

Denmark's  
Haldor Topsoe to  
set up office in Tehran

Govt. to grant  
low-interest loans to  
flood-stricken families

Iran volleyball team  
defeats Poland in  
friendly match

Official says "Salesman"  
needs no modification  
to premiere in Iran

# TEHRAN TIMES



Iran condemns  
terrorist acts in  
Tartus, Jabaleh  
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## Austria keen to help Iran in green energy, water management

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**

By Mahnaz Abdi

Christian Bengner, the regional minister of Austrian state of Carinthia for economy, agriculture and tourism, says there is high know-how technology in the fields of solar and other green energy resources as well as water management in Austria and the country is keen to help Iran in these areas.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Bengner said, "There is also high know-how in Austria for recycling plastics. You have petrochemical industry and we have technology to recycle your products, so a lot of opportunities we can develop."

The interview came on the sidelines of a meeting between Bengner, heading a high-ranking trade delegation, and Masoud Khansari, the chairman of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, in Tehran on Wednesday.

The Austrian minister mentioned problems with the banks and money transfer as the main downside for business in Iran, while noting, "I think this will be solved in the very near future."

Austrian banks help remove this obstacle, Bengner said, adding, "Raiffeisen Bank is one of the main Austrian banks in the international business. It's the Austrian control bank, which controls every international money transfer. This bank and all other banks are active and support resolving this problem. So, solutions will be seen in the near future."



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## Larijani urges next parliament to prioritize economy

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN — Ali Larijani, who held the post of speaker in the previous parliament which its term officially came to

an end on Tuesday, said on Wednesday that the Supreme Leader has been prioritizing economy and the next parliament should also follow the same policy.

During a press conference, Larijani attached great importance to implementation of the policies of resistance economy in achieving a prosperous economy.



See page 2

## India's foreign trade policy focused on Iran: official

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — India's foreign trade policy is focused on Iran, IRNA quoted Khalid M Khan, the regional chairman of Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO), as saying on Wednesday.

According to IRNA, the official noted that FIEO tries to create a channel for closer trade communications through the two countries' chambers of commerce.

Khalid, who accompanied India's trade delegation headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, further asserted that important industrial provinces of Isfahan, Shiraz and specially Tehran are among their priorities and FIEO is negotiating with Iranian side to evaluate the potentials and ways of improving business cooperation in these provinces. The official went on explaining that founded in 1969; Federation of Indian Export Organizations supervises the country's export activities.

"FIEO plans to strengthen trade ties and pursue common economic goals through conducting various trade fairs and exhibitions." He added.

During Modi's visit, India signed 12 agreements with Iran 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. Modi arrived in Tehran at the head of a high-ranking economic and political team on May 22 for an official two-day visit.

## Why observe Africa's National Day

Every year on May 25 the world holds National Day of Africa.

As for Africa, Iran's major policies are based on expanding ties with the continent, having supported the freedom-seeking African countries since the Islamic revolution in 1979.

What should be noted is that African countries are not poor or bankrupt, but the black continent is full of precious riches.

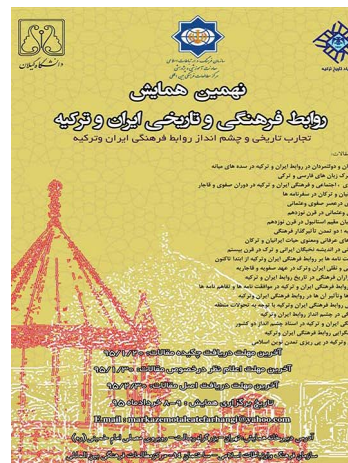
If we want expanding ties, we should change the mindset of our officials toward Africa.

In the post-sanctions era the stage is open to establishing ties with Africa. But Iranian goods have still not found their way to the African market. The export of Iranian goods to Africa should be propagated.

## Rasht conference to discuss cultural relations of Turkey, Iran

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — Cultural relations between Iran and Turkey will be scrutinized during a conference, which is scheduled to be held at the Hekmat Hall of the University of Guilan in the northern Iranian city of Rasht on May 28 and 29.

The director of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organizations (ICRO), Abuzar Ebrahimi-Torkaman, the director of the Atatürk Culture Language and History High Commission, Derya Ors, and some other cultural officials and experts from both countries are scheduled to deliver speeches at the opening ceremony. The event is organized by the ICRO in collaboration with the Turkish History Foundation.



## Professor: U.S. missile defense shield in Romania 'will have little effect on Iranian security'

**INTERVIEW**

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN — Professor Farhang Jahanpour is of the opinion that the U.S. missile defense shield in Romania will not pose threat to the Iranian security.

"In my view, it will have little effect on Iranian security," says Jahanpour, a member of Kellogg College, University of Oxford.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Jahanpour says, "Even in the past, Iran's role in the defense shield was mainly used for propaganda purposes because Iran did not possess nuclear weapons or intercontinental ballistic missiles."

Following is the full text of the interview:

**■ What is the purpose of U.S.'s decision to establish the missile defense shield in Romania? Can we see this event as NATO's expansion into the East?**

A: Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the West has moved closer and closer to Russian borders. The former Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev has claimed that when he reached an agreement with the West to allow the dissolution of the Soviet Union and German unification, the West promised that NATO "would not expand into the East". However, the West has rejected his claim.

In any case, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War provided a great opportunity for

reconciliation in the European continent that was missed. For decades, the world had been divided between the two superpowers and their satellites, with thousands of nuclear weapons aimed at each other. Humanity was in great danger of annihilation as the result of a nuclear clash between those two blocs, as could be seen over the Cuban crisis.

With the end of the Cold War, the world breathed a sigh of relief and many people hoped that hostilities between the two blocs would end for good. The Warsaw Pact was dismantled, and indeed most former Soviet satellites became members of the European Union and even of NATO.

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## Indian warships visit Iran's Bandar Abbas

Two Indian warships started a visit to the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on May 24 which will stay there until May 27.

The visit came on the heels of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Tehran on May 22-23.

Following is the text of the report released by the Indian embassy in Tehran:

Indian Naval Ships Ganga and Trikand are visiting Bandar Abbas from 24-27 May 16, in consonance with India's strong bilateral relationship and steadily growing maritime interaction with



Iran. INS Ganga, an indigenous guided missile frigate of the Indian Navy has been in active service for about three decades and is presently

operating Seaking ASW helicopters. INS Trikand, on the other hand, is a modern stealth frigate with cutting edge weaponry, sophisticated sensors and is capable of carrying a KM 31 Airborne Early Warning helicopter. The ship is commanded by Captain Arjun Dev Nair.

During the visit, the crew of IN ships will undertake professional interactions with the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN), pertaining to nuances of maritime operations, including means of combating maritime terrorism and piracy.

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## Oman Air to fly to Mashhad in Iran from next month

A new service between Muscat and the Iranian city of Mashhad will start from June 1, 2016, Oman Air said in a statement.

This is Oman Air's second destination in Iran, following the launch of flights to Tehran in 2012. The carrier will operate daily flights aboard Boeing 737-800 aircraft. Flights will depart Muscat International Airport at 14.00hrs and arrive at Mashhad International Airport (also known as Shahid Hashemi

Nejad Airport) at 17.15hrs.

Return flights will depart Mashhad International Airport at 21.45hrs and arrive in Muscat at 23.50hrs.

"Oman Air is delighted to be launching a new service between Muscat and Mashhad from June 1. The launch is in response to significant customer demand and we anticipate a high level of early bookings. The service will strengthen the well-established bilateral trade links

between Oman and Iran and deliver further opportunities for the two nations," Oman Air's Chief Executive Officer Paul Gregorowitsch said.

Oman Air's Deputy CEO & EVP Commercial Abdulrahman Al Busaidy said that Oman Air's new service to Mashhad will offer travelers from throughout our international network the opportunity to discover an exciting and vibrant new destination.

(Source: Times of Oman)

## PERSPECTIVE

By Matin Moslem

international  
relations expert

## Tehran-Riyadh ties: What to expect

With Tehran and Riyadh sailing in turbulent waters, the question arises as to what reconciliatory steps to take to lesson friction between the two regional powerhouses. Although ties between the two countries are plagued by numerous sticking points, it should not be taken to mean an eternal deadlock.

The tension is not something to let go by. Nor it is logical as it impinges on stability, security, diplomacy, and economy of the whole region.

One possible solution is to achieve resilience through simplification. But does it work? Perhaps!

Nelson Mandela once said there is always one brick to pick up from high walls. Looking from Mandela's vantage point, it should not be too much demanding to find such brick in a history of regional coexistence between the two.

Of course, the task seems a bit daunting considering opposing perspectives on issues such as regional and international security, the refugee crisis, conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain, rivalry over oil market, and the hajj issue. The list can go on.

While the concerns have brought the two to a confrontation, each of the two can play its role to pave the way for the reconsolidation process, the request of not only the U.S. and its European allies, but also some conservative Arab states.

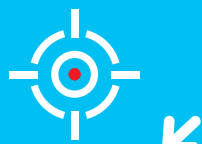
U.S. President Barack Obama believes that Saudi Arabia, one of America's most important allies in the Middle East, needs to learn how to "share" the region with Iran. European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier have also spoken of quelling tensions.

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MEDIA MONITOR



'Badreddin to find replacement among Hezbollah commanders'

**TEHRAN** — A former Iranian defense minister has said Hezbollah commanders will easily replace the martyred Mustafa Badreddin.

Speaking at a ceremony in the honor of Badreddin in Tehran on Tuesday, Ahmad Vahidi stressed that Hezbollah is growing more powerful every day, Mehr reported.



Ejei appointed IRIB monitoring council chief

**TEHRAN** — Qolamhossein Mohseni Ejei on Wednesday was appointed as the chairman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Monitoring Council.

Each of the three branches of government (legislature, administration and judiciary) has two members in the council. The six members then choose one among them as the chairman.

Ejei, a senior judicial official, had been appointed as a member of the council by Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani, IRINN reported.



Iran, India to stage joint naval drill on Friday

**TEHRAN** — Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari announced on Wednesday that his forces are slated to hold a joint naval exercise with an Indian naval fleet on Friday.

Sayyari said the Iranian and Indian naval forces will hold the one-day joint drill in waters to the east of the Strait of Hormuz, Tasnim reported.



NAM stresses active partnership with African Union

**TEHRAN** — Iran's deputy ambassador to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on Tuesday, called for a strong cooperation with the African Union and other African organizations by NAM in order to ensure peace and security under the aegis of the UN.

Addressing a Security Council open debate on "African Peace and Security Architecture" in New York, Gholam Hossein Dehqani voiced NAM's support for continuing efforts to strengthen African peacekeeping capabilities, the IRIB reported.

He also emphasized the necessity for enhanced, effective partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in order to improve the planning, deployment and management of African peacekeeping operations.



Aref: I will not give up race for parliament speaker

**TEHRAN** — Mohammad Reza Aref, Tehran's top choice in parliamentary elections, has said he will not step aside from his race for the speakership in the next parliament.

Aref stressed that he will remain in the course of the competition for the same basic reasons he stepped aside from the presidential campaign in 2013, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

"We are prepared to cooperate on any other position other than the speaker," he said.

Aref added, "There is no governmental organization with which we are not in good terms."



SCO to study Iran's full membership after India, Pakistan: Chinese FM

**TEHRAN** — Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said the issue of Iran's permanent membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will be on the organization's agenda after India and Pakistan's accession.

"We fully endorse Iran's interest in this issue (of joining the SCO). At the moment, we should focus on the issue of the accession of India and Pakistan," Wang said at the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers held in Tashkent on Tuesday, Press TV reported.

He added, "I think, in this respect, the accession of Iran may be put on the agenda of the SCO in the future."

# New parliament to take on mission amid high hopes for change for the better

## News analysis

The new Iranian Majlis (Parliament) will be sworn in on Saturday amid hopes for a change for the better.

Iranians went to the polls on February 26 and the April runoff to decide who will present them in the 290-seat legislative body in a parade of democracy.

The election round was a contest between entrenched-in-power principlists pitting their popularity against reformist and moderate figures, who practically re-entered the political scene of the country after an eight-year hiatus.

The tug of war between the two opposing poles was felt the most in the capital Tehran where reformists outmaneuvered rivals, sweeping all thirty seats.

Whatsoever the parliamentary make-up, Iranians will expect a change of tack and this has been mainly influenced by the performance of the 9th parliament, particularly when it comes to the economic sector.

According to the former parliament speaker Ali Larijani, economic bills accounted for almost one third of all legislations ratified in the parliament.

During eight years of unrivalled domination over the body, MPs okayed passing, inter alia, subsidy reform plan and fuel rationing. Although the reforms were necessary, paving the way for a more efficient economy, MPs failed to monitor a proper implementation of the plans by the Ahmadinejad administration so as to make sure the plans would be implemented as depicted.

