extremely clean alternatives to current trucking solutions.

In Europe, fuel cell production facilities will begin pumping out 50,000 fuel cell stacks by the year 2020, making United Kingdom-based Intelligent Energy the market leader in bringing the green technology to the masses. "Hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles are available now, but to continue to drive customer adoption, we need to ensure future fuel cell stacks are robustly indus-

trialized and remain cost competitive in the future," said the company's Manufacturing Head Richard Peart.

2. Lithium-air batteries: These storage units, also known as Lithium-oxygen fuel cells, have been gestating in scientific labs all over the world since the beginning of electric vehicles. Science Daily says two instabilities in the technology's current form have prevented it from hitting mass markets: unpredictable short circuiting and speedy loss of battery power. Cornell University recently tackled the second capacity face problem, meaning we could be just one witty solution away from long-range electric cars.

3. First Generation Smart Grid: The first step in making a reliable and responsive smart grid system requires the installation of smart meters in every household and building. The new meters will send usage information in real time to your energy provider, allowing adjustments in availability to fluctuate according to the area's latest needs. So far, countries like the United Kingdom are having trouble adjusting the technology to fit the national infrastructure and business norms. The United States jumped on the smart grid bandwagon in 2007 and set up a taskforce to ensure a synchronized adoption of the new technology. The process has been slow, but small communities have begun "microgrid" projects that will allow consumer demand to drive implementation.

4. Tidal turbines: Much like wind turbines, these underwater pinwheels harness energy from wave movement. This green energy has had small-scale success so far, but objections from fishermen, as well as accidents, have set the technology back in California – tidal en-

ergy Ground Zero – in recent months. But the science behind tidal energy continues its march forward. Scotrenewables Tidal Power announced the launch of a new low-cost turbine off the coast of Scotland. It's also the "largest and most powerful" turbine of its kind in the world with a power generation capacity of two megawatts, according to its manufacturers. A retractable arm gives the facility a separate transport mode and an operation mode, which allows easy portability and an impermanence that would please local fishing industries.

5. Space-based Solar Power: Solar power captured from the beyond has been a sci-fi concept since the 1970s. The high cost of transporting the panels and other equipment into space has prevented the idea from becoming fruitful for commercial energy production. In addition, the transfer of generated energy back to Earth has been a concern. Solar power panels installed on the ground connect to the local power grid to deliver their harnessed goods, but it is comical to imagine a satellite in space hooked to the planet via cable for efficient energy delivery, prompting scientists to develop wireless energy transfer technologies akin to the iPhone 8's anticipated wireless charging feature. None of the existing methods have proven to be feasible on a massive scale. Suggestions are welcome.

The advances mentioned above are inter-related: progress in the lithium-air battery efforts will pave the way for the success of electric cars, which could be recharged with energy harvested from the tides or space-based solar power. It's one small step for science, one giant leap for green energy-kind.

(Source: oilprice.com)

India's record jet fuel exports set to fall as air travel soars

India's record jet fuel exports may fall this year as an expanding middle class and cheaper air travel boost local consumption, refinery executives and analysts told Reuters, potentially raising ailing profit margins for the fuel.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month launched the first flight under the Regional Connectivity Scheme that is designed to spur air travel between smaller Indian cities that are currently under-served and to make flying more affordable. The government will cap fares under the scheme and offer airlines incentives to fly less traversed routes.

The plan should eat into the country's jet fuel exports, which rose to a record of 741,000 tons in March, according to preliminary government data. The expected decline in exports could help raise jet fuel margins, which plunged to a nine-month low earlier this month, said three middle distillate traders.

India's efforts to connect regional routes and the expansion of aircraft fleets will continue to boost local demand for jet fuel, said Sri Paravaikarasu, head of East of Suez Oil at energy consultants FGE.

India's jet fuel demand is expected to rise by 11 percent in 2017 after rising last year by 13 percent, or about 15,700 barrels per day (bpd), she said.

"In the domestic market, we are expecting double digit growth in jet fuel because of regional connectivity and enhanced air travel," said Indian Oil Corp chairman B. Ashok last week.

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), India is the world's fastest growing aviation market, with passenger numbers rising by more than 20 percent a year.

IATA expects India to displace the United Kingdom as the third-largest market in the world in 2025, with passenger numbers more than doubling to 278 million a year from more than 95 million today.

Enticed by the growing size of India's aviation market, BP last year obtained a license to sell jet fuel in the South Asian nation.

The firm local demand, coupled with weaker profit margins for refining jet fuel compared with gasoil, could slow jet fuel exports this year, said L.K. Gupta, managing director of Essar Oil.

Refiners typically adjust the yield of middle distillates, which include jet fuel, kerosene, gasoil and diesel, according to the margins.

Last year, India's jet fuel exports were high due to better margins compared to gasoil, Gupta said. (Source: Reuters)

Japanese oil refiners Idemitsu, Showa Shell sign alliance deal

Japanese oil refiners Idemitsu Kosan Co Ltd and Showa Shell Sekiyu KK said on Tuesday that they have signed a deal to form a business alliance ahead of Idemitsu's takeover of Showa Shell.

Under the deal, the companies will cooperate more closely on crude purchases and transportation as well as production plans, they said in a statement.

The closer cooperation will result in cost savings of at least 25 billion yen (\$220.59 million) within three years.

The companies said they will still achieve costs savings of 50 billion within five year of the full integration of the two business. The full merger has been delayed indefinitely due to opposition from Idemitsu's founding family.

(Source: Reuters)

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD



K S C

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER

No. :367879

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE 50 PCS CaSi Coil Wire

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

Chemical Specification%	CaSi
Ca	30-40
Si	60-70
Fe	—
Packing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coil should be in Metallic Pallets ➤ Protective guard of coil should be angle or profile(square)type ➤ Coil should be covered by 2 plastic layers and kept in the roofed place.
Delivery Date	July & August (In 2 Parts)
2017	

Wire Specification		Physical Specification	
Wire Diameter	13 mm	Vertical Coil	Dimension (mm)
Type of Coil	Vertical which open inside	A	1200*100
Coil Weight	About 1250 kg	B	1200*100
Type of Coil's Front Ring	OVAL	C	800*100
		D	900*100
		E	600

INTRESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF: EUR 50 "FIFTY EURO" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

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

2) ACCOUNT No.1902-750-4019644-1 AT "EGHTESAD NOVIN BANK- OF IRAN AHVAZ SHARIATI BRANCH" OR Rials 2,000,000,"TWO MILION RIALS" TO THE ONE OF BELOW ACCOUNT No.:

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

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

AND PRESENT THE PAYMENT RECEIPT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

RAW MATERIAL & ENERGY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY (KSC)
KM 10 AHVAZ – BANDAR IMAM KHOMENI ROAD
PO.BOX: 1378
POST CODE: 61397-31398
AHVAZ – IRAN

Note1: BIDDER SHALL SUBMIT WITH TENDER A BID BOND ISSUED BY AN IRANIAN BANK OR BY A EUROPEAN FIRST CLASS BANK , IN THE AMOUNT OF 100,000,000 Rial OR 3,000 EUR FOR 50 PCS CaSi Coli Wire AND MAY REDUSED IN PROPORTION WITH THE QUANTITY OF BIDDERS OFFER.

Note2: ALL BIDS MUST BE INFORMED US WHICH PARTICIPATE IN OUR TENDER UP TO 13thMay, 2017. WHEN YOUR COMPANY IS CONFIRMED AND THE TENDER DOCUMENT IS SENT TO YOU, YOU MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE AFORESAID ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE 22thMay,2017.THE OPENING DATE OF ENVELOPES WILL BE AT 10:30 AM ON THE 23thMay,2017 IN THE BUYER'S CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHVAZ-IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER.

Note 3: FOR MORE INFORMTION PLEASE CONTACT WITH FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Tel No. : +98 61 32908114 / 32136119
 Fax No. : +98 61 32908115
 Ms.F.FADAMI EMAIL : f.fadami@ksc.ir OR VISIT:<http://WWW.KSC.IR>

France's new leader must restore confidence

By Julia Amalia Heyer

He did it. Emmanuel Macron's election heralds the start of a new era -- for French politics and for France. And if he is able to push through all the things he has said he would like to achieve, it might also mark a new era for a crisis-riddled Europe that badly needs a taste of success and a morsel of appeal.

For now, he has achieved the unprecedented. At 39, he is about to become the youngest French president ever in the Fifth Republic. In fact, he will be the youngest French leader since Napoleon Bonaparte. Even Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was almost 10 years older at the time he became president.



And perhaps the greatest novelty of all is that Macron isn't a member of either of France's two main parties, the Socialist Party or the Republicans.

What is happening in France is not just a generational shift -- it's an upheaval of a political world that had been in place in the country for decades.

Both the rejuvenation and the renewal should be celebrated. More than 21 million French voters chose Macron, casting their ballots for an open and receptive France rooted in Europe. They didn't allow themselves to be led astray -- not by the Brits turning their backs on Europe, not by Donald Trump and not by the promises of Marine Le Pen. With 11 million votes, Front National did manage to win more votes in a presidential election than ever before. But it still suffered a resounding defeat.

More importantly, Macron scored a clear victory, providing this young president with the legitimacy he needs to implement the pledges he has made for France's renewal.

Macron isn't even 40 yet, and the movement he founded is just one year old. Early on, many laughed at En Marche!, dismissing it as a "startup" from an overly ambitious economics minister. He raised the eyebrows of his fellow cabinet ministers because his enthusiasm and ambition often got on their nerves. They thought he was too young, too inexperienced, too presumptuous and too hungry. He is also very open about what he wants and is openly critical when things weren't going well. Reform plans, a legislative process, anti-terror measures: He was polite in his critique, but loud and clear.

■ An anomaly in politics

And he wouldn't relent. Even when his superiors, be it the prime minister or the president, bullied him like a schoolboy, he stayed true to his convictions. From the very beginning, Macron was an anomaly in politics.

But president? No one believed he would get this far. Even after he resigned from the cabinet and announced his candidacy, it was still quite some time before pollsters even included him in their surveys.

Ultimately, during the long weeks of this incredible campaign, it fell to him to defend, or even save, the French republic. The others, the old-school establishment, failed spectacularly. With Macron's election, a campaign that could hardly be topped in terms of its suspense and ruthlessness has come to an end. And the results are surprisingly good.

What hasn't changed, however, is the enormity of the job facing Macron. "It is a great honor and a great responsibility," were the first words uttered by Macron after his election on Sunday night. He looked as though he was in an almost hypnotized state as he spoke. "I will do all I can to be worthy of your trust and confidence," he told the country he now leads, sounding humble by his standards.

Now, though, with parliamentary elections scheduled for the beginning of June, Macron will have to quickly find new energy. That vote will determine how free a hand he will have to implement his policies. He has pledged to institute a trio of significant reforms early on in his presidency. He wants to liberalize the labor market and to restore equal opportunity in the job-training and school systems.

His biggest task, of course, will be finding ways for France to find peace with itself. He must create confidence in a country where a strong sense of desperation and resignation has prevailed for far too long.

But if anyone can do that, then it's probably him. He's shown as much with the results of this incredible election.

For now, everything seems possible.

(Source: Spiegel)

Libyan rivals descend on Washington

By Julian Pecquet

Libya's chaotic politics will play out in Washington this week as some of the war-racked nation's top rivals scramble for the Donald Trump administration's attention.

Current and former government leaders assemble May 10 for a Capitol Hill conference on Libya-U.S. relations and investment opportunities. Meanwhile, UN-backed Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and his main rival, Khalifa Hifter, are both hoping to meet with Washington officials as early as this month following their May 2 deal to hold elections next year.

The Libyans' goals, former U.S. envoy Jonathan Winer told Al-Monitor, are "pretty straightforward."

"Everybody in Libya who's got a position wants to maintain their position and increase the power and authority of that position without having to give anything up," he said. "That's a zero-sum game and it doesn't work, but it doesn't stop people from trying."

The speaker list for the May 10 event, organized by the nonprofit National Council on U.S.-Libya Relations, includes two members of the Presidency Council -- Libya's executive branch -- and two former prime ministers, Mahmoud Gebril and Ali Zeidan. Most of them are seen as either close to Hifter or at least critical of Sarraj's Government of National Accord, and many are in touch with the Trump administration.

"We hold regular dialogue with a wide range of Libyan interlocutors, including with some of the participants in the Forum," a State Department official said.

■ Libya policy

The visits come amid reports that some officials inside the Trump administration are looking to revamp the Libya policy formulated under President Barack Obama. Washington threw its support behind a UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement in December 2015 that called for the formation of a national unity government, but a rival parliament elected in 2014 and based in Tobruk has so far refused to go along in part because it wants to be guaranteed a top military post for Hifter.

Winer laid out three basic options for U.S. policy: staying the course; supporting Hifter's bid for more power, which he said risks civil war; or keeping the current structure in place but replacing some of the current members of the Presidency Council.

"The problem with that approach is that other people are going to be upset -- the ones that don't get selected," Winer said.

Hifter's allies, which include Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, argue that he offers the best chance to defeat the Islamic State (ISIL) and bring order to the country. Critics counter that



UN-backed Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj (L) meets with Khalifa Hifter (R) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, May 2, 2017.

Winer laid out three basic options for U.S. policy: staying the course; supporting Hifter's bid for more power, which he said risks civil war; or keeping the current structure in place but replacing some of the current members of the Presidency Council.

backing him would destroy any hope of a negotiated end to the civil war that broke out in 2014 and plunge Libya into even greater chaos.

That debate is finding new urgency amid reports that Hifter plans to soon visit Washington for meetings with Trump administration officials. Ari Ben-Menashe, a Canada-based lobbyist for Hifter and members of the Tobruk parliament, told Al-Monitor that Hifter hopes to travel as early as this month but nothing has yet been agreed to.

"There are people [inside the U.S. government] that are being talked to,

yes," Ben-Menashe said. "And some of it is starting to make sense."

Hifter's allies have been laying the groundwork for such a visit for some time. Last month, a delegation of tribal chiefs close to Hifter visited Washington in cooperation with the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies, led by former Libyan envoy to the UAE Aref Ali Nayed, and Walid Phares, a foreign affairs adviser to Trump's presidential campaign.

"If what I hear is correct there is a push within the administration to support him," a former senior administration told Al-Monitor. "Probably based in part on a UAE

recommendation or to keep the Russians from having too much influence."

■ U.S. support

At the same time, the Libyan Embassy in Washington is said to be trying to organize a visit by Sarraj to bolster U.S. support for his government. Both the U.S. and the Libyan sides, however, may be waiting to see whether the May 2 Sarraj-Hifter deal has brought the Libyan factions closer together before fixing a date.

"It has to be [that] this visit happens in the context of a broader consensus that includes other players," Frederic Wehrey, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, testified at an April 25 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Libya. "He may ask for a million things. We've seen these visits before. But then they go back, they can't execute the programs, they can't write the check for them. We've seen this movie before. We need to demand when he comes [to know] who's on board with this project, what's the consensus, what's the road map?"

Trump's own personal preference -- if he has one -- remains a mystery.

At a press conference with visiting Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni last month, Trump said, "I do not see a [U.S.] role in Libya. I think the United States has right now enough roles." Moments earlier, Gentiloni had insisted that the United States had a "critical" role to play in helping stabilize the country.

Just the day before, however, U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley delivered a largely overlooked speech to the UN Security Council in which she made the case for staying the course. The Libyan Political Agreement, she said, "remains the framework that Libyans agreed on for their country's transition" and is "vital to restoring stability."

"We call on those who have not yet dedicated themselves to engaging in the process and ask them to do so immediately," Haley said. "There may need to be certain amendments to the agreement but the important point is that every Libyan faction needs to come together in a national dialogue and agree on how to carry out its terms."

