

# TEHRAN TIMES



Iran's "Salesman" takes home Cannes awards for best actor, best screenplay

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## Modi, Ghani meet Leader



**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani separately met with the leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday afternoon.

The Prime Minister Modi and President Ghani visited Iran to sign a three-way transit agreement on Iranian southern port of Chabahar.

The text of the Leader's remarks in his meetings with the senior officials of India and Afghanistan will appear on our website and the Wednesday issue of the Tehran Times. On the importance of Chabahar port, the Indian prime minister said, "History is being created." Modi also said, "We want to link to the world, but connectivity among ourselves is also a priority."

The accord will significantly boost the role of the underappreciated port of Chabahar, connecting India through Iran and Afghanistan to Central Asia.

"Today is an important and historical day for expansion of ties between the three countries," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said in a televised speech, sitting between Modi and Ghani. Ghani also said, "Our will starts from Chabahar today, but its end will be an all-out comprehensive development and economic-cultural cooperation."

## Iran, India, Afghanistan pen trilateral transit pact

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Iran, India and Afghanistan signed a tripartite trade and transit corridor agreement on Chabahar port in Tehran on Monday, which allows the three countries open new routes to connect among themselves via converting the Iranian southern Port of Chabahar into a transit hub bypassing Pakistan. Accordingly, through Chabahar port India can bypass Pakistan and transport goods to Afghanistan and central Asia, while Afghanistan can get linked to India via sea.



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### ARTICLE

By: Jose Graziano da Silva  
The FAO Director General

## From crisis to development: Boosting agriculture's role

With increasing frequency and magnitude, disasters and conflicts are causing untold human suffering in many parts of the world. These are as diverse as Typhoon Haiyan, Ebola, civil war in Syria, to name but a few of the more recent.

We need more concerted efforts to end conflict, alleviate suffering and reduce risk and vulnerability conditions facing millions of people, most of whom are poor and live in rural and marginalized areas of developing countries.

This, essentially, is the aim of the World Humanitarian Summit (23 - 24 May 2016, Istanbul, Turkey) convened by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. It seeks to build on the momentum of an extraordinary series of commitments by the international community.

The recent adoption of a sustainable development agenda to end hunger and poverty and to "leave no-one behind", a universal climate agreement, and a new framework to reduce disaster risk and enhance resilience, are important steps in the right direction.

But we must go much further and radically transform how we perceive and implement humanitarian efforts. Crises are not only humanitarian emergencies. Many are also about neglect and lack of development and as such cannot be solved by humanitarian action alone.

In practical terms, it means moving beyond responding with short-term, relief measures, and invest much more in tackling the root causes of crises. It means building resilience and strengthening the livelihoods of people in ways that not only drive recovery from war, disease, floods and other shocks, but also help to reduce the impact of these crises and, where possible, prevent them from taking place altogether. →9

## Indo-Iran relationship

### ARTICLE

By Adil Murtaza

"My visit to Persia has given me faith in the power of the eastern peoples to assert themselves and quickly find their way to a united manifestation of their undying heritage in spite of conflict and difficult economic circumstance". Rabindra Nath Tagore

India and Iran share deep social, cultural, economic and political relations that have supplemented both civilizations.

It is believed that Indians and Iranians belonged to one single family before the begin-

ning of the Indo-Aryan civilization and lived together with a common language for many centuries in pasturelands of Oxus valley in Central Asia.

With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, India and Iran lost the geographical contiguity they had enjoyed for centuries.

The Cold War saw a period of turbulent relations between the two countries, as the Shah of Iran allied his country with the U.S., whereas India preferred to remain non-aligned.

However, the end of the Cold War opened a window of opportunity for India to clear away misunderstandings and upgrade its relationship with Iran.

Iran began to cultivate a strong relationship

with India. Bilateral relations also remained extremely cordial during Iran's years of global chastisement for its nuclear program, with the exception of a short period during which India was unable to deal with the dynamic of Iran-U.S. disagreement.

Overall, India's diplomacy with Iran has been rooted in economic interests and buttressed by civilizational links.

New Delhi's contemporary cooperation with Tehran is mainly premised on India's energy security, access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, and its enduring rivalry with Islamabad.

It is worth emphasizing that India's interests in Central Asia are substantial, and it needs to bolster its presence in the region. →3

## Iranian and Afghan presidents hold talks

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani and his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani held talks in Tehran on Monday.

Ghani arrived in Tehran on Monday to witness the signing of an agreement between Iran, India and Afghanistan which is intended to turn the Iranian port city of Chabahar into a transit hub.

Rouhani said the trilateral agreement will help economic development in the three countries and the region as well.

He also expressed hope that two countries would witness a "positive change" in relations.



For his part, Ghani called for expansion of ties with Iran in various areas.

Elsewhere, Rouhani said Iran is ready to cooperate with the Kabul government to boost the security situation in the war-torn

Afghanistan.

"Stability, security and development of Afghanistan are very important for the Islamic Republic of Iran and we are ready to cooperate with our friendly and neighboring country in this respect," Rouhani remarked.

Afghanistan has been grappling with the scourge of terrorism since Taliban was formed in the early 1990s.

Rouhani called "disappointment" one of the main reasons behind the spread of terrorism and said Tehran attaches great importance to Afghanistan's development in order to establish stability and security in the country.

## Velayati says Iran won't allow Syria's disintegration

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, top aide to the Supreme Leader, said on Monday that Iran will not allow Americans' and its allies dream to disintegrate Syria to come true, branding it a "hideous plot," according to IRNA.

The veteran politician made the remarks in a meeting with visiting members of the Russian Center for Strategic and International Studies in Tehran.

"Iran will adamantly resist such hideous plots and Bashar al-Assad is Iran's redline," Velayati

was quoted as saying in the session.

The Syrian crisis and Tehran's unfailing support for Assad have been running themes in almost all Velayati's meetings.

In his recent meeting with President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, Velayati hailed the resistance shown by the Syrian government and people against terrorists as "unprecedented in history."

"Iran will use all its capacities to counter terrorists regardless of their farcical division into moderate and extremist," he had said during

the meeting.

Fighting terrorists is very important to establish international peace and security, the veteran politician had noted.

Elsewhere, he had told student news agency ISNA that "Syria is the golden ring of resistance front."

As of 2011 when the Syrian conflict waged, Tehran has been providing financial and military supports to the Syrian government, showing strong commitment to counterterrorism attempts.

## Russia, Iran sign agreement on simplified customs corridor

**MOSCOW(TASS)** — Russia and Iran have signed a number of documents on cooperation, including the protocol on swapping of preliminary information regarding the flow of goods and

vehicles between the countries, Federal Customs Service reported on Monday.

Also, the sides agreed to swap information on customs value of the goods crossing the border and

inked the plan on cooperation between Russia and Iran in the customs area for 2016-2017.

Besides, head of Russia's Federal Customs Service Andrei Belyaninov and head of Iran's Customs

Administration Masoud Karbasian discussed the issues related to the North-South international transportation corridor as well as the implementation of the memorandum on swapping statistics. →9



### COMMENT

By Pang Sen  
China's ambassador to Iran

## Truth you need to know about the South China Sea

These days the issue of the South China Sea draws the attention of the world media because the Arbitral Tribunal based in the Hague is expected to make a decision in the near future on the arbitration initiated by the Philippines. Some western media described this case as a righteous act by a small country to protect its rights and interests, and portrayed China as a villain defying international law. However, is this really the case?

One thing needs to be clarified is that the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea has been China's territory since ancient times. Every Chinese government has exercised effective jurisdiction over it. During World War the Nansha Islands was invaded and occupied by Japan. At the end of the war, it was recovered by China in accordance with the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation. It was widely recognized by the international community that the Nansha Islands belongs to China in the following decades.

The Philippines used to clearly admit that its territory does not contain the Nansha Islands and Huangyan Dao. The scope of the Philippines' territory is defined by the 1898 Treaty of Peace Between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain (Treaty of Paris), the 1900 Treaty Between the Kingdom of Spain and the United States of America for Cession of Outlying Islands of the Philippines (Treaty of Washington) and the 1930 Convention Between the United States of America and Great Britain Delimiting the Boundary Between the Philippine Archipelago and the State of North Borneo (1930 Convention between the US and UK). The above documents all confirmed that 118 degree east longitude is the western limit of the Philippine territory. →9



**MEDIA MONITOR**



**Ayatollah Amini to run for Assembly of Experts chair**

**TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini has accepted calls to run for the chairmanship of the Assembly of Experts.

He made the decision following numerous letters of request sent to him by friends and followers, ISCANews reported on Monday.



**Leader pardons, commutes prison terms of 669 inmates**

**TEHRAN** — In a decree issued on Monday, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pardoned or commuted prison terms of 669 prisoners sentenced by the public and revolutionary courts, the YJC reported.

The amnesty was proposed by Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larjani as Iran marks the liberation of Khorramshahr from the Iraqi occupation in 1982.



**Iran opens new military industrial units**

**TEHRAN** — On Monday Iran inaugurated a number of military industrial plants.

The inauguration was attended by Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan, ISNA reported.

The units produce advanced individual combat weapons, shoulder-fired missiles, and related ammunition.



**Araqchi: World must force Israel to join CWC**

**TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday that the international community must force the Zionist regime to join the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the non-commitment of the Zionist regime to international regulations must not go unheeded, Araqchi told the 14th conference of the Asian member states of the CWC in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Araqchi pointed out that the Middle East is the only region in which chemical weapons have been used on large scale since the end of the World War II.



**Iran unveils new drone in military exercises**

**TEHRAN** — The Iranian armed forces unveiled a new unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) named Siraf on Monday in the third phase of Beit-ol-Moqaddas-28 military drills underway in the central province of Isfahan.

Siraf drone, which is capable of taking images and sending them online to commanding posts, has been designed by students at the college of the ground forces artillery training center in Isfahan, ILNA reported.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of Beit-ol-Moqaddas-28 war games, Army chief Ahmad-Reza Pourdastan said that Zolfaqar and Tiam tanks as well as Fallaq armored personnel carrier were used in the exercises.



**Saudis sent terrorist groups to Iran in recent days: Rezaei**

**TEHRAN** — The secretary of Iran's Expediency Council announced on Monday that Saudi Arabia has sent several terrorist groups to Iran over the past few days.

"The Saudis don't give up support for terrorism and have sent several terrorist groups to the Islamic Iran in the past few days, but all of them have been apprehended," Mohsen Rezaei told reporters, the IRIB reported.

He called on the Iranian officials not to show patience with the Saudis' deeds anymore and inform other Islamic states of their crimes.



**Faezeh Hashemi's meeting a criminal act: legal expert**

**TEHRAN** — Faezeh Hashemi's recent meeting with Bahais was a criminal act and the Judiciary should take strong action in this regard, a legal expert has said.

Abbasali Kadhodaei indicated that Faezeh Hashemi's meeting constitutes an act of propagating banned groups, Tasnim reported on Monday.

# Arrogant powers angry about Iranian resistance, Leader says

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Monday that the arrogant powers are "angry" over the Iranian people's resistance in face of difficulties and pressure.

"Resistance", "non-obedience to the enemy" and "protection of Islamic and revolutionary identity" form the main cornerstones of the Islamic system and the Iranian people's power, he said while addressing a ceremony for graduates of Imam Hussein Military Academy in Tehran.

"The U.S. and the other powers are very upset about the issue and have no option, so they made a lot of efforts to dominate the country's decisions making centers, but they could not and will not," he noted.

He said that the arrogant powers are making efforts to bring the Islamic system into knees, but the Iranians will not obey the ar-

rogant powers.

The Leader also said that the universities and the seminary school are duty bound to take action in clarifying the depth of the "revolution's slogans".

He said that issues such as nuclear energy, missile power and human rights are pretexts which are being made due to Iran's refusal to obey the arrogant powers.

"Recently, they have raised a commotion over Iran's missile capability, but they should know that such propaganda will not be effective and they cannot do a damn thing," the Leader added.

"Were the Iranian nation ready to surrender, they (arrogant powers) would have comprised over [Iran's] missile power and nuclear energy and they would have made no mention of human rights," Press TV quoted the Leader as saying.



## Rouhani: Iran and India to share intelligence on campaign against terrorism

**Tehran-Delhi ties to benefit the entire region, Iranian president says**

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday praised growing ties between Tehran and New Delhi, with the Indian leader saying a new chapter is opening in ties.

Rouhani said the strong ties with India will benefit the entire region.

Modi started a historic two-day visit to Iran on Sunday. This is first visit by an Indian prime minister to Iran over the past 15 years.

The trip by Modi after the implementation of the nuclear deal which removes sanctions against Iran is highly significant.

Rouhani said the Indian prime minister's visit to Iran provides the ground to strengthen economic ties.

"The visit, which has taken place in the post-JCPOA and post-sanctions situation, has provided the situation for development of economic relations between the two countries more than the past," Rouhani said in a joint

press conference with Modi.

Rouhani said that banking relations between the two countries will be expanded. He added the economic relations can be boosted more and more.

The two countries signed 12 agreements in areas of economy, business, transportation, culture, science and development of ports.

**'Historic opportunity'**

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani arrived in Tehran on Monday for signing of a trilateral agreement on Chabahar port between India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

Modi said the trilateral agreement is a "historic opportunity".

**'Sharing intelligence on campaign against terrorism'**

Rouhani also said in view of developments in the region, including the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and Syria, the two countries of Iran and India can have "closer ties in areas of politics and intelligence for estab-



lishing peace and stability."

Modi also said that India and Iran play important role in regional developments. The two countries also share common views and concerns on terrorism, the Indian leader noted.

## Iran shows restraint with Saudi Arabia on Hajj

**By Marjan Golpira**

**TEHRAN** — Iranian foreign minister has said Iran will exercise restraint with Saudi Arabia on the issue of this year's Hajj ritual.

Making the remark in his weekly press conference on Monday, Hussein Jaber-Ansari said that the subject of Hajj is being looked into as it should be by Iran, but unfortunately, Saudi Arabia continues to sabotage this year's Hajj ritual for Iranians.

"The Saudi government refuses to provide security and transportation and facilitate visas issuance for our pilgrims."

Pointing to Riyadh's policy, the official said Saudis have adopted a foreign policy which has resulted in escalation of conflict and tension in the region.

However, Jaber-Ansari said, Tehran is after a principled and consistent policy to help promote regional cooperation, peace, and stability.

"We are not after intensifying tensions in the region."