Moreover, unbridled inflation rates, high unemployment, lack of long-term



vision, and hasty implementation of macro plans are among other economic plagues believed by Iranians to be directly linked with what was happening all these years in the parliament.

To the list, one can add some parliamentarians' negative attitude to the nuclear deal Iran struck with the West though it was ratified at the end of the day.

While Iranians should learn to live with long-term consequences of the wrong decisions made, there is high hope for a much better performance now that their country is in the process of unshackling its economy from years of sanctions imposed led by the West.

In addition to all challenges inherited from the Ahmadinejad administration, the new parliament should act in more harmony with the incumbent government so as to find a way out of the economic stagnation which is stifling the country.

Moreover, with the government and parliament moving in unison, it would be less challenging to cope with the en-



vironmental crisis Iran is facing due to years of low precipitation and mismanagement. A more realistic confrontation with the issue will guarantee a greener Iran.

How successful the two will be in hashing out disputes over the above-cited issues hinges on, to a great extent, who will be the next parliament speaker. Two options are on the table.

One is the reformist Mohammad Reza Aref who secured the heaviest share of public backing in the metropolis of Tehran in the February parliamentary elections.

In his recent interviews, Aref has laid emphasis on seeking a "participatory approach" in the upcoming parliament, saying managing the Majlis is more than presiding over the legislative body.

The reformist heavyweight made the remarks in a recent hour-long interview with the Shargh daily in reply to a question on the strategy adopted by the figure and his parliamentary bloc known as "Hope" to cooperate with other parliamentary rivals.



The former vice president had also previously vowed to seek change of tack in the upcoming parliament, calling for more harmony between the upcoming parliament and government to address issues as unemployment, inflation, etc.

The Stanford-educated reformist stands a high chance of winning the seat of speakership and this can leave the Rouhani administration with more leeway to implement its economic reforms.

On the other side, there is the veteran Ali Larijani, already taking the helm of Majlis for two four-year terms (2008-2016), has shown to be a man of working out a "yes" out of numerous 'noes.'

He could do it once when it was not quite clear what would happen to the fate of the nuclear deal. Larijani has also been heralding the importance of prioritizing economic concerns.

We are only a couple of days from learning the next parliament speaker and Iranians will expect a different and strong parliament, when national interests and prosperity of the nation are at the fore.

## 'Arrogant powers, defeated in battlefield, yet not abandoning hegemonic nature'

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian armed forces chief of staff said on Tuesday that the arrogant powers have been defeated in the military war but they have not yet abandoned their hegemonic nature.

Major General Hassan Firouzabadi said these countries have resorted to other ploys, such as psychological warfare or secularization of people, to achieve their goals. But, he predicted, they will fail in this endeavor too.

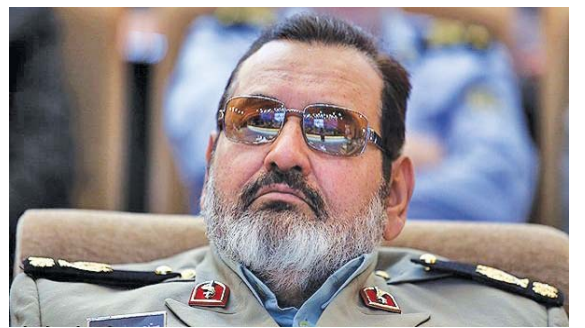
"The global arrogance seeks ways such as psychological operation, transformation of the system and secularization of the people and students to harm pure Islam,

but they will not reach their objectives," he said on the sidelines of a ceremony held to commemorate martyrdom of top Hezbollah commander Mustafa Badreddine.

He highlighted the importance of resistance against the arrogant powers and said that Iran "will not stop resistance" against global arrogant powers.

In the same ceremony, Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan said the crises in Iraq and Syria are a plot hatched by the U.S. and the Zionist regime of Israel.

He also said the behavior of terrorist groups have nothing to do with Islam.



## Iran condemns terrorist acts in Tartus, Jabaleh

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry censured on Wednesday the deadly suicide attacks in the Syrian cities of Tartus and Jabaleh and expressed sympathy with the families of the victims.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran calls on the international community to fulfill its legal and moral duties and responsibilities in countering this

evil and inhuman phenomenon," Foreign Ministry spokesman Jaber Ansari remarked.

Jaber Ansari described terrorism and extremism as a "dangerous threat" to the Middle East and international peace and security.

Suicide attacks by ISIL in cities of Tartus and Jableh on Monday killed and injured over 100 people.

## Terrorism has nothing to do with religion or ethnicity, Iran says

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — A senior official at the Iranian Supreme National Security Council said on Wednesday that terrorism has nothing to do with "religions, nations and ethnic groups".

Delivering a speech at the Chechnya security conference, Reza Seifollahi said there is no "military strategy" to the scourge of terrorism.

He said terrorism is an ideology

which grows in a climate of insecurity for which there is no military solution.

The security official also said that terrorism should not be divided into good one and bad one.

If some countries, which enjoy military, financial and political power, support terrorism and destabilize a country, other countries in the world will also be affected.

## U.S.: Watching India-Iran ties 'very closely'

The U.S. is "watching very closely" India's growing ties with Iran after it recently pledged 500 million dollars for developing the Chabahar port and will see if its legal parameters and requirements are being met, the Obama Administration has told lawmakers. As of now, there is no military or counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries that could be a cause of concern for the U.S., Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Nisha Desai Biswal told members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during a Congressional hearing. She said the U.S. is "watching very closely" India's relationship with Iran.

"We also track very closely what their economic engagement is and make sure they understand what we believe are legal parameters and requirements," Biswal

said. "With respect to the announcement in the Chabahar port, we have been very clear with the Indians on what we believe are the continuing restrictions on the activities with respect to Iran and what we have done," she said. She was responding to a question on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Iran visit from Senator Ben Cardin, ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday. Modi's visit, that saw the signing of a bilateral pact to develop the Chabahar port for which India will invest 500 million dollars, came months after the lifting of international sanctions on Iran following Tehran's historic nuclear deal with the Western powers over its atomic program.

(Source: The Indian Express)



## Larijani urges next parliament to prioritize economy

**1→** Larijani was reelected to the next parliament in the February elections from the shrine city of Qom. He is a serious candidate for the post of speaker in the new parliament which will start its work officially on Saturday.

"My view on future is positive and we are passing a difficult situation," he said.

Larijani also said that recession is a "serious" issue which should be addressed seriously.

Elsewhere, he said that the next parliament should make efforts to help establish "a calm political atmosphere" in the region.

He also said the February parliamentary elections bore the message that the people seek "calm" in the country, noting that problems in the country cannot be resolved in a tense atmosphere.

The Parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections were held simultaneously on February 26.

## New Turkish cabinet planning to step up relations with Iran

The new Turkish cabinet is planning to step up cooperation with Iran in various sectors of economy, according to a program document introduced by Prime Minister Binali Yildirim on Tuesday in the Turkish parliament.

"The government will work to step up relations with Iran in such sectors as trade, energy, transport and tourism," the document says.

Yildirim replaced Ahmed Davutoglu as new Turkish prime minister on



Sunday. President Tayyip Erdogan has approved the new cabinet headed by Yildirim. (Source: Sputnik)



# UN: Yemen deal close as dozen killed in Saudi airstrikes

At least a dozen civilians are killed in the House of Saud regime airstrikes in northern Yemen as the United Nations envoy said warring that parties are closer to agreement at peace talks in Kuwait.

"We are moving towards a general understanding that encompasses the expectations and visions of the parties," Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed said in a statement on Wednesday.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed was to brief the UN Security Council in a closed session later in the day on the progress made in the peace talks which began on April 21.

The apparent progress comes after the Saudi-backed side said on Monday that it stood ready to make concessions to Ansarullah (Houthi) movement and their allies.

The main sticking point in the talks has been the form of government to oversee a transition.

Ansarullah and its allies have demanded a unity government but the Saudi-backed side insists that former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi should take the reins.

The Saudi side has also demanded that Ansarullah withdraw from the capital and other territory which they have been controlling since 2014.

The Ansarullah movement and its allies have demanded the formation of a consensus transitional government before forging ahead with other issues.

Hadi is being propped up by the House of Saud regime and some of its regional allies, notably the United Arab



Emirates (UAE), which have deployed troops to Yemen amid airstrikes pounding the country on a daily basis.

On Wednesday, Saudi warplanes carried out fresh airstrikes on residential areas in the northern al-Jawf province, killing six people and wounding eight others.

Six other civilians, including children, were killed and four others injured in the southern province of Lahij in separate Saudi airstrikes.

Sources close to the Ansarullah delegation accused Saudi Arabia of violating the ceasefire.

The delegation met late on Tuesday with the ambassadors to Yemen of the United States, Britain and the European

Union and called for the formation of a "consensus executive authority" in Yemen.

Ansarullah spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam warned that if no fair solution is reached, the group will form the government in Sana'a.

"Yemenis are awaiting a fair solution and if it fails, anti-aggression national forces must fill the vacuum by forming a government to serve the people and confront challenges," Abdulsalam said on Twitter.

The AFP news agency quoted an unnamed Western diplomat as saying that the UN envoy has proposed a "National Salvation Government."

The proposed government "would

only replace the current government once Sana'a and key government institutions are not under the control of non-state actors," he said.

That means Hadi would function as the de facto president until Ansarullah movement leaves the capital.

The port city of Aden currently serves as Hadi's temporary capital which has turned into a hub for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) and other Takfiri groups.

On Monday, a car bombing claimed by ISIL killed at least 40 Hadi recruits and wounded 60 in Aden.

The Chatham House think tank warned on Wednesday that current UN-backed attempts to end Yemen's conflict are too simplistic.

In a hard-hitting report, it warned that any agreement struck would lead to the "big war" dissolving into a series of mini-conflicts and push the country toward a "chaos state."

The report said those most likely to gain from spiraling chaos in Yemen were terrorist groups including al-Qaeda militants and ISIL Takfiris which have gained a foothold amid Saudi airstrikes.

Al-Qaeda, it added, is already "one of the biggest winners" of the Saudi aggression against its southern neighbor.

The terrorists, it said, are "expanding territorially while continuing the process of rebranding itself as a local alternative to the Hadi government or the Houthis."

(Source: agencies)

## Lebanon marks 16th Liberation Day anniversary

Lebanon on Wednesday commemorated the 16th anniversary of the Israeli withdrawal from the country, known as Resistance and Liberation Day.

Israeli troops left most of south Lebanon on May 25, 2000, after 22 years of occupation. However, Israel still occupies a portion of the Shebaa Farms in the southeast.

"We salute the Resistance that freed Lebanon after 22 years of occupation following the international community's failure to enforce the execution of the Resolution 425 on Israel," Free Patriotic Movement founder Michel Aoun wrote on Twitter.

Aoun was referring to the United Nations Security Council Resolution adopted in 1978, five days after the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon, calling on Israel to withdraw its forces from the country.

He congratulated the Lebanese people on the occasion, saying: "We strongly appreciate the sacrifices that have been made, and are still being made by the Resistance and its people. We bow down in front of every drop of blood that has been shed, and is still being shed, for the liberation and the conservation of this land."

Kataeb Party head MP Sami Gemayel also applauded the country on the occasion on Twitter.

"The joy of the liberation will be complete with the forced return of the deportees," Gemayel said, referring to Lebanese who collaborated with the Israeli army and their families who fled the country during the Israeli withdrawal.

Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, whose party is credited with leading the resistance that force Israel to withdraw, will give a speech during a celebration in the Bekaa Valley village of Nabi Sheet.

Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV said the party leader talk about the capabilities and potential of the resistance against Israel and the continued defense of Lebanon. He also commented on the situation in Syria as well as internal issues, Al-Manar added.

"May 25 is a legend, a people's sacrifice, a resistance until (we attain) liberation and victory," Marada Movement Leader Sleiman Frangieh tweeted.

"History will remember Hasan Nasrallah and the resisters in letters of gold, and it will condemn all the rulers and the regimes that are conspiring today against the Resistance," Tawhid Party Chief Wiam Wahhab tweeted.

"On a day like this, the resistance freed Lebanon with the blood of its martyrs, the sweat of its people, and exposed the official Arab regime that had convinced us that Israel was invincible," he added.

Lebanese Democratic Party leader Talal Arslan congratulated the Lebanese people in a statement.

"This holiday belongs to all of us, and it cannot be limited within sectarian shackles for the sake of narrow-minded political and factional considerations," he said.

"This holiday belongs to every honorable Lebanese, regardless of his sect, because it represents Lebanon's



pride and victory over the injustice and arrogance of the Israeli occupation that was and still is the enemy of Lebanon and the whole Arab nation," he added.

Former Minister Faisal Karami also congratulated Lebanon.

"We proudly reflect upon the great victories that have been attained against the Israeli enemy," he said.

"However, with all the achievements and the sacrifices, the Israeli threat still exists on land, in the sea, and in the air. This danger cannot disappear without a united stance against Lebanon and the Arab world's enemy."