She also ripped into Hifter's forces, without mentioning Hifter by name, after they attacked an air base controlled by rivals from the western city of Misrata, who are allied with the government in Tripoli.

"These destabilizing attacks are unacceptable. They must stop now," Haley said. "When Libya's factions keep fighting, instead of talking, the biggest winners are the terrorist groups."

Asked to explain the administration's Libya policy, a State Department official directed Al-Monitor to Haley's remarks.

(Source: Al Monitor)

How the Trump administration has quietly stalled refugee resettlements

In the first few days of the Trump administration, the Department of Homeland Security stopped sending investigators overseas to interview refugees seeking asylum in the United States. That was, in effect, a cold stop on processing new applications. The face-to-face interviews are a required part of the vetting process to ensure that potential immigrants pose no risk to American public safety or national security.

Freezing those resettlements -- most of which had already been vetted and approved by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees -- was a cruel move. At a minimum, it delayed the hopes of thousands of victims of war and unrest seeking permanent refuge in the U.S. from violence or repression in their home countries.

■ The vetting process

Then Trump followed it up with his atrocious directives formally suspending all refugee resettlement for 120 days (among other things), ostensibly to give the government time to review the vetting process. The administration pointed to no flaws in the process; it just declared that they were weak and needed fixing and that national security hung in the balance.

No sooner did he issue them, however, than those directives were put on hold by court orders. Mayhem has not ensued, suggesting Trump's warning of threats to national security was, at best, alarmist.

We'll leave it to legal minds to determine whether the government's pause in refugee interviews -- which began before Trump's directive -- violates the letter of an injunction from a federal judge in Hawaii against the latest version of the directive, including the moratorium on resettlements. But it certainly violates the spirit of it, and contradicts America's role as a welcoming haven for the oppressed of the world. Now 16 U.S. senators -- 11 Democrats and 5 Republicans, led by Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) -- have written to the secretaries of State and Homeland Security demanding an explanation of the administration's policy toward refugee resettlement and of how those policies comport with the court injunction. The American public deserves those answers, too.

Among those whose applications are being held up are people fleeing genocide -- as determined last year by the State Department -- at the hands of Islamic State



It's hard not to view the reduction in resettlements as part of a White House plan to broadly curtail immigration.

(ISIL), as well as Iraqis whose work for the U.S. has put them at risk of retaliation. But there also are thousands of people from other nations looking for relief. The Trump administration has left them in limbo. According to data published by the State Department, the U.S. has admitted 43,241 refugees since Oct. 1, the start of the current fiscal year, for which Obama and Congress had budgeted 110,000 refugee admissions. But 30,122 of those entries came before Trump's inauguration; since March 1 only 6,213 refugees have been admitted, part of a steady decline in monthly admissions during Trump's brief time in office.

The president and some of his key advisors -- "economic nationalists" Stephen K. Bannon and Stephen Miller most notably -- have publicly opposed robust immigration, whether the new arrivals are refugees seeking safety or otherwise. So it's hard not to view the reduction in resettlements as part of a White House plan to broadly curtail immigration.

■ A legitimate subject

Trump's suspended immigration orders would reduce the resettlement target for the current fiscal

year to less than half of the 110,000 set by Obama and Congress. Whether immigration in general is too high is a legitimate subject for political discussion. But for Trump to unilaterally undercut admissions to people in desperate straits, who in effect have no countries or homes to return to safely, is cold-hearted and in the service of no end other than xenophobia.

Every country has the right and responsibility to control its borders, and to determine who gets to enter and remain. And the U.S. has, in the modern era, been relatively welcoming. In fact, the foreign-born segment of the U.S. population has quadrupled since 1960, creating a more diverse society. And since the Refugee Act of 1980, the U.S. has accepted 3 million refugees at fluctuating annual levels reflecting changing global events and U.S. priorities. In this era of vast migration spawned by wars and famines -- the highest levels of human displacement since the end of World War II -- the United States needs a more robust refugee resettlement program, not a retreat. Shutting our doors to the desperate would be a mistake.

(Source: LAT)

Trump and the rush to deploy THAAD

By Raekyong Lee

The Korean police swarmed onto the golf course in Seongju, just 300 kilometers southeast of Seoul, just before dawn on April 26. The officers pushed aside the dazed protesters and escorted a group of U.S. Army military trailers that carried the critical parts for the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) missile defense system.

The deployment of THAAD in Korea has become extremely contentious since China expressed its strong opposition. The sudden deployment of the AN/TPY-2 radar system and two missile launchers and interceptors a week before the Korean presidential election on May 9 has created even greater controversy. It looks for all the world like a bid to make deployment a fait accompli even as the liberal candidate Moon Jae-in, who is the frontrunner in several polls, suggests that the system requires further debate.

Although the incident did not grab the headlines around the world, it was an obvious effort to circumvent the Korean political process. It also marks a fundamental shift in Korea-U.S. relations.

But that's not all. President Donald Trump also went on to demand that Korea pay one billion dollars for the cost of the deployment, even though the Korean military is not actually purchasing the missile defense system and has agreed to deployment in the face of strong opposition.

President Trump went on to condemn the KORUS Free Trade Agreement, calling it a "horrible deal" and threatening to "terminate" it. Trump has linked together security issues with trade issues in an aggressive manner, hinting that the crisis might be resolved if Seoul were more accommodating in trade negotiations.

This mix of trade issues with security issues goes against the grain of the entire shared-values strategy that the United States has employed since the Second World War. Trump suggests, in so many words, that the military alliance is an economic exchange and that THAAD, or just about anything, can be modified or even eliminated if the price is right. Though this approach may seem like common sense to Donald Trump, the implication is that the United States military is a mercenary force whose purpose is not determined by a commitment to democracy and free markets but rather the balance in the national treasury.

And lo and behold, on May 1, Trump stated that he would be "honored" to meet with Kim Jong-un, the leader of North Korea, a country that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has refused to engage in discussions, despite numerous offers by the Chinese. At other times, the Trump administration has suggested that military action against North Korea was imminent.

■ Korean politics

Because of all these zigzags in U.S. policy, South Koreans perceive the Trump administration as irrational, self-centered, and impulsive. The demand for a large payment for THAAD has increased Moon Jae-in's skepticism of the system and boosted anti-American sentiment in the election. Moon is now openly critical of THAAD early deployment even in the face of conservative criticism.

The shift in Korean perceptions of the United States is driven by the complete lack of concern for procedure in the decision on THAAD. Acting president Hwang Kyo-ahn



The United States is pushing a hasty deployment of a missile defense system in South Korea. The backlash could be huge.

is not authorized to make such a critical decision. Also, former President Park Geun-hye agreed initially to THAAD without consulting with the National Assembly.

There has been literally no debate among legislators on THAAD. The issue is simply not a matter of a North Korean threat. China perceives THAAD as an effort to undermine its own defensive capabilities. Although experts can debate the fine points, deployment will trigger an arms race in Northeast Asia that could draw in Korea, Japan, Russia, and perhaps other nations. China currently has under 300 nuclear weapons (as opposed to the United States with almost 7,000). Worried that THAAD could neutralize this relatively small arsenal, China could increase that number to a thousand or more.

We do not know how the rapid deployment of THAAD was decided upon. Most likely it was an agreement reached between Kim Kwan-jin, head of national security office in the Blue House, and Admiral Harry Harris, head of the U.S. Pacific Command. Both are famous for their bellicose declarations and their close ties to military contractors. It seems less likely that Donald Trump was involved in the process.

But Donald Trump has just thrown oil on the fire with his recent comments that Korea had once been a part of China—according to Xi Jinping. He has eliminated all Asia experts from the State Department and has no one around him who has any expertise on the region. This lack of actual understanding combines with the astonishing capacity of the U.S. president to reverse himself on North Korea.

■ A new South Korean policy?

A Moon administration is likely to pursue improved relations with North Korea, in contrast to the last ten years of conservative government. It will also encounter at least the same hostility that the Roh Moo-hyun administration

encountered from the George W. Bush administration.

Moon is likely to try to bring back some version of Kim Daejung's "sunshine policy" which promoted diplomatic, economic, and cultural engagement with the North. Conservatives thought they'd put a stake through the heart of this engagement policy last year when they shut down the last vestige of cooperation, the Kaesong Industrial Complex, run jointly by the North and South. Such efforts to reopen dialog with North Korea will likely be combined with a push for the transfer of operational wartime control of the military to Korea over the next few years and a Korean foreign policy that is more independent of the United States.

In fact, Korea could well be the one of the most independent-minded of all the United States allies under a Moon administration. Obama's "strategic neglect" of North Korea and inaction in the face of nuclear tests has caused enormous frustration for South Korea. A Moon administration could forge its own policy toward the North that would be substantially different from Washington's.

North Korea is fully aware of the manner in which outside power overthrew governments in Libya and Iraq because they lacked sufficient deterrence. As a result, Pyongyang is unlikely to make any easy compromises, especially as Kim Jong-un has staked his legitimacy on the nuclear program as an assertion of national autonomy.

But for all the rhetoric of the need to stand up to North Korea, American engagement in Korea is in retreat. Increasingly China offers the real economic opportunities to Koreans, and Chinese language schools are popping up all over the place. By contrast, Citibank announced the closure of one-third of its branches in Korea in April, and the percentage of Americans among foreigners in Korea has declined significantly.

Astonishingly, in the face of threats of war with North Korea, the United States not only no longer has an ambassador to the Republic of Korea—the last ambassador Mark Lippert was asked to step down on January 19—there is not even a candidate. Korea was essentially left out of the conversation between Trump and Shinzo Abe at the White House in February and also between Trump and Chinese president Xi Jinping at Mar-a-Lago. The failure of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to have dinner with acting president Hwang Kyo-ahn when he visited Korea in March only added insult to injury.

Ultimately, the THAAD anti-missile system is part of a long-term relationship with the United States that dates back to the late nineteenth century. Overall, although North Korea is getting front-page coverage in the mainstream media, South Korea has not registered as a major player for the Trump administration. If steps are not taken to find common ground and engage Koreans about some other topic than the North Korean threat, there is a danger of a rise in anti-American sentiments and a corresponding drop in American influence. (Source: FPIF)



De-escalation zone memorandum – decisive step towards peace in Syria

By Firas Samuri

Following the results of the fourth round of Syrian talks in Astana the representatives of guarantor-states (Iran, Russia and Turkey) signed a memorandum on de-escalation zones in Syria.

According to the agreement, the de-escalation zones are to be created in the provinces of Idlib, Hama, Aleppo, northern part of Homs, Eastern Ghouta, Daraa and Quneitra for six months, with the option of further prolongation.

The memorandum, which comes into effect on May 5, envisages the cessation of hostilities between the sides, conditions for returning refugees, the restoration of destroyed urban infrastructure and the access of humanitarian organizations. Moreover, the checkpoints to control the movement of civilians and the ceasefire regime will be created along the de-escalation zone borders.

It is notable that the agreement doesn't apply to ISIS and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham terrorists, it doesn't depend on whether they

are inside a zone or not.

Moreover, the flights of the U.S.-led International Coalition are strictly forbidden in the area. The airspace will be also controlled by the guarantor-states.

The treaty caused positive reaction of the world community. In general, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres highly appreciates the achievement of the guarantor-states. He also believes, that the memorandum should really improve the citizens' lives.

The head of the Syrian delegation in Astana Bashar Jaafari expressed gratitude to the efforts of Kazakhstan, Iran and Russia, as the memorandum opens new opportunities for the political settlement of the crisis.

Even Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir supports the creation of de-escalation zones.

Unfortunately, during the signing of memorandum a number of the opposition delegates opposed the peacekeeping initiatives. The actual initiatives of the opposition are unknown. As a mark of protest, a number of the opposition delegates decided to



leave the room, referring that the adoption of the document violates the territorial integrity of Syria. In addition, the armed opposition insists on that Iran can't be a guarantor state and they don't adduce any weighty arguments.

It sounds strange that the opposition has rejected the memorandum. The primary target of guarantor states' initiative is the protection of civilians, and as it is temporary, it won't affect Syria's sovereignty. That's why the actions of the armed opposition can

show to the world community that they are not interested in the fast settlement of the crisis. In this case the armed opposition doesn't differ from ISIS or Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

That's why the guarantors have taken the initiative to save Syria as the hesitation of the Syrian government's opponents is a heavy burden for the country – innocent people keep dying and the civilian infrastructure is being damaged. If not hurry, Syria will be completely destroyed.

Syria is the dam against more bloody chaos

By Jonathan Cook

A decade ago I published a book, *Israel and the Clash of Civilisations*, that examined Israel's desire to Balkanise the Middle East, using methods it had refined over many decades in the occupied Palestinian territories. The goal was to unleash chaos across much of the region, destabilising key enemy states: Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

The book further noted how Israel's strategy had influenced the neoconservative agenda in Washington that found favour under George Bush's administration. The neocons' destabilisation campaign started in Iraq, with consequences that are only too apparent today.

My book was published when efforts by Israel and the neocons to move the Balkanisation campaign forward into Iran, Syria and Lebanon were stumbling, and before it was clear that other actors, such as ISIS, would emerge out of the mayhem. But I predicted – correctly – that Israel and the neocons would continue to push for more destabilisation, targeting Syria next, with disastrous consequences.

Today, Israel's vision of the region is shared by other key actors, including Saudi Arabia, the [Persian] Gulf states, and Turkey. The current arena for destabilisation, as I warned, is Syria. But if successful, the Balkanisation process will undoubtedly move on and intensify against Lebanon and Iran.

Although commentators tend to focus on the "evil monsters" who lead the states targeted for destruction, it is worth remembering that before their disintegration most were also oases of secularism in a region dominated by medieval sectarian ideologies, whether the Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia or the Orthodox Judaism of Israel.

Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Libya's Muammar Gaddafi were ruthless and brutal in the way all dictators are, against opponents who threaten the regime. But before their states were targeted for "intervention", they also oversaw societies in which there were high levels of education and literacy, well-established welfare states, and low levels of sectarianism. These were not insignificant achievements (even if they are largely overlooked now) – achievements that large sections of their populations appreciated, even more so when they were destroyed through outside intervention.

These achievements were not unrelated to the fact that the regimes were or are more independent of the U.S. than the U.S. and Israel desired. The rulers of these states, which comprise disparate sectarian groups, had an interest in maintaining internal stability through a carrot and stick approach: benefits for those who submitted to the regime, and repression for those who resisted. They also made strong alliances with similar regimes to limit moves by Israel and the U.S. to dominate the region. Balkanisation has been a powerful way to isolate and weaken them, so the process can be expanded to other renegade states.

This is not to excuse human rights violations by dictatorial regimes. But it is to concentrate on an even more important issue. What we have seen unfolding over the past 15 years is part of a lengthy process – often described in the West as a "war on terror" – that is not designed to "liberate" or "democratise" Middle Eastern states. If that were the case, Saudi Arabia would have been the first state targeted for "intervention".

Rather, the "war on terror" is part of efforts to violently break apart states that reject U.S.-Israeli hegemony in the region, so as to maintain U.S. control over the region's resources in an age of diminishing access to cheap oil.

Although it is tempting to prioritise human rights as the yardstick according to which the parties should be judged, by now there should be little doubt that the conflicts unfolding in the Middle East are not about the promotion of rights.

Syria offers all the clues we need.

The agents trying to overthrow Assad in Syria are no longer civil society groups and democracy activists. They were too small in number and too weak to bring about change or threaten the Assad regime. Instead, whatever civil war there may initially have been has transformed into a proxy war. (In a closed society like Syria, it is of course almost impossible to know what drove the initial opposition – was it a fight for greater human rights, or growing dissatisfaction with the regime concerning other issues, such as food shortages and population displacements that were themselves a consequence of long-term processes triggered by climate change?)