**Iran dismisses Taliban leader passing through its border to Pakistan**

Elsewhere, the spokesman rejected reports on Afghan Taliban Leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour crossing Iranian borders to enter Pakistan.

Jaber-Ansari said, "Related authorities have rejected that such people have passed through Iran's borders on such dates and entered Pakistani soil."

Mullah Akhtar Mansour, who was using a Pakistani passport with the name

Muhammad Wali, was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Pakistan, according to multiple sources.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan has condemned the U.S. for violating Pakistan sovereignty during the attack.

On whether Iran helped locate the Taliban leader, the official said, "Iran supports any measures in line with restoring stability in Afghanistan."

**Indian prime minister in Iran to boost economic ties**

As his speech unfolded, Jaber-Ansari hinted at the two-day visit by the Indian prime minister to Iran, calling it "an important trip" because of historical relations between the two countries and the geopolitical location of India in the globe.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Tehran at the head of a large delegation on Sunday. He is the very first Indian prime minister to visit Iran in 15 years.

Pointing to 14 memoranda of understanding (MOUs) inked between Iran and India, Jaber-Ansari said the trip aims at

strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

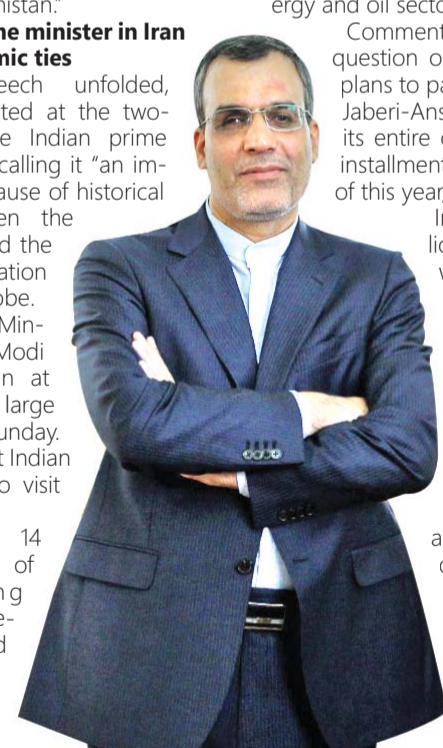
The Iranian official then said before the sanctions regime, Iran was the second largest supplier of crude oil to India, adding that after the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran looks forward to restoring economic ties with India, inter alia, in energy and oil sectors.

Commenting on the Tehran Times question on when and how India plans to pay off its oil dues to Iran, Jaber-Ansari said, "India will pay its entire oil debt back to Iran in installments, hopefully by the end of this year, 2016."

India owes Iran \$6.4 billion for oil imports out of which 750 million dollars was cleared over the past two days, ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Tehran.

**Afghan president in Iran to pen trilateral agreement on Chabahar port**

While the Indian



## Tehran says its diplomats are alive and in Israeli captivity

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — The Iranian defense minister asserted on Monday that four Iranian diplomats abducted in 1982 in Lebanon are alive and in Israeli captivity, saying there is evidence to believe so.

Three Iranian diplomats, Mohsen Mousavi, Ahmad Motevaselian, Taqi Rastegarmoghaddam and an IRNA photographer, Kazem Akhavan, went missing in northern Lebanon during the country's civil war on July 4, 1982.

According to the Iranian Embassy in Beirut the four

**Dehqan says: "We continue to believe that our diplomats are still alive and in Israeli custody. We hold them accountable for their fate and will do whatsoever it takes politically and legally to free them."**

were snatched at a Lebanese Forces checkpoint north of Beirut on their way back from the northern city of Tripoli.

"We continue to believe that our diplomats are still alive and in Israeli custody. We hold them accountable for their fate and will do whatsoever it takes politically and legally to free them," Tasnim quoted Hossein Dehqan as saying.

Since the abduction, there have been contradictory news stories about the fate of the abducted diplomats.

While Iranian officials believe that Israel is behind the kidnappings, Israel has denied any involvement.

Iran has said its diplomats are held in Israel as a possible trump card in a future deal involving information about Ron Arad, the Israeli pilot who was lost on a mission in Lebanese air space.

However, in 2006, Samir Geagea, then-commander of the Christian militia Phalange forces and current president of the Lebanese Forces party, claimed in an interview with As-Safir newspaper that his militia witnessed the diplomats' killing without giving further evidence.

Geagea's claim was promptly dismissed by Iran.



"Such remarks are unacceptable. These persons are alive and are held by the Zionist regime, and we hold Zionist regime accountable," former Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said.

During the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), the Lebanese militia forces headed by Samir Geagea were known for close connections with Israel.

ISCA

YJC

ISNA

IRNA

ILNA

IRIB

TASNIM



# Al-Abadi orders 'liberalization' of Fallujah from ISIL

Iraqi troops advance to liberate ISIL stronghold

By staff & agencies

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi informs the Iraqi nation of the beginning of a process for the "liberation" of Fallujah city from the grip of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Nearly 70 kilometers west of the capital Baghdad, the strategic city in the Anbar province, has been suffering under the ISIL terrorists' control since 2014.

In a televised speech late on Sunday, the Iraqi commander-in-chief announced the start of the operation, promising the nation that the "Iraqi flag will rise" again in Fallujah.

The city will return under the control of the government just like "hundreds of villages and cities and towns," recaptured by the Iraqi soldiers, backed by Shia and Sunni fighters.

The forces tasked with battling the Takfiri terrorists in the western Iraq are "approaching a moment of great victory," stated the prime minister.

The western town of Rutba, also in Anbar, was recently recaptured by Iraqi forces.

The Joint Operations Command also issued a statement, declaring the start of the operation.

## ■ Iraqi troops advanced in Fallujah

Meantime, dozens of ISIL terrorists have been killed as Iraq launches an offensive to retake one of the two remaining ISIL strongholds, with al-Abadi saying the "moment of great victory has drawn near."

Iraqi jets bombed ISIL positions in Fallujah late on Sunday, destroying an explosive-making factory and a court



building where the terrorist group sentenced many of its victims to death, the al-Sumaria news website reported.

According to the volunteer People's Mobilization unites (al-Hashd al-Shaabi) sources, troops pounded terrorist positions in northern and northeastern Fallujah with heavy rocket and artillery fire.

The districts of Harariat and al-Lifayah as well as Shahabi were liberated, the al-Forat news agency said on Monday.

The offensive is being conducted by the army, police, counter-terrorism forces, local tribal fighters and a coalition of mostly Shia Muslim forces, Prime Minister al-Abadi said on Sunday.

Security sources said al-Abadi is personally supervising the operation and had visited the command center near the city to meet military commanders.

Fallujah and Mosul, the capital of the northern province of Nineveh, are the last two major cities ISIL still holds in Iraq.

Fallujah is almost completely surrounded by Iraqi forces, who have regained significant ground in Anbar province in recent months, including its capital Ramadi further up the Euphrates River valley.

"We are beginning the operation to liberate Fallujah," al-Abadi said in a statement.

"The Iraqi flag will be raised high over the land of Fallujah," he added.

Fallujah, 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad, was the first city to fall to the ISIL ter-

rorists in January 2014, six months before ISIL declared a self-claimed "caliphate" spanning large parts of Iraq and Syria.

More than 75,000 civilians remain in Fallujah, according to Iraqi officials who have urged them to flee.

Residents, however, say checkpoints controlled by the terrorists along roads leading out of the city are preventing most from fleeing.

On Monday, a tribal source said ISIL had imposed a curfew in the city and shut bridges with concrete blocks.

According to the military's media unit, families who cannot flee should raise white flags to mark their location in the city, a tactic employed with some success during other recent offensives.

"Our goal is to liberate civilians from Daesh's repression and terrorism," al-Abadi said in his televised speech.

The announcement comes at a time when Iraqi ground forces are gaining territory against ISIL, most recently in Iraq's vast western Anbar province.

Iraqi forces, however, are expected to face a complicated fight to push ISIL out of Fallujah.

Following recent gains in Rutba and Hit, control of Fallujah would secure the road more than 500 km (300 miles) from Baghdad to the Jordanian border and northwards to Haditha.

However, ISIL still controls vast swathes of territory and major cities such as Mosul in the north which Iraqi authorities have pledged to retake this year.

## Blasts kill at least 120 in western Syria UN chief urges world powers to press for Syria peace talks

By staff & agencies

Seven bomb explosions have rocked the coastal cities of Tartous and Jableh in western Syria, leaving at least 121 people dead, a London-based monitor says.

In Jableh, the attacks took the lives of at least 73 people and left scores of others injured on Monday morning, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said.

At least 48 people were killed in Tartous and many others injured in almost simultaneous bombings.

According to the report, one of the explosions occurred near a hospital when a bomber detonated his explosive vest.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) claimed responsibility for the bombings. The ISIL terrorist group, which is controlling parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq, has repeatedly targeted civilian structures like hospitals and schools.

Rights groups have documented numerous cases of such bombings and attacks over the past months.

Physicians for Human Rights said in a recent research that militants had carried out about a dozen attacks on medical facilities, with ISIL being responsible for at least eight of them in which more than a dozen medical staff had been killed.

## ■ Militants threaten to abandon ceasefire agreement

In another event, Syria's militant groups have threatened to stop abiding by a cessation of hostilities deal unless Syrian government forces end targeting terrorist positions near the capital, Damascus, within 48 hours.

Some 40 militant groups fighting against the Syrian government across the country signed a statement on Sunday, saying they would consider the truce as having "totally collapsed" if the government forces did not stop their fight against them in two days.

The statement also said once the two-day period is

over, the foreign-backed militant groups would "take all possible measures and respond with all means."

This came as the Syrian army made fresh gains against terrorists in the Eastern Ghouta region of Damascus on Friday and managed to retake 13 villages from the al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra) elements.

The militants' statement said the Syrian army should stop fighting against terrorists and "pulls back to its pre-May 14 positions," especially in Daraya.

In Hama, the Syrian soldiers broke the siege imposed on al-Zara power plant and forced terrorists to retreat and move to the town of Harbanafseh in the southern countryside of the province.

The Syrian Air Force further destroyed positions held by ISIL terrorists in al-Shaer field and Um al-Tababeer area in the central Homs Province.

The Syrian army has vowed to press ahead with its counter-terror military operations and drive terrorists out of their major strongholds.

A ceasefire brokered by the United States and Russia went into effect on February 27 across Syria. The truce agreement does not apply to ISIL and al-Nusra Front.

## ■ Ban request

Meanwhile, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called on regional and international powers to press Syria's warring sides to participate in peace talks with a view to finding a political solution to the country's conflict.

Ban said during a forum for democracy and development in Qatar's capital Doha that an immediate cessation of hostilities plus talks on political transition are needed in Syria.

The UN chief warned that persistent fighting could hamper efforts for a political settlement.

"I call on all regional and international actors to use their influence on the parties, and to persuade them to negotiate in good faith on transitional arrangements," he said.

"Is there anything more urgent than resolving that



nightmare?" he added.

The remarks came days after a meeting of world powers on Syria in the Austrian capital, Vienna failed to make a clear breakthrough.

At the end of the meeting co-chaired by the U.S. and Russia, the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) pledged to bolster Syria's fragile ceasefire and send humanitarian relief.

UN special envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura said after the meeting he wants to see signs of progress before setting a date for the resumption of negotiations.

On Saturday, the Russian Coordination Center, based in Hmeimim airbase, said that terrorist organizations breached the ceasefire agreement nine times over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of breaches to 577 since truce took effect on February 27.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. Damascus says the House of Saud regime, Turkey and Qatar are the main supporters of the militants fighting the government forces.

De Mistura estimates that over 400,000 people have been killed in the Syrian crisis.

## 45 army recruits killed in Yemen's Aden bomb attacks

At least 45 people have been killed and dozens of others injured when two car bomb attacks targeted conscripted soldiers in Yemen's southern port city of Aden.

According to the Yemeni officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, one bomber targeted a line outside an army recruitment center, near the Badr base in the Khormaksar district of the city, killing at least 20 on Monday.

A second bomber detonated his explosive belt among a group of recruits waiting outside the home of an army commander, killing at least 25.

Yemen's Saudi-backed former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi is based in Aden.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack, but similar assassination attempts have been made over the past months by militants

of Yemen's al-Qaeda against pro-Hadi military commanders.

Many say al-Qaeda militants also enjoy support from the House of Saud regime as there have been numerous reports of airdrop by Saudi regime jets of ammunition to areas under the control of the militants, especially in areas where it could launch attacks against Ansarullah (Houthi) movement fighters.

The Ansarullah is still in control of much of Yemen despite more than a year of Saudi airstrikes and ground operations.

Numerous attempts by the United Nations for clinching a deal between Ansarullah and the pro-Hadi camp have failed.

## ■ U.S., Britain cluster bombs in Yemen

Meanwhile, leading human rights group Amnesty International says its most recent

mission to Yemen has found evidence of the United States, Britain and Brazilian cluster munitions used by Saudi forces.

In a statement on Monday, the Britain-based rights group said unexploded cluster bombs have turned northern Yemen into "minefields" for civilians.

The watchdog said displaced families, who are returning to their homes since a ceasefire was agreed in March, are at "grave risk" of "serious injury or even death."

"Even after hostilities have died down, the lives and livelihoods of civilians, including young children, continue to be on the line in Yemen as they return to de facto minefields," said Amnesty's senior crisis adviser Lama Fakih.

"They cannot live in safety until contaminated areas in and around their homes and

fields are identified and cleared of deadly cluster bomb sub munitions and other unexploded ordnance," she said.

The rights group said children were among civilians killed and maimed by such munitions, calling on the international community to help clear contaminated areas.

The statement also called on countries with influence on Saudi Arabia and its allies to have them "stop using cluster munitions, which are internationally banned and inherently indiscriminate."

Following a 10-day research trip to Sa'da, Hajjah and Sana'a provinces, Amnesty found that 16 civilians, including nine children, had been killed or injured by cluster munitions between July 2015 and April.

(Source: agencies)

## NEWS

### Obama: Afghan Taliban's Mullah Mansoor dead

United States President Barack Obama has said that the Afghan Taliban Leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor was killed in a U.S. strike.

In a statement on Monday, he called Mansoor's death an "important milestone."

"We have removed the leader of an organization that has continued to plot against and unleash attacks on American and Coalition forces, to wage war with the Afghan people, and align itself with extremist groups like al-Qaeda," he said.

Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah said on Twitter a day earlier that Mansoor was dead; the country's spy agency also said he had been killed and a source close to Mansoor told Al Jazeera that he believed the reports to be true.

