

TEHRAN TIMES



Tehran says House's ban on heavy water unimportant

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Leader: Real authority is way to progress

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, said on Thursday, "The only way for the survival and progress of the [Islamic] establishment and materialization of the objectives of the [1979 Islamic] Revolution is 'real authority in the country' and 'great cause', i.e. defying the enemy."

During a meeting with the chairman and elected members of the fifth Assembly of Experts, he said, "The Assembly of Experts is a divine blessing, which is a great and influential phenomenon even regardless of its tasks [enshrined] in the Constitution."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described the formation of an "elected and nationally reliable" group of scholars and religious and scientific pundits as significant per se, adding: "This prominent and exalted assembly enjoys great potential for the exchange of views, coordination and effective activity."

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Leader.ir

Germany's ADKL inks €2b petrochemical contract in Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Germany's Abels Decker Kuhlfuß Lenzen (ADKL) signed a €2 billion contract with Iran's Masjed Soleyman Petrochemical Industries Company (MIS) on the implementation of a petrochemical project in Iran. According to the Shana news agency, this contract, which could be expanded up to €10 billion, was

signed by Yousef Davoodi, the managing director of MIS, and Bernd Lenzen from ADKL, in Tehran on May 25. Based on the contract, ADKL will cooperate with MIS in providing the funds, transferring the technology and implementing contracts for the project within the framework of engineering, procurement, construction and finance (EPCF). →4

Tehran Symphony Orchestra gives first performance with new conductor

CULTURE TEHRAN — The Tehran Symphony Orchestra performs its first concert with new conductor Shahrdad Rohani on Wednesday night after the Vienna-based Iranian maestro Ali Rahbari resigned from the orchestra earlier in April. Some musicians, including violin virtuosos Arsalan Kamkar and Bardia Kiaras, and drummer

Milad Omranlu, who separated from the Tehran Symphony Orchestra under Rahbari, accompanied the orchestra at the performance. Pieces by Russian composers Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff and Alexander Borodin, and German composer Ludwig van Beethoven highlighted the repertoire of the orchestra in the first part of its performance. →12

IAEA: Iran has stayed within the limits of nuclear deal

By staff and agency

The International Atomic Energy Agency said in a quarterly report on Iran that the country has stayed within the limits of a nuclear deal it reached with world powers last year on its stockpiles of uranium and heavy water.

"Throughout the reporting period, Iran had no more than 130 metric tons of heavy water ... Iran's total (low) enriched uranium stockpile did not exceed 300 kg," the report said on Friday, according to Reuters.

"There shouldn't be any surprises for anyone. Iran continues to honor its commitments," a senior diplomat said. "At this point in time it's clearly below the 300 kg limit."

In July 2015 Iran and the 5+1 group - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany - finalized the text of a nuclear deal according to the deal Tehran was obliged to restrict its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic sanctions, including financial restrictions, on Iran. The nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, took effect in January 2016.

HPCL starts processing Iran oil payments

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) has received clarity from the central government to clear its \$23 million oil dues to Iran.

The company's Chairman and Managing Director, M K Surana, said that it has already started the process to clear \$17.5 million of dues and it will clear the same through Turkey-based Halkbank.

The company is also in talks to source 2 million tons per annum of crude from Iran through a term contract. This will be utilized by both HPCL and the HPCL Mittal Energy Ltd refinery in Bhatinda.

HPCL alone imports 12 million tons of crude oil annually. The last time it sourced crude oil from Iran was two years ago.

Surana was speaking to reporters while announcing the fiscal 2015-16 fourth quarter results.

(Source: thehindubusinessline.com)

Iranian, Afghan environment chiefs discuss Hamoun Lake preservation

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The chief of Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) and the director general of Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) discussed issues related to Hamoun Lake preservation.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2), which was held on May 23-27 in Kenya, DOE website reported.

Mentioning the Hamoun Lake being registered as a biosphere reserve registered by UNESCO, DOE chief Masoumeh Ebtekar called on bilateral cooperation to save and revive the lake.

She additionally suggested for a working group to form in order to boost and environmental cooperation between the two nations.



The Afghan official, Mustafa Zaher, for his part, welcomed Ebtekar's suggestion pointing Afghanistan's readiness to cooperate with Iran and that they are willing to sign an agreement on the matter.