A coalition of the U.S., Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Turkey and Israel exploited those initial challenges to the Syrian regime, seeing them as an opening. They did not do so to help democracy activists but to advance their own, largely shared agendas. They used Sunni jihadist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS to advance their interests, which depend on the break-up of the Syrian state and its replacement by a void that empowers them while disempowering their enemies in the region.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states want Iran and its Shia allies weakened; Turkey wants a freer hand against Kurdish dissident groups in Syria and elsewhere; and Israel wants to foster the forces of sectarianism in the Middle East to undermine pan-Arab nationalism, thereby ensuring its regional hegemony will go unchallenged.

The agents trying to stabilise Syria are the regime itself, Russia, Iran and Hizbollah. Their concern is to use whatever force is necessary to repel the agents of anarchy and restore the regime's dominance.

Neither side can be characterised as "good". There are no "white hats" in this gunfight. But there is clearly a side to prefer if the yardstick is minimising not only the current suffering in Syria but also future suffering in the region.

The agents of stability want to rebuild Syria and strengthen it as part of a wider Shia bloc. In practice, their policy would achieve – even if it does not directly aim for – a regional balance of forces, similar to the stand-off between the U.S. and Russia in the Cold War. It is not ideal, but it is far preferable to the alternative policy pursued by the agents of anarchy. They want key states in the Middle East to implode, as has already happened in Iraq and Libya and has been partially achieved in Syria.

We know the consequences of this policy: massive sectarian bloodspilling, huge internal population displacement and the creation of waves of refugees who head towards the relative stability of Europe, the seizure and dispersal of military arsenals that spur yet more fighting, and the inspiration of more militant and reactionary ideologies like that of ISIS.

If Syria falls, it will not become Switzerland. And if it falls, it will not be the end of the "war on terror". Next, these agents of anarchy will move on to Lebanon and Iran, spreading yet more death and destruction.

Republicans Party like it's 1984

By Paul Krugman

There have been many bad laws in U.S. history. Some bills were poorly conceived; some were cruel and unjust; some were sold on false pretenses. Some were all of the above.

But has there ever been anything like Trumpcare, the health legislation Republicans rammed through the House last week?

It's a miserably designed law, full of unintended consequences. It's a moral disaster, snatching health care from tens of millions mainly to give the very wealthy a near-trillion-dollar tax cut.

What really stands out, however, is the Orwell-level dishonesty of the whole effort. As far as I can tell, every word Republicans, from Trump on down, have said about their bill — about why they want to replace Obamacare, about

what their replacement would do, and about how it would work — is a lie, including "a," "and" and "the."

And what does it say about the state of American politics that a majority of the representatives of one of our major political parties have gone along with this nightmarish process?

■ Obamacare attacked

Before taking back the White House, Republicans at-

tacked Obamacare for many things. For one thing, they claimed that it was rushed through without proper debate.

They also claimed that Americans were getting a raw deal. Deductibles were too high, they claimed; so were premiums. They promised to bring these costs down, to provide, as Donald Trump insisted he would, coverage that was "much less expensive and much better." →13

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14 foods that cleanse the liver

Modern society is a sad state that produces many over-processed livers. When we overeat or eat processed or fried foods, or anytime we are exposed to environmental pollutants or stress, the liver becomes overworked and overloaded. When the liver is taxed, it can't process toxins and fat in an efficient way. There are many foods that can help cleanse the liver naturally by stimulating its natural ability to expel toxic waste from the body.

In the past, I have discussed my favorite cleansing foods. The list in this article is a little more specific and focuses mainly on foods that can help cleanse your liver. All it takes is a few simple steps to promote normal liver health. In addition to taking a liver cleansing supplement, and performing at least two liver and gallbladder cleanses per year, eating the following foods is the best way to keep your liver healthy and functioning. I encourage you to incorporate these liver cleanse foods into your diet.

1. Garlic

Just a small amount of this pungent white bulb has the ability to activate liver enzymes that help your body flush out toxins. Garlic also holds high amounts of allicin and selenium, two natural compounds that aid in liver cleansing.

2. Grapefruit

High in both vitamin C and antioxidants, citrus fruits like grapefruit, oranges, lemons, and lemons support the natural cleansing abilities of the liver. Have a small glass of freshly-squeezed grapefruit juice to boost production of the liver detoxification enzymes that help flush out carcinogens and other toxins.

3. Beets and carrots

Both are extremely high in plant-flavonoids and beta-carotene; eating beets and carrots can stimulate and support overall liver function.

4. Green tea

This liver-loving beverage is full of plant-based antioxidants known as catechins—compounds known to assist liver function. Green tea is a delicious, healthy addition to any diet. Just remember that green tea offers the benefits, not green tea extract. Some research suggests green tea extract may actually have a negative effect on liver health. Keep it simple and stick to the beverage to enjoy the benefits of green tea.

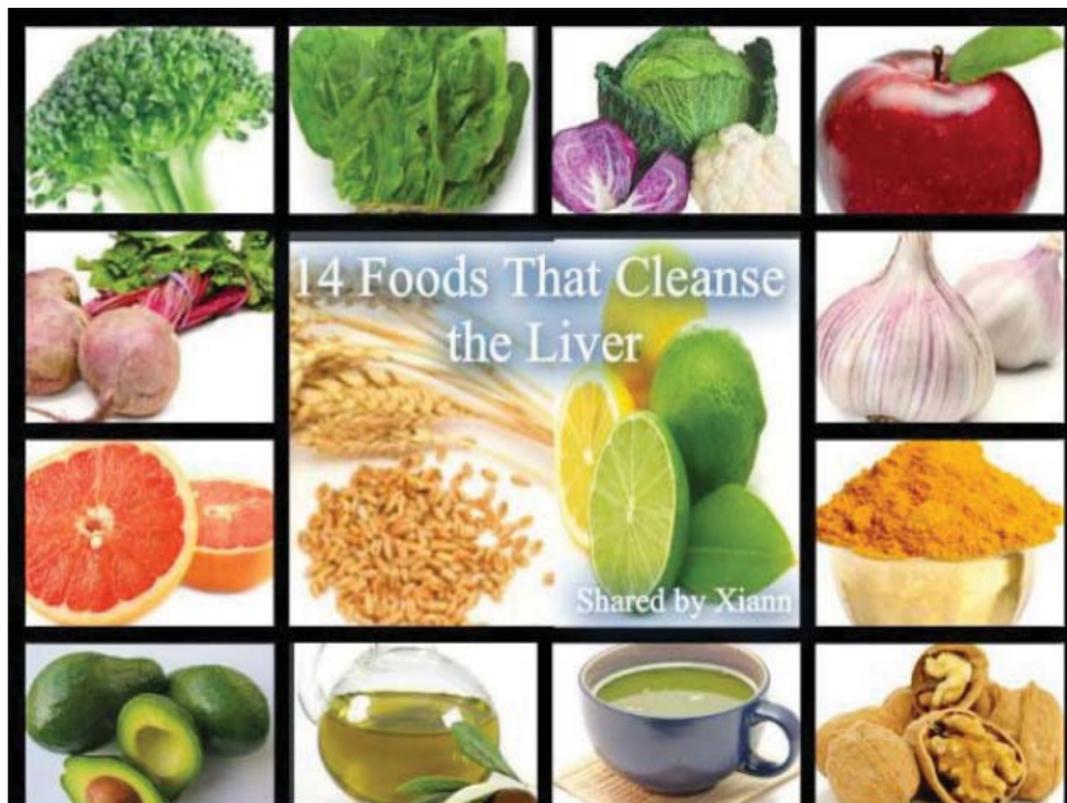
5. Leafy green vegetables

One of our most powerful allies in cleansing the liver, leafy greens can be eaten raw, cooked, or juiced. Extremely high in chlorophyll, greens soak up environmental toxins from the blood stream. With their distinct ability to neutralize heavy metals, chemicals, and pesticides, these cleansing foods offer a powerful protective mechanism for the liver.

Incorporate leafy greens such as bitter melon, arugula, dandelion greens, spinach, mustard greens, and chard into your diet. This will increase creation and flow of bile—the substance that removes waste from the organs and blood.

6. Avocados

This nutrient-dense superfood helps the body produce glutathione, a com-



Performing a liver cleanse at least twice a year will eliminate any foreign substances that may be trapped in your liver.

pound that is necessary for the liver to cleanse harmful toxins.

7. Apples

High in pectin, apples hold the chemical constituents necessary for the body to cleanse and release toxins from the digestive tract. This, in turn, makes it easier for the liver to handle the toxic load during the cleansing process.

8. Olive oil

Cold-pressed organic oils such as olive, hemp, and flaxseed are great for the liver when used in moderation. They help the body by providing a lipid base that can absorb harmful toxins in the body. In this way, they take some of the burden off the liver.

9. Alternative grains

If your diet includes wheat, flour, or other standard grains, it's time to make changes. And alternative grains like quinoa, millet, and buckwheat can help. Your liver is your body's filter for toxins, and if you have certain sensitivities, grains that contain gluten only add to them. One study found that persons who experienced sensitivity to gluten also experienced abnormal liver enzyme test results.

Leafy green vegetables have distinct ability to neutralize heavy metals, chemicals, and pesticides, these cleansing foods offer a powerful protective mechanism for the liver.

10. Cruciferous vegetables

Broccoli and cauliflower are good sources of glucosinolate, which supports enzyme production in the liver. These natural enzymes flush carcinogens and other toxins from the body, and may significantly lower risks associated with cancer.

11. Lemons and limes

These citrus fruits are high in vitamin C, which aids the body in synthesizing toxic materials into substances that can be absorbed by water. Drinking freshly-squeezed lemon or lime juice in the morning can stimulate the liver.

12. Walnuts

High in the amino acid arginine, walnuts support the liver in detoxifying ammonia. Walnuts are also high in glutathione and omega-3 fatty acids, which support normal liver cleansing. Make sure you chew the nuts until they are liquefied before swallowing.

13. Cabbage

Much like broccoli and cauliflower, eating cabbage stimulates liver detoxifying enzymes that help flush out toxins. Kimchi, coleslaw, cabbage soup, and sauerkraut are great cabbage-foods to add to your

diet.

14. Turmeric

Turmeric is the liver's favorite spice. Try adding some of this detoxifying goodness into your next lentil stew or veggie dish for an instant liver pick-me-up. Turmeric helps boost liver detoxification by assisting enzymes that actively flush out dietary toxins.

This golden spice tastes great in all kinds of dishes, but you can further boost your intake with a turmeric supplement. A word of warning; turmeric supplements are somewhat notorious for low-quality ingredients and even outright dangerous contamination. Only buy the highest quality turmeric from the most reputable sources. I encourage you to try Global Healing Center's own Turmeric supplement. This premium liquid supplement contains potent antioxidants and is sourced only from organic Curcuma longa root.

■ Tips for doing a liver cleanse

Other liver cleanse foods not listed above include artichoke, asparagus, kale, and Brussels sprouts. Eating the foods listed above is a great way to help keep your liver functioning properly. However, for best results, I recommend performing a liver cleanse. Performing a liver cleanse at least twice a year will eliminate any foreign substances that may be trapped in your liver.

(Source: globalhealingcenter.com)

What causes eye strain or tired eyes?

By Troy Bedinghaus

We all complain about eye strain from time to time, but what does eye strain really mean? How do our eyes become strained? As an eye doctor, I hear the complaint of eye strain every day, often several times per day.

Eye strain is a symptom felt by people when their eyes feel tired and achy. Some people state that they just want to close their eyes and go to bed when they have eye strain. They feel exhausted.

Sometimes, eye strain can give you a headache or even make you dizzy. Let's explore several different causes of the discomfort.

■ Ciliary body fatigue

Eye strain is caused by different things. First, any time you do extended near work (at a close distance), the ciliary body, a muscle found inside the eye, is forced to work overtime. The ciliary body is the focusing muscle and allows humans to focus on near objects. When you stare or concentrate on a new object, that muscle contracts and allows the lens to get thicker and increase the total power of the eye.

■ Extraocular muscle fatigue

Another set of muscles that contract when doing extended near work is the extraocular muscles. There are six extraocular muscles per eye. Two of these, the medial recti, do a lot of the work when focusing on a near object. To keep the image in focus and to prevent you from seeing double, the medial recti cause the eyes to converge inward.

Once again, when those muscles contract for an extended period of time, they may feel strained. Another activity that causes eye strain is when looking back and forth for an extended period. For example, let's say you are copying a paper that you have down by your side and you



have to look back and forth to type the written text into a computer.

The constant eye movement back and forth can also cause significant eye strain. Plus, it wears on your mental status. Constantly looking back and forth begins to make your brain feel tired too.

■ Ocular surface disease

Eye strain can also come from an often over-looked culprit. People often complain of eye strain after reading for long periods of time. In some cases, it may not be the focusing of the eye that causes the problem but rather a dry

Unwanted glare can cause eye strain. Glare is a visual phenomenon caused by excessive and uncontrolled brightness. Sometimes glare can be downright debilitating.

eye causing it. Whenever we focus on a computer screen or just reading a book for a long time, our blink rate decreases. Anytime we concentrate on something our blink rate slows down. When we don't blink normally, our natural lubricating tear film does not get renewed. When our eyes are not lubricated properly, they feel tired and strained.

■ Uncorrected vision problems

Another cause of eye strain is an uncorrected vision problem. Small uncorrected vision problems are almost worse than having a large vision problem. When an individual has a large vision problem, they don't even try. They usually give up and go to the eye doctor because they can no longer function. When you have small uncorrected vision problems, you attempt to compensate by squinting and focusing hard.

Attempting to compensate may cause accommodative spasm and leave you exhausted at the end of the day.

■ Glare

Unwanted glare can cause eye strain. Glare is a visual phenomenon caused by excessive and uncontrolled brightness. Sometimes glare can be downright debilitating. Many employers spend a lot of money setting up wonderful work stations for their employees. However, they totally forget to address the right type of lighting for certain work environments. The right type of lighting can create all the difference in the productivity of employees. Although our computer monitors are of much better quality now than they were a few years ago, generic fluorescent lighting can sometimes cause glare that creates a very uncomfortable environment.

Most debilitating glare comes from the sun while driving to and from work. In fact, it can limit visibility so much that it can become dangerous.

(Source: verywell.com)

Chronic pain: The "invisible" disability

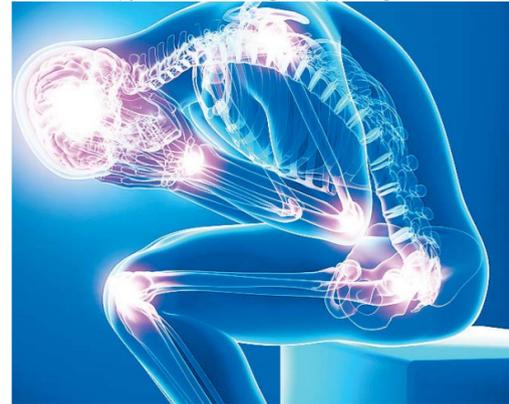
By Laura Kiesel

Sometime back in 2010, a good friend of mine from college who had since become a pediatrician posted a complaint on Facebook about "made up" health conditions. "Fibromyalgia, I'm looking at you," she wrote. At this time, pain was more of an occasional visitor in my body rather than the permanent tenant it has since become. Still, I was offended on behalf of those patients with the disease.

