

TEHRAN TIMES



No military solution to Syria crisis: Zarif

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Rouhani greets new ambassadors, calls for stronger ties with Paris

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani received on Tuesday credentials of new ambassadors to

Tehran of France, Slovakia, Azerbaijan, and Indonesia with calls for expansion of ties with the countries.

The newly appointed figures will certainly have more demanding missions compared to their outgoing comrades considering that Teh-

ran is emerging from the shadows of international trade sanctions.

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New director of IRIB says change in news programs high on agenda

ART TEHRAN — The new director of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Abdol-Ali Ali-Asgari, has said that making a couple of major changes to new programs is high on the agenda.

Speaking to the reporter after his inauguration on Tuesday, he also said that IRIB will turn its main focus on producing educative programs.

"Paying attention to the national economy and production is also high on the agenda; you will see it on TV," he noted.

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Opportunity for Iran to deepen integration into global economy is coming: IMF

David Lipton, the first deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund says the opportunity for Iran to deepen integration into global economy is coming.

The IMF published the full text of Lipton's planned speech in Tehran on its website on Tuesday. Parts of the speech cover issues relating to the situation of the Iranian economy before and after the lifting of sanctions, opportunities and challenges ahead for its reintegration into the global economy.

Excerpts of the IMF official's quotations are as follow:

With important sanctions lifted, Iran has a new opportunity to deepen its integration into the global economy. That process has the potential over time to support faster growth and rising living standards for Iranians.

But positive results depend on overcoming two major obstacles as well. The first is navigating a difficult global economic situation. And the second is building a competitive and flexible domestic economy that will serve as a suitably strong platform for growth.

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S. Korea, Iran sign MOU for cooperation on environment

SEOUL (Yonhap) — South Korea and Iran signed an agreement Tuesday to jointly tackle their environmental issues, further expanding their bilateral cooperation to social issues in the latest sign of their improving relations.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cooperation on environment was signed here by South Korea's Environment Minister Yoon Seong-kyu and his Iranian counterpart Masoumeh Ebtakar, who is double-hatted as vice president of Iran.

Under the signed agreement, the countries will exchange information on waste management and preservation of wetlands, as well as hold joint seminars that will further promote exchange of information and cooperation, according to South Korea's environment ministry.

"I hope the signing of the MOU for cooperation will be our first step toward improving the countries' environment and boosting their cooperation and exchange of information on their environment-related technologies and policies," Yoon was quoted as saying.

The agreement will resume the countries' joint efforts to tackle their national and global environment issues six years after their 2010 agreement expired. The MOU also follows a series of business deals signed earlier in the month during South Korean President Park Geun-hye's visit to the Middle Eastern country, said to be worth billions of dollars.

In a summit with Park, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also expressed hope to more than quadruple the countries' bilateral trade from \$6.1 billion in 2015 to over \$30 billion in five years.

Tehran greets Croatian president

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic who arrived in Tehran on Tuesday afternoon for a three-day visit was welcomed at Imam Khomeini International Airport by Industries and Trade Minister Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh.

On Wednesday, Grabar-Kitarovic will be officially welcomed by President Hassan Rouhani at Saadabad presidential palace.

A number of agreements and memorandums of understanding will be signed between Iran and Croatia at the presence of Rouhani and Grabar-Kitarovic on Wednesday. Later the two presidents will hold a joint press conference.

Grabar-Kitarovic will also par-



participate at the meetings arranged between economic officials and private sectors of the two countries.

She will also hold talks with some senior Iranian officials on Wednesday.

For Thursday, some cul-

tural activities have been arranged for the female president. She leaves Tehran on the same day.

Grabar-Kitarovic, who became the first female president of Croatia in January 2015, visited Tehran upon an invitation by President Rouhani.

Grabar-Kitarovic's trip follows a series of visits to Iran by world leaders after the Islamic Republic and the great powers signed a landmark nuclear deal in July 2015. The nuclear agreement, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into effect on January 16.