(Source: Daily Star)

## Afghan Taliban appoints new leader after Mansour's death

The Afghan Taliban confirmed on Wednesday that their Leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a United States drone strike last week and that they have appointed a successor — a scholar known for extremist views who is unlikely to back a peace process with Kabul.

The announcement came as a suicide bomber struck a minibus carrying court employees in the Afghan capital, killing at least 11 people, an official said. The Taliban promptly claimed responsibility for the attack.

In a statement sent to the media, the Taliban said their new leader is Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, one of Mansour's two deputies. The insurgent group said he was chosen at a meeting of Taliban leaders, which is believed to have taken place in Pakistan, but offered no other details.

Mansour was killed in Pakistan on Saturday when his vehicle was struck by a U.S. drone plane, an attack believed to be the first time a Taliban leader was killed in such a way inside Pakistani territory.

Pakistani authorities have been accused both by Kabul and the West of giving shelter and support to some Taliban leaders — an accusation that Islamabad denies. The insurgents have been fighting to overthrow the Kabul government since 2001, when their own regime was overthrown by the U.S. invasion.

The United States and the Afghan government have said that Mansour had been an obstacle to a peace process, which ground to a halt when he refused to participate in talks with the Afghan government earlier this year. Instead, he intensified the war in Afghanistan, now in its 15th year.

Mansour had officially led the Taliban since last summer, when the death of the movement's founder, the one-eyed Mullah Mohammad Omar became public. But he is believed to have run the movement in Mullah Omar's name for more than two years. The revelation of Mullah Omar's death and Mansour's deception led to widespread mistrust, with some senior Taliban leaders leaving the group to set up their own factions.

Some of these rivals fought Mansour's men for land, mostly in the opium poppy-growing southern Taliban heartland.

Senior Taliban figures have said Mansour's death could strengthen and unify the movement, as he was in some ways a divisive figure. The identity of his successor was expected to be an indication of the direction the insurgency would take, either toward peace or continued war.

Akhundzada is a religious scholar who served as the Taliban's chief justice before his appointment as a deputy to Mansour. He is known for issuing public statements justifying the existence of the extremist Taliban, their war against the Afghan government and the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan. His views are regarded as hawkish, and he could be expected to continue in the aggressive footsteps of Mansour, at least in the early days of his leadership.

He was close to Mullah Omar, who consulted with him on religious matters. A convincing orator, Akhundzada was born in Kandahar — the capital during the Taliban's 1996-2001 regime.

A member of the Noorzai tribe, he is said to be aged around 50 years, and comes from a line of religious scholars.



He leads a string of madrassas, or religious schools — figures in the Taliban say up to 10 — across Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province.

A former foreign minister under the Taliban, Mullah Mohammad Ghous, told The Associated Press that the choice of Akhundzada was "a very wise decision." Akhundzada was well respected among Taliban of all ranks, and could be a unifying force for the fractured movement, Ghous said.

But hopes that the new leader would be a unifying figure dimmed within hours of the announcement on Wednesday, with some dissident Taliban figures rejecting Akhundzada as leader.

A breakaway Taliban faction led by Mullah Mohammad Rasool, which has for months battled Mansour's men for control of drug smuggling routes in the south, said it would not accept the new leader for the same reason it rejected Mansour — Akhundzada was chosen by

the same small clique of leaders rather than by the wide rank and file.

"We will not accept him as a new leader until and unless all religious scholars and tribal elders sit together and appoint new leader," said the faction's spokesman, Mullah Abdul Manan Niazi, speaking of Akhundzada.

However, President Ashraf Ghani's office said the appointment brought the insurgents "yet another opportunity to end and renounce violence, lay down their arms, and resume a normal and peaceful life."

Ghani, who took office in 2014, assiduously courted Pakistan in an effort to bring the Taliban into a dialogue that would lead to peace talks. Mansour, however, refused, choosing instead to intensify the war once the international combat mission drew down to a training and support role in 2015.

Deputy presidential spokesman Zafar Hashemi said that if the Taliban decided against joining the peace process, "they will face the fate of their leadership."

Wednesday's Taliban statement also said two new deputies to Akhundzada have been appointed — both of whom had earlier been thought to be the main contenders for the top job.

One of them is Sirajuddin Haqqani, who was also one of Mansour's deputies and who leads the notorious Haqqani network — the faction behind some of the most ferocious attacks in Afghanistan since the war began in 2001. The other is the son of Mullah Omar, Mullah Yaqoub, who controls the Taliban military commissions for 15 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

(Source: AP)

## NEWS

### Iraqi troops advancing towards Fallujah from south: head of Anbar operations

Iraqi soldiers and allied volunteer fighters have pushed towards Fallujah from areas to the south as part of an operation to liberate the city from the grip of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group, says a commander.

Staff Major General Ismail al-Mahalawi, the head of the Anbar Operations Command, said on Wednesday that forces from Iraq's 8th Division, backed by tribal fighters, set out from the city of Amriyat al-Fallujah, south of Fallujah, and the al-Salam intersection to its southwest.

The offensive is being supported by air cover, Mahalawi added.

Early on Monday, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the start of the long-awaited major operation to retake Fallujah in the western Anbar Province. Since then, the Iraqi military and volunteer fighters have managed to recapture several areas near the embattled city.

About 100,000 civilians are estimated to be in Fallujah which, in January 2014, became the first major Iraqi city to be captured by ISIL terrorists.

#### ■ Ayatollah Sistani urges restraint in Fallujah raid

In another development on Wednesday, Iraq's senior Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urged restraint in the Fallujah battle, calling on the Iraqi forces to spare civilians trapped in the city.

The prominent Iraqi clergyman's representative, Sheikh Abdul Mahdi al-Karbalai, said in a statement that Ayatollah Sistani has reaffirmed his recommendations that moral principles be respected in the operation launched to liberate the city.

"Don't be extreme ... don't be treacherous. Don't kill an old man, nor a boy, nor a woman. Don't cut a tree unless you have to," he said, citing sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The operation to recapture Fallujah comes as aid agencies have expressed concern over the humanitarian situation in the city.

Gruesome violence has plagued the northern and western parts of Iraq ever since the ISIL terrorist group launched an offensive in Iraq two years ago.

Earlier this month, Iraq's government spokesman, Saad al-Hadithi, said the ISIL-controlled areas in the conflict-ridden country have significantly decreased to only 14 percent, compared to almost triple that number recorded two years ago.

(Source: Press TV)

### Arabs ready to normalize Israel ties: Blair

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair says if Israel agrees to a Saudi "peace" initiative, Arab states will be willing to normalize their relations with Tel Aviv.

"Provided the Israeli administration is ready to commit to a discussion around the Arab peace initiative... it would be possible to have some steps of normalization," the Israeli daily Haaretz quoted Blair as saying.

"With the new leadership in the region, today that is possible," he said, citing Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Last week, Sisi called on Israeli officials and the Palestinians to grasp what he termed a "real opportunity" for peace.

"A lot will depend on the response of the Israeli administration to President Sisi's initiative and to the Arab peace initiative, and to whatever steps the Israelis are ready to take," he added.

Israeli media reported on Friday that House of Saud regime and its allies have asked Israel to resume Middle East negotiations under new terms which include changes to Riyadh's "peace" initiative.

The kingdom, its Persian Gulf allies, Jordan and Egypt have been sending messages to Israel through various emissaries, including former British PM Tony Blair, the Israeli newspaper Arutz Sheva reported.

"They are expecting to receive from Israel a response and are also expecting Israel to make gestures toward the Palestinians" in the West Bank, the paper said.

The Saudi "peace" initiative, unveiled in 2002, offers to normalize ties with Israel by 22 Arab states in return for Tel Aviv's withdrawal from the occupied West Bank.

Tel Aviv has rejected the Saudi initiative due to the fact that it calls for Israel to accept the right of return for the Palestinians who were forced to flee their homes under the Israeli occupation.

Saudi Arabia and its allies are now prepared to discuss changes to the initiative in order to resume talks between Tel Aviv and the Palestinian Authority.

The daily Maariv revealed earlier this month that the Israeli regime would present a bill to the Knesset in the coming weeks, calling for the annexation of 60% of the West Bank.

According to the paper, preliminary talks have been held to annex Area C of the West Bank where more than 350,000 illegal Israeli settlers are based.

Nevertheless, there is a desire among the leadership of the Arab states in the region to change their attitude towards Israel and to start taking an active mediating role, Channel 10 reported, citing diplomatic sources.

(Source: agencies)





## Stocks rise on higher oil prices, Greek debt relief deal

Global stocks marched higher Wednesday as rising oil prices lifted shares of energy companies.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 68 points, or 0.4%, to 17774 shortly after the opening bell. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite rose 0.4%.

The Stoxx Europe 600 climbed 1.1% to its highest level this month, as shares of oil and gas companies gained 1.4%.

Technology and financial stocks led the S&P 500 to its biggest jump in more than two months on Tuesday.

"People are realizing that rates going up is not a negative for the longer term economy—it's a positive vote of confidence that things are going better than people hoped," said JJ Kinahan, chief strategist at TD Ameritrade.

That rally continued Wednesday, with banks and energy companies among the biggest gainers in Europe.

Oil prices got a lift from expectations that production disruptions would help reduce a supply glut and after industry group API reported a surprisingly large drawdown in U.S. crude supplies.

"We have a stabilizing oil price, and that is comforting to the very distressed sectors associated with energy," said Sandra Crowl, member of the investment committee at French asset manager Carmignac.

Also boosting shares, eurozone finance ministers and the International Monetary Fund reached a deal early Wednesday that clears the way for fresh loans for Greece and prevents the country from defaulting on big debt redemptions in July.

Greek government bond yields fell below 7% for the first time since November before retracing slightly. Yields in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Spain also fell. Yields fall as prices rise.

Analysts said the deal reduced the risk of a summer crisis, but fell short of a long term solution to the country's debt.

"The partial agreement in Greece is positive," said Ms. Crowl, but "markets will remain volatile because of a lack of a visibility both in growth and in political events."

Despite the recent gains, many investors aren't convinced they will see great returns this year in a sluggish global economy with uncertain monetary policy. Stocks have struggled for traction in recent weeks, with the S&P 500 locked in a tight trading range.

"We're going into a period of uncertainty," said Patrick George, global head of equities at HSBC.

"Big investors are sitting on the sidelines, waiting," he said, adding that international investors have been shy of investing in Europe because of uncertainty over what shape it will have after June 23, when the U.K. holds a referendum on membership in the European Union.

Earlier, Japan's Nikkei Stock Average added 1.6%, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index gained 2.7% and shares in Australia gained 1.5%, bolstered by the rise in oil prices and strong finish on Wall Street.

Shares in Shanghai ended slightly lower, however, after China guided the yuan to its weakest level against the dollar in over five years.

(Source: Wall Street Journal)

## France taps strategic fuel reserves as refinery strikes persist

France began releasing strategic fuel reserves amid strikes at refineries that caused nationwide shortages and clashes between police and protesters.

While panic buying by motorists drove demand to three times the normal level Tuesday, France has enough stocks even if the strikes persist for weeks, Transport Minister Alain Vidalies said on iTele. The problem isn't about supply but about delivery, he said.

Oil companies mobilized hundreds of trucks to ship diesel and gasoline around the country Tuesday as filling stations ran dry after all the nation's refineries experienced disruptions or outright shutdowns. By Wednesday Exxon Mobil Corp. reported that its Gravenchon plant was operating normally and able to transport fuel while elsewhere strikers have blocked refineries to try to bring shipments to a halt.

Workers are protesting against President Francois Hollande's plans to change labor laws to reduce overtime pay and make it easier to fire staff in some cases. While the government has watered down its proposals since first floating them in February, unions are calling for them to be scrapped altogether. The new law will not be withdrawn and the strikers will be met with a robust response from police, Prime Minister Manuel Valls said on Europe 1 radio Tuesday.

### Refineries halted

Total SA's Feyzin refinery near Lyon and its Normandy plant have stopped production, La Mede was working at a lower rate, and later this week the Grandpuits facility near Paris will come to a complete halt and Donges, close to Nantes, will shut down several units, according to a company statement.

Total, which operates five refineries in France, may reconsider a plan to spend 500 million euros (\$557 million) to upgrade the Donges facility as workers take the plant "hostage," Chief Executive Officer Patrick Pouyanne said Tuesday. He urged motorists not to rush to gas stations and create an "artificial" shortage.

Some 350 of Total SA's 2,200 gas stations ran out of fuel and 431 faced partial shortages as of Tuesday evening, the company said in a statement.

About one in five of the country's 12,200 stations were facing shortages Tuesday afternoon, little changed from a day earlier, the government said. The country has used three days of emergency reserves out of 115 days' worth of supply, according to Vidalies, the transport minister.