Fast forward to today and my life is all about pacing. This is because everything I do — cook, sleep, work, walk — takes time. This gradual approach to every aspect of my life is not about enlightenment or mindfulness. It is about pain. Or more specifically, trying to evade or minimize it. To minimize is key because I've learned it can't be avoided, at least not entirely, no matter my effort. For me, fibromyalgia became a default diagnosis — a catch-all phrase the doctors slapped on me to encompass all the aches and health complaints that had begun to persistently plague me. I received this diagnosis even as imaging showed degenerative changes and other damage in my spine and hips, even as endometriosis was confirmed to be spreading like strands of spider web inside my abdomen, wrapping its tendrils around my organs with the insidiousness of an invasive plant. When the pain reached the point of making it impossible to work more than on a very part-time basis most weeks, I began to inquire about disability. But my doctors — the same ones who diagnosed me, treated me, and viewed my MRI results — all shook their heads and refused to sign off on any paperwork.

■ "You don't seem sick," they said

This was the same line I was offered in college after extreme intestinal distress caused me to lose more than 20 pounds in a single semester. But the school nutritionist thought I just wasn't eating enough bananas. "You have such shiny, healthy-looking hair," she explained, pinching a lock of it between her fingers as though I were a doll on display. "People who are really sick don't have hair like yours." A colonoscopy showed nothing visibly wrong, so the doctor



diagnosed me with irritable bowel syndrome and treated me as though I was a hopeless neurotic. "Stop being so stressed and eat your greens," he scolded. Two years later, a laparoscopic surgery would show widespread endometriosis, a large portion of it choking my colon. Its removal eased my GI complications considerably. But by then I learned the hard lesson that doctors often erred on the side of disbelief when they couldn't see something plainly... or even when they could.

Under the strain of prolonged pain, nerves not only become super-sensitized to pain signals, but begin amplifying them. Once these changes occur, they can be extremely difficult to undo.

I have heard an extensive list of reasons why I can't be in as much pain as I say despite my test results... and besides my shiny hair, like: I am too young; I have good teeth; I'm too thin to have back problems. Yet, these haven't granted me immunity from illness, and they have not prevented pain.

Only recently has medical research started to catch on to what patients suffering from chronic pain have long known. As reported in a New York Times Well column written by Tara Parker-Pope in 2011, a study by the Institute of Medicine discovered that pain can endure long after the illness or injury that caused its initial onset has been treated or healed, until it eventually evolves, or devolves, into its own disease. That is, pain is no longer indicative of another prognosis — it is the prognosis, and a disabling one at that.

Specifically, under the strain of prolonged pain, nerves not only become super-sensitized to pain signals, but begin amplifying them. Once these changes occur, they can be extremely difficult to undo. Meanwhile, most medical students are woefully lacking in training in chronic pain, usually receiving only a few hours' worth in their entire education. In fact, veterinarians receive more training on how to treat animals in pain than medical doctors do for their human patients. Unfortunately, without an adequate understanding of pain and its mechanisms, many medical practitioners are quick to downplay the experience of their patients as faking or exaggerating. What this translates into is denying a disability because it is invisible to the naked eye.

■ Wiser doctors needed

What would help me at this point would be to have practitioners who are not only more well-versed in chronic pain, but are willing to acknowledge its disabling impacts on their patients. In other words, doctors should start believing their patients when they say they are hurting. Validation is the first step toward a solution, or at the least, toward offering alternative adjustments and treatments that can accommodate a pain patient and bring them a better quality of life in the absence of a long-term cure. (Source: health.harvard.edu)

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

Here are high rated IT titles in the world that reviewed by savvy tech users:

- 1** Future phones will ID devices by their electromagnetic fields. It'll be like using NFC, except this doesn't require tags.
- 2** Microsoft just fixed a serious Windows Defender bug. Theoretically, an attacker could take over your PC with an email you haven't even opened yet. Google Project Zero researchers Tavis Ormandy and Natalie Silvanovich tweeted about discovering "the worst Windows remote code exec in recent memory."
- 3** Amazon lowers free shipping minimum again. The company has lowered the minimum for non-Prime members to \$25 of eligible items, according to a shipping page on its website.
- 4** Senator confirms FBI paid \$900,000 to unlock San Bernardino iPhone. Dianne Feinstein revealed the figure while questioning FBI director James Comey last week. In early 2016, Apple was embroiled in a battle with the FBI over privacy, specifically whether it could (or would) crack an iPhone 5C following the San Bernardino terrorist attack.
- 5** Billionaire investor Jeff Gundlach says he's joined Twitter because he's "getting tired" of inaccurate reporting about him.
- 6** Apple is now the first \$800 billion company. The highly-anticipated iPhone 8, edge-to-edge OLED screen and all, is apparently going to throw Apple fans in an upgrade "super cycle," or so think the analysts, whose predictions made investors take notice, and push Apple's stock past the \$800 billion market cap mark after the quarterly results were announced.

7 Austria orders Facebook to delete hate postings. And not just block them from Austrian users. Facebook is having a hard time lately amid claims of fake news and political bias.

8 Uber expands self-driving research to Canada amid US troubles. Despite problems in Pittsburgh and the Waymo lawsuit, Uber opens a new self-driving center in Toronto.

9 Google makes it easier to read offline in Chrome on Android. A long press will download and save anything you want to check out later.

10 Waze now lets users record directions in their own voice. Community-based traffic and navigation app Waze has received a new update. The update brings only one major feature: The Waze voice recorder. Yes, now you can record your own voice directions.

Microsoft Surface Pro 5 to be released only when it can bring meaningful changes

Launched in October 2015, the Surface Pro 4 (pictured above) will soon be 2 years old, so it's about time for Microsoft to unveil a Surface Pro 5, right? Well, maybe not.



Panos Panay, Vice President of Devices at Microsoft, recently talked to Cnet about the future of the Surface line, mentioning that "there's no such thing as a Pro 5." This, however, doesn't mean that there won't be a Surface Pro 5 sometime in the future.

Panay said that a fifth-generation Surface Pro would only be released when it can bring "meaningful" changes - which may not necessarily mean "hardware changes" (though we did hear that the next Surface Pro would feature a new, speedier processor). Reportedly, Microsoft is planning to bring "an experiential change that makes a huge difference in product line" - that's what the Surface Pro 5 should be about.

But when should we expect to see a fifth-gen Surface Pro? Panos Panay won't say, so we don't really know if it's going to happen this year. However, Microsoft is hosting a Surface event later this month, on May 23, so maybe we'll hear more about this on that day.

Meanwhile, the Surface Pro 4 certainly remains a great convertible tablet, especially if we're talking about the higher-end models with Intel Core i7 processors. It's just that the Pro 4 will soon need a successor - here's hoping Microsoft is working on that, despite Panay's "there's no such thing as a Pro 5" affirmation.

(Source: cnet)

Transport app Citymapper trials its own smart bus and transport service in London

By Paul Sawers

Popular city transport app Citymapper has revealed an ambitious plan to reinvent the humble bus, creating vehicles fit for the smart city era.

Citymapper, if you didn't know, is a mobile app that rose to prominence in London for its user-friendly interface that combines multiple transport options to help users find their way from A to B based on their preferred criteria. For example, the app may give the quickest option using a combination of train, tram, and bus; or, if you've already invested in a rail card, it will give you train-only options; or it will also suggest a "rain safe" option that minimizes the amount of time walking between transport options during a torrential downpour.

Since its inception in 2011, Citymapper has rolled out to dozens of conurbations globally, including New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Tokyo, and it has raised around \$50 million in venture capital funding.

The London-based startup has been at the center of much speculation over its future direction and how it plans to grow - for many, it is a prime acquisition candidate, with companies such as Google surely keen to snap up the design team and data upon which Citymapper has grown. But few will have predicted



that the hitherto software-only company would be toying with launching a physical bus and associated service. But that, it seems, is what it is doing.

Kicking off in London this week, Citymapper is launching an experimental "popup" circular bus route (for free) with its own green, branded buses.

Similar to traditional buses, the Citymapper vehicles follow pre-set routes, with passengers able to jump on and off

at bus stops. And for now, the vehicles have been given some technological overhauls. For example, there will be a large screen that shows riders where they are in real time, and what's coming up on the route - similar to how its smartphone app works. And they also have USB charging ports.

If you're already familiar with transport apps such as Citymapper and Google Maps, you'll be aware of certain features

that tell you which part of a vehicle is the busiest at a certain time of day - for example, it may recommend that you enter the last coach on a train given that it should be the least busy. But such features aren't based on real-time information; they're estimates based on historical data. With its own bus, Citymapper has access to the very fabric of the vehicle, and it has installed its own tracking software that integrates directly with the app. It also boasts real-time passenger counting so it (and you) can know how busy a bus is.

Looking to the future, it's easy to see how useful this could be if rolled out at scale. Imagine if every bus, boat, and train in London was kitted out with sensors and counters, with the data made available to third-party service providers - this could help cities manage transport infrastructure far more effectively.

Other than that, however, the first version of these buses are fairly standard, with a driver (yup, no autonomous aspirations yet), bells, and seats. But it's worth noting here that this is the very beginnings of what Citymapper is calling a push to create "better mobility and cities," according to a blog post on the initiative. "We're reinventing the entire software stack for running and operating a bus."

(Source: venturebeat)

Comcast and Charter agree to partner up on wireless; will they buy T-Mobile or Sprint?



The nation's number one and number two cable television firms, Comcast and Charter respectively, announced today that they are teaming up on what is being called "wireless phone ventures."

Comcast recently announced that it will offer later this year an MVNO service to subscribers called Xfinity Mobile. This will be a hybrid service depending on both Xfinity's large number of Wi-Fi hotspots, and Verizon's 4G LTE network.

Charter will also start its own MVNO

service using Big Red's network, but this won't launch until 2018.

Under the terms of their partnership, Comcast and Charter will be able to offer their own MVNOs to each of their separate subscribers. However, both will work together on certain aspects of their wireless offerings including "common operating platforms; technical standards development and harmonization; device forward and reverse logistics; and emerging wireless technology platforms."

(Source: Comcast)

Germany's plan to kill online registrations



Germany's corporate giants are promising a brave new future in the form of a single account one that will let you do your online shopping, get a flight and rent a car, all with no more registrations or repetitive passwords.

Deutsche Bank, Germany's biggest bank, announced Monday it's teaming up with other big firms to create a new company that will create the service. Users would enter their ID details just once before they can make all their online purchases across multiple sites.

The partners which include

Mercedes-Benz maker Daimler, insurer Allianz and publisher Axel Springer hope other firms will sign up to their vision. They're calling it a "pan-industry platform for online registration, e-identity and data services."

The program could eventually be expanded to include government services. For example, drivers could apply for a new license through the system before their old one expires.

The partners expect the program will be running in Germany by mid-2018.

(Source: cnn)

NASA has a supercomputer coding challenge for you

By Nicole Gallucci

Feeling ambitious? If so, NASA's got a challenge for you.

If you know how to program computers (otherwise this will be damn near impossible), the agency's encouraging you to participate in the High Performance Fast Computing Challenge (HPFCC).

What the heck is that? Well, essentially, the NASA-sponsored competition will reward expert programmers who are able to speed up the agency's FUN3D design software.

FUN3D is used for solving nonlinear partial differential equations, and the challenge - which is being supported by NASA's partners, HeroX and TopCoder - encourages computer whizzes to assist NASA in improving the code

so that it can become compatible with some of the most advanced, fastest supercomputers in the world.

"This challenge is specifically targeted to speed up the CFD portion of our aerospace research," said Michael Hetle, program executive for NASA's Transformative Aeronautics Concepts Program (TACP). "Some concepts are just so complex, it's difficult for even the fastest supercomputers to analyze these models in real time. Achieving a speed-up in this software by orders of magnitude hones the edge we need to advance our technology to the next level!"

The goal of the competition is to moderate the existing FUN3D algorithms so that they run 10 to 10,000 times faster on the Pleiades supercomputer. "This is the ultimate 'geek' dream assignment," said Doug Rohn, director of TACP. "Helping NASA speed up its software to

help advance our aviation research is a win-win for all."

If this task sounds do-able, it should be noted that there are a few catches. For instance, once you speed up the software, there can't be any decrease in accuracy.

The software is owned by the U.S. government and has strict export controls, which means it's not available to anyone outside the country. It's also written predominantly in Modern Fortran, a new version of an old programming language, which a lot of general computer programmers aren't necessary pros at.

In addition to some serious bragging rights, first and second place finishers in two categories can win up to \$55,000. Submissions are being accepted until 5 p.m. ET, June 29.

(Source: Masbale)

WhatsApp is totally dominating video calling, too

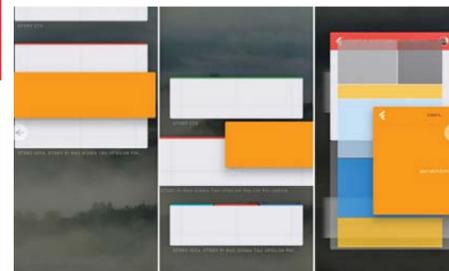


WhatsApp users are spending a lot of time on video calls. Together, the app's 1.2 billion users are spending more than 340 million minutes a day making more than 55 million video calls, WhatsApp announced.

To mark the milestone, WhatsApp is finally updating its Android app to make video calling more prominent. Now, the feature will appear right next to the voice calling menu within chats on Android.

(Source: Economicstimes)

Google's Fuchsia OS now has a UI for smartphones and tablets



Google has been quietly working on a new operating system called Fuchsia OS, that replaces the Linux kernel used in Android with one called Magenta. This open source OS has expanded from being just a command line to having an actual UI for smartphones and tablets. While Google hasn't revealed why Fuchsia exists, it is way too early to even speculate on Google's intentions for the future.

(Source: ArsTechnica)

Apple iPhone 8 suppliers are reportedly ramping up production early



A new report published today says that circuit board manufacturers will start to work on components for the Apple iPhone 8 as soon as next month. That would be a month earlier than most analysts expected. Taipei's Economic Daily News names Kinsus Interconnect and Zhen Ding as two companies that will be starting work in June on their contributions to the tenth anniversary edition of the iPhone.

(Source: SeekingAlpha)

Scientists call for more precision in global warming predictions

Researchers from Harvard University, Princeton University and the Environmental Defense Fund proposed a new, more precise way to measure the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on Earth's climate in an article published on Thursday in the academic journal *Science*.

The proposal, titled "Unmask temporal trade-offs in climate policy debates," would create a two-digit measurement system the scientists likened to blood pressure readings in medicine, which show the pressure on blood vessels both during heartbeats and in between them.

It would help scientists and policymakers account for the fact that some greenhouse gases last longer than others in the atmosphere.

■ Different timescales

"Different gases have widely different lifetimes in the atmosphere and affect the climate in different ways over widely different timescales," said co-author Michael Oppenheimer, a geosciences professor at Princeton.

The system would show the effects of greenhouse emissions on a 20-year scale and a 100-year scale.

Having a measurement that shows both numbers, the scientists argued, would let governments and other insti-



tutions trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow global warming decide which policies would be best in the short term and which should be adopted

An overwhelming majority of scientists believe gas emissions like carbon dioxide, which is produced from burning fossil fuels, are contributing to global climate change, triggering sea level rise, droughts and more frequent violent storms.

longer term.

It would also help in disputes between opposing advocacy groups. For example, according to the researchers, advocates for using natural gas as an energy source base their arguments on a 100-year timescale.

But their opponents, activists lobbying against natural gas, use a 20-year timescale to show the effects of burning natural gas on the climate.

■ Gas emissions

An overwhelming majority of scientists believe gas emissions like carbon dioxide, which is produced from burning fossil fuels, are contributing to global climate change, triggering sea level rise, droughts and more frequent violent storms.

