



baseball

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# US officially designates Iran Guard as terrorist

## Prosecution of companies made easier

WASHINGTON, April 15. (Agencies): The United States officially designated Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization, according to a notice published in the US Federal Register on Monday.

US President Donald Trump said last week he would make the symbolic but unprecedented move, which immediately was condemned by Iran and created concerns about reprisal attacks on US forces.

The IRGC is in charge of Iran's ballistic missile and nuclear programs. It also is involved with the country's banking and shipping industries. The new designation makes it easier to prosecute companies or people in the European Union that do business with Iran.

US law already punishes US persons who deal with the IRGC with up to 20 years in prison because of the group's designation under the US Specially Designated Global Terrorist list, a different US sanctions program.

**Also:**

**TEHRAN, Iran:** Iran's supreme leader on Monday approved the use of special emergency funds to deal with damage from major flood-

ing that has killed at least 76 people and injured more than 1,000 over the past several weeks.

**Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** gave the government permission to use the National Development Fund, which collects some of the country's foreign revenue for emergency needs, should the country's regular budget not be enough. President **Hassan Rouhani** asked the country's supreme leader last week to release about \$2 billion from the fund.

Since March, the devastating flash floods have been hitting the northern and western parts of Iran, with damages estimated at nearly \$2.5 billion so far.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies also launched an international emergency appeal Monday seeking 5.1 million Swiss francs (\$5 million) to financially help tens of thousands of families in Iran impacted by the floods and to replenish emergency stocks of tents, blankets, plastic sheets and food items.

"We are making every single resource we have available to save and support people. But it is not enough," **Zahra Falahat**, an official with the Iranian Red Crescent, said in a statement.

# Kuwaitis praise Sudan mission



Tiger Woods reacts as he wins the Masters golf tournament on April 14, in Augusta, Georgia. (AP)

## Tiger finds his stripes

Tiger Woods won the Masters for the fifth time on Sunday to land his 15th major title and first since 2008.

Woods, who began the final round two shots back of overnight leader Francesco Molinari, carded a two-under-par 70 to finish one shot ahead of fellow Americans Dustin Johnson, Xander Schauffele and Brooks Koepka. (RTRS)

— **Details Page 28**

## Newswatch

**DUBAI:** The Saudi regulator, Capital Market Authority (CMA), said on Monday it had approved the public share listing of shopping malls operator Arabian Centres Company, owned by the Fawaz Alhokair Group.

Arabian Centres will offer 95 million shares representing a 20 percent stake in the company.

Reuters reported in February that Arabian Centres was seeking \$1 billion from a public share listing in the second quarter. (RTRS)

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**GENEVA/WELLINGTON:** The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has appealed for information on the fate of three employees abducted in Syria more than five years ago and last known to have been held by Islamic State.

Breaking its silence on the case on Sunday, the independent aid agency identified the three as **Louisa Akavi**, a nurse from **New Zealand**, and Syrian drivers **Alaa Rajab** and **Nabil Bakdounes**. (RTRS)

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**LONDON:** A group of LGBT+ Syrian refugees launched a legal challenge against **Britain** on Monday, saying it offered them asylum but left them in **Turkey**, where their sexuality puts them in danger.

The 15 refugees have been forced to conceal their sexuality in Istanbul and are constantly at risk of attacks while they wait to be taken to Britain, lawyers representing them said.

"Pretty much every client that we spoke to mentioned that they had to essentially hide," **Sheroy Zaq**, a solicitor at Duncan Lewis law firm representing the group, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. (RTRS)

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**UNITED NATIONS:** The UN envoy for **Yemen** says the government and Houthi rebels have reached agreement on the initial redeployment of forces from the key port of **Hodeida**.

Martin Griffiths told the Security Council Monday that "when – and I hope it is when and not if – these redeployments happen they will be the first voluntary withdrawals of forces in this long conflict."

He called Hodeida "a test of many things" including leadership, and expressed hope "that we shall see in the coming days the people's trust vindicated in this." (AP)

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**PARIS:** French arms including tanks and laser-guided missile systems sold to **Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates** are being used in the Yemeni war against civilians, leaked intelligence published by investigative website Disclose showed.

Entitled "Yemen: security situation", a 15-page classified report written by **France's** DRM military intelligence agency includes maps that detail the positioning of French-made weapons inside **Yemen** and on the Saudi side of the border. (RTRS)

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**NEW YORK:** UN Security Council will hear briefings on **Yemen** from Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs **Mark Lowcock**, both by videoconference later on Monday.