While Exxon Mobil Corp's Fos-sur-Mer refinery in southern France is still operating, fuel deliveries from the plant remained suspended, Catherine Brun, a company spokeswoman said Wednesday. Exxon's Gravenchon plant in northern France is working normally and shipments continue, she said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

# Austria keen to help Iran in green energy, water management

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Elsewhere in his remarks, the Austrian official said the trade level between Iran and Austria at this point is nice, but not enough. "I think we have big opportunities on both sides, so we are here to enforce these possibilities into potentials for both sides."

He also asserted that there is a big chance to develop tourism ties between the two countries.

■ **'Carinthia willing for long-term ties'**



"We are eager to have long-term cooperation and investment relations with Iran," said Jürgen Mandl, the president of

Carinthia Chamber of Commerce, in the meeting.

"Carinthia is a state focusing on exports and now that the sanctions are being lifted against Iran we are focusing on this country, although our ties were never cut during the sanctions," he noted.

He said that Iran is not their final target for exports, while they see the country also a hub for access to all countries of the region.

"Materializing all these objectives



depends on the finance, so it is important for us that Austrian banks will resume ties as soon as possible", the official further asserted.

■ **'Austria's rapid action required to remove banking barriers'**

Khansari, for his part, said that for creating and developing trade ties between the two countries, Austrian banks should take rapid action to remove the problems related to transfer of money between Iran and Austria.

While many European banks are still cautious to resume ties with Iran, two Austrian banks have already made relation with the country, the official highlighted.

He said five trade delegations have

visited Iran in the recent months and some fruitful negotiations have been conducted between the two sides.

"Now that the sanctions are being removed against Iran, we the both sides should think about bilateral long-term investments for strengthening our trade ties," Khansari asserted.

It is worth mentioning that at the end of the meeting, a memorandum of understanding on trade cooperation was signed between the chambers of commerce of Tehran and Carinthia.



Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Chairman Masoud Khansari (L) giving an Iranian handicraft to Christian Benger, the regional minister of Austrian state of Carinthia for economy, agriculture and tourism, in Tehran on Wednesday

## Preferential trade pact with Iran in a year

India and Iran have agreed to conclude within a year the preferential trade agreement (PTA), which is expected to boost bilateral trade and give a fillip to sagging exports.

"A preferential trade agreement with Iran will benefit Indian exports as tariffs in general are higher in Iran," Ajay Sahai, director-general of the Federation of Indian Export Organizations, said.

"We can expect a 25-50 percent cut on MFN (most favored nation) duty, but it will be a reciprocal gesture though our offer list will have products of our export interest and vice-versa."

The joint statement issued after the conclusion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Islamic nation said, "Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Modi agreed to strengthen the longstanding trade ties

between the two countries by, inter alia, stepping up the momentum of economic engagement through the early conclusion of a PTA, preferably within a year."

The two trading partners plan to reduce or eliminate duties on select products to boost trade and investments.

"The new sectors such as auto components, various types of steel, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewelry that have made

inroads into Iran during the sanction period can leverage further on tariff advantage gained through the PTA with Iran," Sahai said.

Analysts said the lifting of international sanctions on Iran provided an opportunity for the early conclusion of the pact, which should encompass trade, investment and services.

(Source: telegraphindia.com)

## Denmark's Haldor Topsoe to set up office in Tehran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Kim Braad Carlsen, the project manager of the Danish catalysis company Haldor Topsoe, revealed that the company plans to open its office in Tehran, Shana reported on Wednesday.

Carlsen who represented Haldor Topsoe in Iran's first conference of advanced European technology in process furnaces, said, "After implementing the nuclear deal, European countries have lifted all restrictions for the transfer of technology to Iran and there are not any more limitations in this regard."

"We are negotiating with Iranian companies to sign contracts for future cooperation with them, because it is a great opportunity and there is a lot of potential for cooperation



## India seeks rights to operate Iran oilfield

India has sought a discovered oilfield from Iran for raising crude oil imports from the Persian Gulf nation as part of efforts to widen economic and energy ties post lifting of sanctions.

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, has proposed to Iran that it be given rights to operate and produce crude oil from the discovered field to help move away from buyer-seller relationship to a strategic partnership, sources privy to the development said.

The oil produced from the field can then be shipped home, the IOC has said.

IOC had last fiscal imported 1.2 million tons of crude oil from Iran. In the fiscal year that began from April 1, it is looking to raise it by at least three-fold.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Iran was

aimed at boosting trade and commerce between the two countries. His trip came just months after lifting of international sanctions on Iran following Tehran's historic nuclear deal with the Western powers over its contentious atomic program.

Besides IOC, ONGC Videsh Ltd has also sought two discovered fields from the 16 fields that Iran is likely to put on auction shortly.

The fields sought by OVL, the overseas arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), is besides the Farzad-B offshore field for which it is in advanced talks to secure developmental rights.

OCV had in 2008 discovered the Farzad-B field in the Persian Gulf. The field holds 12.5 Trillion cubic feet of recoverable reserves.

Sources said Iran has so far not responded to the requests by the Indian firms.

It has, however, shown willingness to give Farzad-A, which holds 283 billion cubic meters of reserves.

The field besides holding smaller reserves is more challenging, OVL feels.

Sources said India may import as much as 20 million tons of crude oil from Iran in 2016-17 fiscal, up from about 11 million tons in the previous year.

This follows lifting of sanctions against Iran in January.

Till 2010-11, Iran was the second biggest supplier of crude oil to India after Saudi Arabia. Fresh U.S. sanctions in 2010 led to imports, which were 18.5 million tons in 2010-11, to fall to 11 million tons. Iraq is now the second biggest supplier of oil to India.

with Iranian companies," he added.

The manager further noted, "Iranian companies are very keen to utilize advanced knowledge and technologies of Europe and we see no limitation for providing them."

Carlsen also said that there may still be issues regarding the banking relations with the country but Europe faces no restriction in the field of technology transfer to Iran.

Iran's first conference of advanced European technology in process furnaces attended by petrochemical industry entrepreneurs and representatives of renowned European companies was held on Tuesday in Tehran with the aim of familiarizing the Iranian participants with the Europe's new technologies and knowledge in oil-gas industry.

NEWS IN BRIEF



**French tax investigators swoop on Google's Paris offices**

French police and prosecutors swooped on Google's Paris offices on Tuesday, intensifying a tax-fraud probe amid accusations across Europe that the Internet giant fails to pay its fair share.



**Toyota hails a ride with Uber**

Carmakers Toyota and Volkswagen have struck separate partnerships with rideshare companies Uber and Gett.



**Huawei sues Samsung over patents**

Huawei is suing its tech rival Samsung over claims that its patents have been infringed.



# Some smart travel hacks you should know

Over the years we've lived and learned from our own time spent on the road. We've chatted up fellow travel nuts, and we've done plenty of research to find the most clever, creative, and efficient time-saving and stress-reducing hacks every traveler should know—and we compiled them all into this handy list. We've included some obvious (yet oft-forgotten) tips, as well as some clever beat-the-system hacks, too.

From the moment you book a ticket or tour till you're unpacking your souvenirs, these 20 time-saving travel hacks will help to streamline your trips, ease some headaches, and make sure you're spending as much time as possible in blissed-out vacation mode.

## ■ Pack light (and try not to check a bag)

This might honestly be one of the best time saving hacks out there—and for some, one of the hardest to accomplish. But take our word for it: Most people overpack. There are tons of guides on how to pack light by either rolling clothes military style, using mix-and-match basics, bringing lightweight fabrics, and paring down on toiletries, so look and learn.

If you can avoid checking a bag, you'll not only be able to bypass all those other guys who have to wait forever for their luggage to deplane, but you'll fly through customs, be able to grab a cab before the line gets out of control, and generally move around more swiftly throughout your entire trip. Plus, thinning out your suitcase pads your budget with the money saved on checked baggage fees.

## ■ Email yourself a copy of your itinerary, ID documents

The last thing you want to happen on a trip is for your stuff to get stolen. While your clothes, camera, and money are all high-priority items, the top of the list is your identity. Good luck trying to get much of the other things replaced or recovered without proper ID!

So first things first, email yourself a copy of your passport, driver's license, and any documents with reservation numbers on them so at least you know you're covered in a bag snatching scenario. It'll save you a lot of time and massive headaches if you can prove you are who you say you are, and you know when and where you need to be.

## ■ Use ATM and credit cards instead of exchanging money

Let's settle this once and for all: 99 percent of the time your bank will have the best possible exchange rate. So stop wasting time and money locating and exchanging bills at those currency exchanges, or paying in your home currency at those all-too-happy independent vendors.

Grab money—in the local currency—from ATMs, or pay with a credit card to save time—and your hard earned cash. But beware: International transaction fees can definitely add up, so it's wise to grab a travel-friendly credit card that doesn't



add them. Certain Charles Schwab checking accounts refund all your ATM fees, at home and abroad.

## ■ Mix some quick-dry clothes into your wardrobe

Quick-dry clothes are the jam. Why waste money on expensive hotel laundry services or spend time waiting for a shirt to dry when you can just wash whatever you want to wear at the end of the day and rest assured when you wake up it'll be so fresh and so clean (clean)—and dry?! Even if it's just a few basic items, packing in some quick-dry wardrobe pieces, including underwear, can save you oodles of time and suitcase space.

## ■ Put all of your electrical items in an old toiletry bag

Don't waste anymore time fishing around your bag for your electronics and chargers. Throw them all into a water-resistant, zippered toiletry bag, making them easy to find, easy to decipher, and safe from spills. We've been known to throw our cell phone chargers, iPod chargers, camera batteries, SD cards, and anything else you'd rather not go on a search for or replace if there's a leak (or rainstorm).

## ■ Stuff some plastic grocery bags into your suitcase

Pack a few extra plastic grocery bags in with your stuff. This ole trick is super simple and comes in handy often. Don't want to wait for that wet suit to dry, or have the time to clean off those sandy sneakers? Throw them in a bag! We also love using plastic bags to cover our cameras and phones when we are caught in an unexpected downpour, and they're great as on-the-go laundry bags so you don't spend time sifting through what's clean and what's...not.

## ■ Set up Google maps to work offline

Such a time-saver, this one! If you don't have internet while abroad, or you're thinking about getting it just to use

for navigation (but don't want to spend the cash)—fret no more. While you've still got connection, pull up a map of where you'll need to navigate and type "OK maps" into the search box. This saves the screen for offline use.

You can also drop pins or mark specific places of interest since you won't be able to search for them offline. For extra security, you can even take several screen shots of specific areas at different zoom lengths. This should save tons of time getting from point A to point Z.

## ■ Use a currency convertor app on your phone

Install a currency convertor app like XE Currency Exchange on your phone. These not only save time from doing mental math (that stuff's just for elementary school), but can end up saving you from getting ripped off (since mental math is just for elementary school and maybe isn't your strong suit).

Even if you don't have data on your phone, most apps will work off of the conversion rates from the last sync, so you'll at least be in the right ballpark. Tip: If you are going to bargain for an item, plug in what the most amount of money you're willing to spend on the item is so you have a stronger bargaining stance from the get-go.

## ■ Pack a small first-aid kit

Depending where you are traveling, you can save a lot of time and pain by packing a small DIY first-aid kit. At minimum, throw some aspirin and/or Tylenol, cotton swabs, regular band-aids, a little tube of anti-bacterial cream, and maybe some chewable stomach antacids for good measure into a ziploc bag or small sunglasses case and you should be set.

These basics can be hard to find (or hard to mime if you don't speak the language), and having a personal on-hand stash will make you feel prepared.

## ■ Compartmentalize your suitcase with collapsible cloth boxes

After a few days or hotel changes, chances are it looks like a tornado hit inside your luggage. Solution? Get some small collapsible cloth boxes from places like Target or Bed Bath and Beyond and you've got an easy-peasy compartmentalized system inside your suitcase! A box each for toiletries, socks, underwear, bras, shorts and pants, shirts—you name it, there can be a spot for it.

The best are the adjustable ones so you can change the sizes of the boxes on the go to suit your needs and allow for a "dirty laundry" compartment.

## ■ Create an email folder for your trip

This one may seem like a no-brainer, but again, you'd be surprised how easy it is to overlook. Organizing a trip can be a long process, particularly if you're a down-to-every-last-detail planner. Create a folder or label in your email for your trips and send every confirmation, itinerary, receipt, and document that corresponds to your trip its way.

Heck, you can even take a screenshot of each email on your phone. This way you've got easy access to confirmation numbers, record locators, frequent flyer numbers, names, and addresses—all in one place so you don't have to spend time searching through your inbox when it's go time.

## ■ Learn some key phrases

Nothing speeds things up in a foreign country like speaking the language—or at least a peu of it. We recommend packing a small phrasebook in your bag so you don't have to memorize a bunch of random phrases, but if you can't find the space, just knowing a few simple phrases from "please" and "thank you," to counting, to "where is..." with a few essentials like "bathroom," "hotel," "restaurant," and/or "hospital" can save time, and is often appreciated.