The Taliban has not yet issued an official statement, though some of the group's officials earlier denied the reports.

Obama, who authorized the attack, was in Vietnam for his first state visit when the statement was issued.

Speaking at a news conference following his meeting with Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang, Obama said the fatal attack on Mansoor did not represent a change in U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan, which is to help train Afghan forces. Obama ended the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014.

"We are not re-entering the day-to-day combat operations that are currently being conducted by Afghan security forces," Obama said. "Our job is to help Afghanistan secure its own country, not to have our men and women in uniform engage in that fight for them."

## ■ U.S. forces in Afghanistan

Mansoor was chosen to head the Afghan Taliban last summer after it was announced that the group's previous Leader Mullah Omar had died two years earlier.

The Taliban is the most powerful armed group in the country, where an estimated 11,000 civilians were killed or wounded and 5,500 government troops and police officers died last year alone.

It seized power in 1996 and ruled Afghanistan until it was toppled by a U.S.-led invasion after the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington.

Almost 15 years later, about 13,000 troops are in the country from a U.S.-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) coalition, including about 9,800 Americans.

While they are mostly focused on training and helping Afghan government forces battle the insurgency, about 3,000 troops are conducting operations against the Taliban and groups including al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Netanyahu rejects French peace initiative, offers to meet Abbas

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a multi-lateral French peace initiative as he met his French counterpart on Monday, offering instead to hold direct talks with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in the French capital, Paris.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said he would speak to French President Francois Hollande about Netanyahu's proposal.

Direct negotiations with the Palestinians are "the only way to proceed to peace," Netanyahu said. He offered "a different French initiative" of face-to-face talks with Abbas in Paris.

Valls is visiting Israel and the Palestinian territories to advance his country's plan to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

Abbas has welcomed the French initiative to hold a meeting of foreign ministers from a range of countries on June 3, without the Israelis and Palestinians presence.

Another conference would then be held in the autumn, with the Israelis and Palestinians in attendance. The goal is to eventually restart negotiations that would lead to a Palestinian state.

Netanyahu has criticized the initiative and called for direct negotiations between the two sides.

Negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians have been at a standstill since a United States-led initiative collapsed in April 2014.

Netanyahu has repeatedly offered to meet Abbas for direct talks.

Palestinian leaders say years of negotiations with Israel have not ended its occupation and have pursued a strategy of diplomacy at international bodies.

(Source: AFP)

## Indo-Iran relationship

suing an independent foreign policy are common traits in the diplomatic behavior of both countries.

Moreover, Indo-Iran relations have a domestic political dimension as well. India's large Shia population has been an important variable in India's interaction with Iran.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Iran on May

22-23 as India is looking to step up engagement with the sanctions-free energy-rich nation.

The visit, it seems, will provide thrust to expand bilateral cooperation and "mutually benefit from new opportunities in the wake of lifting of secondary sanctions against Iran earlier this year."



New Delhi's desire to reclaim for India the influence and cultural relations it once enjoyed with the countries of Central Asia before the dawn of colonialism can only be reasonably realized through Iran.

India and Iran also share many similarities: Extra-regional ambitions and a strong sense that they are pur-



NEWS

**Oil falls after Iran dampens hopes for production freeze**

Brent oil prices fell for a fourth consecutive session on Monday after Iran insisted it would not freeze crude output, returning investor attention to a global glut.

Adding to signs the oil market will remain oversupplied, data showed last week the number of rigs operated by U.S. drillers held steady for the first time this year, following a near two-year slump in the rig count.

Global benchmark Brent futures were down 41 cents at \$48.31 a barrel by 0851 GMT, on track for a fourth straight day of losses for the first time in a month.

U.S. crude futures traded at \$47.91 a barrel, down 50 cents on Friday's close.

"Stagnating rig counts and comments from Iranian officials show that the way up for the oil prices may come to an end now," said Frank Klumpp, oil analyst at Stuttgart-based Landesbank Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Rokneddin Javadi told Iran's Mehr news agency on Sunday his country had no plan to halt a rise in oil production and exports.

He said Iranian crude exports, excluding gas condensates, were at 2 million barrels per day (bpd) and would reach 2.2 million bpd by the middle of summer.

His comments further dampened hopes for a coordinated decision to freeze OPEC oil production at a meeting of the exporter group in Vienna on June 2.

The bearish comments outweighed concerns about un-planned oil outages globally hitting a five-year high mainly due to wildfires in Canada that have affected oil-sands production and losses in Nigeria and Libya.

Meanwhile, Goldman Sachs said in a research report on Monday that it expected shale productivity gains through 2020, which will push average breakevens for shale plays below \$50 per barrel for U.S. crude.

It raised its average Brent forecast to \$45 per barrel this year, from \$39, while it said West Texas Intermediate would average \$45 per barrel this year, up from \$38 previously.

(Source: Reuters)

**Asian stocks climb as tech shares rise, Chinese equities gain**

Asia's benchmark stock index rebounded from four weeks of losses as Chinese and Taiwanese shares gained while Japanese equities pared a steep loss.

The MSCI Asia Pacific Index rose 0.4 percent to 126.09 as of 4:28 p.m. in Hong Kong, swinging from a drop of as much as 0.6 percent. The biggest gains were seen in Taiwan, where the Taiex index rallied 2.6 percent, the most since September, on optimism Apple Inc. orders for the iPhone 7 will be higher than estimated. Japan's Topix index lost 0.4 percent at the close, after sliding as much as 1.8 percent, as the yen gained amid clashes between the Group of Seven finance chiefs on whether to intervene in the currency market.

It's been a wild ride for investors in Asia-Pacific equities this year. The regional index began 2016 with a 14 percent slump through a February low on concern a devaluation of the Chinese yuan would curb global growth and amid prospects for a Federal Reserve rate increase. It then rallied almost 20 percent through this year's peak in April before retreating again, with the gauge dropping 5.6 percent in the last four weeks.

"The market has been overly concerned about the global growth slowdown as well as the imminent Fed rate hike," said Norman Chan, chief investment officer at Oreana Private Wealth in Hong Kong. "Both are not going to happen very soon."

Taiwanese shares gained the most among Asian equity benchmarks, with Apple vendors Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. and Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. among the biggest contributors to advances on the regional gauge. The iPhone maker asked suppliers to prepare production of a new version of its smartphones, the Economic Daily News reported.

(Source: Bloomberg)

**Italy, Japan central bankers see risks to inflation outlook**

Italian and Japanese central bankers warned on Monday of the damage that weak inflation expectations could inflict on their economies, as the euro-zone and Japan suffer from anemic prices despite years of aggressive monetary easing.

Bank of Italy Director General Salvatore Rossi said central banks should never let inflation remain low as that could affect people's psychology and hurt inflation expectations.

"In Europe, we see risks of a de-anchoring of inflation expectations. That's why (European Central Bank President Mario) Draghi said many times that the stance of euro-area monetary policy is so accommodative and every tool is brought on the table," Rossi told at a seminar hosted by Japan's Keio University.

Bank of Japan Deputy Governor Hiroshi Nakaso told the same seminar that Japan's two-decades experience of deflation showed it was very important to "act quickly" against subdued price growth as once entrenched, it would hurt inflation expectations.

"Our experience probably tells you that if actual inflation stays low for too long, it affects inflation expectations."

Japan's central bank is three years into a massive asset purchase program but inflation has ground to a halt.

Nakaso declined to comment on how a strong yen could affect the BOJ's policy decisions. But he stressed that it was important to look not just at first-round effects of yen rises but the full pass-through effect on the economy and prices. (Source: Reuters)

**Iran, India, Afghanistan pen trilateral transit pact**

1 →

The document was signed in the presence of the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

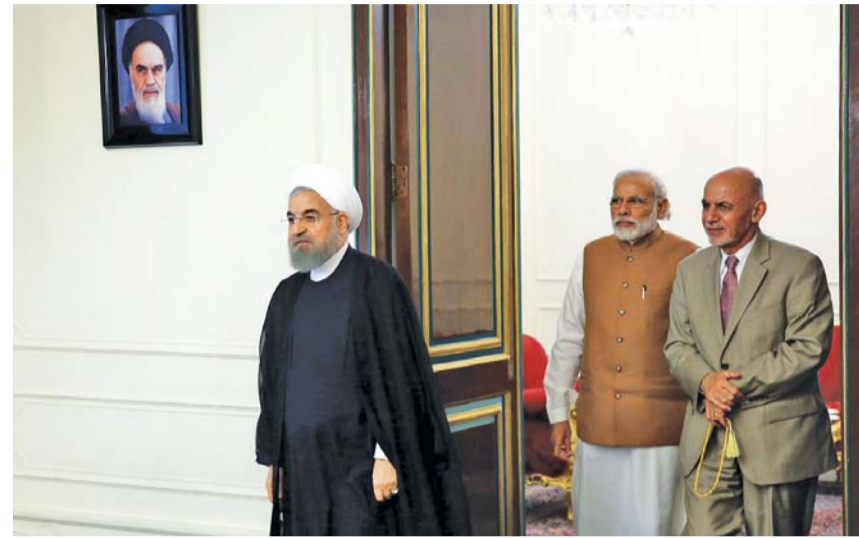
**Tehran, New Delhi call for comprehensive, strategic economic ties**

President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi in a joint Monday meeting in Tehran underlined the necessity of seizing the existent opportunities and potentials to broaden the bilateral comprehensive and strategic economic ties between the two sides.

During the meeting, the Indian part signed 12 agreements with the Islamic Republic in different economic areas including investing billions of dollars in setting up industries, ranging from aluminum smelter to urea plants, in Iran's Chabahar free trade zone on the Persian Gulf nation's southeastern coast.

As Times of India reported, the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran and the India Ports Global Pvt signed an agreement on the development of Chabahar port.

Meanwhile, the Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry of Iran and the Exim Bank of India; the Indian National Aluminum Company (Nalco) and the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO); and the Indian Railway PSU IRCON and the Iranian Construc-



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani met in Tehran on Monday.

tion and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company signed agreements.

After the signing ceremony of the accorded agreements and in a common press conference with the Indian prime minister, President Rouhani noted that after the implementation of Iran's nuclear deal with P5+1, the ground is set for expansion of mutual ties with India and the two countries can take advantage of the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) in this regard.

**Chabahar, potential hub for regional multifaceted cooperation: Rouhani**

As the Iranian president said, Chabahar can become a very big symbol of cooperation between the two countries. "Chabahar port can serve as a point of connectivity between different countries, especially India and Afghanistan," he added, "It can also play a pivotal role in Iran-India cooperation on various industries including aluminum, steel, and petrochemicals."

Rouhani named biotechnology, nano-

technology, information technology (IT), as well as space and aerospace technologies as other industries where the two sides can collaborate on.

According to him, while fulfilling India's need for oil and gas, the Islamic Republic is ready to make investments in different sectors such as establishing refineries in that country.

"To develop Chabahar port and the railway in the region, we can benefit from the investments made by other Asian and European countries as well as their technology," Rouhani added.

**Modi urges joint investments to double in 5 years**

The Indian prime minister expressed discontent with the volume of current Iran-India economic relations and emphasized that as the result of the annulment of unfair sanctions against Iran, the joint investments between the two sides should grow twice more than its current level in the upcoming five years.

"The agreement to develop Chabahar port for which India will provide \$500 million is a key milestone," Modi said, "The outcomes and agreements signed today open a new chapter in our strategic partnership."

He also added that Chabahar-Zahedan-Mashhad railway, which links Chabahar Port with Afghanistan and Central Asia, can boost bilateral economic cooperation between Iran and India and also other regional countries.

**Japan's plant-engineering giant JGC keen to return to Iran**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — JGC, Japanese pan's leading plant builder, is looking at ways to get back to Iran's potentially lucrative market, IRNA reported on Monday.

According to the report, in an interview with Nikkei, Yoshihiro Shigehisa, JGC group's chairman emeritus, stated that post-sanctions era is a great opportunity to return to Iran's big and

promising market.

"Iran has one of the largest populations in the Middle East, with nearly 80 million people. It has said it will raise its crude oil output in two stages, by one million barrels a day" Yoshihiro added.

He also noted that Iran has a great potential for oil refineries and petrochemical plants and JGC hopes to strike some deals by the end of this year.

Shigehisa further stated that there were some obstacles to Iran-Japan trade cooperation due to the sanctions but with the sanctions lifted new windows have been opened and there are opportunities for Japanese businesses to resume cooperation with the country.

"We want to invest in ways that will help the country to develop. We may

also consider investing in hospitals and agriculture, along with power plants," he added.

It is worth noting that the volume of trade between Iran and Japan in 2014 shadowed by sanctions against Tehran was less than \$250 million and Tehran also accounted for 10 percent of Japan's oil imports before sanctions cut them to five percent.

**Iran's construction industry forecast to grow 4.5% in 2016: BMI**

The BMI Research (formerly Business Monitor Online) revised its construction industry growth forecast for Iran in 2016 from 3.2 percent to 4.5 percent thanks to the removal of the majority of international sanctions and release of new historic data.

The lifting of sanctions will result in the gradual return of private investment as well as improve Iran's access to funding for projects, the report said. As such, the country's risk profile - particularly in the financing stage of the project life cycle - will foreseeably continue to improve.

In addition, the British research institute estimates an average of 6.1 percent growth in Iran's construction industry over the next five years as a result of the lifting of international sanctions and strong demand for infrastructure. However, persistently low



oil prices will reduce government revenue, limiting public spending in infrastructure.

As the published report proves, the lifting of sanctions is already having a positive impact on Iran's capability to finance infrastructure projects. Reflecting the reduced risk in the financing stage, Iran now scores 34 out of 100 in the Financing Risk pillar of BMI's Project Risk Index (PRI), from a previous score of 18.8.

Moreover, greater competitiveness in Iran's labor market will be required to support growth in the construction industry, according to the report.

BMI Research is a research firm that provides macroeconomic, industry and financial market analysis, covering 24 industries and 200 global markets. (Source: BMI Research)

**Euro area said to plan \$12b for Greece after review**

Greece's European creditors are preparing to disburse 11 billion euros (\$12.3 billion) once the nation successfully completes a review of its bailout program.

The funds will be used to clear arrears and to cover debt servicing needs, including a 2.3 billion-euro payment scheduled to the European Central Bank in July, according to a draft of the European Commission's compliance report for the Greek economic program seen by Bloomberg News.