**Virginia Gamba**, the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict is also expected to brief. (KUNA)

**KHARTOUM, April 15.** (Agencies): Kuwait's embassy in Khartoum on Sunday received a number of Kuwaiti citizens upon arrival in Khartoum from the southern Sudanese state of Sennar and completed necessary measures to ensure their return to their country.

"The Kuwaiti ambassador in Khartoum, **Bassam Al-Qabandi** and his staff, were in constant contact with us throughout the day from Sennar province, 500 km south of Khartoum, to the capital Khartoum," **Turki Fahad Al-Dhuwayan** told KUNA.

For his part, **Mohammad Rashed** praised the efforts exerted by the embassy and local authorities.

**Nayef Mohammad Nasser** told KUNA that the ambassador and the members of the embassy provided them with all necessary assistance to ensure their safety and comfort.

He noted that the embassy secured hotel accommodation in Khartoum and booked tickets for them at the nearest flight from Sudan to Kuwait.

He added that they are being treated in the best possible manner and that they receive the utmost care and attention from the embassy and reassure their families that they are at their best.

The Sudanese military, meanwhile, attempted to break up an anti-government sit-in Monday outside its headquarters in the capital, Khartoum, but backed off, organizers behind the protests said. Later in the day, the African Union gave Sudan's transitional military council 15 days to hand over power to a "civilian-led political authority" or face suspension from the union's activities.

There were no clashes and no one was hurt in the attempted dispersal, but the incident set off concerns that the military, which last week ousted Sudan's long-time President **Omar al-Bashir** after four months of street protests against his rule, could renege on its promises not to use force against the peaceful demonstrators.

Videos circulated online showing hundreds of troops outside the military compound in Khartoum. In the footage, an officer is heard saying they came to open roads, "clean the area" and remove the barricades set up by the protesters to protect their gathering.

# Iraq seeks to reclaim status in Arab World

## 'Country before sect'

**BAGHDAD, April 15, (AP):** After decades of conflict, Iraq is seeking to reclaim a leadership role and status in the Arab world with a centrist policy and a determination among the country's top leaders to maintain good relations with both Iran and the United States.

A flurry of recent diplomatic activity and high-profile visits to the Iraqi capital, including this month's re-opening of a Saudi Consulate in Baghdad – for the first time in nearly 30 years – points to a new era of openness as the nation sheds its war image and re-engages with the world.

"Iraq is coming back to the neighborhood," President **Barham Salih** told The Associated Press in a nearly hour-long interview last month. The veteran politician laid out a vision centered on an "Iraq First" policy, saying his country can no longer afford to be caught in regional disputes.

"For almost four decades Iraq was the domain in which everybody pursued their agenda at the expense of the Iraqi people. It's time we say we need a new political order ... in which Iraq must be an important pillar," Salih said.

Iraq has emerged from a ruinous three-year war against the Islamic State group and faces the mammoth task of reconciling, rebuilding and returning tens of thousands of displaced to their homes. And while the extremists' territorial "caliphate" has been defeated in Iraq and Syria, the militants have now shifted to an insurgency campaign of targeted assassinations, car bombings, and suicide attacks.

The issue of Iran-backed Shiite militias who fought IS alongside Iraqi security forces poses a challenge to the government's central authority, and the country's oil-based economy is suffering from wide-scale corruption.

"Iraq's path to reclaiming a leadership role in the Arab world will depend on how successful its leaders are in tackling security and economic challenges at home," **Randa Slim**, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Middle East Institute wrote recently.

Amid rapidly escalating tensions between the US and Iran, Iraq also needs to maintain a delicate balance with the two as Baghdad has strong ties with both countries.

The dynamics are complex. The Shiite-majority country lies on the fault line between Shiite Iran and the mostly Sunni Arab world, led by powerhouse Saudi Arabia, and has long been a theater in which Saudi-Iran rivalry for regional supremacy played out. Relations have been particularly frosty with Riyadh, which broke relations with Baghdad following **Saddam Hussein's** invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and never really warmed much as Iraq was increasingly pulled into Iran's orbit in later years.

Iraq needs much help and investment to rebuild its cities – something it can only get from oil- and gas-rich Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia. But it can also ill afford to alienate Iran, which holds enormous political and military sway in Iraq through powerful militias and pro-Iran politicians.

"We have 1,400 km of borders with Iran, we simply cannot ignore that reality," **Salih** said, adding that it's in Iraq's national interest to nurture good relations with Iran, with which Iraq fought an eight-year war in the '80s. He said Iraq, however, was also keen on good relations with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other regional countries.