For the two-value proposal to be successful, the scientists argued, it would have to be widely adopted, not only by individual government agencies like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but also by international bodies like the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Science is a weekly, peer-reviewed journal published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

(Source: Reuters)

New study shows cannabis can reverse cognitive decline in mice

Marijuana appears to improve the memory and learning abilities of old mice. Scientists discovered low doses of its main psychoactive ingredient — cannabinoid THC — can reverse the age-related decline in cognitive abilities, a finding that could lead to scientists figuring out a way of slowing brain aging in humans.

Researchers are increasingly examining THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) for its potential medical benefits. In the UK, Oxford University recently launched a £10 million (\$13 million) program to "identify new medical therapies through research into the molecular, cellular and systems mechanisms of cannabinoids."

In a study published in *Nature Medicine* on Monday, researchers led by Andreas Zimmer, from the University of Bonn, Germany, have shown how THC can provide significant benefits to mice when it comes to age-related cognitive decline.

THC interacts with receptors in the brain's endocannabinoid system, which is involved in many physiological functions, including pain, mood, memory and appetite. Previous research has also shown activity in the endocannabinoid system declines as we get older, indicating it plays a role in the progression of aging.

■ Life stages

To study what effect THC has on the aging brain, scientists gave low doses of THC to mice at three different life stages — two months, 12 months and 18 months. The latter two groups represented mature and old age.



The team carried out three experiments. The first involved a water maze, where mice have to learn and then remember how to navigate their way to the end. In a control group, mature and old mice performed worse than the young group. However, when treated with THC, the older groups improved at the task, while the young mice fared far worse. (The study's authors noted that this was in "good agreement with the known detrimental effects of THC on cognition in young animals and humans.")

Next, they created a task where mice had to locate a specific object. Older mice treated with THC performed to the same standard as young mice that had not been

given the drug. A third test relating to partner recognition also showed THC led to improved memory in mature and older mice. "Together, these results reveal a profound, long-lasting improvement of cognitive performance resulting from a low dose of THC treatment in mature and old animals," the scientists write.

■ Transcription patterns

Further research showed what might cause the improvement, with THC appearing to restore hippocampal gene transcription patterns — activity in the brain relating to memory and learning — to a similar state seen in young mice.

The team argues that while they do not yet know if these findings would be same in humans, it could lead to new treatments to prevent cognitive decline in older people: "Cannabis preparations and THC are used for medicinal purposes," they write. "They have an excellent safety record and do not produce adverse side-effects when administered at a low dose to older individuals. Thus, chronic, low-dose treatment with THC or cannabis extracts could be a potential strategy to slow down or even to reverse cognitive decline in the elderly."

Zameel Cader, associate professor in clinical neurosciences at Oxford University, is involved in the institution's \$13 million cannabis research project. Commenting on the *Nature Medicine* study, he tells *Newsweek* the paper is "very interesting on a number of levels."

(Source: Newsweek)

Chemical engineers explain oxygen mystery on comets

A Caltech chemical engineer who normally develops new ways to fabricate microprocessors in computers has figured out how to explain a nagging mystery in space — why comets expel oxygen gas, the same gas we humans breathe.

The discovery that comets produce oxygen gas — also referred to as molecular oxygen or O₂ — was announced in 2015 by researchers studying the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko with the European Space Agency's Rosetta spacecraft.

The mission unexpectedly found abundant levels of molecular oxygen in the comet's atmosphere. Molecular oxygen in space is highly unstable, as oxygen prefers to pair up with hydrogen to make water, or carbon to make carbon dioxide. Indeed, O₂ has only been detected twice before in space in star-forming nebulae.

Scientists have proposed that the molecular oxygen on comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko might have thawed from its surface after having been frozen inside the comet since the dawn of the Solar System 4.6 billion years ago. But questions persist because some scientists say the oxygen should have reacted with other chemicals over all that time.

A professor of chemical engineering at Caltech, Konstantinos P. Giapis, began looking at the Rosetta data because the chemical reactions happening on the comet's surface were similar to those he has been performing in the lab for the past 20 years.

■ Chemical reactions

Giapis studies chemical reactions involving high-speed charged atoms, or ions, colliding with semiconductor sur-

faces as a means to create faster computer chips and larger digital memories for computers and phones.

"I started to take an interest in space and was looking for places where ions would be accelerated against surfaces," says Giapis. "After looking at measurements made on Rosetta's comet, in particular regarding the energies of the water molecules hitting the comet, it all clicked."

In a new *Nature Communications* study, Giapis and his co-author, postdoctoral scholar Yunxi Yao, demonstrate in the lab how the comet could be producing oxygen.

Basically, water vapor molecules stream off the comet as the cosmic body is heated by the sun. The water molecules become ionized, or charged, by ultraviolet light from the sun, and then the sun's wind blows the ionized water molecules back toward the comet. When the water

molecules hit the comet's surface, which contains oxygen bound in materials such as rust and sand, the molecules pick up another oxygen atom from these surfaces and O₂ is formed.

"We have shown experimentally that it is possible to form molecular oxygen dynamically on the surface of materials similar to those found on the comet," says Yao.

"We had no idea when we built our laboratory setups that they would end up applying to the astrophysics of comets," says Giapis. "This original chemistry mechanism is based on the seldom-considered class of Eley-Rideal reactions, which occur when fast-moving molecules, water in this case, collide with surfaces and extract atoms residing there, forming new molecules."

(Source: phys.org)

10-Round Intl. MoU Inked for Designing and Manufacturing PLATFORM for IKCO's New Products

An international Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), Presidential Office's Scientific and Technology Deputy Office, Sharif and Amirkabir universities of technology, Italy's Pininfarina Company, Belgian "Punch" Company, South Korea's Power-Tech Company (Hyundai), prestigious German BENTLER and MAHLE Company.

It should be noted that all stages for designing and manufacturing platform and producing exclusive product of IKCO was kicked off by the world's most prestigious car manufacturing companies, IKCO Press reported the above statement.

Moreover, IKCO and Italy's Pininfarina Company inked another contract, based on which, this prestigious Italian company along with the mentioned firms will design and manufacture an equipped platform for manufacturing Iran Khodro Company's new products, the report added.

An informed source put the investment needed for launching this giant deal at over 10,000 billion rials, so that all stages for designing and manufacturing platform will be launched inside the country in IKCO.

The 10-round deal is Iran's first and largest coopera-



tion in international arena.

Full implementation of this contract will lead to designing and manufacturing IKCO's exclusive platform, so that various products in different models [including sedan, hatchback, crossover, SUV, hybrid and electric cars] will be manufactured on this platform.

Also, Presidential Office Scientific and Technology Deputy Office is one of the main pillars of the consortium (joint cooperation) in line with the materialization

of objectives of resistance economy, the report opined. It is predicted that the first product of this contract will hit country's consumer market in the second half of the next Iranian calendar year in 1398 (to start March 20, 2019)."

With setting up and developing knowledge-based companies, giant steps have been taken in the field of provision of car parts including engine, gearbox, axle, body, electric and electronic parts.

It is worth mentioning that Sharif University of Technology will be tasked with designing and developing electric cars while Amirkabir University of Technology will design and develop hybrid cars.

Cooperating with Iranian Parts Manufacturers Association with the aim of promoting domestic manufacturing of car parts and equipment is of the other main topics of this contract signed and sealed by Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) and foreign companies.

Moreover indigenizing and manufacturing parts in the country, technical and specialized knowhow of Iranian parts manufacturers will be expanded in this consortium in cooperation and collaboration with parts manufacturers considerably, the report ended.

Incas used knots to communicate with textiles

We know cave drawings told stories and were a means of communications. But what about macramé? A researcher at St. Andrews University in Scotland says that's exactly how Incas transmitted letters.

In a paper published Monday for the April 9 edition of the journal *Current Anthropology*, anthropologist Sabine Hyland of the St. Andrews Department of Social Anthropology examined two khipus preserved by a village in Peru that villagers said were sacred texts about warfare.

The various ways of twisting and knotting animal hairs a cotton fibers and colors contained 95 symbols that amounted to writing. The khipus even contained names at the bottom, formed by distinct fibers, colors produced by dyes and ply direction.

Spanish witnesses long claimed khipus contained historical narratives, biographies and epistles, but scholars dismissed them as memory aids, providing simple mnemonic tools rather than providing a writing system to preserve information.

"I examined two khipus safeguarded by indigenous authorities in the remote Andean village of San Juan de Collata," Hyland wrote. "Village leaders state that these khipus are narrative epistles about warfare created by local chiefs. The existence of epistles, comprehensible to recipients, implies a shared communication system."

"In Collata, the khipus were stored in a sacred wooden box containing over 100 manuscripts. ... The khipus show little evidence of felting, indicating that they have not been handled frequently. While highly valued, the manuscripts are not generally consulted in village affairs, although one senior man reads through them in his spare time. ... Collata is the only village in the Andes where colonial manuscripts and khipus are known to be preserved together in the same archive," Hyland said.

(Source: IBT)

Graphene speaker produces sound with good (non)-vibrations

Sound is the result of a pressure wave in the air. A regular speaker creates this wave by physically moving back and forth, regardless of whether it's a magnetic coil-driven speaker or a membrane-based one. Thermo-acoustic sound generation is different. It causes the necessary pressure wave not by physically moving a component, but by periodically varying the temperature of the air next to it.

To achieve this, a material is required that's able to heat up and cool down very rapidly, at a rate comparable to the frequency of the generated sound. That rules out a lot of metals because, although they conduct heat quickly, they turn out to be too good at storing heat over a long period of time.

According to a new piece of research coming out of the UK's University of Exeter, it could be to use all-around wonder material graphene to create a non-moving solid-state audio device that may one day replace your existing bulk sound system.

"Graphene is great at conducting heat but, as it is just a single sheet of atoms, it has really poor capacity to store heat," Dr. David Horsell, a professor of physics who worked on the project, told *Digital Trends*. "As a result, it can heat and cool at a very high rate indeed — enough to generate sound at audible frequencies and at much higher, ultrasonic frequencies."

(Source: Digital Trends)

Ancient minerals fill in lost chapter of Earth's history

Scientists from the Australian National University in Canberra studying ancient minerals have filled in some gaps in our picture of Earth in the Hadean eon, 4.4 billion years ago. The Jack Hills, in mid-west Western Australia, are home to the world's oldest known mineral samples, called detrital zircon grains. These small zircon grains are the only known geological record of the Earth's crust from the Hadean eon.

Scientists from the Australian National University in Canberra studied the elements present in younger zircons, of known origin, to create a geological 'Rosetta Stone' to determine

Long before Kevin Costner and Dennis Hopper battled it out on the open seas in the mid-90s dystopian sci-fi flick *Waterworld*, the Earth really was almost entirely covered with water, according to a new report by scientists at The Australian National University.

According to new research, at a point in time roughly 4.4 billion years ago, the Earth was virtually featureless and the entire planet was little more than a vast ocean stretching in every direction.

The "history of the Earth is like a book with its first chapter ripped out with no surviving rocks from the very early period, but we've used these trace elements of zircon to build a profile of the world at that time," Dr. Burnham of ANU's Research School of Earth Sciences explains. "Our research indicates there were no mountains and continental collisions during Earth's first 700 million years or more of existence. It was a much more quiet and dull place."

Using granite samples to compare and contrast the type of zircon that is known to be from the very early Earth, the scientists were able to determine that it was created not from melting sediments — which would be an indication of continental shifts and crashes that would create dry land — but from ancient igneous rocks.

(Source: Cosmos Magazine)



WORD OF WISDOM

Patience is of two kinds, patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet
(Imam Ali (AS))

Traditional medicine expounds on temperaments: Phlegmatic or melancholic



ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari

LIFESTYLE TEHRAN — As explained in the previous **d e s k** articles each individual has a distinguishing temperament- or as well-known in the Persian term 'Mizaj'- based on which people display distinctive physical and behavioral characteristics.

In the Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine the excess or less of warmth and humidity define four essential temperaments of "Warm and Wet (sanguine or *Damawiy*)", "Warm and Dry (choleric or *Safrawiy*)", "Cold and Dry (melancholic or *Saudawiy*)" and "Cold and Wet (phlegmatic or *Balghamiy*)" respectively. The terms in the parentheses refer to four groups of material in the body (called "humors" or '*Aklat*') including blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm respectively. Words written in italic show original Persian terms in the ancient literature.

Here is a detailed analysis of the people with phlegmatic and melancholic temperaments.



Phlegmatic: Cold and Wet

People with phlegmatic temperament are normally bulky and quickly gain weight with a body composition of larger proportion of fat rather than muscle tissue and they usually seem swollen.

Their body parts are big and smooth due to the wetness of their bodies.

They usually feel cold and run colder than the other people and once someone touches them can tell they are colder than normal. They usually are more sensitive to cold and humid weather.

They are light, fair and smoothed-complexioned and have the best skin relatively speaking. They have silky, straight, smooth and thin hair.

They expel fairly large amount of waste matter (urine, sweat, and feces) but the waste matter don't have strong color or odor unless waste materials have built up in their bodies.

They might have runny nose and watery eyes, overproduce saliva or suffer from excess mucus production.

They oversleep and as they get up they feel they haven't got enough sleep. They usually have trouble waking up and they wake up tired. They feel dizzy and tired early morning particularly when it's cold or they have consumed food or drinks with wet Mizaj.

These people have poor memory and they may need to read something several times before they fully comprehend it.

They are sensitive to dairy products, sour foods, large amounts of water, and high-water-content foods and should cut back on them.

Mentally speaking they take their time speaking and acting; they are endlessly patient and calm and can put up with people with all sorts of belief.

Melancholic: Cold and Dry

People with melancholic temperament are usually thin and have a small frame. They don't have much big body parts and they can eat as much as they want but don't gain weight. They run colder than the others.

They have a dark complexion and are likely to develop dark spots on their skin. Their skin is dry and rough and their hair is coarse, curly and coily. They also have excessive unwanted hair (hirsutism).

They don't sleep much, have trouble falling asleep fast, they have a lower sleep efficiency which might cause disturbed sleep. They are also likely to have more nightmares than other people.

They have a retentive memory.

They are sensitive to food stuff with cold and dry temperament and they have to cut down on pickled fruits and vegetables, food stuff with vinegar content, lentil, eggplant, leftovers, and fast food.

From mental point of view people with melancholic temperament tend to be introspective.

They might have negative thoughts. They can be perceived as cynical, skeptic, distrustful and suspicious. They act and speak unhurriedly and accomplish a task perfectly.

Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, holds a PhD degree in medical physiology and is an Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine researcher. He is also an assistant professor in AJA University of Medical Sciences, Tehran.

'You invited your child to your home, so be a perfect host!'

Lifelong skills are between the pages!

All the skills human develop during childhood would be useful for his or her rest of life including learning interaction with people around, the way to cope with problems in life or creative way to solve a problem and book provide all these skills free of charge!, Rahmadoost said.

"Sometimes we teach a single skill to our children like repairing electrical devices. By reading book for children, we develop several skills in them," he explained.

He named the skills children gained through book reading. The most important skill is the power of word usage and fluency in language.

"Book reading is at least a kind of language exercise. He or she learns to speak eloquently and anyone who knows more words and expressions, can be a winner in interactions with other," he added.

The book reading also feed children's imagination and it also each book introduce a kind of life to your child, he said.

"Even a book, which is about life of two bears in a forest, is a window on unknown aspects of life for children," he said.

Book reading for children is a delightful



act, which paves several ways for them in the future, Rahmadoost explained.

Parents matter and society cannot be neglected!

Parents have a great role in making their children to love and read books.

Unfortunately many parents have superficial understanding from life and they do not have power instead of skill, he said.

"Books strengthen children mind to cope with problems, which makes them to have creative solution in different

situations during their life," headed.