Hamoun is a shallow and marshy lake, located

in the Sistan region of eastern Iran and western Afghanistan. It is fed by the Helmand River, which starts in the Hindu Kush Mountains in Afghanistan.

When droughts occur in Afghanistan, or the water in watersheds that support lake is drawn down by other natural or human-induced reasons, the end result is a dry lake bed in Iran. In addition, when the lake is dry, seasonal winds blow fine sands off the exposed lake bed.

The sand is swirled into huge dunes that may cover a hundred or more fishing villages along the former lake shore. Wildlife around the lake is negatively impacted and fisheries are brought to a halt. Changes in water policies and substantial rains in the region hope to affect a return of much of the water in Hamoun Lake.

Biographical dictionary of Persian poets inscribed on UNESCO Memory of the World

CULTURE TEHRAN — The al-Ashiqin wa Arasat al-Arifin, a biographical dictionary of Persian poets compiled by Safavid-era scholar Taqi ad-Din Mohammad Awhadi Balyani (1565-ca. 1640), has been added to the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Register of the Memory of the World.

Several other works from China, South Korea, Japan, some other countries were also registered on the list during the 7th General Meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific

(MOWCAP), which was held in Hue, Vietnam from May 18 to 20.

Awhadi Balyani compiled the dictionary during his journey to India at the court of the fourth Mogul Emperor Nur-ud-din Mohammad Salim, better known by his imperial name Jahangir, who ruled from 1605 to 1627.

The book provides brief biographies of almost 3500 Persian-language poets and also gives examples of poems from each poet.

A reproduction of the Tazkirah-i Arafat al-Ashiqin wa Arasat al-Arifin



was published in six volumes by the Mirase Maktoob Research Center in Tehran in 2010.

The original version is kept at Tehran's Malek Museum and Library, one of Iran's major centers for rare Persian and Arabic manuscripts.

UNESCO launched the Memory of the World Program in 1992 to protect documentary heritage, and helps networks of experts to exchange information and raise resources for preservation of, and access to, documentary material.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



The Foreign Ministry Institute for Political and International Studies on Wednesday hosted a ceremony to observe Africa Day. Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said maintaining friendly relationship with African nations has been a foreign policy priority for the Islamic Republic. He said visits to Iran by Ghanaian and South African officials to Tehran in recent months are indications of the fact that Iran and Africa are eager to strengthen ties.

PERSPECTIVE

By Matin Moslem
international relations expert

Taliban or ISIL, which one!?

In the face of the concealed but rising threat of ISIL in Afghanistan, what significance does the death of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor have?

Mullah Omar, Mullah Mansoor, Mullah Rasool, or Mullah Yaqoob or today Mullah Haibatullah Akhunda-da? The breathless terrorist leaders, do they have much difference?

Almost nine months after the death of Mullah Omar and the selection of Mullah Mansoor as the new leader of the militant group, once again the death of Mullah Mansoor made Taliban, beyond its leaders, the focal point of political and security analysts.

Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor was killed in an American drone strike in the restive Pakistani province of Baluchistan.

Mullah Mansoor, the heavyweight Taliban leader who also held the first rank in illicit drug smuggling, was selected as the leader of the Taliban nine months ago. However, since two years ago when Mullah Omar was killed he was secretly the Ace of Spades of the Taliban in the dark.

In the phenomenology of terrorism from both political and security aspects this is a shameful intelligence weakness. It is not only a failure for security sources in Kabul, but also a total embarrassment for NATO and the United States, who rely on such intelligence to counter Taliban.

In a snap look at the incident considering the intelligence they receive, the question still remains that how the abovementioned sources did not get informed of Mullah Omar's death in two years!?

Now one can learn about the real reasons behind the failure in the fight against terrorism.

A high ranking official in the Afghan presidential office says: "The case is not only getting the right intelligence. The West is watching the Taliban from a far distance, but they can't see the tip of their nose." →9

MEDIA MONITOR



'Saudis must ensure safety or no Iranian is sent to Hajj pilgrimage'

TEHRAN — The head of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization has said the Islamic Republic will not send people to Hajj pilgrimage unless Saudi Arabia ensures safety for Iranians.

"The dispatch of Iranian pilgrims to Hajj depends on the Saudi side accepting Iran's rational conditions and providing safety for Iranian pilgrims," Saeed Ohadi said in a telephone interview with IRIB on Thursday.