The Croatian president's visit comes two weeks after the female Korean President Park Geun-hye's trip to Tehran.



Iraq in the midst of crisis

On May 11, Iraqis woke up to another series of blasts around Baghdad in Shia populated areas including the city of Sadr, named after Ayatollah Mohammed al-Sadr, leaving almost 100 people dead and more injured. Such explosions have somehow become ordinary and don't even get any headline anymore in local or even international news reports. This kind of violence among Muslims, that is Sunnis attacking Shias or vice versa is something beyond comprehension and I receive it with disturbance and regret.

Despite that Syria has been in an intense civil war for five years and is considered to be in a severe crisis, Iraq is in at least the same condition if not worse. Iraq has not seen a break in violence since the moment it was invaded by the U.S. in 2003. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis lost their lives and 1.5 million left homeless. The casus belli of this invasion was the false presumption that Iraq had supplies of WMD and was an imminent global threat, which later proved to be false and fabricated. Surprisingly some of the leaders apologized for the wrong intelligence. Tony Blair expressed it in an interview he gave to CNN with these statements: "I apologise for the fact that the intelligence we received was wrong... I also apologise for some of the mistakes in planning and, certainly, our mistake in our understanding of what would happen once you removed the regime." Yet, the damage was done and it was once more another Muslim country with a Muslim population who suffered extensively. In the following years car bombs, suicide bombers, and market blasts have turned into a routine set of incidents. The gap between Shias and Sunnis has widened and both initiated to perpetrate incessant violence against each other, which has not ceased up even until today.

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Russia may counter NATO by deploying ballistic missiles near Romania: analyst

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — A senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington DC tells the Tehran Times that Russia may deploy short range ballistic missiles near the Romanian border as the U.S. activated a land-based missile defense station in Romania on May 12.

"Russia, of course, may take this opportunity as an excuse to boost 'counter-measures', maybe by placing short range ballistic missiles near the Romanian border," Gautam Adhikari says.

NATO claims the interceptor station will help defend against the threat of short and medi-

um-range ballistic missiles, particularly from the Middle East. However, Russia has said it is aimed at containing Russia and President Vladimir Putin has said Moscow will "neutralize emerging threats".

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ What is the purpose of the U.S. in deploying missile defense shield in Romania? Isn't it an expansion of NATO to the East?

A: The U.S. has officially said making the missile defense system operational in Romania is to protect Europe from aggressive activity of "rogue states", such as Iran. Russia sees it differently. It has called the system destabilizing and part of a plan to contain Russia militarily and

politically. It may be worth noting that another such NATO installation will be operating in Poland early next year, as plans currently stand. The full system includes NATO's command and control center in Germany as well as U.S. warships in the region which are equipped to launch interceptor missiles. The U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary, Robert Work, has said this strengthening of NATO's missile defense system is not about Russia and that the U.S. would openly say so if it were meant to deter Russia. What it has said this time about the installation in Romania is that it is meant to defend against attacks from other players in the region.

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Iran's railway sector exciting with huge potential for foreigners

By Mahnaz Abdi

Iran's railway sector is exciting with a lot of potentials for foreign exhibitors participating in Iran's 4th International Exhibition of Rail Transportation, Related Industries and Equipment, dubbed RAILEX-PO 2016 (running from May 15 to 18 in Tehran).

The following is what some of them told the Tehran Times in the exhibit.

■ 'Sanctions removal to facilitate business in Iran'

Firdavsi Nuraliev, the export sales manager of Lukoil Lubricants Middle East, the branch of Russian Lukoil Lubricants Company for the Middle East market, believes that

the removal of sanctions will facilitate everything for business in Iran.

"We have always wanted to enter the Iranian market as it is one of the main markets in the Middle East," he stated.

"We want to enter the Iranian market in several stages. The first stage is to have a specific part of

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Tel: 021-430 51 450

times1979@gmail.com