Greece's creditors, including the commission and the International Monetary Fund, are trying to complete an assessment of the nation's third bailout program, which was agreed upon last year and provides for as much as 86 billion euros in aid. Fulfillment of the evaluation would also allow for Greece to negotiate ways to ease the burden of its 321 billion euros of obligations.

The bailout program "is broadly on track, paving the way for the next dis-

bursement to Greece," the report says.

Euro-area finance ministers meet in Brussels on Tuesday to decide on the review and to weigh debt-relief proposals. European creditors remain at loggerheads with the IMF on how to alleviate Greece's loan obligations, with euro-area states, led by Germany, resisting calls from the Washington-based fund to set less ambitious fiscal targets and hand Athens more generous repayment terms on its bailout loans.

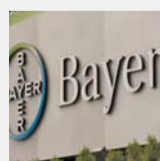
Greece's 10-year bonds were headed for their highest close in six months after lawmakers passed additional austerity measures Sunday night.

The 11 billion euros would cover the debt-ravaged nation's financing needs until the end of November, with 3.8 billion euros being used to clear arrears and 7.2 billion euros servicing debt.

Greek lawmakers on Sunday approved additional austerity measures required to unlock the latest loan.

(Source: Bloomberg)

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Bayer announces \$62 billion cash offer for Monsanto**

German drugs and chemicals group Bayer AG said it had made an offer to buy U.S. seeds company Monsanto Co for \$122 per share in cash, or a total value of \$62 billion including debt, to create the world's biggest agricultural supplier.

Bayer said on Monday that the proposal made to Monsanto's management represented a 37 percent premium over the closing price of Monsanto shares on May 9, before rumors of a planned bid emerged.

Monsanto disclosed last week that Bayer had made an unsolicited takeover offer for the group, triggering an investor backlash in which one of the German company's major shareholders called the move "arrogant empire-building".



**Uber deal shows divide in labor's drive for role in 'gig economy'**

The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers trumpeted an agreement reached earlier this month to represent New York Uber drivers, saying it "gives organized labor an opportunity to shape the new economy in a way that supports and values workers and their families."

But not everyone in the U.S. labor movement is cheering.

The deal falls short of actual union representation, and it has revealed sharp divisions among labor advocates about how to address a central reality of the so-called gig economy: The classification of workers as independent contractors rather than employees.



**ANZ Banking explores sale of part or all of life insurer unit: sources**

ANZ Banking Group is exploring plans to sell part or all of its life insurance and pension product development unit, valued at up to \$4 billion in total, people familiar with the matter said, in line with its broader strategy of raising funds to boost capital.

The plans being worked out by Australia's No. 4 lender come months after it split its global wealth management business into separate arms, one focusing on developing insurance and pension products and the other focusing on distribution.

ANZ is still streamlining the product development division before seeking bids for the business, the people said, declining to be identified as the plans were confidential.



# The best cafés and coffeehouses in Tehran

Café culture is thriving in Iran, nowhere more so than on the backstreets of its capital. The hundreds of modern style cafés dotted around Tehran provide a vibrant sense of cosmopolitanism, often juxtaposed with more traditional elements of city life.

As well as a caffeine fix, coffee shops in Tehran offer young Iranians a space for open discussion, creative collaboration, and meeting new people. Here we review some of the best cafés in town.

## ■ Lamiz Coffee

The ever-expanding Lamiz is perhaps Iran's premier coffee shop chain, now with five branches in Tehran. Lamiz prides itself on its premium grade coffee beans imported from farms around the world, and its laid-back but professional atmosphere. A favorite with young middle class Iranians, foreign students, and tourists, the two Tajrish branches are especially popular (one on Tajrish Square, and the other on the top floor of Ghaem Shopping Center).

They also boast what must be the best carrot cake in the entire Middle East.

The café can be found at No. 6 Sa'dabad, Tehran.

## ■ Gol Rezaieh Café

Gol Rezaieh Café, located in central Tehran just opposite the Glass and Ceramics Museum, is full of character and history, as one of the oldest coffee shops in the city. Established over 70 years ago, it has a longstanding reputation as a hub of intellectual discussion and excellent coffee.

Like many of Tehran's cafés, due to Iran's 20th century attitudes towards indoor smoking (and most other vices being officially prohibited), you can expect a thick cloud of smoke hanging over the clientele, as they no doubt discuss the latest political and literary developments. Worth visiting if you're in the bazaar area.

The venue is found on Si Tir Street, opposite the Glass and Ceramics Museum, Tehran.

## ■ Traditional Teahouse, Tajrish Bazaar

Go down the third alley on the right off the main drag of the Tajrish bazaar and you will discover a delightful two storey traditional teahouse on the left. The top floor of the wooden-structured building provides carpeted platforms on which to recline, sip tea, and eat a traditional Iranian omelette if you are so inclined.

It overlooks the central downstairs area, which is reserved for shisha-smoking (men only). Few teahouses can match the elegant simplicity of this establishment, the walls of which are adorned with fantastic Shia-themed paintings depicting the tragic events of Muharram.

It is located at Tajrish Bazaar, Tajrish neighborhood, Tehran.



Cinema Café, Bagh-e Ferdows

## ■ Café Shemroon, Iranian Art Garden Museum

Within the grounds of the Iranian Art Garden Museum in Elahieh, you can find Café Shemroon, one of Tehran's most picturesque and popular cafés. Renowned for its breakfast buffet in particular, Shemroon offers its customers an excellent selection of teas, coffees, cakes, and western foods such as lasagne or burgers. Sit inside or outside, after enjoying a walk around the gardens which, amongst other things, feature models of the most famous architectural structures from around the country.

The café is located in Elahiyeh district, Tehran.

## ■ Café Naderi

Café Naderi is famous citywide as the erstwhile intellectual hangout for the A-list literati of mid-20th century Iran. Leading modernist writers and thinkers such as Sadeq Hedayat, Simin Daneshvar, and Jalal Al-e Ahmad could be found sipping tea and exchanging notes here during the 1940s and 1950s.

Located on Jomhuri Street, these days Naderi is more of a tourist attraction, and feels more old-fashioned than quaint. Still, it does an excellent Turkish coffee, and the characterful old waiters (who no doubt remember the café's heyday) ensure a memorable experience.

The café can be found on Jomhuri Street, Tehran.

## ■ Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art Café

The concrete, modernist home of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art is a must-see when visiting the capital. The museum, built in the 1970s, contains a more



Chaykhune, Enqelab Square

than impressive collection of works by artists including Picasso, Dalí, Monet, Bacon, and Warhol. The ground-floor café is the perfect venue to talk art and high culture with locals and tourists alike, or as a quiet spot read or simply people-watch.

The museum is located on Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Laleh Park, Tehran.

## ■ Cinema Café, Bagh-e Ferdows

More popular than the Cinema Museum with which it shares its grounds, the Cinema Café in Bagh-e Ferdows offers a quiet space to enjoy a fine selection of teas, coffees, milkshakes, and sandwiches. Larger than most Tehranian cafés (which are notoriously cramped), the Cinema Café has both indoor and outside seating and a reliable WiFi connection, making it an ideal place to spend an afternoon working. Often frequented by foreign students, it's unsurprisingly a little pricier than most alternatives.

The café is located on Bagh-e Ferdows, Vali-e Asr Street, Tehran.

## ■ Chaykhune, Enqelab Square

An altogether alternative tea-drinking experience can be found in one of the city's many workingmen's chaykhunes, or traditional teahouses. Rough round the edges and with some brutal strip lighting, the underground teahouse on Enqelab Square exemplifies such establishments. The tea is practically free, you'll be expected to smoke a shisha pipe, and with its boisterous atmosphere, it is perhaps the closest thing Iran has to a pub.

It can be found on Enqelab Square, Tehran.

(Source: The Culture Trip)

## NEWS

### The body book: top tips for traveling in summer

Most of us have a summer vacation planned, whether it's a "stay-cation", road trip, or vacation to the beach. Vacations and traveling can be tricky if you're not prepared; it's easy to veer off track with the healthy habits we've integrated into our normal daily living.

The first step to take when traveling is planning, just as you would plan ahead to get a hotel, car, and think of activities, apply the same planning to your nutrition and exercise plan while you're traveling.

■ Stay active. This one is probably the least difficult to incorporate, many vacations include sightseeing, walking, shopping, or even swimming in the ocean- all of which will keep you moving. An added bonus if your hotel or resort has a gym that you can get a quick weight session in!

■ Stay hydrated. Being out in the sun, sweating, drinking cocktails (hey, it's vacation right!), and moving around will naturally dehydrate you a bit, it's important to keep water by your side all day long. It'll also help you from mistaking hunger for thirst. Be sure you're paying attention to your urine, that's the best indicator of your hydration (pale-yellow/clear).

■ Pack food. I never leave the house when traveling without teas, plant-based protein powders, hemp seeds, chia seeds (great for digestion), granola bars, or homemade muesli. Check out my Travel Food Survival Kit for more of my favorites to bring.

■ Bring snacks. If you're walking long distances or out and about enjoying the city you're visiting, be sure to bring a couple snacks with you that you can munch on just in case you're not by food or when hunger strikes! A couple of my favorites would be trail mix, raw nuts/seeds like almond or sunflower seeds, and of course fruit!

■ Know your markets. The first thing I do when traveling is scope out the local markets or grocery stores to stock up on raw veggies, fruits, and other things that require a fridge that I couldn't bring with me while traveling.

■ Hotel kitchen. Try to get a hotel room with a mini-fridge, teapot, or microwave- most do. This will help you keep a couple snacks on hand in your room to bring with you for the day. My tops: raw carrots, cucumbers, lemons, avocados, bag of organic spinach, fruits, and any other raw produce you can pick up at a local market.

■ Research local dining spots. Ask the locals where they eat for healthy dining out options. Most often than not, eating the cuisine of the locals is healthier than eating at an American franchise. Think of visiting Mexico for example, you're better off eating an authentic Mexican cuisine full of fresh ingredients than going to a Mexican franchise restaurant you could easily eat in the states.

(Source: ourbodybook.com)

# Iran and Japan hold 2<sup>nd</sup> joint water and wastewater industry forum



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Iran and Japan Water and Wastewater Industry Forum was held in order to explore ways for broadening bilateral cooperation in related field in a way that approx. 240 engineers in domestic water and wastewater industry have been trained by Japanese experts.

Managing Director of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company Eng. Hashem Amini announced the above statement and pointed to the golden opportunities created in Iran after implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and said: "In the past, Japanese water and wastewater activists were worrying on sanctions imposed against Iran in order to continue their activity in the country but presently, many of Japanese companies have expressed their satisfaction on resumption of bilateral ties between the two countries in order to carry out their projects in Iran with peace of mind."

More cooperation and interaction should be established between Iranian and Japanese industrialists in water and wastewater field in current years in order to materialize objectives of resistance economy in the country, he maintained.

He also pointed out to the presence of top 10 Japanese firms in Isfahan and said: "Currently,



we intend to ink industrial contracts with Japanese companies but actually, these companies have thus far concluded separate agreements with many countries within the framework of Build-Operate-Own (BOO) and Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis and finance scheme."

There is an amicable cooperation and interaction between Iran and Japan which dates back to many years ago, he said, adding: "Given its brilliant and fruitful experiences, it seems that Japan can help improve water and wastewater industry of the country in current year which was named after as "Resistance

Economy, Action and Implementation."

He, who is the chairman of Board of Directors of the company, pointed to the impact of offering modern training services to staff and personnel of the company and said: "Smart development of water projects came on stream in this province when some staff of the company passed training courses in Japan."

Director General of Isfahan Province Governor-Generalship Crisis Management Eng. Shishehforoush was the next speaker who pointed to the compilation of Sendai document between Iran and Japan and said: "Un-

der the terms of document, it is reiterated to take advantage of equipment resistant against force majeure events such as earthquake and flood, based on which, Japanese companies are expected to provide state-of-the-art technology in the shortest time possible available to Iranian industrialists."

In recent years, Isfahan Water and Sewage Company faced unexpected crisis such as outflow of river and entrance of oil and gas oil materials to Baba Sheikhalı Wastewater Treatment Plant, he said, adding: "Once the company was equipped with necessary equipment, such incidents would be controlled in the shortest time possible."

Given the above issue, suitable ground should be provided between the two countries in order to exchange views in relevant issues, he highlighted.

In the beginning of the Forum, Ms. Akhavan Member of Representatives Board of Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mine and Agriculture said: "Isfahan is considered as one of the largest industrial cities in the country in a way that the province is leader in textile, petrochemical and steel sectors of the country."

Considering the travel of high-ranking Japanese delegation to Isfahan, suitable ways should be provided in order to take advantage

of modern technology and technical know-how in water and wastewater sector, she opined.

She is of the opinion that modern-day knowledge and know-how should be disseminated in society and in this respect, knowledge of graduated students and talented engineers should be applied in order to materialize most objectives of the company.

For his part, Japan Water Resources Management Bureau Dr. Nagasaki was the next speaker who said: "I am very glad to have travelled to Isfahan historic city. Like Japan, Iran enjoys rich culture and civilization and capacities of the two countries should be used properly."

Presently, 97 percent of land in Japan has been equipped with quality water-supply system, he said, adding: "It is tried to offer quality potable water to the noble people of this province."

For their parts, representatives of Japanese "HITACHI" and "MITSUBISHI" companies pointed to the high potentials of their companies in meeting demands of Isfahan Water and Wastewater Company in relevant issues.

In this get-together meeting, representatives of Japanese companies pointed to the high capacities of the companies and assured them to carry out relevant projects in this province in the best form possible.

## Japanese firms keen to offer modern technology to Isfahan Province Water and Sewage Co.

A couple of days ago, a 17-strong Japanese delegation, from companies including MITSUBISHI, HITACHI, KOBOOTA, TORAY AICHI MICROZA, YOKOGAWA and METIRO, expressed their readiness to provide most modern technology and technical know-how available to Isfahan Province Water and Sewage Company.

The visiting Japanese delegation visited installations of Isfahan Province Water and Sewage Company including Baharestan Water and Wastewater Plant, Baba Sheikhalı Wastewater Treatment Plant and Control Chamber and water-supply projects of the province.

Given the above issue, Managing Director of Baharestan Wastewater Treatment Plant expounded on the treatment process of mechanical screening unit, degreaser and grit chamber,



primary sedimentation ponds, wastewater disinfecting and dredge dehydrating process and said: "With the studies made in this regard, we came to this conclusion that Japanese firms can promote water and wastewater installations of this province properly."

In their visit from provincial water and sewage installations, constructive negotiations were held in the presence of senior officials of the two sides to provide Japanese state-of-the-art technology in relevant field.