The official made the remarks as an Iranian delegation is in Saudi Arabia at the official invitation of new Saudi Hajj and Umrah Minister Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen to discuss arrangements for pilgrimage months after a deadly crush in Mina which killed hundreds of pilgrims, including 460 Iranians.



Zarif to visit Sweden on June 1

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will visit Sweden on June 1, the Swedish Ambassador to Tehran Peter Tejler said in a tweet on Friday.

He said Zarif will lead an economic delegation in his trip to Stockholm.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari announced on May 23 that Zarif will start a five-day tour to Europe which will take him to Poland, Sweden, Latvia, and Finland.



Jannati's accession was a blow to arrogant powers: cleric

TEHRAN — An interim Tehran Friday prayer leader has hailed the accession of Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati to the chair of the Assembly of Experts as a "blow in the mouth of arrogance".

Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami also raised the subject of Hajj in the current year, stating that the Saudi government is not qualified to guard the holy places in Mecca and Medina, ISNA reported.



Iran, Russia discuss construction of new nuclear plant

TEHRAN — Iran and Russia have discussed the construction of the second nuclear power plant in Bushehr, according to the official website of the Iranian embassy in Moscow.

The talks on manufacturing the second power plant followed a meeting between Behrouz Kamalvandi, a ranking Iranian nuclear official, with Rosatom CEO Sergei Kiriyeenko in Moscow on Thursday.

"The date of the groundbreaking ceremony for the second nuclear power plant was discussed," the report said, without giving further information.

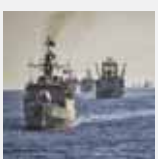
The report said the two countries have reached an agreement on the framework of the construction project.



'IAEA reconfirms Iran has fully implemented JCPOA'

TEHRAN — The International Atomic Energy Agency has reconfirmed that Iran, on its part, has fully conducted all measures necessary under the nuclear deal, officially called JCPOA, the Iranian Ambassador to the IAEA said on Friday.

Reza Najafi told reporters that the IAEA's new report repeats previous statements except for some minor changes in numbers and statistics, Fars reported.



Iran, India stage joint naval drill

TEHRAN — Iran and India held a one-day joint naval drill in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and northern Indian Ocean, commander of Iran's First Naval Zone said on Friday.

Rear Admiral Hossein Azad told reporters the joint naval exercises were held with the aim to exchange information and experience between the staff of the two navies, Mehr reported.

He added the event was indicative of Iran-India cooperation for maintaining peace and sustainable security in the region.

Tehran says House's ban on heavy water unimportant, won't allow JCPOA breach

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's deputy foreign minister has said Tehran won't allow the nuclear deal being breached by signing parts, reacting to a Republican-backed amendment to bar the Obama administration from buying heavy water from Tehran.

"The U.S. and Zionist regime have not stopped being hostile to Iran and the challenge continues. We won't allow an explicit breach of the JCPOA," Abbas Araqchi, who heads the implementation committee of the nuclear deal, said in a televised interview on Thursday.

The remarks come after the House voted on Wednesday to bar the U.S. government from future purchases of heavy water from Iran.

Wednesday night's 251-168 vote came on an amendment by Florida GOP Rep. Ron DeSantis to a funding bill for the Energy Department, ABC news reported.

Media outlets in April talked of the U.S. Department of Energy buying 32 metric tons of heavy water from Iran worth \$8.6 million. However, it is not yet

clear if there have been any deliveries of the technological material to Washington.

Under JCPOA terms, Tehran should have no additional heavy water reactors or accumulation of heavy water for 15 years and all excess heavy water should be made available for export to the international market.

Araqchi branded the bid as "an Iranophobia policy," followed by headline American senators, aiming at preventing Tehran to reap the fruits of the deal in the post-sanctions era.

"Iranophobia attempts by hardline factions within the U.S. and in the region are intended not to allow Iran to benefit from the post-sanctions era," Araqchi was quoted as saying.

He also dismissed the nuclear amendment attempt as unimportant, saying neither Washington is bound to buy heavy water from Tehran, nor is Tehran obliged to sell the material to Washington.

A similar amendment died in the Senate after a major dust-up earlier this year, when Democrats filibustered a companion proposal by freshman Sen.



Tom Cotton, R-Ark.

In reply to Cotton's bid, The White House had said it was "gratified" that the amendment wasn't moving forward. "I'd say that we're grateful that this is not advanced in the Senate," said spokesman Josh Earnest, who then dismissed Cotton's nuclear expertise, CNN reported.