(Sourc: Smarter Travel)

## TRAVELOGUE

### Palangan, northwestern gem of Iran

By Edalat Abedini

Blogger and adevnturer

Iran is home to variety of villages, which fascinates tourists who travel the country in different seasons with different purposes.

Palangan, one of most picturesque and beautiful villages of the country, is located in northwestern Iran and is 47 km away from kamyaran, Kordestan Province.

It spreads over both sides of a »tangivar«valley, in middle of a high mountain, which names shahoo.

This village, which is one of main tourism target villages in Kordestan, is unique for its fantastic architecture and its beautiful springs, waterfalls and ancient castle next to the village over a mountain.

The area was one of the most important regions of Kord-estan region during Seljuq dynasty (11st and 12nd century).



A little girl in traditional dress poses for a photo at Palangan village. (Photo: Edalat Abedini)

All of the houses in the village are made of stone in a steep gorge, hence the roof of one house is the courtyards of the upper house.

There is also a river in Palangan, which split it in two parts and flows into the Sirwan River.

The kind and welcoming residences wear Kurdish traditional dresses and speak Kordish.

There are some homestay accommodations for those who want to sojourn in the village and some tourists from other countries come here and stay for a long time in this beautiful region. Several Iranians also go on a picnic in week-ends in this area. kalaneh, kalivash, dolmeh, and grilled fish are amongst the traditional cuisines of Palangan.

Every year, Palangan hosts to a traditional festival one month before the Iranian Nowruz (the Iranian New Year, which falls on March 21). During the event, the locals wear traditional and colorful clothes. Young men and women take light torch and walk on high and connected rooftops performing traditional dance and music.

To get this village, you can take a taxi in kamyaran, a city located between sanandaj and Kermanshah.

## Terror attacks, air crashes weaken appetite for European travel

A spate of terror attacks and airliner disasters across Europe and its periphery is starting to catch up with the region's travel industry.

Tourism officials and airline executives typically brace for a sudden drop in flight and hotel bookings after a terror-related incident or headline-grabbing aircraft accident. Those booking typically rebound quickly, though, often in just a matter of weeks.

This time, however, things were starting to look different even before EgyptAir Flight 804 disappeared from the radar Thursday and plunged into the Mediterranean Sea with 66 people aboard. Each time bookings seemed poised to start ticking back up, another deadly incident struck, extending the dismal streak.

"We have seen more external factors affecting us than we have seen at any other time," Carolyn McCall, chief executive of British budget airline easyJet PLC, said this month, just days before Flight 804 went down.

Michael O'Leary, CEO of Ryanair Holdings PLC, Europe's biggest budget carrier, said Monday that the pace of bookings—an early sign of passenger sentiment—again started slowing after the EgyptAir tragedy. He didn't provide figures.

Ryanair reported higher profit for its latest fiscal year, but warned that recent terror attacks could drive down ticket prices more generally across Europe. "If people have a feeling this is terrorist-related, then we probably will see a kind of softening of demand," said Neil Sorahan, the airline's chief financial officer.

The pressure on bookings adds to the headwinds facing Europe's airlines. Several carriers have put new planes in service, increasing the number of seats available, and strikes in Germany, France and Belgium have disrupted air travel.

Last year, Russian and British airlines suspended flights to the Egyptian beach resort town of Sharm El Sheikh after a Russian jetliner with 224 people aboard went down on Oct. 31. Russian and Western investigators believe the plane was the target of a terrorist bombing, and an Islamic State affiliate in Egypt has claimed responsibility for the crash.

The crash was followed by the terrorist attacks across Paris in November that left 130 dead. Airlines in the U.S. and Europe reported a slump in demand, but executives predicted things would eventually return to normal.

(Source: Wall Street Journal)

## PICTURE OF THE DAY

by Mehr/Amir Ali Razzaqi



The Great Wall of Gorgan is a series of ancient defensive fortifications located near city of Gorgan. It is at the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea

## literary travel quote: Packing up!

"Packing up. The nagging worry of departure. Lost keys, unwritten labels, tissue paper lying on the floor. I hate it all. Even now, when I have done so much of it, when I live, as the saying goes, in my boxes. Even to-day, when shutting drawers and flinging wide a hotel wardrobe, or the impersonal shelves of a furnished villa, is a methodical matter of routine, I am aware of sadness, of a sense of loss. Here, I say, we have lived, we have been happy. This has been ours, however brief the time. Though two nights only have been spent beneath a roof, yet we leave something of ourselves behind.

Nothing material, not a hair-pin on a dressing-table, not an empty bottle of aspirin tablets, not a handkerchief beneath a pillow, but something indefinable, a moment of our lives, a thought, a mood. This house sheltered us, we spoke, we loved within those walls. That was yesterday. To-day we pass on, we see it no more, and we are different, changed in some infinitesimal way. We can never be quite the same again."

\*Daphne du Maurier, "Rebecca"



# Moving on in Vietnam, but remembering its lessons

## COMMENT



John Kerry



John McCain



Bob Kerrey

As United States President Barack Obama visits Vietnam, we are struck by the fact that most citizens of both countries have no living memory of a conflict that claimed the lives of more than 58,000 Americans and upwards of a million Vietnamese.

As Americans who fought in that war, we are frequently asked about its lessons. There are few easy answers, in part because every conflict is unique and because we have learnt that attempts to

apply past lessons to new crises sometimes do more harm than good. But a few things are clear.

The first is not personal to us, but a principle that applies to all who wear the uniform: We must never again confuse a war with the warriors. American veterans deserve our deepest respect, gratitude and support whenever and wherever they serve.

The second lesson is that our leaders need to be honest with Congress and the American people about the plans, goals and strategy

when the lives of our fighting men and women are put at risk. (The mission of the first American combat troops deployed to Vietnam was described as "flood relief".)

The third is to exercise humility in assuming knowledge about foreign cultures. During the war in South-east Asia, neither America's allies nor its adversaries acted in accordance with its expectations.

The fourth and final lesson of the Vietnam conflict is playing out before our eyes: It is that with sufficient effort and will,

seemingly unbridgeable differences can be reconciled. The fact that Obama is the third consecutive American president to visit Vietnam is proof that old enemies can become new partners.

### ■ Normal diplomatic relations

As veterans who were fortunate to serve in public office, we are proud of the contributions we made to the resumption of normal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.

→9

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# On the agenda but off guest list, China eyes G7 in Japan

World leaders meet in Japan this week for talks that will encompass the slowing Chinese economy and China's reclamation of land in the disputed South China Sea -- without any representatives from Asia's largest economy at the table.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will host U.S. President Barack Obama and other Group of Seven leaders from Thursday at a secluded resort on Kashiko Island, 300 kilometers (190 miles) southwest of Tokyo.

The meeting is being held against a backdrop of slowing growth as China's engine cools, with a debate among major developed nations on how much -- or whether -- governments should take fiscal action to boost their economies. It also comes before an international court ruling on a case brought by the Philippines over territory in the South China Sea, which could affect China's behavior in waters through which more than \$5 trillion of trade passes each year.

China reacted with anger to an April statement by G7 foreign ministers expressing opposition to any "intimidating, coercive or provocative" actions in the East China Sea and South China Sea, and calling on all parties to act in accordance with international law. That's even as the statement did not mention the country by name.

A similar declaration by the leaders this week would further irritate China, a key trading partner for all the G7 members.

## Other participants

As host to countries that share the values of "freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights," Japan plans to lead the world on the path of peace and prosperity, according to documents distributed to reporters by the foreign ministry ahead of the G7 summit. The documents specify that the "Asia-Pacific situation" and China's economic slowdown will be on the agenda.

Japan has invited the heads of several non G7 nations to come to the country during the summit, for sideline chats. That includes the leaders of Vietnam and Indonesia, plus Laos, which this year holds the rotating chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and thus has some sway over the wording of any Asean statements on the South China Sea. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are also on the list.

## Steel glut

On the economic front, China could come in for fresh criticism amid a global steel glut. Several European governments, including the UK, have repeatedly



called on China to reduce the amount of steel it produces in a bid to help the industry. The weakening of the Chinese currency could also be a topic of discussion.

Any perception that Japan is spearheading a rebuke of China would be risky for ties, according to Noriyuki Kawamura, a professor at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. After inheriting a relationship in its worst state in decades, Abe has met President Xi Jinping twice since he took office in 2012. But attempts to re-start what were once regular high-level talks have been stymied by bickering over the territorial matters.

"China will find it extremely unpleasant if Japan takes the lead and begins a debate critical of China," said Kawamura. "Relations between Japan and China had just

**Any G7 efforts to tackle problems relating to China could prompt China to dismiss the G7 as an anachronism for excluding the world's second largest economy.**

begun to improve from last year, and this would have a negative effect."

## Doesn't help

China and Japan had two-way trade of \$344 billion in 2014, and China is Japan's biggest trading partner.

Song Guoyou, deputy director of the Center for American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, said any G7 efforts to tackle problems relating to China in its absence would be counterproductive.

"It doesn't help the situation, as all these issues can only be solved after more consultations with China," said Song. "China today won't bow to this kind of political and diplomatic pressure by other nations, and such actions can only generate suspicion and make relations even more antagonistic."

Any criticism could prompt China to dismiss the G7 as an anachronism for excluding the world's second largest economy. While the grouping was originally founded to deal with economic issues, its remit has spread. China is set to host the broader G20 summit in September.

"China sees the G7 as a relic of the 20th century," said Kawamura. "It's the G20 that actually makes a difference in international issues now. That's how they see it."

(Source: Bloomberg)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Euro zone hails 'breakthrough' with Greece, IMF debt deal

The euro zone gave Greece its firmest offer yet of debt relief in what finance ministers called a breakthrough deal that won a provisional commitment from the IMF to return to taking part in the bailout for Athens, heartening investors.

After talks that lasted into the small hours of Wednesday, Euro group finance ministers gave a nod to releasing 10.3 billion euros (\$11.5 billion) in new funds for Greece in recognition of painful fiscal reforms pushed through by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras's leftist-led coalition, subject to some final technical tweaks.

But a bigger step forward was a deal under which the euro zone agreed to offer Athens debt relief in 2018 if that is necessary to meet agreed criteria on its payments burden. In the meantime, the currency area's rescue fund was given approval to take steps to smooth out Greece's debt service path.

However, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble avoided any immediate commitment to rescheduling Greek debt that would have required him to secure approval from a skeptical parliament in Berlin before a general election next year.

(Source: Reuters)

### Global watchdog says shadow-banking supervision too patchy

Regulators have yet to get a firm handle on the world's \$35 trillion shadow banking sector with supervision and data gathering still too patchy for spotting risks properly, the global Financial Stability Board said on Wednesday.

Banks face tougher rules since the 2007-09 financial crisis, prompting a shift in risks to shadow banking like repurchase agreements, securitization or pooling of debt, money market funds and securities lending by asset managers.

Policymakers now call the sector market-based financing that can offer alternative funding for the economy, but are still mindful of risks after securitization helped sow the seeds of the financial crisis.

Shadow banking usually refers to nonbanking firms carrying out services similar to those typically offered by banks.

They are better supervised than in the past but the FSB, which coordinates regulation for the Group of 20 economies (G20), said there are still gaps, with better quality data and improved sharing of data still needed to assess risks.

(Source: Reuters)

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- Revives the eyes
- Cuts cancer

## Solar Impulse plane lands in Dayton from Oklahoma

A solar-powered plane landed in Dayton, Ohio on the latest leg of a record-breaking trip to circle the globe without consuming a drop of fuel.

Solar Impulse 2, piloted by Swiss businessman Andre Borschberg, arrived at 09:56 PM. (0156 GMT Sunday) at Dayton International Airport after a flight from Tulsa, Oklahoma that lasted a 16 hours and 34 minutes, a live video feed showed.

"Amazing to have landed in #Dayton after being in the sky for 17 hours!" Borschberg tweeted.

The slow-moving, single-seat plane with the wingspan of a Boeing 747 cuts a flimsy figure, but it has traversed much of the globe in stages since taking off March 9, 2015 from Abu Dhabi.

The aircraft -- clad in thousands of solar cells, the sole source of energy for the flight -- reached its destination more than an hour ahead of schedule. (Source: AFP)

## Disturbing figures of MS in Iran

**TT MEDICAL** TEHRAN — Iran stands first in the rise of Multiple Sclerosis among other states in the Middle East, the vice president of the Iranian MS Society reported on Monday.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a complex neurological disorder most likely caused by gene-environment interactions.

On the occasion of World MS Day, May 25, Mohammad-Ali Sahraeian, told IRNA based on the latest statistics, 65,000 to 70,000 Iranians are suffering from MS, equivalent to affecting 115 people out of every 100 thousand.

"The disease is more prevalent this year compared to last year."

Isfahan province has the highest incidence of MS, while Sistan-Balouchestan province holds the lowest, he further said.