Water Supply Manager of Isfahan Province Water and Sewage Company Eng. Akbari was the next speaker who pointed to the way of distribution of potable water to 56 cities and 300 villages under the coverage of water-supply project and said: "Presently, all water-supply installations of the province are monitored by telemetry system using control chamber and telemetry system meticulously."

In response to a question on the way of dealing with water shortage problem and



occurred incidents, he said: "Water flow rate and pressure is controlled using state-of-the-art technology in order to distribute water among subscribers of 56 cities and 3000 villages of the province fairly."

In the end, he pointed to the key role of

manpower in alleviation of relevant incidents and said: "Efficient workforce can prevent many incidents in construction of water pipeline."

Director of Baba Sheikhalı Wastewater Treatment Plant Eng. Gorji was the next speaker who briefed the visiting Japanese delegation on the wastewater treatment plant and said: "The wastewater is the largest plant in the Middle East in a way that water flow rate of the plant stands at 12,500 lit./sec."

With the coordination made in this regard, ozonation compressors, chlorine analyses, hydrocarbon sensors and equipment related to quality control of required water can be equipped with Japan's most modern technology and technical know-how, he ended.

By: A.Saeidi



# Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour

Elevation to the top leadership of one of the world's deadliest militant movements does not come with assurances of longevity, but Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour's short tenure as Taliban leader has to be some sort of a record.

He came from the influential Ishaqzai clan of the Durrani tribe of Pashtuns in Kandahar province, the political and cultural seat of Pashtun power in Afghanistan.

Before assuming the leadership of the Taliban, he functioned as the acting head of the

movement on behalf of Mullah Mohammad Omar, its founder and spiritual head.

In this capacity, he is understood to have authorised the release of periodic statements by Mullah Omar on the official Taliban website, even after Mullah Omar had been dead for a long time.

This created controversy within the higher echelons of the movement, and there were allegations that he might have conspired with some other tribal allies or

elements in Pakistan to assassinate Mullah Omar.

Many of his detractors accused him of being firmly in the hands of the Pakistani intelligence apparatus, which they say offers him sanctuary and protection.

However, the main challenges to his leadership eased away, and even al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri expressed his allegiance to Mullah Mansour as the legitimate successor to Mullah Omar, after his appointment in July



2015.

Mullah Omar was a reclusive figure who remained at the head of the Taliban for two years after his death, our obituary explains.

Mullah Mansour was born sometime between 1963 and 1965 in Band-e-Taimoor, a village in Maiwand district of Kandahar, a southern province of Afghanistan that shares a border with Pakistan's south-western Balochistan province.

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# Oil supply cuts from Nigeria to Canada renew bets on price rally

Outbreaks of violence in Nigeria, export troubles in a divided Libya and wildfires ripping across the Canadian oil sands are reviving wagers that crude markets will tighten. Speculators' net-long position in benchmark U.S. crude, a measure of how bets on a price increase outnumber bearish ones, climbed by the most contracts since March, according to data from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

"The main bullish factor has been the outages," said Michael Wittner, the New York-based head of oil-market research at Societe Generale SA. "There are many outages, led by Nigeria and Canada. We're missing a lot of crude."

West Texas Intermediate futures are heading for a fourth-straight monthly gain, which would be the longest rally in five years, as evidence mounts that demand may soon outpace supplies.

Investors' net-long position in WTI futures climbed 14 percent in the week ended May 17, according to the CFTC. Short positions, or bets crude prices will drop, shrank while longs advanced.

WTI futures surged 8.2 percent on the New York Mercantile Exchange in the CFTC report week, and the June contract on Friday dropped 0.9 percent to expire and close at \$47.75 a barrel. WTI for July delivery lost 0.5 percent to \$48.15 at 11:50 a.m. Singapore time on Monday.

#### ■ New wrinkle

Nigerian crude output has tumbled as militants resumed blowing up the pipelines that criss-cross the mangrove swamps of the Niger River delta, ending years of relative peace. A wave of attacks this month are pushing production to a 27-year low of 1.4 million barrels a day.

"The new wrinkle is Nigeria," said John Kilduff, a partner at Again Capital LLC in New York. "It's been a long time since we've worried about the supply of West African crude."

In Libya, competing administrations



of the state-run National Oil Corp. have brought exports to a halt, the latest setback to supplies from a nation devastated by conflict. In the five years since the ouster of Muammar al-Qaddafi, Libya's oil installations have been attacked and ports shut down as groups vie for influence.

#### ■ Canadian fires

The Canadian wildfire doubled to an area more than five times bigger than New York City in about a week, threatening oil-sand mines. More than 80,000 people around Fort McMurray in northern Alberta fled the inferno earlier in

the month, and the industry shut down more than 1 million barrels a day of output.

The market has moved into a production deficit earlier than expected following supply disruptions and an increase in demand, according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc. Other banks such as Morgan Stanley, Barclays Plc and Bank of America Corp. also noted that supply losses are leading markets to rebalance.

"The disruptions are getting people thinking that supply may soon trail demand," Kilduff said. "This is especially true given the thesis that the market was

going to come into balance later this year anyway."

The net-long position in WTI rose 30,475 futures and options combined to 246,996, the biggest gain since March, CFTC data show. Short positions tumbled 24 percent, while longs rose 3.6 percent.

#### ■ U.S. production

U.S. crude output fell to 8.79 million barrels a day in the week ended May 13, the least since September 2014, an Energy Information Administration report showed. Gasoline use averaged 9.56 million barrels a day in the four weeks ended May 13, the highest seasonal level in at least a decade, EIA data show.

In other markets, net bullish bets on Nymex gasoline surged 53 percent to 23,756 contracts. Gasoline futures increased 10 percent in the period. Net bullish wagers on U.S. ultra-low sulfur diesel more than doubled to 5,862 contracts, the highest since July 2014, as futures climbed 9.7 percent.

Managed money bets will shift if the disruptions are reduced, Wittner said. Canadian output would rebound in weeks if the weather cooperates, said Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy & Economic Research in Winchester, Massachusetts.

Alberta officials are counting on cool, humid weather in the coming days to help them better contain the wildfire. More success in keeping the flames at bay and improved air quality are needed before workers will be allowed to return to facilities, including some of Suncor Energy Inc. and Syncrude Canada Ltd.'s mines north of Fort McMurray, officials said in a media briefing on Friday.

"There's a high probability that Canadian production will recover rather quickly," Lynch said. "Nigeria and Libya will probably take a lot longer. There's no telling whether it will take weeks, months or years for their production to rebound."

(Source: Bloomberg)

**The market has moved into a production deficit earlier than expected following supply disruptions and an increase in demand, according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc.**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Brexit poses 'major risk' to global growth, warns Bank of Japan chief

Haruhiko Kuroda, governor of the Bank of Japan, says the most serious risk facing the global economy was the possibility of the UK voting to leave the European Union.

In an interview, Mr Kuroda made the remarks when I asked him whether China, Brexit, or the US Federal Reserve raising interest rates was the biggest threat to global economic stability.

"It is for the British people to decide whether or not to exit from the European Union," he said, but added: "This could be potentially quite serious. If Brexit is agreed, it would have a significant and serious impact on the global economy."

In recent months, as the deadline for the UK to vote on whether to leave the EU gets closer, calls by the global community against a Brexit vote have become louder.

The United States, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have all raised concerns about the damage a vote in favour of Brexit could do to confidence and investor sentiment, which they say are already at delicate levels.

(Source: BBC)

### One of the most expensive countries is debating giving away money

The Swiss are discussing paying people \$2,500 a month for doing nothing.

The country will vote June 5 on whether the government should introduce an unconditional basic income to replace various welfare benefits. Although the initiators of the plan haven't stipulated how large the payout should be, they've suggested the sum of 2,500 francs (\$2,500) for an adult and a quarter of that for a child.

It sounds good, but — two things. It would barely get you over the poverty line, typically defined as 60 percent of the national median disposable income, in what's one of the world's most expensive countries. More importantly, it's probably not going to happen anyway.

Plebiscites are a common part of Switzerland's direct democracy, with multiple votes every year. The basic income initiative is taking place after the proposal gathered the required 100,000 signatures, though current polls suggest it won't get any further. The idea of paying everyone a stipend has also piqued interest in other countries, such as Canada.

(Source: Bloomberg)



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## NEWS

**NASA super pressure balloon begins journey around the Earth**

The super pressure balloon (SPB) of NASA has started its journey around the world Tuesday morning – a test flight aimed at offering access to a sensational, inexpensive peek into stratospheric conditions.

The high-pressure balloon was launched by the space agency from Wanaka Airport in New Zealand at 11:35 A.M. on May 17, with hopes it will stay up there and travel around the globe for at least 100 days at mid-latitudes. This projected flight time is around double the current record.

The high-tech gondola is carrying the Compton Spectrometer and Imager (COSI), a gamma-ray telescope developed by UC Berkeley scientists, and infrasound microphones from UNC Chapel Hill for recording acoustic wave field action in the stratosphere.

Two hours and 9 minutes post-lift-off, the 18.8-million-cubic foot balloon reached 110,000 feet and was initially taken westward through southern Australia.

According to NASA estimates, it will circumnavigate Earth once every one to three weeks, largely depending on stratospheric wind speeds. The balloon is pressurized, healthy and well on its way for this important test mission," said NASA balloon program chief Debbie Fairbrother.

**Galactic elements**

The launch marked the second SPB flight for the telescope, a NASA-sponsored mission to investigate the mysterious birth of galactic elements and conduct groundbreaking studies of black holes and gamma rays. Long-haul flights are vital to these kinds of research, NASA argued.

To stay aloft for 100 days is no small feat: previous ones depended on sunlight to keep inside gas thermally expanded or hot enough to float. But since the sun goes down, there were necessary work-arounds, such as taking off from Antarctica during its summer season when there was constant sunlight.

Since NASA's balloon is not beholden to solar power because of its own closed, pressurized system, it will display the potential of super pressure balloons to hurdle long-duration flights needed by scientific instruments for data gathering.

But why balloons? These are deemed low-cost, easy to build and require much less red tape than rocket launches, slashing years off preparation time required by each mission. They are considered an inexpensive access to near-space environment for exploring science. (Source: Tech Times)

**Harvard and ReWalk Robotics to develop wearable exosuits for disable people**

Harvard University has entered into a collaboration with ReWalk Robotics Ltd., to accelerate the development of lightweight, wearable soft exosuit technologies for assisting people with lower limb disabilities. The agreement with ReWalk will help speed the design of assistive exosuits that could help patients suffering from stroke and multiple sclerosis (MS) to regain mobility.

"This is a very exciting day for the soft exosuit technology," said Conor Walsh, who is the John L. Loeb Associate Professor of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), founder of the Harvard Biodesign Lab and a Core Faculty Member at the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering.

"ReWalk brings commercialization expertise and experience in the area of wearable robotics and complements our translation-focused research.

Ultimately this agreement paves the way for this technology to make its way to patients."

The soft exosuit – which is a soft wearable robot that is the first of its kind – was developed by Walsh and his team through extensive prototyping that included the in-



**The soft exosuit – which is a soft wearable robot that is the first of its kind – was developed by Walsh and his team through extensive prototyping that included the involvement of roboticists, mechanical and biomechanical engineers, apparel designers, and software engineers.**

volvement of roboticists, mechanical and biomechanical engineers, apparel design-

ers, and software engineers. Walsh's collaborators also include Terry Ellis and Ken Holt, both faculty members at Boston University's Department of Physical Therapy & Athletic Training.

"What makes the soft exosuit's development unique is the extreme multi-disciplinary nature of the work. In addition to our varied technical expertise as a team, our research with voluntary study participants has been central to our understanding of how we need to design and build these exosuits," said Kathleen O'Donnell, who has been leading the team at the Wyss Institute with Walsh.

Over the course of its development, the soft exosuit has been the catalyst for entirely new forms of functional textiles, flexible power systems and control strategies that integrate the suit and its wearer in ways that mimic the natural biomechanics of the human musculoskeletal system.

"There is a great need in the health care system for lightweight, lower-cost wearable exoskeleton designs to support stroke patients, individuals diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and senior citizens who require mechanical mobility assistance. (Source: harvard.edu)

**Can nightmares cause a heart attack?**

There are case reports of people with no previously known risks having a heart attack after a nightmare, though they appear to be quite rare.

No studies have been done to determine just how rare nightmare-induced heart attacks might be, and experts do not know whether they may result from the pulse-racing effects of the frightening dream itself.

Nightmares are more commonly seen in the rapid eye movement (REM), phase of sleep, which gets longer as the night progresses. Therefore, nightmares are more likely to occur in the early morning hours. Heart attacks, too, are most common in the early morning hours, when internal body clocks start secreting stress hormones and blood pressure tends to rise, said Dr. Mary Ann McLaughlin, a cardiologist at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. If



someone is at risk for a heart attack — because of high blood pressure, diabetes, sleep apnea, smoking or other factors — that attack is more likely to occur in the early morning.

But "it's rare for an otherwise healthy person to have a

nightmare that causes a heart attack," said Dr. McLaughlin.

**Triggers of nightmares**

Nightmares can be triggered by alcohol, lack of sleep and medications, including some antidepressants and blood pressure medications, she said. Anxiety and depression have also been linked to increased risk of nightmares.

On the flip side, patients with heart disease often have sleep apnea, a form of disordered breathing that can lead to fragmented sleep, and potentially more nightmares, said Dr. Neomi Shah, a sleep specialist, also at Mount Sinai.

One 2013 study found that apnea patients with regular nightmares woke up more often than those who didn't. Nightmares disappeared in more than 90 percent of the patients who used a continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP machine to treat their apnea. (Source: The NYT)



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## By staff &amp; agencies

Britain's Labor Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn is reportedly preparing to call for an investigation into former Labor Prime Minister Tony Blair for war crimes in the wake of a long-awaited Chilcot inquiry into the country's role in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The Chilcot inquiry into the Iraq war will publish a 2.6 million-word report on July 6, following seven years of analyzing evidence about how the British government acted before the invasion of Iraq and during the war.

According to a Labor spokesperson, Corbyn will stand by comments he made during the party's leadership contest last year that the Iraq war was illegal and all those who committed a crime should be put on trial.

"If [Tony Blair has] committed a war crime, yes. Everyone who's committed a war crime should be [charged]," Corbyn said.