"I'm confident that he couldn't differentiate heavy water from sparkling water," Earnest said.

Iran and the 5+1 group of countries struck a deal on Tehran's nuclear deal in July, ending economic sanctions against Iran in exchange for a limited nuclear program.

Tehran rejects meddling in Iraq, says Saudis are most dangerous supporter of terrorism

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's foreign ministry spokesman branded on Friday Saudi Arabia as "the most dangerous supporter of terrorism" in the world, reacting to the Arab country's foreign minister's remarks about Iran-Iraq relations.

In a recent interview with RT Arabic, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir had claimed Tehran is meddling in Iraq's domestic affairs.

"To know its interests and its friends and enemies, the Iraqi nation doesn't need the remarks by the foreign minister of a country which has been the biggest agent and backer of instability and terrorism in Iraq, the region and the world over the past 15 years," Hossein Jaber Ansari was quoted as saying.

Tehran and Riyadh have been sailing in turbulent waters from 2011, where strong divergence over the future of the Syrian government has set the region's two biggest powerhouses on a collision course.

While Iran has been backing a political settlement for the Syrian crisis, the Saudi kingdom has been insisting on



an "Assad must go" policy.

Later developments added more complexity to the two countries' relations. Saudi Arabia executed the Shiite cleric Sheik Nimr Baqr al-Nimr, a move which initiated outrage among Shiites across the Middle East and beyond.

In retaliation to the execution, Riyadh's diplomatic posts in Tehran and Mashhad were stormed by angry

mobs. In reaction Riyadh cut diplomatic ties with Tehran even though top Iranian officials condemned attacks on the diplomatic missions.

Prior to the execution, Iran and Saudi Arabia were at loggerheads over the Mina hajj Stampede in 2015 in which more than 464 Iranian nationals were killed.

A more recent sticking point is that Saudis have been stonewalling the annual haj ritual by Iranian pilgrims, rendering rounds of negotiation to hash out the dispute futile.

Al-Jubeir's hostile remarks came a few days after Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi had termed Saudis' decision to sever ties with Tehran a "miscalculation" and dismissed the view that the two countries are regional rivals.

"We see Iran and Saudi Arabia in no regional rivalry. Both are key players in the Middle East," Araqchi was quoted as saying.

According to the top diplomat, with Tehran and Riyadh in peaceful coexistence, counterterrorism attempts will be more likely to bear fruit.

Leader: Real authority is way to progress

I → The Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed to "consultation about different issues", "concentration on issues of mutual interest", "declaration of stance and demands" and "formation of discourse and public demand" as potentialities of the Assembly of Experts, saying: "In case this objective materializes, different branches [of government] and officials and executives will naturally move towards meeting that demand."

"Sovereignty of Islam, freedom, independence, social justice, public welfare, eradication of poverty and ignorance, resistance to the devastating flood of ongoing moral, economic, social and political corruption in the West and steadfastness against the Arrogant Front's hegemony are among the most important objectives of the Iranian nation's Islamic Revolution," the Leader said.

He said safeguarding the Revolution is more difficult than creating it. The Leader

also touched on methods of countering the front of global oppressors, saying: "The enemies of the Iranian nation put hard [conventional military] invasion on their agenda from the very beginning; eight-year [Iraqi] imposed war, riots during the early days of the Revolution, supporting terrorist grouplets, attacks on Iran's oil platforms and downing of [an Iranian] civilian plane are examples of this invasion that ended in the failure of the enemies thanks to God and in light of the divine influence of [the late] Imam Khomeini and the nation's patience and resistance."

He said "soft attack" was another stage of incessant invasions by global bullying powers, adding: "Persistent economic sanctions, continued political attacks, seductive propaganda and targeting the Islamic Republic's interests in other countries are among methods of the second stage of the enemies' invasion which has failed to pay off thanks to God and the perseverance of the nation and officials."

The Leader described the third stage of the enemies' invasion, i.e. "infiltration", as very dangerous and in continuation of the same soft war, adding: "In its strategy of infiltration, the Arrogance is pursuing several main objectives: 'influencing decision-making and decision-taking centers', 'changing people's beliefs' and 'altering the calculations and positions of officials.'"