Mindful of the need to counter Iran's growing influence in the region in the post-IS order, Saudi officials have sought closer ties with Iraq, and last week sent a high-level delegation to Baghdad where the Kingdom's consulate was inaugurated.

Lebanon's parliament Speaker **Nabih Berri**, on a visit to Baghdad earlier this month, said Iraq is a unique position to play an important regional role "in the reconciliation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran."

**Watheq al-Hashemi**, an Iraqi political analyst, said it's an opportunity for Iraq to again become an important regional player.

But for that to happen, Iraqi politicians "need to put country before sect and act as statesmen," something he says they've had trouble doing for a long time.



Notre Dame Cathedral is burning in Paris on April 15. Massive plumes of yellow brown smoke is filling the air above Notre Dame Cathedral and ash is falling on tourists and others around the island that marks the center of Paris. (AP)

## Historic Notre Dame Cathedral hit by fire

A major fire broke out at the medieval Notre Dame Cathedral in central Paris on Monday afternoon, leading firefighters to clear the area around one of the city's most visited landmarks. Smoke could be seen billowing out from the top of the gothic cathedral, as flames leapt out besides its two bell towers, a Reuters witness said.

It was not immediately clear what had caused the fire. France 2 television reported that police were treating the incident as an accident.

The cathedral, which dates back to the 12th century and is famous for featuring in **Victor Hugo's** classic novel the Hunchback of Notre Dame, attracts millions of tourists every year. (RTRS)

# MP hits 'System' for Bedouins

By **Ahmed Al-Naqeeb**  
Arab Times Staff

**Adnan Abdulsamad** said the Central System for Remedying the Status of Illegal Residents (CSR-SIR) is part of the Bedouin issue as it has complicated matters more than finding solutions let

**KUWAIT CITY, April 15:** While pushing for the bill on the civil and social rights of Bedouins, MP

**Continued on Page 5**

# Aramco buys stake in Hyundai Heavy refiner unit for \$1.2 bn

**SEOUL, April 15, (RTRS):** The biggest shareholder in South Korean oil refiner Hyundai Oilbank said on Monday that state-owned Saudi Aramco had agreed to buy a 17 percent stake in its oil processing operations for 1.4 trillion won (\$1.24 billion).

Hyundai Heavy Industries Holdings said in a regulatory filing that it had signed a sales agreement with Saudi Aramco that included an option for Aramco to buy an additional 2.9 percent stake in Hyundai Oilbank.

The agreement, reached with an Aramco subsidiary, Aramco Overseas Co B.V (AOC), will support the mother company's crude oil placement strategy by providing a dedicated outlet for Arabian crude oil to South Korea, Aramco said in a state-

ment. In late January, Hyundai Heavy said Aramco planned to invest up to \$1.6 billion for as much as 19.9 percent of the South Korean refiner to expand its foothold in the country.

Aramco bought the stake in the unlisted refiner for 33,000 won per share, which is slightly lower than its initially planned price, reflecting market conditions, said an official at Hyundai Heavy who provided no further details.

The investment is meant to support Aramco's broader downstream growth strategy and provide long-term crude oil options and offtakes as part of the company's trading business, **Abdulaziz Al-Judaimi**, Aramco's senior vice-president of downstream, said in the statement.

# Abraaj 'probe' ongoing: Dubai

**DUBAI, April 15, (RTRS):** Dubai's Financial Services Authority (DFSA) said on Monday its investigation into collapsed Dubai private equity firm **Abraaj Capital Ltd** and relevant companies and persons was ongoing.

The Dubai regulator added that it was aware of the arrest of two former executives of the Abraaj group, former chief executive, **Arif Naqvi**, and managing partner, **Mustafa Abdel-Wadood**, on US fraud charges.

"The DFSA is a regulatory body which oversees the conduct of firms under its jurisdiction in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). Where appropriate, it has the power to impose administrative sanctions, but does not have a criminal jurisdiction, therefore it does not lay charges or make arrests," the statement said.

■	US\$/KD 0.30385/95
▼	Euro/KD 0.3437
■	Yen/KD 0.0027
▼	British £/KD 0.3982
▼	KSE -18.62 pts at closing April 15 See Page 21
▼	Dow -68.24 pts at 20:40 April 15 See Page 22
▼	Nasdaq -31.19 pts at 20:40 April 15
▼	FTSE -0.19 pts at closing April 15
▲	Nikkei +298.55 pts at closing April 15
▼	Gold \$1,296.15 per oz (London)
▼	NYMEX crude \$63.24 pb
▼	Brent crude \$71.07 pb
▼	3-month \$ LIBOR rate 2.60100%