According to some reports, Sahraeian explained, in 2008 in Tehran, out of every 100 thousand residents, 50 were affected, while the number in 2001 was 73, in 2014 came to 101 and in 2015 reached 115, displaying a rising trend of the disease.

Sahraeian, who is also a professor at the University of Tehran, said 80 percent

# MS

## Multiple Sclerosis

of MS population is between the ages of 18-50, adding that children also get affected by the disease but not at the rate adults do.

There have been numerous theories and extensive debates on the causative mechanisms of MS.

Viral cause is still considered as a possible hypothesis. The western lifestyle that is being duplicated by the youth in the region these days may be related with MS as well if the viral cause is to be considered. Environmental factors such as different types of pollutions in this

vulnerable region (which has undergone several major wars in the past decade) may also play a role. The stress caused by the unstable geopolitical situation in the region may also trigger an earlier age of onset.

In children, the symptoms of MS pretty much resemble those in adults, therefore, families should be aware of warning signs of the disease, and take their children immediately to neurologists.

The professor listed the early symptoms of the disease as: blurred or double vision, thinking problems, clumsiness or a lack of coordination, loss of balance, numbness, and tingling sensation, advised all to take these symptoms seriously.

Good nutrition and consumption of healthy food can be effective in disease prevention, he said.

Overall, physicians recommend people that they avoid greasy fast food and instead substitute fruit and vegetables for it.

Although there is no cure for multiple sclerosis, physical therapy and medications can help with symptoms and slow disease progression.

## Scientists unravel clues how some birds become red

Where do some birds get their vibrant red colors? New research identified a genetic enzyme in birds that converts yellow pigments from their food into red pigments applied to their bills, feathers, and skin. The color red is very important for birds, playing an active role in mating, protection, and representation of genetic quality.

Two independent studies published in Current Biology each indicate the same gene is responsible for red pigmentation in birds. One of the studies -- carried out by Ricardo Lopes, an evolutionary biologist at Portugal's Universidade do Porto; James Johnson, biochemist Ph.D. candidate at Auburn University; and Matthew Toomey, a postdoctoral biologist at Washington University School of Medicine -- compared domesticated yellow and red factor canaries.

Bred nearly a century ago, red factor canaries are a cross between Serinus canaria, domesticated yellow canaries, and Spinus cucullata, wild red siskins.



"We discovered a gene that codes for an enzyme that enables this yellow-to-red conversion in birds," said the Universidade do Porto's Miguel Carneiro, who co-authored the study, which investigated the source of the "red factor" in canaries.

### ■ Dietary pigments

To "produce red feathers, birds convert yellow dietary pigments known as carotenoids into red pigments and

then deposit them in the feathers." Their study found CYP2J19, a cytochrome P450 enzyme on chromosome 8, to be responsible for red pigmentation.

The other study explored the genetics of domesticated wild-type and yellow-beaked zebra finches. Two groups carried out the study: one under the direction of Nicholas Mundy, evolutionary geneticist in the department of zoology at the University of Cambridge, and the other led by Jessica Stapley, evolutionary biologist in the department of animal and plant sciences at the University of Sheffield. The two research groups studied the genes of Taeniopygia guttata, domesticated zebra finches.

Birds such as zebra finches get carotenoids, or yellow pigments, from their food: seeds, in the case of the zebra finch, and insects for other bird species. Before the study, it had already been established that they convert carotenoids into ketocarotenoids, red pigments, but the process remained ambiguous.

(Source: The CSM)

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6→ The process of restoring relations was arduous and required full cooperation by Hanoi in developing information about Americans missing or unaccounted for from the conflict - an effort that continues today. But we have reached the point, more than 20 years after normalization, where our agenda with Vietnam is forward-looking and wide-ranging. Obama's discussions with the Vietnamese will cover issues ranging from security cooperation to trade and investment to education, as well as from the environment to freedom of religion to human rights.

This wider agenda reflects changes to the relationship that are well under way. Twenty years ago, there were fewer than 60,000 American visitors to Vietnam annually. Today, there are nearly half a million.

Twenty years ago, the U.S.' bilateral trade in goods with Vietnam was only US\$450 million. Today, it is 100 times that. Twenty years ago, there were fewer than 1,000 Vietnamese students in the U.S. Today, there are nearly 19,000.

More remarkably, the Vietnamese Politburo includes two people who earned graduate degrees in the U.S. while on Fulbright scholarships. It is appropriate, therefore, that this week a new institution of higher learning will open in Ho Chi Minh City: Fulbright University Vietnam. One of us, Bob Kerrey, is proud to serve as chairman of the university's board.

Nearly half a century ago, when we

## Moving on in Vietnam, but remembering its lessons



were serving in Vietnam, we would never have imagined that our country would one day work with the government in Hanoi to help save the Mekong Delta, by helping to create an initiative to manage its ecosystem and cope with the effects of climate change. We could never have imagined that the two countries would be partners in a landmark trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is intended to raise labor and environmental standards while expanding prosperity in the

U.S. and all along the Pacific Rim.

It would have been even harder to imagine that the U.S. and Vietnam would be cooperating on security issues. And yet the U.S. has helped establish a new training center for the People's Army of Vietnam on the outskirts of Hanoi, where young Vietnamese will prepare for service in United Nations-sponsored peace-keeping missions.

### ■ Both militaries in contact

The U.S. and Vietnamese militaries are in frequent contact and our diplomats

consult regularly about the controversy surrounding competing maritime claims in the South China Sea.

The U.S. government does not take sides on the legal merits of these claims, but we believe strongly that they should be settled peacefully and in accordance with international law and not unilaterally by any country seeking to assert hegemony over its neighbors.

Of course, the U.S. and Vietnam have different political systems and different approaches to some issues. But human rights are universal and we have made clear to the leaders in Hanoi our strong belief that Vietnam will reach its full potential only if and when its people have the right to express themselves freely in the arenas of politics, labor, the media and religion. In our visits to Vietnam, we have been impressed by the eagerness of its citizens to take advantage of technology and to compete in the global labor market. We are convinced that the government in Vietnam has nothing to lose, and much to gain, by trusting its citizens.

Looking to the future, we know that mutual interests, above all else, will drive the U.S. partnership with Vietnam. But it is strengthened, as well, by the natural affinities between the two societies. These include family ties, a tendency towards optimism, a fierce desire for freedom and independence, and a hard-earned appreciation that peace is far, far preferable to war. (Source: *straitstimes.com*)

## Professor: U.S. missile defense shield in Romania 'will have little effect on Iranian security'

1→ However, the West saw the collapse of the Soviet Union as a victory by the West and treated Russia, which had come to its knees facing severe economic and political problems, not as an equal but as a vanquished foe. Had Russia been incorporated into Europe, as many East European and Baltic countries were, the world could have experienced a long period of peace and stability with a big drop in military expenditure by both sides.

One can blame both sides for renewed hostilities. The West accuses Russia and particularly President Vladimir Putin of wishing to reinstate the former Soviet zone of influence, while Russia blames the West of expansionism and a desire to encircle Russia with NATO bases. The Russian involvement in Georgia to prevent it from joining NATO, the coup in Ukraine supported by the West, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and Russian military involvement in the civil war in Syria have intensified hostility between the West and Russia.

In order to deter Russia from encroaching into her former satellites, the West has set up a chain of bases in those countries, and the missile defense shield is a part of those measures. Initially, the Americans maintained that the missile defense system was aimed at preventing Iranian nuclear weapons from reaching the West. Since

signing the JCPOA agreement with Iran, the West can't use that excuse any longer, and Russia sees the missile defense shield as a major threat that will undermine her deterrence.

Rightly or wrongly, many Russians believe that Russia is vulnerable to a sudden Western attack that could destroy most of Russian nuclear warheads. If the West also builds a missile defense shield against Russian retaliation, the nuclear deterrence, or the concept of MAD (mutual assured destruction), would lose its value and Russia would have no option but to surrender to Western demands. This may be a form of paranoia, but in politics perception plays a major role.

Recently, the United States switched on the \$800 mil-

**“The only way that the current situation can impact Iran is as the result of the hostility between Russia and the West, which will create a less stable situation in the region and the world.”**

lion missile shield ironically at a Soviet-era base in Romania, again saying that it was aimed at the so-called rogue states, but speaking to his top military officers, President Putin said: “This is not a defense system. This is part of U.S. nuclear strategic potential brought onto a periphery. In this case, Eastern Europe is such periphery.” He went on to say: “Until now, those taking such decisions have lived in calm, fairly well-off and in safety. Now, as these elements of ballistic missile defense are deployed, we are forced to think how to neutralize emerging threats to the Russian Federation.” All this sounds very ominous.

### ■ What will be the impact of the defense shield on Iranian security?

A: In my view, it will have little effect on Iranian security. Even in the past, Iran's role in the defense shield was mainly used for propaganda purposes because Iran did not possess nuclear weapons or intercontinental ballistic missiles. The only way that the current situation can impact Iran is as the result of the hostility between Russia and the West, which will create a less stable situation in the region and the world. It is in Iran's best interests to remain impartial in this rivalry and maintain good relations with both sides.

(See the full story on the Tehran Times website)

## Largest intl. brokerage network system belongs to Parsian Bank

TEHRAN TIMES **ECONOMY** Currently, Parsian Bank has the largest international brokerage network system among other Iranian banks.

Intl. Affairs Manager of Parsian Bank Alaei announced the above statement and said: “The bank almost covers all European countries in the field of opening Letters of Credit (L/Cs) and drafts.”

Under the current circumstances that almost all sanctions on Iran have been lifted, some banks in the country yet carry out their banking transactions through

Parsian Bank, he maintained.

Turning to the pioneering role of Parsian Bank in creating brokerage relations with various banks in Asia, Europe and world, he said: “Global financial messaging system dubbed SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) had been set up since establishment of the bank i.e. before sanctions period, so that the bank has not thus far faced any problem in this regard.”

Despite problems facing the country in sanctions period, the bank managed

to revive brokerage relations and focused on new brokerage system, he said, adding: “After initial stage of landmark nuclear deal linked between Iran and P5+1 in last year, the bank managed to send over 400 SWIFT messages to different banks worldwide in order to revive and intensify brokerage relationship.”

To date, Parsian Bank has presently set up SWIFT and brokerage relationship with 50 countries in world and also 230 banks, he observed.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the close cooperation of the

bank with Italian Export Credit Agency (SACE) and said: “Parsian Bank has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Italy's SACE in order to take advantage of services of the Agency for covering Letters of Credit (L/Cs) and financing projects as introduced by the bank.”

In the end, he said that Parsian Bank has 53 active accounts in countries worldwide including Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, UK and Turkey.

## Tehran to host IRAN SME EXPORTERS Conference today

TEHRAN TIMES **ECONOMY** The 2nd Iran SME Exporters Conference (conf.zoodel.com), suitable for small and medium-sized enterprises, will be held in Tehran in the presence of responsible officials, experts, traders, merchants, businesspersons and representatives of more than 500 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the aim of introducing Iran and its potentials as export hub in the region. New export markets and Iran's high potentials for exporting products to Turkey will be introduced in the Conference.

The first edition of the Conference was held by ZOODEL Company on Feb. 5, 2016 and presently, the company is honored to hold the 2nd edition of Iran SME Exporters Conference today on May 26 in Tehran in the field of exporting products to neighboring Turkey in

the presence of senior and high-ranking officials of the country from public and private sectors and more than 1,000 participants.

With the coordination made in this regard, Secretary General of Iran and Turkey Joint Council of Commerce Dr. Seyyed Jalal Ebrahimi will first address the Conference at Shahid Chamran Conference Hall of Tarbiyat Mo'alleem University on May 26 in the field of introducing Turkey as Iran's export target market. Bilgin AYGÜL Head of Iran and Turkey Commercial Council will be the next speaker who will talk about trade ties between Iran and Turkey and strategies for enhancing Iran's export of products to Turkey.

In addition, Chief Executive of ZOODEL Company Mehrzad Khoei will speak on sales and marketing

strategies in international trade and way of finding new customers in overseas markets as well as strategies to penetrate into international markets via online services.

Secretary of the Conference Mr. Tehrani pointed to the high potentials of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the country and said: “After holding lengthy negotiations with Turkish side over Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), eventually, the agreement was finalized in the last Iranian year (ended March 19, 2016).”

It is projected that trade volume between Iran and Turkey will hit \$35 billion, the rate of which was below \$10 billion in previous years, he said, adding: “As organizer of this prestigious Conference, ZOODEL Company burdens great responsibility in this respect in order to materialize the aforementioned objectives.”

## Call for tutorial workshop “Golden Trade Opportunities with Europe”

TEHRAN TIMES **ECONOMY** A Tutorial Workshop entitled “Golden Trade Opportunities with Europe” will be held by Business Training Center of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade in cooperation with Iranian Industries Engineering Association and INOTEX 2016 Scientific Secretariat.