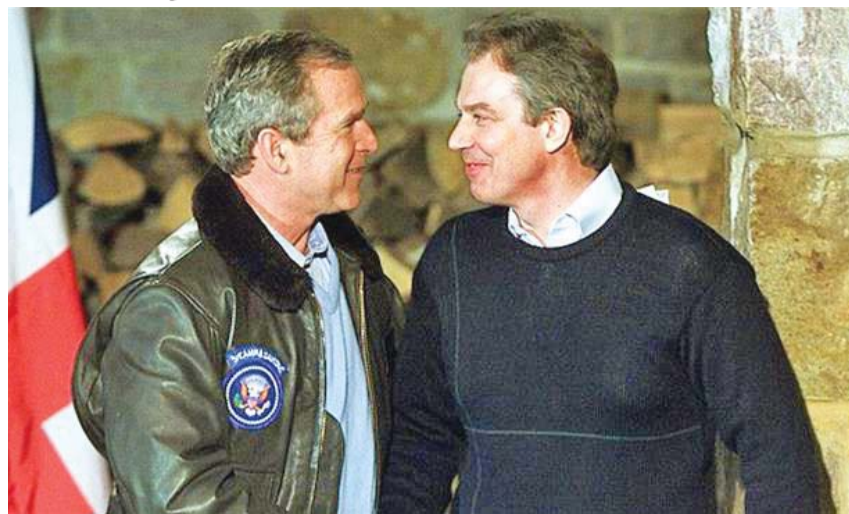
"I think it was an illegal war, I'm confident about that, indeed Kofi Annan confirmed it was an illegal war, and therefore he has to explain to that," he added.

The Labor spokesperson said "we look forward to the release of the Chilcot [inquiry] report into the Iraq war and reading the evidence he has uncovered."

Corbyn was against the Iraq war and had voted and campaigned against it despite the party's endorsement of the move under Blair.

Blair told British MPs before invading Iraq that intelligence showed former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had "active", "growing" and "up and running" nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Weapons of mass

## Labor leader preparing to call for Tony Blair's war crimes trial



destruction (WMD) were the basis of launching the war.

In 2004, however, a United States report said that Saddam Hussein had destroyed his last WMD over a decade ago and had no capacity to build new ones.

Meanwhile, a former government minister, who asked for anonymity, told the Sunday Times that the Chilcot inquiry report will deliver an "absolutely brutal" verdict on Blair, his Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and former MI6 chief Richard Dearlove.

"It will be absolutely brutal for Straw. The build-up to war is very crucial," the source who had the knowledge of the inquiry said.

"It will damage the reputations of a number of people, Richard Dearlove as well as Tony Blair and others," the source added.

The former minister further noted that the report also has a second part that depicts how "we really did make a mess of the aftermath."

The report's section about Britain's withdrawal from the Iraqi city of Basra in 2007 was "embarrassing", the source also said, adding the report would conclude that the Blair government did not have "the full picture" before invading the country because of Blair's informal "sofa-style" approach.

Last week, the Scottish National Party (SNP)'s foreign affairs spokes-

man Alex Salmond reportedly began rallying support for the impeachment of Blair. Salmond said any prosecution of Blair should be conducted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) if the inquiry reveals that the Labor prime minister made a secret commitment to former US President George W. Bush to support the war.

The Chilcot inquiry was launched in 2009 by then Prime Minister Gordon Brown into the Iraq invasion by the United States and Britain and its aftermath that saw British forces remained in the country for six years.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq lasted from 20 March to 1 May 2003 and signaled the start of the Iraq War, which was dubbed Operation Iraqi Freedom by the U.S. The invasion consisted of 21 days of major combat operations, in which a combined force of troops from the U.S., Britain, Australia, Spain and Poland invaded Iraq and deposed the Ba'athist government of Saddam.

According to U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the coalition mission was "to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people."

According to Blair, the trigger was Iraq's failure to take a "final opportunity" to disarm itself of alleged nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons that U.S. and British officials called an immediate and intolerable threat to world peace.

However there were no such weapons found.

## Truth you need to know about the South China Sea

China's islands and reefs in the South China Sea, including the Nansha Islands and Huangyan Dao, all locate west of that line and well beyond the scope of the Philippine territory defined by the above-mentioned treaties. However, the Philippines started to claim sovereignty over some islands and reefs of China's Nansha Islands since 1970s.

To solve the territorial disputes between the two countries, China has been sincerely committed to negotiations with the Philippines. The two countries have agreed to solve the South China Sea issue through bilateral negotiations and consultations, and a series of bilateral documents were signed accordingly. The Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) jointly signed by China and ASEAN Member States, including the Philippines, makes it clear that "The parties concerned undertake to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means...through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned." The Philippines also issued a statement with China in 2011 undertaking to resolve disputes through negotiations and consultations.

The alleged legal basis of the arbi-

tration is the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the Convention) and the Philippines' requests are about territorial sovereignty and maritime delimitation in nature. However the Convention clearly stipulates that territorial issues are not subject to the Convention and consequently the compulsory arbitration cannot be initiated under it. Furthermore, a State Party to the Convention is entitled to declare not to accept the compulsory arbitration should the disputes involve maritime delimitation. This exclusion also has legal effect to the other State

Parties. In 2006, China made the declaration on optional exceptions in accordance with the Convention, excluding disputes concerning maritime delimitation from the dispute settlement procedures under the Convention.

Meanwhile, according to the Convention, compulsory arbitration cannot be initiated and the Arbitral Tribunal has no jurisdiction if the states concerned have chosen other means to settle the disputes. Since there has been a long-standing agreement between China and the Philippines to settle the disputes in the South China Sea through negotiations,

any third-party settlement including arbitration has been excluded thereof, which has been announced by both China and the Philippines repeatedly.

Finally, and as a matter of procedure, the arbitration should not be initiated before the obligation of exchange of views of dispute-settling means is fulfilled by the states concerned. The arbitration initiated by the Philippines is null and void as China has never been informed before the case was presented to the Tribunal.

The reason that the Chinese Government will neither accept nor participate in the arbitration initiated by the Philippines is not because it shies away from the lawsuit, but because it knows that the compulsory arbitration will neither solve the issue, nor help narrow the gap between China and the Philippines. Political commitment of the states concerned and bilateral negotiations are the only feasible way to find solutions. Many states have expressed opposition to the compulsory application of the third party settlement to the South China Sea. As a peace-loving country, China will continue to work with states concerned to address the disputes and safeguard the peace and tranquility of the South China Sea.

**One thing needs to be clarified is that the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea has been China's territory since ancient times. Every Chinese government has exercised effective jurisdiction over it. During World War the Nansha Islands was invaded and occupied by Japan. At the end of the war, it was recovered by China in accordance with the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation. It was widely recognized by the international community that the Nansha Islands belongs to China in the following decades.**

### Israeli forces kill Palestinian woman near al-Quds

A Palestinian woman has been shot and killed by Israeli troops in the occupied Palestinian territories with Israelis claiming she was attempting to stab regime forces.

Israeli police said Monday that the woman was killed in Ras Biddu checkpoint, north of the occupied city of al-Quds (Jerusalem). They said she defied warning shots by Israelis and moved to stab an Israeli female soldier at the scene.

Israeli sources first claimed that the Palestinian woman had been "neutralized", but they later said she was killed on the scene without any Israeli soldier having been injured.

Neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians have revealed the identity of the woman. Her attempted stabbing, if confirmed, may have been inspired by the brutal killing of a pregnant Palestinian

woman and her teenage brother last month. The Israelis handed over the bodies of the two to their families earlier on Monday.

Israelis claimed the death of Maram and her sibling by a privately contracted Israeli security officer came after the two threw a knife in the direction of Israeli forces at the notorious Qalandiya checkpoint north of the occupied West Bank. Eyewitness rejected the claims, saying the two had posed no threat to Israelis stationed at the site.

The dead are the latest victims of a 10-month-long Israeli crackdown in the occupied territories. More than 200 have been killed from the Palestinians with regime in Tel Aviv claiming most of them were engaged in attacks on settlers and troops.

(Source: Press TV)

### Turkey threatens to suspend EU deals if visa-free travel not allowed

Turkey has threatened to suspend all agreements with the European Union (EU) if Brussels fails to grant visa-free travel to Turkish citizens.

"Let them continue to apply double standards, let them continue not to keep their promises for Turkish citizens, but they should know that if they maintain this attitude, Turkey will take some very radical decisions very soon," said Yigit Bulut, an adviser to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on Monday.

Bulut warned that Ankara would review "all relations with the EU, including the customs union deals and the migrant readmission agreements."

The EU is in a standoff with Turkey on the future of an agreement signed in March to stem the flow of refugees and asylum seekers to Europe.

Under the deal, Turkey has commit-

ted to taking back all the asylum seekers and refugees who have used the Aegean Sea to illegally reach Greece. In return, Ankara was promised financial aid, the acceleration of visa liberalization talks and progress in its EU membership negotiations.

The two sides are currently negotiating a sub-deal under which Turkish nationals would be allowed visa-free travel to Europe.

Negotiations over the deal for visa-free travel have been faltering. Turkey reportedly refuses to make changes to its anti-terror laws, as required by the EU.

Concerns over the potential collapse of the deal with Turkey have reportedly prompted EU officials to consider a "plan B" — striking a similar deal with Greece, instead of Turkey.

(Source: agencies)

## Bank Shahr holds int'l conference on urban economics in Tehran

**ECONOMY** The first international seminar about urban economics was held on Thursday in the central building of Bank Shahr in Tehran with the participation of Iranian and international, officials, scholars, students and researchers active in banking and urban development.

The seminar was revolving around the development of smart city, boosting urban tourism, implementing economic resilience, different types of banking organizations, cost evaluation of civil services as well as environmental and air

pollution.

Among the speakers were Hossein Mohammadpourzarandi, the CEO of Bank Shahr, Morteza Talayi, Deputy Director of Tehran City Council, Young Hoon Kwaak, Chairman of the Board of Directors of World Citizen Organization from South Korea and Alireza Daliri, Deputy Vice-president for science and technology.

During the seminar, speakers addressed the upcoming challenges city officials are facing which are rising with the rapid expansion of cities and the looming

crisis of overpopulation.

Several panels with similar subjects were set up throughout the seminar where participants exchanged their views about urbanization challenges as well as solutions to them.

Conference also offered a proper venue where successful mayors and city officials were introduced and honored.

Some articles were also read and discussed with critical approach to urbanization and awards were handed to the researchers whose works had the

most contribution to the conference subjects.

The conference was closed with Iran Urban Economics Scientifics Association (IUESA) singing memorandums of understanding with representatives of six foreign companies including Gorgian Iranian Cultural Centre, World Citizen Organization and the Italian Group of Private companies Artelia Italia, FG Tecnopolo and European Engineering aimed to develop and strengthen mutual cooperation in the field of urban economics and management.

### JUMP

## Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour

During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, Mullah Mansour, like some other members of his family, is said to have carried a gun alongside Islamist resistance fighters of the mujahideen.

Like some other members of his family, he also followed a local group led by Mullah Haji Mohammad, who was the regional commander of Hezb-e-Islami Khalis, one of seven main Pakistan-based resistance groups led by Maulvi Yunus Khalis.

Some sources say he was a prominent, though young, fighter, but not much is known about his exploits then.

In 1987, he is known to have moved to Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's Balochistan province, and later to Peshawar in the north-west, in what is now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where he resumed a religious education that had been interrupted by the war in Afghanistan. Mullah Mansour was among the first bands of Taliban, or seminary students that descended from Pakistan to capture Kandahar and then the rest of Afghanistan in a two-year blitzkrieg that wiped out nearly all the various mujahideen groups except the Northern Alliance.

According to an independent Afghan news agency, Pajhwok, after the capture of Kandahar, the Taliban leadership put Mansour in charge of airport security in the southern city and later made him "commander of its jet fighters".

When the Taliban captured Kabul in 1996, he was initially appointed as director of the Afghan airline Ariana and was later made minister of civil aviation, with additional responsibility for transport and the air force. (Source: BBC)

## From crisis to development: Boosting agriculture's role

Agriculture and rural development are key to strengthening livelihoods of the most vulnerable, including hundreds of millions of small-scale family farmers who are responsible for producing an important share of the world's food.

And it is they who are most at risk. The damage is there for all to see. Extreme weather events, such as those associated with El Nino wreak havoc across wide swathes of the rural areas of the developing world, animal diseases disrupt food chains and wars force millions to abandon their homes, fields and livestock and become migrants at a scale not seen since World War II.

Meanwhile, the agricultural sector, which bears almost 22 percent of damages and losses caused by natural disasters and up to 85 percent in case of drought, receives on average less than 4 percent of the total in humanitarian aid. This provides a stark measure of the widening chasm between needs and the magnitude of response.

In this context it is crucial to stress that investing in livelihoods is not only the just thing to do, but it also makes sense from a cost-effectiveness point of view by helping to address the root causes of conflict, reduce the impact of future shocks and prevent a deepening of vulnerabilities and the on-set of a vicious circle. Expanding access to social protection systems is crucial to underpin resilience - in humanitarian response as well as in development. In the case of natural hazards, it is four to seven times more cost-effective to invest in disaster-risk reduction than to rely on emergency response. Yet only 0.4 percent of Official Development Assistance is spent on disaster-risk reduction.

Moreover, in armed conflict and protracted crises, protecting, saving and rebuilding agricultural livelihoods to save lives and create the conditions for longer-term resilience is a key step towards ensuring peace and stability. However, the role of the agriculture sector in crises is too often overlooked and the necessary investments are not made.

FAO provides both humanitarian and development assistance. We firmly believe in prioritizing early warning, prevention and preparedness to safeguard livelihoods, especially in the rural areas. Around the globe, plenty of evidence exists on the benefits of this and on how it reduces the need for emergency interventions.

More generally, we see how investment in agriculture helps strengthen the self-reliance and dignity of vulnerable rural communities reducing the need for food assistance. We have found that \$200 in support enables a Syrian farmer to produce two tonnes of wheat, enough to feed a family of six for a year and provide seeds for future planting. This is a fraction of the economic cost of food aid, not to mention the dramatic human costs.

If we want to address growing humanitarian needs we need to move beyond business as usual and manage crises differently. We need to acknowledge that the interventions made must have a long-term impact on the beneficiaries, especially those in the rural areas, and then act accordingly. It is the only way we can ensure that nobody is left behind.

## Turkish Airlines to kick off direct flight from Tehran to Konya

**ECONOMY** Turkish Airlines will launch its direct flight from Tehran to Konya in very near future.

The number of weekly flights of the Airlines will increase to 69 in Iran, the report added.