The problem is that parents do not have an experience of achieving success through reading books, he regretted.

If a child ask a question from his or her father, he seldom ask his child to check the answer together in a book, he said.

"We are not perfect and we should help our children to learn about it and to develop their sense of research and study and active their minds," he added.

Unfortunately child of parent who do not read book will not become book reader most of the time and it is not possible to make children to read book just by advice. There should be some social bases and education system, which motivates children for reading books.

The research-oriented education system has a great role in encouraging children for reading books, which is still not accepted by schools in Iran, he said.

Rahmadoost said everyone can effect children around his or her by giving books as gifts to them.

"You can encourage children by giving books to them, reading books for them and talk to them," he said.

"I am really hopeful about the future, the values are changing but it takes time," Rahmadoost concluded.

Colorful Iran: Tandorostoon celebration in Kerman



LIFESTYLE TEHRAN — Tandorostoon is the name of a celebration, which is traditionally held by people in Kerman, southeast of Iran, 40 days after the beginning of the Iranian New Year, Noruz, on April 30.

The history of the celebration, which literally means happiness and health, dates back to ancient times. Kermani families, especially grandmothers gather at the foot of Shivashgan and

Ghaleh-Dokhtar mountains.

They cook Aash, an Iranian soup, and play music. The family also entertains with fortune telling and smoking Zaqq, alum, to protect them from evil eye.

Various tribes and ethnic groups who live in different parts of Iran are just like colors, which make a great painting. Iran is home to about 20 ethnic groups who live in different regions of the country.

How to fake a clean home in five minutes!



You just remembered that you're hosting a potluck baby shower, the perfect-mom down the street, and your mother-in-law will all be in attendance. Your house is a wreck. You have five minutes. Don't panic.

Grab a laundry basket. Clear all surfaces of clutter in your living areas. Toss it in your bedroom and close the door!

Go into the one bathroom the guests

will use and wipe down all the surfaces with a cleaning or disinfecting wipe, toilet last.

Stick any dirty dishes in the oven. (Please don't forget they're in there.)

Straighten up any couch, books or magazines in the living room. Straighten up any shoes or coats in the entryway.

Take a look at yourself in the mirror, take a deep breath, and smile.

The bell rings! Open the door warmly!
(Source: apartmenttherapy.com)



LEFT TO SAY

TO: Those who wait for a bright day to come!

SUBJECT: You're not a tree!

You just pass days looking forward to upcoming semester, to get married, to become parent or to be retired! The bad news is that these days are counted as your life! And the days you eye are full of such moments that you cannot avoid.

If you think you are not in a place you deserve or not with people you like just move. As American author Jim Rohn suggested 'If you don't like how things are, change it! You're not a tree!' create moments you like and enjoy every moment of your life! Live in the moment and enjoy it!

Be good!



#IRANIANLIFESTYLE



Cooking appliances in an Iranian kitchen

First Announcement

PERMIT NO.: 1396.666
TENDER NO.: 08-21-9540013

N.I.S.O.C
Invitation For Prequalification

National Iranian South Oilfields Company intends to purchase the following goods:

Item	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	Quantity
01	HSL (AN ULTRALIGHT WT.CMT. ADDITIVE) FOR OIL WELL CEMENT. IT FUNCTIONS AS A FLUID LOSS CONTROL ENITANDER.IT INCREASE THE COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH OF CEMENT. IT HAS VERY SPECIFIC SURFACE AREA WHICH RESULTING IN SLURRY STABILITY& ZERO FREE WATER SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH ALL API CEMENT&CMT. ADDITIVE TO BE PACKED IN WATER-PROOF MULTI-WALL BAGS PALLETIZED ON REINFORCED PVC PALLET.SHRINK COVERED. IN22 LB (10KG)BAGS	BG	2000

vendors who intend to participate in the A/M tender are requested to send their resume & tendency letter via fax / mail to the following address not later than 14 days after the second announcement.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide a bid bond of Euro 28/798 Rls 1/000/000/000 in favor of NISOC.

Iranian vendors shall submit their resume acc . to forms nos . 01,02 and 03 which are Available at www.shana.ir and www.nisoc.ir

Foreign Purchasing Dept.
Kouy - e - Fadaeian Islam (New site) Bldg No. 104, ahwaz Iran
Tel / Fax No.: +98-61-34457437,2263256

Public Relations
WWW.NISOC.IR WWW.SHANA.IR <http://IETS.MPORG.IR>

Palestinian president says ready to meet Netanyahu

Turkey's president raises tensions with criticism of Israel

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas says he is ready to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the resumption of the long-stalled so-called peace talks between Israel and Palestinians.

Abbas told reporters during talks with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the Palestinian Authority headquarters in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah on Tuesday that he was ready to meet Netanyahu in line with efforts by the United States President Donald Trump to revive the talks.

Abbas, who met Trump in Washington last week for their first face-to-face talks, said the U.S. president was expected to visit the occupied Palestinian territories "soon." There are speculations that the visit will occur on May 23.

Trump announced last week that his first foreign trip as president would include stops in Saudi Arabia, the occupied Palestinian territories and the Vatican.

Trump has been seeking ways to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

The last round of the so-called peace talks collapsed in April 2014. Among the major sticking points in those negotiations was Israel's continued settlement expansion on Palestinian territories.

The Israeli settlements are considered illegal under international law as they are built on occupied territories.

Observers say the Trump administration's positions on the Israeli settlements and the peace process are not clearly formulated, if formulated at all.

Before taking office, Trump had strongly slammed the administration of former U.S. President Barack Obama for not vetoing a United Nations Security Council resolution that condemned the Israeli settlements.

Since the inauguration of Trump in January, the Israeli regime, which sees in him a stronger supporter than Obama,



has stepped up its construction of settler units on occupied Palestinian land.

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Trump has also implied that he considers al-Quds as the future capital of Israel. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state. They want al-Quds as the capital of that state.

The U.S. president has also vowed to fulfill a campaign pledge to move the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to al-Quds.

■ Erdogan: Relocating U.S. embassy to al-Quds is wrong

Meantime, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that even relocating a stone in Israeli-occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem) will have serious implications, let alone moving the U.S. embassy there

from Tel Aviv.

Erdogan made the remark on Monday, while stressing that all debates over the subject should be halted as such a move would be very wrong.

"The debates over the possibility of US moving its Israel embassy to Jerusalem are extremely wrong and should certainly drop from the agenda," he said in Istanbul.

The planned relocation of the American embassy to al-Quds remains a controversial issue and it has sparked fears of a renewed outbreak of violence across the Middle East.

Earlier in the month, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said that Trump is giving "serious consideration" to moving the embassy.

Palestinians oppose the move and have repeatedly warned Trump against such an action. Also, the Palestine Liberation Organization warned the U.S. against the relocation of the embassy.

The organization emphasized the potential relocation would deliver a death blow to any prospects of the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and fuel extremism in the region.

■ Israel hits back at 'rights violator' Erdogan

The development follows as Israel has hit back at Erdogan, who recently compared Israeli practices against Muslims to apartheid.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon on Monday said, "Whoever systematically violates human rights in their own country should not preach morality to the only true democracy in the region."

Earlier on Monday, Erdogan had pledged never to allow a controversial ban on Muslim calls to prayers to take effect in occupied Palestine.

The ban has been envisioned in an Israeli bill, which was approved by ministers in February but is yet to be adopted by the Israeli parliament.

"God willing, we will never allow the silencing of azan (the Islamic call to prayers) in the skies of Jerusalem," Erdogan said at the International Jerusalem Foundations Forum in Istanbul.

The Turkish President also effectively said that Israel was practicing apartheid.

"What's the difference between Israel's current practices and the racist and discriminatory policies implemented toward the blacks in America in the past, and in South Africa more recently?" he asked.

In June 2016, Israel and Turkey reached an agreement on the normalization of their relations six years after an Israeli raid on a Gaza-bound Turkish aid flotilla killed 10 Turkish activists in high seas and sent their ties spiraling into a cycle of tensions in May 2010.

(Source: Press TV)

Police evict refugees from makeshift Paris camp

French authorities have moved to clear out a makeshift refugee camp in northeast Paris.

Local media reports estimate that the site housed about a thousand mostly African and Afghan refugees and migrants.

Up to 350 members of the police force took part in the operation at the Porte de La Chapelle area, police said on Tuesday.

No clashes were reported.

The settlement at the Porte de la Chapelle area of the city was located just meters from a new refugee transit center set up by Paris city authorities late last year to take asylum-seekers off the streets but which has limited space available.

The makeshift camps present "major risks for the security and health of their occupants as well as for local residents", Paris police said in a statement.

Police halted road traffic on a major crossroads in the north of the city in order to gain access to the camp, where a fight between residents last month left several injured.

Last month, a huge fire gutted one of France's biggest migrant camps, housing 1,500 people near the northern French port of Dunkirk, which started after a



brawl involving hundreds of Afghans and Kurds.

As millions of refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in recent years after fleeing war and economic devastation, France has welcomed only a fraction of the newcomers.

Makeshift camps crop up again and again in the French capital due to lack of capacity at official accommodation centers for refugees and migrants.

■ Jungle refugee camp operation

Elsewhere, a similar operation took place in November, when thousands of migrants were cleared out from a squalid camp in Paris, which had doubled in size after the closure of the so-called Jungle refugee camp in Calais, northern France.

The clearance six months ago of the Calais camp has not stopped refugees from gathering there, the charity Care4Calais warned last month.

About 400 refugees live in three small camps in the French port city, in far worse conditions than the Jungle, the report said.

"Living rough on the streets means no access to sanitation at all, with scabies, fungal infections and gum infections at an all-time high," the organization said.

Calais has been a magnet for refugees trying to reach Britain for more than a decade. From there, refugees try to break into trucks heading to Britain.

French authorities are determined to demonstrate that Calais is now a migrant-free zone, which has led to an increasingly hostile environment for refugees.

Police focus on arrests and detention to discourage a refugee presence on the streets.

(Source: agencies)

Israeli video of hunger striking Palestinian prisoner 'fake'

The representatives of the hundreds of Palestinians who are on a hunger strike in Israeli jails have denounced as "fake" footage released by the regime that Tel Aviv claims to show the protest leader breaking his fast.

Israel says the footage, released by Israeli media on Sunday, shows the campaigner and jailed leader of the Palestinian Fatah Movement, Marwan Barghouti, eating food in his cell.

Led by Barghouti, the mass strike, dubbed the Freedom and Dignity Strike, began on April 17. As many as 1,500 prisoners initially joined the action, but now some 2,000 are believed to be refusing food in incarceration to protest their dire conditions in Israeli jails.

The National Committee for the Freedom and Dignity Strike, which acts as a front for the campaign, said the footage dated back to 2004, and that its release was a deliberate attempt to dent the hunger strikers' will.

The footage comprises two separate videos without timestamp, featuring a man whose face is not clearly visible.

The committee also said Barghouti's hairline had now receded farther back than that of the man seen in the videos.

The committee said, "The utter baselessness of the report becomes clear. The fabrications and theatrics demonstrate Israel's utter failure to break the iron will and steadfastness of the growing hunger strike movement."

The Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs likewise described the release of the video as part of an Israeli "war of lies" to discredit Barghouti and other hunger strikers.

Barghouti's lawyer said the release of the video was "expected as part of the psychological and media war the Israel prison service is conducting against the prisoners."

Also on Sunday, Barghouti's wife Fadwa told a press conference that the footage was "fabricated," and called the move "despicable."

Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, meanwhile, said the Israeli prison service had claimed they had set Barghouti up in an attempt to see if he would break his hun-

ger strike.

Some 6,500 Palestinians are currently being held in Israeli jails, 536 of them arbitrarily, according to figures provided by the Palestinian prisoners' rights group Addameer in January.

Palestinian inmates complain that they have been subjected to assault and torture at Israeli prisons.

They have often resorted to hunger strikes in an attempt to voice their anger at the so-called administrative detention, which is a form of imprisonment without trial or charge that allows Israel to incarcerate Palestinians for six-month periods.

■ Palestinian relatives of arson victims sue Israel

Meantime, relatives of a Palestinian family burned alive have filed a lawsuit against Israel demanding it be held responsible and pay damages over the 2015 attack blamed on Jewish groups in the occupied West Bank.

Eighteen-month-old Ali Dawabsheh died along with his parents when their house was firebombed in July 2015.

His brother Ahmed, now six, was the

sole survivor but was left with severe burns.

"Today we filed a complaint with the Nazareth district court demanding the state of Israel be held responsible for the burning of the Dawabsheh family in the village of Duma in the West Bank," Hassan al-Khatib, a lawyer who represents the family, said.

Ahmed's uncle Nasser Dawabsheh said they were seeking an admission of responsibility from the state and \$4.4m in damages.

A 17-year-old, whose name remains under a gag order, was charged with being an accessory to committing a racially motivated murder.

An Israeli defense official said the family would not be eligible for compensation that applies to "terror" victims since it is only open for Israeli citizens, AFP reported.

Nasser Dawabsheh confirmed to AFP that they had rejected a previous compensation offer because they were demanding the state accept responsibility, which he said had been refused.

(Source: agency)

Gunmen attack South Sudan vice president's convoy, injuring bodyguards: official

Unknown assailants attacked the convoy of South Sudan's First Vice President Taban Deng Gai on Tuesday, wounding

three of his bodyguards, a government official said. The ambush took place on a highway linking the capital Juba

with the town of Bor, to its east. State Minister of Information Jacob Akech Deng said Gai was unhurt.

(Source: agencies)

Merkel rules out Turkish vote in Germany on death penalty

Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday ruled out any participation on German soil in a potential Turkish referendum on bringing back the death penalty.

Immediately after winning a close vote last month that boosted his powers, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan mooted a second referendum on reinstating capital punishment, which would mean an end to the country's European Union membership prospects.

Merkel said Berlin would not make it possible for the 1.4 million Turkish voters living in Germany to participate if the referendum were to be held.

"We will not give permission for something we are not obligated to do, and whose content we absolutely reject, for example, the death penalty," she told public broadcaster WDR.

Turkey abolished the death penalty in 2004 as a key pillar of its bid to join the EU.

The April referendum had already opened a new rift between NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies Germany and Turkey, and inflamed tensions within Germany's three-million-strong community of Turkish origin.

After Germany and the Netherlands blocked campaign events by Turkish ministers in March ahead of the vote, Erdogan repeatedly accused both countries of using "Nazi" methods.

Relations took a fresh hit with the arrest of German-Turkish journalist for Die Welt daily Deniz Yucel, who was jailed in February on terror charges and is awaiting trial.

Erdogan and top Turkish officials have also threatened to rip up an EU deal for billions in aid in return for Ankara halting a flood of migrants coming to Europe because of a lack of progress in membership talks.

Germany has urged its EU peers not to end accession talks despite deep misgivings over Turkey's rights record, saying the country is key to European interests.

Since the July 2016 failed coup in Turkey and subsequent crackdown, 414 Turkish officials and their families have sought political asylum in Germany, according to the Federal Office for Migrants and Refugees.

Unconfirmed media reports said successful applicants included numerous Turkish military personnel and their families holding diplomatic passports.

(Source: AFP)

Republicans Party like it's 1984

8 → And meanwhile, they promised to keep the things people liked about Obamacare (whether or not voters knew they were getting those good things because of Obamacare). Nobody would be thrown off Medicaid; nobody would be denied affordable coverage because of pre-existing conditions.

Then came the reality of Republican legislation. Obamacare was debated and analyzed for many months; Trumpcare was thrown together so fast it's hard to believe any significant number of those voting for it even had time to read it. And it was, of course, pushed through the House without giving the Congressional Budget Office a chance to estimate its costs, its effects on coverage, or anything else.