The keynote speakers of the event are as follows: Charles M. Giacomini: Director

General of EIFEC and Head of the Drafting and Development of the EU Export Compliance Framework, Dr. Pietro Maria Paolucci: Chief Executive responsible for European policies and Steering Committee of implementation of European policies and Prof. Dr. Shahrokh Mirzahassemi: Head of Iran's Business Center in the European Union

Hereunder are the main topics:

Overview of EU/USA export laws and national/jurisdiction/regulations/main terms, National Authorities, Export Control/ Policy/ Areas of Intervention, Financial sanctions/ embargoes / restrictive measures, post JCPOA, EU customs system, Basic principles of compliance specialized for export/ import (Export Compliance), Dual USE/ NOT DUAL USE, Technology transfer: best

practices, Methodology application of planning, management of Export Compliance into business realities and institutional as support to economic operators, Export Compliance Program.

Experts, activists and enthusiasts in the field of trade and business with EU and USA are the main audiences of the event which will be held at 9 a.m. to 17 on Thursday May 26.

## JUMP

### Tehran-Riyadh ties: What to expect

1→ Some diplomats based in Muscat have heard from those close to Omani Foreign Minister Yousuf bin Alawi as saying that senior UAE officials as well as the Omani government had related to Saudis that they were not satisfied with the current regional situation.

Also, an unnamed senior UAE official has told the Iranian Diplomacy, an unofficial website, that they are not seeking tension with Tehran but Saudis are pressuring them.

It seems Tehran has taken necessary reconciliatory steps with high risks particularly as of 2013 when the Rouhani administration took office. However, the Saudi government has been sending negative signals. Therefore, perhaps the time is ripe for Washington and its European allies to show more commitment to stability and security of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, bringing the precarious situation of the region home to Saudis.

Among all possible options to start from, two issues of hajj and the Yemeni war are the most fertile grounds. Hajj does matter as it is unique to the two. On the other hand, Saudis are growingly tired of the attrition war on Yemen and opponents have also shown the green light to sit at one negotiation table. Otherwise, it would be quite irrational to expect a restoration of ties between the two overnight.

## Indian warships visit Iran's Bandar Abbas

1→ In addition, calls on senior Government and military authorities, sporting and cultural interactions and sharing of best practices, aimed at enhancing cooperation, strengthening ties and mutual understanding between the two navies, are also planned. The visiting IN ships are also likely to conduct exercises with the IRIN ships.

Relations between India and Iran have spanned centuries marked by meaningful interactions including in the fields of commerce, energy and education. Having shared a border till 1947, the two countries share commonality in language, culture and traditions. The centuries old association has been further strengthened by regular cultural and commercial interactions as well as bilateral meetings and high-level visits between both the countries. The Iranian President Mohammad Khatami was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day function in India in 2003. More recently, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi visited Iran from 22 to 23 May 16. Hon'ble Prime Minister's visit has provided a fresh impetus to bilateral relations with the conclusion of a number of agreements and understandings.

IN ships last visited Iran in August 2015 wherein Beas and Betwa berthed at Bandar Abbas. The current visit by IN ships will further strengthen bilateral relations and enhance maritime cooperation. It will facilitate a common understanding of the maritime security challenges in the region and contribute to security and stability of the Indian Ocean Region.

## Germany's deputy environment minister visits Isfahan Province wastewater treatment plant

TEHRAN TIMES **ECONOMY** Germany's Deputy Environment and Development Minister Gunther Adler and also German Parliament Deputy, who is a member of Environmental Committee, paid a visit to Isfahan Province North Water and Wastewater Company.



In his visit, German Deputy Environment and Development Minister said: “Iran and Germany established amicable relationship before implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), so that relationship between the two countries dates back to many years ago.”

He praised creativity and innovation of expert Iranian engineers in construction of Isfahan Province North Wastewater Treatment Plant. He also visited optimization plan of energy conservation and complementary pilot project for improving and boosting wastewater treatment process.

For his part, Managing Director of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company Eng. Hashem Amini briefed the visiting delegation on the performance of his company and said: “Environmental issue is one of the most important subjects in water and sewage industry in the country and in this regard, Isfahan Province has taken effective steps in this regard to reduce environmental pollutants.”

He pointed to the amicable relations between Iran and Germany in the course of history said: “Germany maintained its trade and economic ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran in periods when Iran had been put under tough economic sanctions.”

Provincial Water and Wastewater Company established close relationship with Germany's Ministry of Science in line with offering quality services in related field.

He, who is the chairman of the Board of Directors of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company, pointed to a contract inked with German Bitfing Company and said: “The contract was signed with prestigious German Company in order to boost treatment process in the mentioned treatment plant.”

In the end, he said: “Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, the company will take giant stride in current year in line with materializing most of its objectives.”



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The most worth-while thing is to try to put happiness into the lives of others.  
*Robert Baden-Powell*

LEARN ENGLISH

Shopping at the Supermarket

**Stocker:** Can I help you find something?  
**Meg:** Yes, I'm looking for coffee.  
**Stocker:** That's on **aisle** 3. Let me show you where it is.  
**Meg:** Thanks. Hmm, I don't see the Jitters brand that I normally buy.  
**Stocker:** It looks like we're **out of stock**. We should get another **shipment** next week.  
**Meg:** Okay, I'll **check back**. I'm also looking for the Fructose brand soda, but I didn't see it in the soda aisle.  
**Stocker:** I'm afraid that's been **discontinued**. Their **parent company** no longer makes soda.  
**Meg:** Really? I love Fructose soda. How about the Mushy brand bread? I didn't see it when I checked the bread aisle.  
**Stocker:** We no longer **stock** the Mushy brand. There were some **quality control** issues at the company, so we've **pulled** all of their products from the shelves. Can I help you find anything else?  
**Meg:** No, I guess I'll just have to try some new brands. Oh, yes, do you **carry** Worm **organic** apples?  
**Stocker:** We normally do, but they're **out of season** right now. We won't have any until early summer.  
**Meg:** All of this shopping and I **have nothing to show for it**. I guess I'm going home **empty-handed**.  
**Stocker:** We do have chocolate cakes and cookies on sale.  
**Meg:** **I'm there!**

(Source: eslpod.com)

■ **Words & phrases**  
**stocker:** a person whose job is to fill the shelves of a shop or supermarket with merchandise  
**aisle:** a long passage between rows of seats in a church, plane, theatre etc., or between rows of shelves in a shop  
**out of stock:** unavailable or available in a particular shop  
**shipment:** a load of goods sent by sea, road, or air, or the act of sending them  
**check back:** to look into the state of someone or something again at a later time  
**discontinue:** to stop doing, producing, or providing something  
**parent company:** a company that controls a smaller company or organization  
**stock:** if a shop stocks a particular product, it keeps a supply of it to sell  
**quality control:** the practice of checking goods as they are produced to be sure that their quality is good enough  
**pull:** to take something out of a bag, pocket or in this case shelves with your hand  
**carry:** if a shop carries goods, it has a supply of them for sale  
**organic:** relating to farming or gardening methods of growing food without using artificial chemicals, or produced or grown by these methods  
**out of season:** vegetables and fruit that are in season are cheap and easily available because it is the time of year when they are ready to eat. If they are out of season, they are expensive or not available  
**have nothing to show for it:** to have nothing as a result of what you have been doing  
**empty-handed:** without getting what you hoped or expected to get  
**I'm there:** I am ready and willing to go someplace, let's go

QUIZ OF THE DAY

158) What does the idiom mean?  
I just could not stomach it.  
a) it was disgusting  
b) I ate too much  
c) I ate too much that I feel sick  
(Quiz No. 157 meaning: a)

PHRASAL VERB

Stick (something) out

■ **Meaning:** tolerate, accept to continue  
■ **For example:** Lunch with my girlfriend's colleagues was boring but I had to stick it out - I had no choice!

ENGLISH PROVERB

Empty vessels make the most noise

■ **Explanation:** the least intelligent people are often the most talkative or noisy

# Tehran's vehicle inspection stations being integrated

**T I S O C I A L** **TEHRAN** — Vehicle inspection stations in Tehran are being merged with an integrated system which is affiliated with the Interior Ministry, IRIB reported.  
So far 410 inspection stations have joined this system, the director general for Tehran's vehicle inspection Navvab Hosseinimanesht said.  
This newly set up system would be beneficial to all the car owners as they can obtain inspection decals all over the country, Hosseinimanesht noted.  
"This way the traffic police can detect any violation and enforce the inspection law by seeing whether the vehicle displays an up-to-date decal by using the traffic enforcement cameras," he explained.  
Mentioning the unfortunate use of fake inspection decals for the past years he warned that the newly issued stickers cannot be forged as the traffic enforcement cameras can tell the fake ones from the valid stickers.



He additionally noted that those who want to enter the traffic zones also need to obtain inspection decals as it is mandatory

## World Health Assembly highlights importance of multisectoral action on health

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, addressed the World Health Assembly today. She stressed the links between climate change and health, including those related to the spread of vector-borne diseases. Her address was followed by a technical briefing that underscored the need for multisectoral action in order to achieve the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and agreement on a new resolution on meeting those goals.  
■ **Climate change and health**  
Figueres thanked Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, for first insisting on the need to reach an agreement on climate change because of its effects on health.  
Congratulating the world's heads of states for reaching last year's Paris Agreement on climate change, she called on governments to act on the agreement. She encouraged health ministers to take the lead, noting that one of the most urgent aspects of climate change is its impact on health. Nevertheless, only 15% of the countries that have drawn up plans for

climate change refer to health in those plans.  
Figueres also stressed the importance of taking action to prevent health problems, noting that the great majority of health interventions currently focus on treatment.  
She ended with a warning that if the world does not fundamentally change its approach to energy within the next 5 years, there is a risk that damage to the atmosphere will be irrevocable and continue to impact health for decades.  
■ **Sustainable Development Goals**  
Delegates agreed to strengthen national health systems to progress towards universal health coverage, as a key way of achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.  
The resolution highlights the need to strengthen a range of essential public health functions. This will involve investing adequate, sustainable resources in health-system strengthening; enhancing the education, recruitment and retention of health workers; tackling social, environmental and economic determinants of health; and improving the monitoring and analysis of health outcomes.

## Govt. to grant low-interest loans to flood-stricken families

**T I S O C I A L** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian government has pledged to grant low-interest loans to the families suffered by the flood on April 14 in Lorestan province, western Iran.  
With the intention of compensating for the losses caused by the flood the government will offer loans totaling 300 million rials (nearly \$8,500) and 200 million rials (nearly \$5700) for urban and rural areas respectively, Mohammad Aslani, deputy governor general of Lorestan

province said, Nasimonline reported.  
Aslani went on to say that the interest rates for the loans are 4 and 5 percent for rural and urban areas respectively.  
Unprecedented rainfalls in the month of Farvardin, falling on March 20 to April 19, damaged many houses across the country.  
Accordingly, because of the devastating flood in Lorestan, 2,100 houses in the rural and urban areas suffered considerable losses.

## No joke: 3 mayors walk into an elevator, get stuck

Three mayors walk into an elevator — but what happened next was no joke, though the officials managed to amuse themselves until they could be rescued about 40 minutes later.  
Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto got stuck in the Westin Hotel elevator Thursday evening along with the mayors of Pennsylvania towns of Millvale and Leetsdale. They had been attending a meeting of the Allegheny League of Municipalities.

At first, it wasn't clear how they'd get out because none of the mayors, and others stuck along with them, could get cellphone service. Luckily, one of the stranded passengers worked at the hotel and was able to summon maintenance crews and first responders using a walkie-talkie.  
And while the mayors couldn't call for help, they did manage to use their phones to take a selfie.  
(Source: abcnews.go.com)

## Alaska inmate escapes, then comes back to try to free others

**FAIRBANKS, Alaska (AP)** — A minimum-security prisoner who escaped from a halfway house in Alaska came back three hours later, but it wasn't to turn himself in.  
State Troopers say 20-year-old Joshua Yaska returned with an SUV and tried to help other inmates flee the facility in Fairbanks.  
Staff members say Yaska was spotted leaving on a bike just after 1 a.m. Sunday. Troopers say he returned at 4:20 a.m. and tried to "aid in the escape of other inmates."  
Authorities say he tried to strike a halfway house employee with the vehicle. Troopers say they caught up with him that night after he broke into a relative's home.  
Online court records show Yaska has past misdemeanor convictions for misconduct, assault and violating the conditions of his release.



Tulip meadow in Miami village, Semnan province, is one of the tourist attractions of the area in the spring.

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

#### Volunteer medical team performs 790 plastic surgeries in deprived areas

A team of volunteer surgeons performed 790 plastic surgeries on patients in underprivileged districts of Iran, IRNA news agency reported.  
The surgeries were performed on patients suffering from cleft lip and cleft palate over 15 trips to underprivileged districts, the chief of volunteer plastic surgeons team Abdoljalil Kalantar said on Saturday.  
Kalantar refused to mention the overall costs of the surgeries and pointed that all the expenses are covered by the plastic surgeons team themselves.  
He went on to say that so far 2,000 underprivileged patients have been transferred to Tehran or other capitals to get appropriate treatment and that they have visited 11,000 patients.