He noted, "The main objective pursued by the enemies in this stage of soft war is to prepare the ground for emptying [from within] the [Islamic] establishment's domestic elements of power."

"If this objective is realized and the Islamic Republic is emptied of elements of power, its destruction or fundamentally changing its direction will not be difficult. That is why I reiterate that defying the enemy and resisting its demands amount to the 'great cause,'" he said.

The Leader also said, "Disciplined religious innovations by educated elements who have the power of inference and

healing wounds caused by the enemy, including 'sectarian and tribal division', 'factional differences' and 'artificial polarizations in the country' are among other tasks of the Assembly of Experts."

"Immobility is not authorized. You must always consider seriously the principle of change and progress for the realization of the objectives of Islam and the Revolution," he added.

He said real empowerment of the country was the only way for the "survival, progress and materialization of the objectives of the Revolution and the nation", adding: "All officials and organs have tasks on this path that they must fulfill seriously."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said the country's strength can also even help get concessions from major world powers, adding: "Otherwise, even weak and humiliated governments will bully the Iranian nation."

(Source: Leader.ir)

Resistance economy entails national determination, general says



POLITICAL TEHRAN — Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a senior military advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said on Friday that success in implementing the resistance economy depends on national determination, the government's help to the people, and also the people's help to the government.

Safavi said, "Through resistance economy we can make use of our own innovation and domestic capacities."

He called on the next Majlis to adopt legislations in line with resistance economy. "The new Majlis which will start its work tomorrow can be influential in resistance economy and the six (development) plan."

Addressing a congregation of wor-

shippers in Tehran, Safavi said, "Resistance and victory during the eight years of Sacred Defense [1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war] can be a document and guide for the resistance economy."

The former IRGC chief also said the Islamic Revolution and the Sacred Defense present role models to the Islamic world on how to govern and resist against hegemonic powers.

He added the U.S., Israel and their allies are not able to stall the growing influence of Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader's political thoughts.

He added the U.S., the Zionist regime of Israel and their allies in the Middle East region have hatched plots against the Islamic revolution but they have failed.

Zarif congratulates Lebanon on Liberation Day



POLITICAL TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday congratulated the Lebanese on Liberation Day.

Liberation Day, celebrated May 25, marks the withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon after long years of resistance by the Lebanese people.

In separate messages to Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah and his Lebanese counterpart Gebran Bassil, Zarif described liberation of Southern Lebanon as a "golden page" in history of Lebanon and the region.

He also said that the Islamic Republic will continue supporting the Lebanese people, government and army.

On Wednesday, Nasrallah said the Israeli withdrawal from most of South Leb-

anon on May 25, 2000 represented a victory for all Lebanese, regardless of sect or political affiliation, Daily Start reported.

Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri also on Thursday offered his congratulations to the Lebanese people and government over Liberation Day.

Jahangiri, in messages to the Hezbollah chief and Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam, said Liberation Day marks "the celebration of resistance and the heroic victory of the brave people and government of Lebanon" against the Zionist regime of Israel.

"...undoubtedly, all courageous and freedom-seeking nations of the world will never forget your nation's victory," the first vice-president noted, according to Tasnim.

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G7 leaders pledge action on terrorism, refugees, slow growth

G7 to help Iraq in its fight against terrorism

The leaders of the Group of Seven rich economies ended a summit Friday by issuing an action plan for countering terrorism and other risks to peace and global growth, including the massive flows of refugees and migrants fleeing to Europe to escape conflict and poverty at home.

A sweeping declaration from the meeting at a scenic Japanese seaside resort addressed covered a universe of global and regional challenges, a breadth not matched by a depth of concrete measures.

The G-7 leaders claimed a "special responsibility" for beefing up policies to stimulate and sustain growth of their sluggish economies. But their declaration glossed over disagreements over coordinating public spending policies to help perk up weak consumer spending and business investment, saying each country would take into account "country-specific circumstances." Germany, in particular, has balked at calls from other G-7 members to commit to an expansionary fiscal policy.

"Weak demand and unaddressed structural problems are the key factors weighing on actual and potential growth," they said in the declaration. "We remain committed to ensuring that growth is inclusive and job-rich, benefiting all segments of our societies."

In a nod to concern over how to pay for such spending, especially in Japan where the public debt is more than twice the size of its economy, the communique includes a reference to the need to ensure debt is "on a sustainable path."