Given the above issue, the new flight from Tehran to Konya will pave suitable way for broadening bilateral exchanges. The Airlines will start its work in Iran with two flights per week on May 30.

On the occasion of its 44th establishment anniversary in Iran, Turkish Airlines will open a new flight destination and is yet expanding its widespread flight network in the country.

With presenting quality flight services to 115 countries in world and with more than 287 destinations across the globe, Turkish Airlines is considered as world's top fourth airlines.

In the same direction, the Airlines has already started its direct flights from seven Iranian cities of Tehran, Tabriz, Mashhad, Shiraz, Isfahan, Ahvaz and Kermanshah.

Suitable way has been paved for the Islamic Republic of Iran in international arena for enhancing bilateral cooperation especially after most sanctions imposed on the country have been lifted.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT



"I don't believe in love at first sight because my mother started loving me before seeing me." *Luffina Lourduraj*

NEWS

Pope calls on France to respect Muslim women Hijab

Pope Francis has urged France to respect the right of Muslim women to profess their faith and wear the hijab same as Christians are allowed to wear the cross.

"If a Muslim woman wishes to wear a veil, she must be able to do so. Similarly, if a Catholic wishes to wear a cross," Francis told the French Catholic newspaper La Croix, The Guardian reported on Tuesday, May 17. "People must be free to profess their faith at the heart of their own culture not merely at its margins."

Showing support to secularism, Pope said that states also needed strong laws guaranteeing religious freedom and needed to ensure individuals, including government officials, had a right to conscientious objection.

He also expressed a "modest critique" of France, saying the country's laws exaggerate "laïcité" – the separation of church and state.

"This arises from a way of considering religions as subcultures rather than as fully fledged cultures in their own right. I fear that this approach, which is understandable as part of the heritage of the Enlightenment, continues to exist," Francis said.

"France needs to take a step forward on this issue in order to accept that openness to transcendence is a right for everyone," he added.

France is home to a Muslim community of nearly six million, the largest in Europe.

French Muslims have been complaining of restrictions on performing their religious practices.

In 2004, France banned Muslims from wearing hijab, an obligatory code of dress, in public places and schools.

France also outlawed the wearing of face-veil in public in 2011.

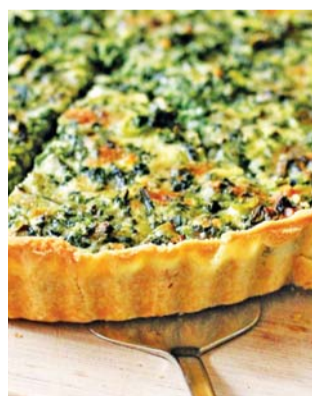
(Source: Ahlul Bayt News Agency)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Spinach quiche

"Let me start by saying that I devised this recipe myself, and I just sort of add 'this and that.' This recipe is VERY forgiving, so you can add or remove ingredients according to your taste!"

Ingredients:



- 1/2 cup butter
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1 (4.5 ounce) can mushrooms, drained
- 1 (6 ounce) package herb and garlic feta, crumbled
- 1 (8 ounce) package shredded Cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 (9 inch) unbaked deep dish pie crust
- 4 eggs, beaten

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). In a medium skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Saute garlic and onion in butter until lightly browned, about 7 minutes. Stir in spinach, mushrooms, feta and 1/2 cup Cheddar cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon mixture into pie crust. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs and milk. Season with salt and pepper. Pour into the pastry shell, allowing egg mixture to thoroughly combine with spinach mixture. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Sprinkle top with remaining Cheddar cheese, and bake an additional 35 to 40 minutes, until set in center. Allow to stand 10 minutes before serving.

VP warns over impacts of aging female population

**WOMEN TEHRAN** — Aging female population in Iran is growing, Shahindokht Molaverdi, vice president for women and family affairs said, stressing that the problem should be addressed through adopting proper policies.

Currently, Iran is facing changes in maternal age pattern, having a growth to over 30s, said Molaverdi, adding that 40 percent of births in the first 9 months of the previous Iranian calendar year 1394 (started March 2015) has been related to mothers over 30.

Growing maternal age to 35 will increase congenital abnormalities in children and it imposes high expenditures for related screening tests, YJC quoted Molaverdi



as saying on Thursday.

Population rate is one of the basic factors in evaluating a county's power, she noted.

Currently, more than 6.5 million people over 65 years of age are living in Iran, with the aging population rate of 8.2 percent which has a growth compared with the population rate of 8 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1393 (March 2014-2015), said Molaverdi.

It is predicted that during the current Iranian calendar year the population of aged people over 60 will reach to 10 percent of the total population and in next 20 years it will pass the rate of 12 percent which leads the country to the crisis of aging population, she added.

5th International Conference on Women's Health winds up

**WOMEN TEHRAN** — The 5th International Conference on Women's Health with special focus on cancers in women was held May 18-19 in the city of Shiraz.

Some 120,000 people die every year of cancers in Iran, of them around 15,000 are women, said Kamran Bagheri-Lankarani, chairman of the conference. Women are more subjected to stomach, gullet, colorectal and breast cancers, he noted.

"Stomach cancer is the most dangerous cancer in women, mostly leading to death," Khabaronline quoted

Lankarani as saying.

Women's health is very important not only because women constitute 49 percent of the country's population but also because they are the basis of families, he highlighted.

Lankarani stressed that the health of society is related to women's health, adding, "heart failure or myocardial infarction is the leading cause of death for women; therefore a change in women's lifestyle is needed."

Currently, 50 percent of Iranian physicians are women and it is predicted that the number will reach 60 percent in the next 4 or 5 years, he said.



Invest in girls' health to compete in the digital future: World Bank head

**COPENHAGEN (Thomson Reuters Foundation)** — Countries which fail to invest in young women's health will be left behind because the underdeveloped brains of their children will not be equipped to compete in an increasingly complex, digital world, the head of the World Bank said on Wednesday.

Jim Yong Kim said childhood stunting, which impairs cognitive ability, was a "great unrecognized disaster happening in the world right now".

He said when finance ministers approach the World Bank for loans they say they are not going to use the money for women and children, but for hard infrastructure like roads and energy.

"What we are now telling them is look to the future ... it is digital, digital, digital. The most important infrastructure you can invest in could be gray matter infrastructure ... and it starts with a healthy girl," Kim told Women Deliver, a major women's health and rights conference.

He said a quarter of children worldwide were stunted, 32 percent in India and 45 percent in Pakistan.

Health experts say the first 1,000 days of a baby's life from conception are critical for physical and mental development.

Women who delay pregnancy, space their births and receive proper nutrition and healthcare before, during and after pregnancy are more likely to have healthier, stronger children.

Kim said brain scans showed that young children who don't have sufficient nutrition or stimulation in their early years have fewer neural connections which impacts their cognitive potential.

"For every country in the world looking at a future that's going to ... require huge amounts of digital competence we are now saying to these governments how are you going to walk into the future with 45 percent stunting."

"How are you going to compete in the future when 45 percent ... of your future workers actually don't have as many neurone connections as the others do?"

Kim said countries must ensure that girls do not have babies too young and that expectant mothers have access to healthcare.

"We have to take care of those children ... in the first five years as if they are the most precious infrastructure you could ever buy," he said to applause.

Give the money to women

Kim said although maternal mortality rates had come down they were still far too high - one in 26 women in sub-Saharan Africa is at risk of dying during childbirth over her lifetime. In Europe it is one in 9,400.

"No woman should die in childbirth and we still have a huge problem. We're making progress but not enough," he added.

He said investing in women's health, education and economic empowerment was crucial for ending global poverty and the World Bank would be making special investments to address the high numbers of girls dropping out in secondary school.

Kim said conditional cash transfers were a highly effective way for reducing poverty, but they were far more effective if the money was given to women rather than men.

UN Women calls for women's rights and empowerment

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — At World Humanitarian Summit, UN Women called for women's rights and empowerment to be central principles of humanitarian action.

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Deputy Executive Director Yannick Glemarec will join other world leaders at the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) held on Monday and today in Istanbul, Turkey.

The first gathering of its kind, the Summit aims to place humanity—people's safety, dignity and the right to thrive—at the heart of global decision-making and initiate a set of concrete actions and commitments to enable countries and communities to better prepare for and respond to crises. With more than 5,000 expected participants, the program will include seven high-level leaders' roundtables on priority action areas.

At the Summit, UN Women will advocate for greater investment for gender equality and for women's rights and women's empowerment to become standard principles of humanitarian planning and action. UN Women and UNFPA Executive Directors will be UN co-chairs for tomorrow's Roundtable Four, entitled "High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on Women and Girls: Catalyzing Action to Achieve Gender Equality", where member states, UN and multilateral actors will come together to endorse core commitments to improve humanitarian action for women and girls worldwide.

Member state co-chairs for roundtable four will include: President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic (Croatia); President Michael D. Higgins (Ireland); Deputy Prime Minister Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa (Samoa) and

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström (Sweden). The Roundtable will be attended by more than 25 Member States and civil society representatives.

Ensuring that humanitarian action works for women and girls is a UN Women priority. The organization's core actions for women and girls in humanitarian situations are to facilitate coordination and provide leadership, build the capacity of planning and implementing agencies, ensure response planning is evidence-based and to implement targeted actions wherever gaps are identified.

"Women have a large stake in the appropriateness of the services they receive, and must be involved in guiding those provisions to make sure they are directly relevant and effective. Getting it right for

women is central to finding appropriate solutions for the millions of families and individuals displaced, homeless, or making new homes in host countries," said Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka.

"There are two important challenges that are still not taken into consideration or integrated into humanitarian action. Firstly, women are marginalized when it comes to leadership and meaningful participation and are consistently excluded from decision-making processes in humanitarian response. This results in a lack of support offered to them to enable them to acquire the skills and resources needed to rebuild their lives. Secondly, the pervasive rise of sexual and domestic violence that women and girls experience in humanitarian situations which remains inadequately addressed" she added. "We know, for example, that early child marriage—considered a form of violence—increases dramatically in response to vulnerability and lack of resources."

A 2013 assessment estimated the percentage of Syrian girl refugees in Jordan being married before age 18 to have risen from below 17 percent before the conflict, to more than 50 percent afterwards. Without access to sexual and reproductive health services, these girls have little or no control over pregnancy, with damaging or deadly consequences. Sixty percent of preventable maternal deaths occur among women and girls who have been displaced or disadvantaged through conflict or natural disaster.

At the summit, in addition to participation in the official program, UN Women will showcase the stories of women leaders and the work on the ground, from Nepal to Democratic Republic of the Congo to Jordan, in support of humanitarian action, including through photo essays, videos and a virtual reality experience at the exhibition fair.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

IN FOCUS ISNA/Pouriya Pakizeh



Non-Iranian female alumni attended their graduation ceremony which was held on May 19 at Abu-Ali Sina University in the city of Hamedan.



# Sepahan confirms Veisi as new head coach

**S P O R T S** Sepahan football club has announced the appointment of Abdollah Veisi as the new head coach on Monday.

Veisi, who led Esteghlal Khuzestan to Iran Professional League title in the historic 2015-16 season, will try to lead Sepahan back to glory days.

Sepahan had a poor performance in the Iran Professional League and finished in 11th place.

"We won the league title with Esteghlal Khuzestan but I decided to leave as we didn't come to an agreement with the club officials," Veisi said.

"I played nine years at Sepahan and I love this team. They offered me the job and I accepted it. I would like to request Isfahani fans to support the team and we will try our best to bring the glory days back to the team," Veisi said.

Sepahan started the 2015-16 league with Hossein Faraki as the head coach but he left after just 11 weeks, then the club appointed Croatian Igor Stimac as his successor but he couldn't stand more than 15 games and resigned.

In the final four weeks of the league Ghasem Zaghinejad appointed as the interim coach until the end of the season.



## Iran beach soccer to play friendly matches with Italy



**S P O R T S** The Iranian beach soccer national team will play two friendly matches against Italy.

Team Melli will leave Iran for the European country on May 29.

Iran has been scheduled to meet the Italian team on May 31 and June 1 in Catania.

Iran coach Mohammad Hossein Mirshamsi has called up 12 players for the

double header upcoming friendlies against the Italian team.

Iran is the best Asian team and one of the world's best teams.

Under guidance of Marco Octavio, the Iranian team won the 2013 Beach Soccer Intercontinental Cup defeating Russia 4-3 in the final match in Dubai, the UAE.

Iran also finished in third place in the competition in 2015.

## Milad Ebadipour joins Sarmayeh Bank volleyball team



**S P O R T S** Iranian international receiver Milad Ebadipour joined Sarmayeh Bank volleyball team on Monday.

The financial details of the 23-year-old's contract have not been revealed.

Ebadipour started his playing career with Kalleh Mazandaran in 2011 and after three years he joined Shahrdiri Urmia.

"We are going to sign the best play-

ers since we want to win Asian and world championship," Sarmayeh Bank coach Mostafa Karkhaneh told Tasnim news agency.

He is a member of Iran volleyball team in the World Olympic Qualification Tournament which will be held in the Japanese capital from May 28 to June 5.

Sarmayeh Bank Volleyball Club was established in Tehran, Iran in 2015 and claimed the title of the Iranian league in 2016.

## Sardar Azmoun linked with a move to Spartak

**S P O R T S** Iranian international striker Sardar Azmoun has been linked with a move to Spartak Moscow, according to TOPRE.

Sardar, who was at Rostov on loan from Rubin Kazan, showed his top form this season as he scored six goals in the last five appearances for FC Rostov.

Rostov had a surprise performance in 2015-16 Russian League as they finished second behind CSKA Moscow.

According to reports in Russian media, Spartak Moscow is considering FC Rostov coach Kurban Berdyev as a successor for Dmitri Alenichev. If this happens Azmoun will definitely be one of Spartak's summer signings.



## Iran bodybuilding team top-ranked in Asian championships

Iranian national bodybuilding squad has hulked into the top position at the 50th edition of AFBF Asian Bodybuilding and Fitness Championships in China.

Iran claimed the title after earning seven gold, one silver, and one bronze medals at the end of the four-day tournament of the Asian Federation of Bodybuilding & Fitness at Jihua Resort & Convention Center in the Chinese capital city of Beijing on May 21.

Iran's Mohsen Mahmoudi and Mehdi Mostafalou claimed gold medals in the 70-kilogram and 80-kilogram weight classes, respectively, while Mehdi Ghana-vati snatched another gold in the minus 85-kilogram category.