Even without a proper analysis, however, it's clear that Trumpcare breaks every promise Republicans ever made about health. Deductibles will rise, not fall, as insurers are set free to offer lower-quality coverage. Premiums may fall for a handful of young, healthy, affluent people, but will rise and in many cases soar for those who are older (because age spreads will rise), sicker (because protection against discrimination based on medical history will be taken away), and poorer (because subsidies will go down).

Many people with pre-existing conditions will find insurance either completely unavailable or totally out of their financial reach.

■ The important thing

The really important thing, however, is not just to realize that Republicans are breaking their promises, but to realize that they are doing so with intent. This isn't one of those cases where people try to do what they said they would, but fall short in the execution. This is an act of deliberate betrayal: Everything about Trumpcare is specifically designed to do exactly the opposite of what Trump, Paul Ryan and other Republicans said it would.

Which raises two questions: Why are they doing this, and why do they think they can get away with it?

Part of the answer to the first question is, presumably, simple greed. Tens of millions would lose access to health coverage, but — according to independent estimates of an earlier version of Trumpcare — people with incomes over \$1 million would save an average of more than \$50,000 a year.

And there is a powerful faction within the G.O.P. for whom cutting taxes on the rich is more or less the only thing that matters.

And on a more subjective note, don't you get the impression that Donald Trump gets some positive pleasure out of taking people who make the mistake of trusting him for a ride?

As for why they think they can get away with it: Well, isn't recent history on their side? The general shape of what the G.O.P. would do to health care, for the white working class in particular, has long been obvious, yet many people who were sure to lose, bigly, voted Trump anyway.

Why shouldn't Republicans believe they can convince those same voters that the terrible things that will happen if Trumpcare becomes law are somehow liberals' fault?

And for that matter, how confident are you that mainstream media will resist the temptation of both-sides-ism, the urge to produce "balanced" reporting that blurs the awful reality of what Trumpcare will do if enacted?

In any case, let's be clear: What just happened on health care shouldn't be treated as just another case of cynical political deal making. This was a Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength moment. And it may be the shape of things to come.

(Source: The NYT)

Advocaat named Netherlands coach for third time

The Dutch football association (KNVB) has confirmed the appointment of Dick Advocaat as Netherlands' new national team coach.

Oranje were seeking a replacement following the dismissal of Danny Blind in the wake of the World Cup qualification defeat at the hands of Bulgaria in March and they have now turned to Advocaat for the third time in his career.

Advocaat has been appointed until the end of Netherlands' qualifying campaign for Russia 2018, with his deal to be extended should they reach the finals.

Ruud Gullit has been chosen as assistant although he and Advocaat face a tall order, with Oranje sitting fourth in Group A with just seven points from five games, six points behind leaders France.

The 69-year-old's return as national team boss is somewhat controversial, with the veteran coach having left his position as Blind's assistant in favour of a move to Fenerbahce in August 2016 just three months after accepting the job.

The KNVB previously approached Henk ten Cate over the vacancy, but the 62-year-old turned down the job as he did not feel the full support of the association, paving the way for Advocaat to take over.

«I am very happy with the appointment of Advocaat and Gullit,» KNVB sporting director Hans van Breukelen said. «We had two options. We either went for a long-term solution or we did everything within our powers to still make it to the World Cup.»

«We went for the second option. We needed an experienced coach with authority. A foreigner was never an option. We considered Advocaat, Ten Cate and Huub Stevens.»

(Source: soccerway)

Usain Bolt just revealed his dream Man United signing

Usain Bolt has told Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho to forget about signing Atletico Madrid forward Antoine Griezmann this summer and to concentrate his efforts on Alexis Sanchez.

The eight-time Olympic gold medalist is a huge fan of the Red Devils and called the club's in-house TV channel earlier this season after a last-gasp win against Middlesbrough.

Mourinho, 54, wants to sign Griezmann this summer and the club are prepared to trigger his £85million release clause to do so.

Sanchez, 28, has 13 months to run on his deal at the Emirates and Bolt says he'd prefer to see the Chile international at Old Trafford.

«I know Alexis plays for Arsenal – which he shouldn't! Bolt told FoxSports.

«He would be great [for Manchester United].

«I think he is a player that I've always said over the years we need someone who is capable of picking the ball up and creating chances for other people. He's proven himself to be one of the best.»

(Source: Metro)

Chris Froome 'rammed on purpose' by driver in France

Three-time Tour de France champion Chris Froome is thankfully okay after tweeting a picture of his 'totaled bike' which was the result of an 'impatient driver'.

Chris Froome tweeted a photo of his ruined bike after a drive in France 'rammed' into the cyclist on the pavement.



The three-time Tour de France winner says the 'impatient driver' didn't stop after the incident.

Kenyan-born Froome said he was fine after the crash which took place in the south-east of France but his state of his bike indicated the level of impact suffered.

His bike, which is worth around £9,000, suffered damage to both wheels and the frame so cannot be salvaged.

Froome is expected to ride in this year's Tour de France, as he looks to secure a fourth title.

A number of his followers tweeted Froome to show their support for the British cyclist.

Froome lives in Monaco with his wife and child, close to where the incident supposedly took place on Tuesday morning.

(Source: itv.com)

Lionel Messi shows off amazing shirt collection

Not content with simply being the best player in global football, the Barcelona, Lionel Messi, wizard has also put together an assortment of club and national colours the likes of which most souvenir hunters could only dream about.

Messi showed off his ensemble in a social media post on Tuesday, with some of the top names in the game represented on the walls, and in the floor and ceiling, of his memorabilia room.

Across the 13 years of his glittering career, the Argentinian maestro has graced just about every major stage - including the World Cup and Champions League finals - and as such has been perfectly placed to swap shirts with his fellow superstars.

And, seemingly a sucker for nostalgia, Messi has been quietly accumulating a vast collection in private.

There are headline names - Thierry Henry, Raul, Iker Casillas, Francesco Totti, Pavel Nedved, Philipp Lahm, Sergio Aguero and Yaya Toure to name but nine- as well as some comparatively lesser lights.

Many football fans might not be familiar with Xabi Prieto of Real Sociedad, for instance, while Qatari outfit Lekhwiya's striker Youssef El Arabi doesn't have anything like the same billing as Messi in the sport.

Manuel Lanzini's West Ham shirt takes pride of place right next to two Argentina World Cup jerseys despite he and Messi never having come face-to-face in a competitive game, while the striking green-and-yellow number bearing the name of former Aldosivi midfielder Hernan Lambert earned a spot after the 33-year-old sent it to the five-time Ballon d'Or winner's home.

But plenty of his Barcelona team-mates past and present feature, including Dani Alves, Cesc Fabregas, Gerard Pique and Luis Suarez, while an abundance of Argentinian names adorn the walls.

Diego Milito, Angel di Maria, Pablo Aimar... the list goes on and on and on.

Players from France, Italy, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Ivory Coast, Holland, Germany, Brazil, Guinea, Morocco, the Czech Republic and Portugal are all represented - but there isn't a single English name on show.

And there's not even the slightest sign of CR7.

In total, there are 70 different shirts in the picture shared by Messi on Instagram, though it's likely the room houses many, many more.

Which is all pretty remarkable considering the 29-year-



old openly claims to not be naturally inclined to swapping shirts after a game.

«I don't ask for shirts. If there is an Argentine, I will swap with an Argentine,» he told Invictus.

«If not and there is someone else that asks me, I will

swap it with them. If not, I do not look and do not ask.

«I asked, once...I asked (Zinedine) Zidane.»

Despite his reluctance to pick up matchday souvenirs, he's obviously proud of his collection.

(Source: Dailymail)

Liverpool ace agrees summer Barcelona move - reports in Spain



PHILIPPE COUTINHO has agreed a summer move to Barcelona, according to reports in Spain.

The Liverpool star is Barcelona's top summer target as the club look set for an overhaul.

And Sport today run with the story that the Brazil ace has given the thumbs-up for the clubs to begin negotiations over a fee.

Barcelona are said to have tested the waters to see how Coutinho would respond to the interest before making their bid official.

And it is now claimed the club are ready to make the move after getting a positive response.

Coutinho penned a new Liverpool contract earlier this year despite having an injury-disturbed season.

And he has been influential for Ju-

rgen Klopp's side as they battle for a place in the top four.

The 24-year-old has scored 10 goals and has six assists for the season and scored three in three Copa America games for Brazil last summer.

Barca are preparing for a big summer with a new manager set to replace Luis Enrique and at least five signings to improve the starting XI.

Coutinho is the main piece in the puzzle and would help to replace Andres Iniesta, who at 32 is on the wane.

However, Liverpool will not give him up easy and could demand a fee as big as the £75m Barca paid for Luis Suarez in 2014.

Reds fans have reacted in horror at the news their star man could go - and have demanded Neymar in return.

(Source: Express)

Bouchard defeats Sharapova, but verbal battle continues



Eugenie Bouchard says she received messages of support from other players before beating Maria Sharapova in an epic three-setter at the Madrid Open.

Sharapova was branded a "cheater" by Bouchard last month, following the Russian's return to tennis from a 15-month doping ban.

And Bouchard's pointed comments added some extra spice to her meeting with Sharapova in the second round of the Madrid Open on Monday, with the Canadian prevailing 7-5 2-6 6-4 in a marathon encounter which lasted almost three hours.

A brief handshake followed between the pair, before Bouchard once more took aim at the five-time Grand Slam champion.

«She said 'well played,» said Bouchard.

«And I think she's been playing really well in her so-called comeback, if you want to call it that.»

«I was inspired because I had a lot of players coming up to me privately, wishing me good luck.»

«They were players I don't normally speak to and I got a lot of texts from people in the tennis world that were just rooting for me. I wanted to do it for myself, but also for all these people.»

«Some girls in the locker room were coming up to me and really wishing me good luck which doesn't normally happen.»

«It showed me that most people have my opinion and they were just maybe scared to speak out.»

(Source: Eurosport)

Surprising candidate linked with becoming Djokovic's next coach

Andre Agassi has emerged as a surprise contender to become Novak Djokovic's new coach, according to reports.

Following Djokovic's clear-out of his coaching team last week, the Telegraph claims the former world number one could look towards Agassi for inspiration.

Djokovic's agent, Edoardo Artaldi, has stated that no name has been singled out, but the Serbian suggested to reporters in Madrid that he is targeting an experienced former pro.

The reigning French Open champion told reporters on Sunday: «[The next coach] is going to be someone that has been through similar experiences like I have. Not too many people in the past in tennis have managed to get to that stage and play at that level, so I'll see.»

Boris Becker was one such former champion to coach Djokovic, and the 29-year-old won six Grand Slam titles under the German's stewardship, Djokovic holding all four major titles at the same time after victory at the French in 2016.



However, Djokovic's time with 'supercoach' Becker came to an end back in November, less than a month after he lost the ATP World Tour Finals showdown with Andy Murray, which in turn handed the number one spot to the Briton.

Agassi has spoken of his reluctance to coach on the tour, recently stating he would "not have any room" to do so when asked if he would consider mentoring Nick Kyrgios.

But the Telegraph suggests that Djokovic may look to Agassi as a "consultant-type head coach" and one that would only involve 10 to 12 weeks a year on the road.

With Djokovic turning 30 on May 22, the Serb is desperate to rediscover the form which led him to become the world No. 1 for 122 consecutive weeks between July 2014 and November 2016.

Agassi would appear to be an attractive prospect due to the longevity of his playing career. The eight-time Grand Slam champion won two of those titles in his 30s, last claiming the Australian Open in 2003 at the age of 32.

The American ended his 20-year playing career back in 2006 at the age of 36 after the US Open, though he did start that year ranked seven in the world.

(Source: Eurosport)

Iran win 2nd Asian U23 Volleyball Championship title

S P O R T S Iran defeated Japan in straight sets (27-25, 26-24, 25-20) to win the 2nd Asian Men's U23 Championship for the second time.

The match was held in front of more than 6,000 cheering fans at the Rezazadeh Hall in Ardabil.

Juan Cichello's boys started the competition with a 3-0 victory over Pakistan in the group stage.

Iran then beat Malaysia 3-1, China 3-0, Kazakhstan 3-0 and Thailand 3-0.

In the third-place play off, Chinese Taipei defeated Thailand 3-1 (19-25, 25-21, 25-23, 25-22).

"Iran will have an uphill task in the World Championship since a total of best teams will vie for the best results. It's possible to win trophy but very hard," Cichello concluded.

The competition brought a total of 11 teams in Ardabil, Iran from May 1 to 9.

The tournament served as the Asian qualifier for the 2017 FIVB Volleyball Men's U23 World Championship which will be held in Cairo, Egypt.

Iran and Japan advanced to the World Championship as top two teams.

Final Standings:

1. Iran, 2. Japan, 3. Chinese Taipei, 4. Thailand, 5. China, 6. Pakistan, 7. Kazakhstan, 8. Malaysia, 9. Uzbekistan, 10. Sri Lanka, 11. Australia



Abdollah Veisi a candidate to take charge of Foolad



S P O R T S According to local media, Foolad football club want to lure Abdollah Veisi as new head coach.

Abdollah Veisi is without a job after sacking from Sepahan.

Under guidance of Naeim Sadavi, the Ahvaz-based club finished in 10th place in Iran Professional League, 29 points adrift of winner Persepolis.

Veisi led Esteghlal Ahvaz to their first major trophy success – League

Championship – in 2015-16.

Abdollah Veisi also is a candidate to take charge of Gostaresh Foolad Tabriz.

Foolad officials have reportedly contacted Veisi over a possible move to Foolad for the upcoming season.

Veisi was a member of Foolad football team as a player for three years and has worked as an assistant coach in the club in 2006-07 season.

Iraqi Saad Natiq linked with a move to Persepolis



S P O R T S Iraqi international defender Saad Natiq has been linked with a move to Persepolis football team.

A source close to the Iranian club said that they have reached an initial agreement with Natiq.

According to him, Natiq will arrive in Tehran this week to finalize his contract.

On August 26, 2015, Natiq made his first international appearance for Iraq against Lebanon in a friendly match.

Natiq, 23, currently plays for Al-Quwa Al-Jawiya in the Iraqi Premier League.

Iran champion has already reached agreement with Nigerian striker Godwin Mensha and former Sepahan defender Shoja Khalilzadeh.

Natiq was a member of Iraq football team in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

Qatari football club Al-Markhiya has already showed an interest to sign the Iraqi rising star.

Hossein Faraki bids farewell to Saipa

S P O R T S Hossein Faraki stepped down from coaching role of the Saipa football team on Tuesday.

He helped Saipa avoid relegation from the Iran Professional League last week.

Last year, Faraki joined Saipa on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee and didn't extend his deal with the Iranian football team at the end of the season.

"Faraki has said goodbye to Saipa and we wished him all the best," Saipa General Manager Reza Darvish said.

"He needs to rest and will not accept any offer for one year," he added.



IPC President concludes visit to Iran

International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President Sir Philip Craven concluded his visit to Iran on Monday (8 May) and overall was greatly impressed at what he saw during his week-long tour of the country.

Whilst in Shiraz on Friday, Sir Philip met the family of Para cyclist Bahman Golbarnezhad before paying his respects at the athlete's tomb. Golbarnezhad died in a tragic accident during the Para cycling road race on the penultimate day of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

During the meeting, Sir Philip thanked Golbarnezhad's family for the significant contribution the two-time Paralympian had made to the Paralympic Movement.

On Saturday, Sir Philip, together with Paralympic shooting champion Sareh Javanmardidodmani took a tour of Shiraz to see its infrastructure for Para athletes. Following the visit he praised city officials for their outstanding efforts in supporting Para sports in Fars Province.