The G-7 host, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he had won support from his counterparts for his own "three arrows" economic strategy of ultra-loose monetary policy, public spending and longer-term reforms.

"We will be launching 'Abenomics' to the world," Abe said.

Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, said there was agreement on such a three-pronged approach.

"Many countries can do quite a lot and



G7 2016 ISE-SHIMA SUMMIT

some more than they are currently doing," Lagarde told reporters after the meeting ended. She said the IMF would help identify what countries could and should do to help counter slowing growth.

Abe appealed to his fellow leaders to act to avert another global crisis, comparing the current global economic situation to conditions just before the 2008 financial crisis. Lagarde was less alarmist, saying the world was "no longer in a 2008 moment."

"We are out of the crisis but we are suffering the legacy of the crisis," she said, pointing to bad loans on the books of companies and banks as one of the biggest causes for concern.

The annual summit brings together the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States. Leaders of major international organizations and of a select group of developing countries attended "outreach" sessions held once the G-7 summit meetings ended.

The G-7 leaders denounced protectionism and trade barriers and noted the negative impact from overcapacity

in some industries. One of the biggest headaches, Abe said, was a glut in China's steel industry.

"It's a root cause distorting the market, and unless it's fundamentally resolved, the problem persists," he said.

During talks on the sidelines, the U.S., EU and Japan reiterated their determination to reach agreement on various trade agreements meant to expand mutual market access.

In their declaration, the summit leaders cited the possible departure of Britain from the European Union, depending on the outcome of a June 23 vote, as one of many potential shocks for the global economy.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said staying in the EU was "all about Britain's national interest."

"It's about Britain being big and bold," he said.

The leaders also expressed concern over territorial tensions in the East and South China seas. The declaration does not mention China and its expansion into

disputed areas specifically, but calls for respecting freedom of navigation and of overflight and for resolving conflicts peacefully through law.

The summit declaration also highlighted joint efforts on corruption, cybercrimes, terrorism, global health and migration - which has become a huge headache especially for European nations - as other top priorities.

It said a global response was needed to cope with the surge in refugees, migrants and other displaced people to its highest level since World War II and committed to increasing assistance to meet their immediate and long-term needs.

But there were no specific, concrete offers of extra help.

President Barack Obama was traveling Friday from Shima to Hiroshima, where he would become the first sitting American president to visit the city on which the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb in 1945 in the closing days of World War II.

(Source: Reuters)

Yemen's Ansarullah, ex-government to exchange prisoners before Ramadan

Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement and the former Yemeni government have agreed to carry out a major prisoner swap prior to the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan that will begin in June.

Sources from the Houthi delegation said on Thursday that 1,000 prisoners captured during the Saudi-led war on Yemen would be exchanged.

However, a source close to the government of former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi said the agreement entailed the release of "all detainees," who number more than 4,000.

The two warring parties are expected to hand in a list of prisoner requests to the United Nations mediators within two days, the Houthi sources further said.

They added that "local committees" will be formed to speed up the process of the exchange before the start of Ramadan, which falls on June 7 this year.

Earlier in the day, UN Special Envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed said officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had recently held talks with the two sides' delegations in Kuwait to explain its pos-

sible role in a potential release process.

The decision comes as UN-brokered peace talks in Kuwait aimed at ending a year-long Saudi aggression against the impoverished country dragged into a second month.

The deal between the Houthis and representatives of the former government is being seen as a breakthrough in weeks of peace talks that have achieved little until now.

A ceasefire has been in place since last month to give the peace talks a chance, but it has been repeatedly violated by Saudi airstrikes on the Arab country.

On Wednesday, Saudi warplanes carried out fresh airstrikes on residential areas in the northern province of al-Jawf, 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.

Yemen has seen almost daily military attacks by Saudi Arabia since late March 2015. More than 9,400 people have been killed and at least 16,000 others injured since the onset of the campaign.

(Source: Press TV)

French fuel blockade lifted, Hollande says won't let protesters choke economy

French riot police removed picketers and barricades blocking access to a large fuel distribution depot as President Francois Hollande warned anti-reform protesters on Friday that he would not let them strangle the economy.

The police operation to free up a fuel depot near the Donges oil refinery in western France followed similar swoops at other depots this week to ease petrol shortages caused by picketers fighting planned labor law reforms.

Speaking in Japan after a summit with other world leaders, Hollande said France's economy was starting to pick up and should not be derailed by opponents of a reform designed to make hiring and firing easier.