#### انجام ۷۹۰ جراحی پلاستیک در مناطق محروم توسط تیم پزشکی داوطلب

به گزارش روز شنبه ایرنا گروهی از جراحان داوطلب ۷۹۰ عمل جراحی پلاستیک در مناطق محروم انجام دادند.  
دکتر عبدالجلیل کلاتر سرپرست تیم فوق تخصصی جراحان پلاستیک داوطلب روز شنبه گفت: جراحی پلاستیک به جراحی شکاف کام و لب مربوط می شد و این شمار جراحی طی ۱۵ سفر پزشکی تیم یاد شده به مناطق محروم انجام شد.  
وی از بازگویی میزان هزینه‌های کلی این شمار عمل جراحی رایگان خودداری کرد و اشاره کرد که تمام هزینه‌های این تیم به صورت شخصی توسط خود این تیم پرداخت شده است.  
وی همچنین ادامه داد: تاکنون تعداد ۲ هزار بیمار نیازمند در مناطق محروم به دلیل کمبود امکانات برای مداوا به تهران یا مرکز استان ها انتقال داده شده اند ۱۱ هزار نفر ویزیت شده اند.



# Iran volleyball team defeats Poland in friendly match

**T I S P O R T S** The Iranian volleyball team beat Poland 3-1 (23-25, 25-21, 25-21, 25-19) in a friendly match in Tokyo, Japan on Wednesday.

Raul Lozano's men had defeated China 3-2 on Sunday.

The friendly matches are as part of its preparation for the World Olympic Qualification Tournament in Tokyo, Japan.

"I am satisfied with the way our players did against Poland; however we know there are so many difficult matches ahead of us," Iran coach Raul Lozano said.

"We are ready to fight for a place in the Olympics and will do our best in the competition," the Argentine added.

The men's tournament will see Japan welcome the top three ranked teams in Asia according to the FIVB men's world ranking – Australia, China and Iran.

Joining them will be France and Poland, who claimed second and third place at the European Olympic Qualification Tournament in 2015, Venezuela, who ranked second at the South American Olympic Qualification Tournament and Canada who finished as runner-up at the NORCECA Olympic Qualification Tournament.

The top ranked Asian team and the top three ranked teams from each tournament will all claim a ticket to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. If an Asian team is ranked among the top three, then the next ranked team will qualify.



## Majid Jalali appointed as Paykan coach

**T I S P O R T S** Paykan football club has announced the appointment of Majid Jalali as the new coach for 2016-17 Iran Professional League season on Wednesday.

Jalali, who was sacked by Saipa two weeks before the end of the season, will replace Alireza Marzban who led Paykan to Azadegan League title and the promotion to IPL.

Jalali, who joined Saipa in May 2014 with a three-year contract, had his worst record with the club in his entire career. Jalali's record of 24 wins from 61 games gives him a win percentage of just 39.34 per cent which is worse than his stats at Pas, Saba, Foolad and even Tractor Sazi.

On the other hand, former Sepahan



head coach Hossein Faraki, who led the Isfahan based team to last season IPL title, took charge of Saipa. Faraki started the 2015-16 league with as the head coach of Sepahan but he left his role at the club after just 11 weeks.

## Alireza Faghani to referee Hazfi Cup final

**T I S P O R T S** Alireza Faghani has been appointed to take charge of Sunday's Hazfi Cup final between Esteghlal and Zob Ahan at the Khorramshahr Stadium.

The Referee Committee of Iran's Football Federation announced on Wednesday that Faghani will officiate the match.

He will be assisted by Sajad Touri and Hossein Zahiri in the match, with Javad Sharafi acting as the fourth official.

The match is the clash between two of the best teams in 2015-16 season as Esteghlal finished in third place while Zob Ahan finished in sixth.

Zob Ahan has won the Hazfi Cup twice while they lost the final once. Esteghlal has won the Cup six times and they have finished as runner up in third occasions.



Esteghlal and Zob Ahan have met each other 57 times; the Blues has won 25 games while Zob Ahan has 16 wins. Esteghlal has not won in its last eight games against Zob Ahan.

## Rafael Benitez agrees three-year contract to remain as Newcastle manager - report

Rafael Benitez is set to remain as manager of Newcastle United in the Championship, according to media reports.

The Northern Echo claims Benitez will be confirmed as Newcastle's permanent coach later on Wednesday despite failing to save the club from relegation after replacing Steve McClaren in March.

Benitez oversaw a six-match unbeaten run as the season drew to a close but local rivals Sunderland condemned the Magpies to the Championship as they

earned 12 points their final six fixtures.

The former Real Madrid coach will remain at St James' Park after deciding to have his contract redrawn with the removal of the release clause that allowed him to quit if the club suffered relegation.

"I said I am quite open and I am quite pleased with everything, the staff, everything, now it's just to be sure that we have to do what we have to do to be sure that we can go up if I stay here," said Benitez after Newcastle's 5-1

flogging of Spurs on the final day of the season.

The Northern Echo says in their report: "It has taken a few days for the legal technicalities of the new deal to be completed, and Benitez is understood to have insisted on some written guarantees regarding the parameters of his position."

Benitez will apparently have demanded full control over the signing of new players and budgets for next season's transfer windows.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Naeim Saadavi appointed Foolad head coach

**TEHRAN** — Naeim Saadavi has been appointed as Foolad Khuzestan head coach on Wednesday.

Former Persepolis and Iran national team defender has signed a one-year deal with Ahvaz based football team.

Saadavi has coached Sanat Naft FC and Shahin Bushehr in Iran's Azadegan League since 2005 and also

worked as assistant coach in Persepolis and Foolad.

The 46-year-old coach replaced Dragan Skocic, who terminated his contract with Foolad by mutual consent after surviving the team from relegation and finishing in 12th place in the 2015-16 season.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Akbar Pourmousavi new head coach of Esteghlal Khuzestan

Akbar Pourmousavi has been appointed as new head coach of Iran Professional League (IPL) reigning champion Esteghlal Khuzestan on Wednesday.

Pourmousavi was Abdollah Veisi's assistant in Esteghlal Khuzestan last season.

He will be assisted by Sirous Ne-

matinejad and Farshad Bakhtiarizadeh in Ahvaz based football team.

Veisi left Esteghlal Khuzestan for Sepahan after inspired the team to win IPL for the first time in history.

Esteghlal Khuzestan will represent Iran in the next season's AFC Champions League.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Saipa reaches agreement with Hossein Faraki

Hossein Faraki will take charge of the Iranian football club Saipa in the 2016-17 season.

Faraki has been out of work since parting company with Sepahan by mutual consent in the 11th week of the Iran Professional League in last season.

Faraki has joined Saipa on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

The 59-year-old coach began his coaching career as an assistant coach at Pas Tehran, the club that he played for in 1976 to 1992.

After six years as assistant coach, he was named as Pas head coach in 2000.

During Branko Ivankovic's time as Team Melli manager, Faraki was the assistant manager. He was also the head coach of the Iran under-23 football team from 2003 till 2006.



Faraki has worked at Naft Tehran and won the IPL titles with Foolad and Sepahan.

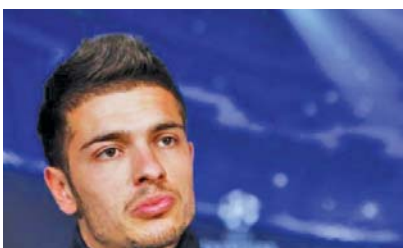
ing in Germany since he was a child and has played for Germany's youth teams, in his squad for next month's tournament in France.

"In accordance with article 89 of the Russian constitution, I decree that I am satisfied with the application made by Roman Neustadter, who was born on February 18, 1988 in Ukraine, to become

a Russian citizen," Putin said on Russia's official legal information website (www.pravo.gov.ru) on Wednesday.

Neustadter, 28, can now play for Russia in a friendly with the Czech Republic on June 1. The Russians have been drawn in Group B at Euro 2016, alongside England, Slovakia and Wales.

(Source: Reuters)



## FOOTBALL

### Former Iran boss Afshin Ghotbi appointed Buriram United coach

Thai champions Buriram United have appointed Iranian Afshin Ghotbi as their new head coach, following the departure of Alexandre Gama on Sunday.

The Thunder Castle have wasted no time in naming their new man as the former Shimizu S-Pulse and Iran national team boss gets his first taste of working in the Premier League of Thailand (PLT).

Ghotbi was strongly rumoured to be heading to Suphanburi in time for the beginning of this year's PLT campaign. While that move failed to materialise, his interest in Thailand has remained.

The 52-year-old takes over a club that seems to be in transition after winning three league titles on the trot. Buriram went on an unbeaten domestic run from October 2014 to April this year as they looked to have a tight stranglehold on the Thai game.

However, the wheels came off for Gama in this year's AFC Champions League when, in the opening game, they lost star striker Diogo Luis Santo to injury after just 12 minutes, and a humiliating 6-0 home defeat to FC Seoul followed. Just one point and one goal in the six group matches was in stark contrast to an impressive 10 points in 2015.

In the PLT, a 3-0 home defeat to Muang Thong United was a further sign that Buriram were in trouble. Then came the shocking news that left-back and Thai national skipper Theerathon Bunmathan would be moving to Muang Thong mid-season. Another home loss - to Army United - soon followed.

Gama's final game on Sunday -- a 2-0 victory at Bangkok Glass -- was ironically the team's best result since they won 5-3 at Bangkok United on Matchday 1. But the swiftness of the appointment of a replacement makes it clear that the club's management have been working behind the scenes to secure a new man to take the club forward.

As well as his experience as head coach with Shimizu in the J-League and with the Iranian national team, Ghotbi was assistant boss at the U.S. and South Korea. He was part of Guus Hiddink's coaching team when the South Koreans reached the World Cup semifinals in 2002 and involved in the Taeguk Warriors setup under Dick Advocaat in Germany in 2006.

As head coach, Ghotbi led Persepolis to the Iranian Pro League championship in 2008 and had four steady but unspectacular years in the J-League with Shimizu S-Pulse.

Ghotbi moved to the U.S. at a teenager and studied and played football at UCLA. He never made it as a professional player and his coaching career started modestly until he got his big break as assistant national boss in his adopted nation in 1997.

Buriram fans must now be hoping that their new head coach can use his vast and varied experience to help them finish the season in style. At eight points behind Muang Thong, he has a huge challenge on his hands to defend the title, but there is still time.

It is hoped that Diogo will be fit for the second half of the season and there will certainly be money available for the new man to bring in a few players.

(Source: ESPN)

### Xavi: Pep Guardiola can change mentality of English game at Man City

Former Barcelona midfielder Xavi has backed Pep Guardiola to "change the face of English football" when he takes over as manager of Manchester City.

Guardiola will officially take over from Manuel Pellegrini at City on July 1 and will be expected to immediately challenge for the title.

City only finished fourth in the Premier League last season, meaning they face a Champions League qualifier that could pit them against AS Roma.

Guardiola heads to the Premier League having won a hat trick of Bundesliga titles, and twice having done the Double, in Germany with Bayern Munich.

Xavi, who was a key player for Guardiola in his four years in charge of Barca, thinks Guardiola will have a huge impact not just on City but the Premier League as a whole.

"It is a big opportunity for him at Manchester City. I think he will change the face of English football," Xavi told the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy in Doha, where he is now playing for Al Sadd. "If there is anyone capable of changing that mentality, it is Guardiola."

"It is a great opportunity but there will also be a lot of pressure, because everyone always expects a lot from Pep Guardiola. But he is without doubt one of the best coaches in the world at the moment."

"Guardiola thinks about football all the time, he is obsessive in his attention to detail. We still talk regularly and discuss football."

Guardiola is also set to renew hostilities with former Real Madrid manager Jose Mourinho, who is expected to be confirmed as the new manager of Manchester United this week.

Carlo Ancelotti, who is to replace Guardiola at Bayern, has echoed Xavi's comments.

"Every manager brings his style, his methodology and Guardiola will do the same [at Man City]," Ancelotti told the Daily Telegraph. "When Guardiola left Barcelona, people said: 'Ah he is not able to repeat the same style of play at Bayern Munich because he doesn't have [Lionel] Messi.'"

"But by the end Bayern were playing with the same style as Barcelona. Different players but the style is there. It will be the same at Manchester City. They will play with possession and control of the game. Guardiola for this reason is a fantastic manager because he is able to build a really strong identity of his team."

"When I arrived at Chelsea, they had the culture and the organisation you would expect of Manchester United or Real Madrid. You cannot change the culture and the tradition and the history of these clubs. You can bring your idea and your style."

(Source: Soccernet)