The IPC President, a former wheelchair

basketball player, got a taste of the action once again on Sunday when he took to court during a visit to a special Para Sports complex in Isfahan. Joined by the Chairman of the Para Sports Association and the Mayor of the Isfahan province, Sir Philip was captivated by what he saw.

"Isfahan has just a few steps remaining to reach the Brazil, South Korea & China Para sports standards," said Sir Philip speaking of the specialist Paralympic training centres that already exist around the world.

"Isfahan undoubtedly fulfils the four Paralympic values of courage, inspiration, determination and equity.

"The important aspect of Para sports development in Iran is that in some other countries Para sports is affiliated to rehabilitation organisations, but in Iran Para sports are governed by Para Sports associations in each province.

"This is one of the main reasons why Para sports are growing so rapidly in Iran," he added.

Messi's Iranian doppelganger: I could be Leo's representative when he is too busy!

Reza Parastesh, an Iranian student, looks so much like Lionel Messi that it almost landed him in jail for disrupting public order this week.

So many people came out to take selfies with Parastesh in the western city of Hamadan over the weekend that police rushed him into a station and impounded his car to stop the chaos and clear traffic.

The furor began a few months ago when Parastesh's football-mad father pressured him into posing in a No. 10 Barcelona jersey and sending the pictures to a sports website.

"I sent them one night and by the morning they had called me and said I should come in quickly for an interview," he said.

Despite his early reluctance, Parastesh, 25, soon grew

into his new role, cutting his hair like Messi and often donning the Barca jersey when he goes out.

It has paid off — he is fully booked with news media interviews and has even landed modeling contracts.

"Now, people really see me as the Iranian Messi and want me to mimic everything he does. When I show up somewhere, people are really shocked," he said.

Iranians are obsessed with football, and Parastesh finds himself constantly besieged by fans looking for a selfie.

"I'm really happy that seeing me makes them happy and this happiness gives me a lot of energy," he added.

Parastesh loves football but has never played professionally, though he is working on some tricks so he can better play the role.

He remembers well the last game between Iran and Argentina during World Cup 2014, when Messi's 91st-minute goal robbed the Islamic republic of a place in the last 16.

Parastesh's father was furious.

"After the game, my dad called me and said, 'Don't come back home tonight... Why did you score a goal against Iran?' I said: 'But that wasn't me!'" Parastesh said, laughing.

His goal now is to meet his hero in Barcelona, and maybe even land a job as his understudy.

"Being the best player in footballing history, he definitely has more work than he can handle. I could be his representative when he is too busy," he said.

(Source: New York Times)

Persepolis qualifies for AFC Champions League Round of 16

Mehdi Taremi's hat-trick helped Persepolis secure their passage to the 2017 AFC Champions League Round of 16 following a 4-2 victory over Al Wahda in Group D on Monday.

Needing a win at Azadi Stadium to advance, and for Al Rayyan to fail to defeat Al Hilal in the simultaneous kick-off in Group D, Soroush Rafiei gave the hosts an early lead after 17 minutes, which was quickly doubled by striker Taremi.



Al Wahda struck back just after the half-hour mark as Ahmed Al Akberi found the target, before Sebastian Tagliabue pulled the visitors level on 51 minutes. Persepolis, though, soon found a second wind as Taremi stepped up to a starring role by scoring three minutes later to restore the home side's lead and then again with 20 minutes remaining to seal what was ultimately a comfortable victory.

With group leaders Al Hilal claiming a thrilling 4-3 victory over Al Rayyan in Doha, the Iranian champions leapfrogged the Qataris into second place to join Al Hilal in the next phase while Al Wahda finished bottom of the standings.

(Source: AFC)

Godwin Mensha Declares Himself 'Satisfied' with Persepolis Move

Nigerian striker Godwin Mensha says that he is satisfied with his move to Persepolis football team.

Former Paykan forward has penned a two-year contract with the Iran champion.

"I had several offers from Iranian clubs but I've made the best decision. Persepolis is a big team in Iran and Asia. Our team is a favorite to win the AFC Champions League title. I hope I can win trophies with Persepolis," Mensha said.

"I can pave my way in Persepolis to be invited to Nigeria national football team. I would like to thank Persepolis fans who supported me to join their team," the 27-year-old player added.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran's Zob Ahan knocked out of AFC Champions League

Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli confirmed their place in the knock-out phase of the 2017 AFC Champions League on Monday as Christian Gross' team handed Zob Ahan of Iran a 2-0 defeat to advance to the Round of 16.



The Jeddah-based club took all three points to secure second place in Group C and set up a last 16 meeting with the winners of Group A, which will be determined on Tuesday.

After a goalless first-half, Abdulfattah Asiri put Al Ahli in front in the 63rd minute and, with six minutes remaining, Amiri Kurdi put the result beyond doubt when he slid in to score from six yards out.

(Source: AFC)

Victory Day Women Cup: Iran come third

Iran finished in third place in the 8th International Futsal Tournament for Women National Teams on Tuesday.

Iran defeated Czech Republic 4-0 in the third match at the Aquarium Hotel, Crocus Expo in Krasnogorsk, Russia.

The Iranian team suffered two defeats to Spain (7-0) and Russia (4-0) in the tournament.

In another match, Spain defeated Russia 3-1 and won the title for the fifth time out of eight editions.

The tournament, which brought Russia, Iran, Spain and the Czech Republic, is also known as Victory Day Women Cup 2017.

(Source: Tasnim)

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Managing Director: Ali Asgari
Editor-in-Chief: Hassan Lasjerdi

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98(21) 88808214 editor@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
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P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



Tehran Philharmonic Orchestra to give concerts late May

A R T TEHRAN — The Tehran Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Arash Guran will perform concerts in Rudaki and Vahdat halls on May 24 and 25.



Italian cellist and composer Alessio Pianelli, and Iranian violinist Pedram Faryusefi will accompany the orchestra.
"The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires", a set of four tango compositions written by Argentine tango composer Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) and arranged by Leonid Desyatnikov will be the first performance by the orchestra.

The second part will include a performance of "Symphony for String orchestra" by Azerbaijani composer Fikret Amirov (1922-1984).

The symphony has been composed in memory of Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi (1141-1209).

Book City Institute to unveil Italian version of "Homay and Homayun"

CULTURE TEHRAN — An Italian version of famous 14th century Persian poet Khwaju Kermani's "Homay and Homayun" will be unveiled during a session at the Book City Institute in Tehran on Wednesday.



Published by Mimesis International Publishing House in Italy, the book is a poem about the adventures of the Persian prince Homay, who falls in love with the Chinese princess, Homayun.

The Iranian translator of the book Nahid Noruzi, professor of Persian literature at Bologna University Carlo Sakone and Iranian scholar Manuchehr Sadat-Afsari are scheduled to give speeches at the meeting.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Short films from Iran to compete in Skepto festival
The 8th edition of the Skepto International Film Festival, which will open in Cagliari, Italy on Wednesday.

A R T TEHRAN — Five Iranian short films will be screened at the 8th edition of the Skepto International Film Festival, which will open in Cagliari, Italy on Wednesday.
"A Moment" by Naqi Nemati, "Survival" by Masud Hatami and "Gas Regulator" (Gas Pipe) by Hossein Darabi are among the films that will go on screen at the festival running until May 13.
The lineup also includes "Just This Once" by Mohammad-Hassan Shahmohammadi and "Kech" (Daughter) by Mehrdad Hassani.

NBC announces its first new sitcom for 2017-18 TV season

LOS ANGELES (AP) — NBC is giving the nod to a new sitcom starring Glenn Howerton of «It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia.»

NBC said Monday it has ordered the series, titled «A.P. Bio.» for next season.
It's the first new 2017-18 comedy announced by the network.

Howerton plays a philosophy scholar who settles for a job teaching Advanced Placement biology to high school students, but starts scheming.

The cast includes Patton Oswalt, with «Saturday Night Live» creator Lorne Michaels among the executive producers.

Foreign novels more appealing to Iranian teens: publisher

I → "Some publishers even deliberately choose to republish works from among bestsellers previously published by their colleagues," she stated.

While most of the publishers are more or less satisfied with the market, Heshmat Omid, the manager of distribution section of Hermes Publications doesn't think so.

He criticized some bookstores for using other materials to lure children.

"The book shops put Chinese toys in their windows instead of books," he said.

He asked parents to help their children make proper choices. "They should introduce good books to their children instead of giving them tablets and access to video games and the internet," he added.

Omid also lamented that the organizers of the Tehran book fair appear not to care about dedicating an appropriate place for the children's publishers.

The children's publishers are being housed in some very big tents set up in the Shahr-e Aftab Fairground, which hosted the book fair for the first time last year. They are faced with damages caused by spring rains every year. In addition, the tents lack air conditioning.

However, most of the publishers agreed that the new venue is better than Imam Khomeini Mosalla, which hosted the book fair during previous editions.

"Children's needs are different from adults," said Alireza Sadeqi, an official of the Institute for Intellectual Development



A teenage girl visits the 30th Tehran International Book Fair at the Shahr-e Aftab Fairground on May 7, 2017. (Jamejamonline/Chavosh Homavandi)

of Children and Young Adults. "They should be provided with places for children to rest."

Fatemeh Khodai, a visitor who was looking for some religious stories for

her five-year-old daughter, said, "My daughter is tired and there is no place inside the tents for children to rest."

Mahsa Zeidi, another visitor who is the mother of a six-month-old boy, said that

she wants her child to be familiar with reading and books even at this early age.

"Whatever you can't tell your children directly, can be taught through stories," she stated.

Tehran gallery to hang paintings by Professor Hormoz Mehmanesh

A R T TEHRAN — An exhibition of paintings by Professor of cardiovascular surgery Hormoz Mehmanesh will open in Tehran's E1 Art Gallery on Friday.

Entitled "Shadow of Silence", the collection of paintings has been selected by artist Behnam Kamrani, and part of the proceeds will be donated to a charity, the gallery has announced on its website.

The professor on his website has described the paintings as his "visual diaries."

"Painting begins for me where speech fails to express my inner thoughts and emotions. In my case the answers are not blowing in the wind, but a dance of colors



on canvas," he has explained.

The exhibit will be running until May 26 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebbeh St., off Mahdih St., in the Elahieh neighborhood.

Iranian films on screen at Polish festival

A R T TEHRAN — Twenty-five Iranian films are on screen at the 11th edition of the International Philosophy Film Festival, which is underway in Krakow, Poland.

The motto of this year's festival is "Cinema, People of the Orient, Dreams and Reality", therefore it focuses on screening independent Iranian films, the organizers have announced on the festival's official website.

Among the films are "Vision" by Soheil Amirsharifi, "The Gambler" by Karim Lakzadeh, "Survival" by Masud Hatami, "Delete" by Kazem Molai and "Monolog" by Keveh Qahreman.



The screenings are followed by review sessions attended by Iranian filmmaker Ashkan Ahmadi and Polish film critic Artur Zaborski.

The festival will come to an end on Wednesday.

Tehran exhibit to review works by land artist Ahmad Nadalian

A R T TEHRAN — Works by land artist Ahmad Nadalian on the Persian Gulf islands of Qeshm and Hormoz will be reviewed in an exhibition titled "The Color of Island", which will open at the Khaneh Mahmudieh Art Gallery in Tehran on Thursday.

Four ladies from the two islands will be introducing the art, culture, traditional costume, food and handicrafts of the

region to visitors during the exhibit, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Tuesday.

It has been a decade since Nadalian has chosen to stay on Hormoz Island during the two seasons of autumn and winter.

"The reason I chose the island is its original nature. The nature of the island is beautiful and mysterious. It enjoys a rich environment for a land artist and can be a

good source of inspiration," Nadalian has previously said.

"Training and teaching painting to the women of the island was the most artistic activity of my life, since it proves that art can play a major role in the cultural, economic and social development of the local societies," he has said.

According to Nadalian, the women now have new handicrafts to offer and

make a living with.

Nadalian is famous for his land art creations in Iran and around the world. He has been living in nature for many years and searches for raw materials for his artistic creations and later displays them in natural settings.

The exhibit will be running until May 18 at the gallery located at No.7, Farvardin St., Mahmudieh neighborhood.

Kendrick Lamar stays atop Billboard album sales chart

NEW YORK (Reuters) -- R&B singer Mary J. Blige and British alternative band Gorillaz could not break Kendrick Lamar's reign on the weekly U.S. Billboard 200 album chart, as the rapper's album "Damn." held onto the top spot for a third consecutive week.

Lamar's "Damn." sold another 173,000 units that included 157 million streams in the week ending May 4, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

Gorillaz, a virtual animated band co-created by British alt-rockers Damon Albarn, saw its latest album "Humanz" debut at No. 2 with 140,000 units sold, while Blige's "Strength of a Woman" opened at No. 3 with 78,000 units sold.

The Billboard 200 album chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).



Kendrick Lamar performs at the Global Citizen Festival at Central Park in Manhattan, New York, U.S., September 24, 2016. (Reuters/Andrew Kelly)

Other new entries in the top 10 of the chart this week include Epic Record's compilation of hit singles "Epic AF V2" at No. 6 and singer-songwriter Willie Nelson at No. 10 with "God's Problem Child."

On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online single sales, hiphop producer DJ Khaled and Justin Bieber's "I'm the One" debuted at No. 1 with 171,000 copies sold.

King Arthur fights back to big screen, leading the resistance

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A new dawn, and possibly even a franchise, await the legend of British folklore hero King Arthur.

Warner Bros' "King Arthur: Legend of the Sword", out in U.S. theaters on Friday, revives the tales of the legendary warrior, his famed knights of the round table, and the magician Merlin.

Directed by Guy Ritchie, "Legend of the Sword" goes back to the origins of Arthur, played by Charlie Hunnam, as he is plucked from the poverty in which he grew up as an orphan, and becomes a reluctant leader of a resistance against his uncle, King Vortigern, played by Jude Law.

"Something that has been really, really important in my life, and it's one of the central themes of the film, is a person's unquestionable ability to elevate themselves in life through conscious endeavor," Hunnam told Reuters.

Arthur is the only one able to wield

the magical sword Excalibur from the stone in which it is trapped and, with the guidance of friends and some wizardry from Merlin, the hero finds himself on a quest to save England from the tyrannical rule of a ruthless king.

While the folklore of King Arthur dates back to the Middle Ages, the story of a civilian uprising is something that can apply to a modern-day audience, said Djimon Hounsou, who plays Arthur's confidant Bedivere.

"It resonates loudly about what's going on in America or, more importantly, about what's going on in the world," Hounsou said.

The legends of King Arthur have been adapted into numerous films over the years, from 1953's "Knights of the Round Table" to 2015's "Arthur and Merlin". Ritchie believes it has staying power, saying he has already envisioned several more films for his iteration of the folklore hero.

Actor Antonio Sabato Jr. running for California House seat

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actor Antonio Sabato Jr., a familiar face from soap operas "General Hospital" and "Melrose Place" and friend of President Donald Trump, has decided to run for Congress.

The one-time Calvin Klein underwear model filed paperwork with federal regulators to begin raising money for the contest in the 26th Congressional District, northwest

of Los Angeles.

His advisers say he'll be running as a Washington outsider who can bring fresh ideas to Congress. And he'll be stressing his ties to the president, when Washington is in Republican control.

Sabatino spoke at last year's Republican National Convention.

His strategist, Jeff Corless, said it's "clear the electorate is frustrated with the professional politicians and the failed government bureaucracy."

The seat is held by Democrat Julia Brownley, 64, a former state Assembly member. Democrats hold a 12-point registration edge over Republicans in the district, which includes parts of Los Angeles and Ventura counties.