Saeed Moammar and Maysam Keshvari also landed in the first place, and were awarded gold medals in the minus 90-kilogram and minus 95-kilogram weight sections.

In the minus 100-kilogram division, Ruhollah Mirhosseini and Ayat Najd-Bagheri also snatched a gold and bronze medal for Iran respectively.

Additionally, Hamid Lakzaei pocketed a gold medal in the over 100-kilogram class. Ramezan Ghanbarlou also collected a bronze in the section.

The 50th edition of AFBF Asian Bodybuilding and Fitness Championships kicked off in Beijing, China, on May 18 and concluded on May 21.

(Source: PressTV)

## Iran basketball team drawn with USA at Atlas Challenge

Iran has been drawn with USA, Macedonia and Lithuania in Group B of the 2016 Atlas Challenge.

The tournament will be held in Suzhou, China on June 14-19.

Group A consists of host China, Japan, New Zealand and Belarus.

Iran will open the campaign with a match against Macedonia on June 14.

Dirk Bauermann's men are scheduled to meet Lithuania and USA in the following days.

Iranian national basketball team is preparing for the Olympic Qualifying Tournament (OQT), slated for July 4-9.



(Source: Tasnim)

## Zobahan's Shekari on FC Basel's radar

Iranian Zobahan attacking midfielder Reza Shekari has participated at Swiss club FC Basel's training.

The Iranian prodigy will most probably move to Basel in the summer.

English Premier League champion Leicester City had already showed interest in signing the 18-year-old player.

In 2015, Shakeri was named by The Guardian as one of the best 50 young talents in world football.

He joined Zobahan on a three-year contract in 2015 and made his debut for the Isfahan-based team in Iran Professional League against Sepahan.

Shekari scored his first professional goal



on 4 November 2015 in a 2-0 Hazfi Cup victory against Persepolis. (Source: Tasnim)

## FOOTBALL

### Zlatan Ibrahimovic 'agrees to join Manchester United' under Jose Mourinho, coaching role in future

Zlatan Ibrahimovic has agreed to join Manchester United and plans are in place for him to take up a coaching role with the club, according to a report on Monday.

Respected Dutch daily De Telegraaf says Ibrahimovic, who has left Paris Saint-Germain following the expiration of his contract, has turned down an annual salary of £39m on offer in China to move to Old Trafford.

The paper says plans are in place for Ibrahimovic, 34, to become an assistant manager at Old Trafford when he does decide to end his playing days.

That will likely be under Jose Mourinho, who is poised to be named United's new manager after the club sacked Louis van Gaal - although official confirmation is still awaited.

Ibrahimovic had the most prolific season of his career in 2015-16, scoring an incredible 38 goals in 31 Ligue 1 matches and 50 in all competitions.

In March, the Sweden international revealed that he was interested in a move to England - a country that has not always appreciated his talents.

"Yes, there is interest from the Premier League, I can confirm that," he said. "The Premier League is the league in the world all people and fans speak about."

(Source: Eurosport)



### AC Milan to officially end Mihajlovic deal in June

AC Milan have reached an agreement with Sinisa Mihajlovic to terminate his contract at the end of next month, freeing him up to take the reins at another club.

The former defender was appointed head coach on a two-year deal last June but was sacked in April after failing to sustain a challenge for the Champions League places.

Mihajlovic is reported to have met with Milan CEO Adriano Galliani in Rome last week to negotiate the finer details of his contract termination, and the club announced on Monday that a deal had been struck to end his deal a year early.

Mihajlovic is tipped to take over at Torino, with Giampiero Ventura rumored to be the favourite to succeed Antonio Conte as Italy coach.

(Source: OmniSport)

### Gotze deals blow to Liverpool by stating he wants to stay at Bayern Munich

Germany striker Mario Gotze will stay at Bayern Munich this summer.

German tabloid Bild quotes the forward - who scored the winning goal in the 2014 World Cup final - saying that he is "looking forward to the new Bayern season", and suggesting that he will stay put.

The news deals a serious blow to Liverpool, who were reportedly close to agreeing a £37 million transfer for a player who has always struggled to nail down a starting spot at the German champions.

Gotze first came to prominence at Borussia Dortmund under current Reds boss Jurgen Klopp, leading many to conclude that it would be straightforward for a deal to go through.

And with Bayern set to welcome Carlo Ancelotti as new manager, that move seemed all the more certain: Gotze is believed to have met Ancelotti earlier this month and been told to move clubs since he wouldn't be in the Italian's plans.

Either those reports were wide of the mark or Ancelotti has had a change of heart, however, as the Bild story is fairly clear.

"I will do everything possible to compete in top shape during my first training session with Carlo Ancelotti," Gotze told the paper.

Also in the report is the news that Gotze has split with his management agency of six years, Total Sport, and agent Volker Struth.

That split does open up the possibility that the Liverpool stories were nothing more than rumours planted by the player's management to try and agitate for a move for a player with just a year left on his contract.

Gotze's words do not absolutely rule out a move, but experts at Eurosport Germany believe that the player will now stay put.

"In my opinion Gotze's words are true," says Eurosport Germany's Dirk Adam. "Bild is always well-informed on this sort of thing."

(Source: Eurosport)







### Poem of the day

Thus spake an idol to his worshiper,  
"Why dost thou worship this dead stone, fair sir?  
'Tis because He who gazeth through thine eyes  
Doth some part of His charms on it confer."

Khayyam

### Prayer Times

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## NEWS

### Tehran Auction set for May 27

**A R T** TEHRAN — The fifth edition of the Tehran Auction, the auction of modern and contemporary Iranian art, will take place in Tehran's Parsian Azadi Hotel on Friday, May 27.

The auction, which is believed to be among the largest auctions in the Middle East, has provided a preview for interested buyers on May 25 and 26 to study the works for sale.

The famous Iranian actor Reza Kianian, who conducted the auction several times, announced his withdrawal from the auction last year.

It is believed that stage director and presenter Hossein Pakdel, who was invited to cooperate as the auctioneer of the classical Iranian artists section last year, most probably will succeed Kianian.

Artworks by a number of deceased and living artists including Parviz Tanavoli, Aidin Aghdashlu, Nasrollah Afjei, Parviz Kalantari, Farideh Lashai and Reza Mafi will go under the hammer on Friday.

The auction is run by art expert Alireza Sami-Azar, a former director of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

The 4th Tehran Auction smashed last year's record by grossing 214 billion rials (over \$6.4 million).

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Zasta to perform at Tehran center



**CULTURE** TEHRAN — The Zasta ensemble is scheduled to give a concert at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center on May 27.

The band led by Behnam Abolqasem will perform selections from "For the Sake of the Cobbled Street that Would Take Me to You", an album of theme music composed by Fardin Khalatbari.

### Iranian writer's book on films portraying prophets published in Russian



**CULTURE** TEHRAN — A book by Iranian writer Razieh Yasini that explores the differences between Hollywood and Iranian films on prophets has recently been published in Russian in Moscow.

Translated by Javid Mirzayev, "The Portrayal of Prophets in Cinema" has been published by Moscow-based Sadra Publications in collaboration with the Russian Foundation for Islamic Studies.

"The Portrayal of Prophets in Cinema" is the second book of "Culture and Traditions", a program that has been arranged by the Russian Foundation for Islamic Studies to translate books from Persian writers into Russian.

"Noruz: a Festival to Unite People" by Bahareh Sazmand has previously been translated into Russian in this program.

### Former Megadeth drummer dies after collapsing during Los Angeles gig

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Nick Menza, a former drummer for the heavy metal band Megadeth, died at age 51 after collapsing on stage at a Los Angeles club late on Saturday, a family spokesman said on Sunday.

Menza collapsed while performing with his current band OHM at the Baked Potato club in Studio City, California, where he lived, said family spokesman J. Marshall Craig, who is also Menza's biographer.

The band had been performing its third song of the first set late on Saturday when Menza collapsed, Craig said. Audience members and friends tried to resuscitate him until medics arrived, but Menza died in an ambulance en route to a local hospital after 25 minutes of resuscitation attempts.

"Despite his excellent health and extremely active, sober lifestyle, a heart attack is his suspected, though not confirmed, cause of death," Craig said. An autopsy will be performed, he said.

Menza was the longest-serving drummer for Megadeth from 1989 to 1998, a period when the band was considered at its height, Craig said. He recorded drums and toured on the albums "Rust in Peace", "Countdown to Extinction", "Youthanasia" and "Cryptic Writings".

# Iran's "Salesman" takes home Cannes awards for best actor, best screenplay

**A R T** TEHRAN — The Iranian cinema shone at the closing ceremony of the 69th Cannes Film Festival on Sunday night as "The Salesman" by Asghar Farhadi received the awards for best screenplay and best actor, won by Shahab Hosseini.

The film, whose screenplay was also written by Farhadi, is about Emad (Hosseini) and Rana (Taraneh Ali-dusti) who move into a new flat in the center of Tehran. An incident linked to the previous tenant dramatically changes the young couple's life.

"My films are not known for their joyfulness, so I'm very happy to have brought some joy to my people," Farhadi said after accepting the award from jury members Valeria Golino and László Nemes at the Grand Theatre des Lumieres.

The film brought Hosseini the Palme d'Or for best actor, which was presented by panel members Kirsten Dunst and Katayun Shahabi.

"I'd like to thank the jury, to thank Cannes and to thank Asghar who gave me back my confidence. I know that I owe this prize to my people. I dedicate it to them, with all my love, and with all my heart," said Hosseini after receiving the award.

The film's success at the prestigious event brought great joy to Iranian cineastes and millions of film aficionados in the country.

In thousands of messages published on social networks, the cineastes, including Payman Moaadi, the star Farhadi's "A Separation" and Jafar Panahi, the winner of the Camera d'Or at Cannes in 1995 for "The White Balloon", congratulated him on the achievement.

Executives of the Cinema Organization of Iran, the Iranian House of Cinema, the Farabi Cinema Foundation and some other Iranian organizations also sent messages of congratulations to Farhadi and his crew.

In a press conference held on Monday morning, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance spokesman Hossein Nushabadi commented, "It has been a pleasure to see that our cinema has achieved such a high level of efficiency that it is able to rival those of the world."

Also among the winners was veteran British director Ken Loach who was honored for "I, Daniel Blake" with the Palme d'Or for best feature.

The Grand Prix went to "Juste la Fin du Monde" ("It's Only the End of the World") directed by Xavier Dolan from Canada.

Cristian Mungiu, Romanian director of "Bacalaureat" ("Graduation") and Olivier Assayas, the French director of "Personal Shopper", shared the award for best director.

The jury special prize was presented to "American Honey" by British director Andrea Arnold and Jaclyn Jose in "Ma' Rosa" by Filipino director Brillante Mendoza won the best actress award.



Director/writer Asghar Farhadi (L) and actor Shahab Hosseini pose after accepting the awards for best screenplay and best actor for "The Salesman" at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in the French city on May 22, 2016.

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## Iran launches music festival to promote environmental conservation

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iran's Department of the Environment has initiated a music festival with the aim of drawing public attention to the protection of the environment.

The secretary of the 1st National Green Music Festival, Mohsen Rohani, elaborated on the reasons behind launching such a festival during a press conference, which was held in Tehran on Monday.

The press conference was also attended by members of the policymaking panel of the festival including maestro Shahrdad Rohani, veteran musicians Ardeshtir and Hana Kamkar.

Rohani announced that competitors in the six main sections must submit recordings of their music to the organizers of the festival by January 2017.

The categories are composed of classical music, re-



gional music, orchestral and choral songs, children's songs and lyrics, modern music, and traditional Iranian music.

In a brief speech, Rohani underlined the importance of solving environmental issues by the contribution of every citizen.

He also shared his experience of developing a sense of environmental protection by means of his composition "Butterfly" that he performed during his tour of Iran over the past eight months.

The festival is in line with the 5th International Green Film Festival that the Department of the Environment held from May 13 to 20 in Tehran and several other Iranian cities.

Winners of the 1st National Green Music Festival will be announced at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on April 22, 2017, which is Earth Day.

### PICTURE OF THE DAY



Participants hold pictures of veteran artist Parviz Kalantari during his funeral in the courtyard of the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on May 23, 2016. Kalantari, who was famous for his paintings of village homes in the Iranian desert regions, died at the age of 85 on Friday.

## Tehran center to release collection of Persian music from 1970s

**A R T** TEHRAN — Tehran's Beethoven Music Center (BMC) plans to release a collection containing solo and duet performances of Persian music recorded in the early years of the 1970s next month.

The collection entitled "The Treasury of the Art of Iranian Music" is comprised of 12 CDs featuring performances by tar virtuoso Jaail Shahnaz (1921-2013), violin virtuoso Homayun Khorram (1930-2013), and tombak player Amir-Naser Efteta (1935-1987), BMC director Babak Chamana told the Persian service of ISNA on Monday.

The performances feature the radifs of Iranian music, which are the total collection of more than 200 gushehs (traditional melodic motifs) in all 12 dastgahs.

"Most albums on radifs available in the market are not complete, and they somehow focus on the teaching side of a radif, but this might be the only collection that will allow listeners to enjoy Iranian music while listening to Iranian radifs," he added.

He also noted that he will release the collection in an attractive package with a very special graphic design containing brochures both in English and French.

## "Angry Birds" flocks to No. 1 over "Neighbors", "Nice Guys"

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — "Captain America" has found a worthy competitor in a bunch of flightless birds. "The Angry Birds Movie" soared to \$39 million in its debut weekend, knocking "Captain America: Civil War" off its first-place perch, while new adult comedies "Neighbors 2" and the "The Nice Guys" struggled to get their footing, according to comScore estimates Sunday.

Rovio Animation spearheaded the production of "The Angry Birds Movie", which cost around \$73 million to make, and it opened strong internationally last weekend. The film has already earned \$150 million worldwide, according to estimates from Sony, which is distributing the film.

"The Angry Birds Movie" features the voices of Jason Sudeikis, Josh Gad and Dan-

ny McBride and has received mixed reviews from critics in its attempt to create a compelling story out of a fairly simplistic app-based game. But audiences under 25 gave the film an A CinemaScore, which should help the film continue to perform well over Memorial Day weekend.

"It's very difficult turning a video-game property into a successful movie," said Josh

Greenstein, Sony's president of worldwide marketing and distribution. "To use a bad pun, we are flying high."

Video-game adaptations have not had the best track record, but comScore's Senior Media Analyst Paul Dergarabedian notes that the success of "Angry Birds" likely has more to do with its family appeal and ingrained brand recognition.