"I will stay the course because this is a good reform and we must go all the way to adoption," the Socialist leader said. "This is not the time to put the French economy in difficulty."

Hollande's appeal was directed above all at the hardline CGT labor union, which is leading street protests, public transport strikes and fuel supply pickets that also risk disrupting the France-hosted European soccer tournament next month.

Hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets over the past

three months for protests marred by violence on the fringes in which hundreds of police have been hurt and more than 1,300 people arrested.

Hollande, who faces an election a year from now plagued by dismal popularity ratings and high unemployment, says things are starting to get better but that the labor reform is vital to tackle joblessness, which has dipped for two months in a row but remains close to a rate of 10 percent.

The reform, which the CGT wants withdrawn, would make it easier for companies to lay off staff in difficult economic times. It would also allow firms to opt out of national labor protection rules if they strike in-house deals on pay and conditions with the consent of a majority of their staff.

French protesters attacked a police station and smashed bank windows on Thursday at rallies against the reform, while the CGT members sought to choke off fuel supplies.

Seventy-seven people were arrested during nationwide street demonstrations on Thursday in which more than 150,000 marched, according to the Interior Ministry.

(Source: Reuters)

S. Korea navy fires warning shots after North incursion

A South Korean naval vessel fired warning shots Friday after a North Korean patrol boat and fishing boat crossed the countries' disputed maritime border, Seoul's defense ministry said.

The incident coincided with a prolonged push by North Korea for talks to reduce military tensions that escalated sharply after Pyongyang conducted its fourth nuclear test in January.

The two North Korean vessels crossed the Yellow Sea border around 7:30am (2230 GMT Thursday) but swiftly retreated after a South Korean navy patrol boat fired five warning shots, a ministry official said.

The de-facto maritime boundary between the two Koreas -- the Northern Limit Line -- is not recognized by Pyongyang, which argues it was unilaterally drawn by US-led United Nations forces after the 1950-53 Korean War.

Both sides complain of frequent incursions by the

other and there were limited naval clashes in 1999, 2002 and 2009.

Incidents like Friday's intrusion are quite common and rarely escalate into anything more serious.

In recent weeks, Pyongyang has been urging Seoul to accept leader Kim Jong-Un's proposal for military talks aimed at easing cross-border tensions.

Kim had offered the military dialogue during a marathon speech to the recently concluded congress of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party -- the first event of its kind for more than 35 years.

Seoul has rejected the proposal, saying it lacks sincerity given Kim's vow to push ahead with the North's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

South Korea says it will only engage in substantive dialogue if the North takes a tangible step towards denuclearization.



The North has repeatedly said its nuclear arsenal is not up for negotiation.

(Source: AFP)

NEWS

Iraqi forces inching closer to Fallujah

Ayatollah Sistani calls for protection of civilians

Iraqi army troops together with members of pro-government Popular Mobilization Units and tribal fighters have managed to recapture a town in the western province of Anbar from the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

On Thursday, Iraqi government forces and their allies purged ISIL (Daesh) militants of the town of Sajar, which lies northeast of the militant-held strategic city of Fallujah, following days of fierce gun battle with the extremists in the area.

The development came two days after Iraqi army soldiers backed by fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units captured the main police station in Sajar, and raised the national Iraqi flag over it.

Kurdish Peshmerga forces down Daesh drone

Meanwhile, Kurdish Peshmerga forces have shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle operated by Daesh militants south of Iraq's oil-rich northern city of Kirkuk.

General Mohammad Qader, the Peshmerga security chief in Daquq, told Arabic-language al-Sumaria satellite television network that Kurdish fighters brought down the drone on the outskirts of the town, located approximately 180 kilometers (111 miles) north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, as it was conducting a surveillance mission and gathering information on Peshmerga positions and military capabilities.

Qader added that the drone has sustained minimal damage and has been handed over to Iraqi security authorities to make use of its military information.

Meanwhile, late on Thursday, Daesh militants lobbed three Katyusha rockets at the Shia Turkmen village of Bashir, situated some 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Kirkuk. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

Grotesque violence has plagued the northern and western parts of Iraq ever since Daesh Takfiris launched an offensive in the country in June 2014, and took control of portions of Iraqi territory.

The militants have been committing vicious crimes against all ethnic and religious communities in Iraq, including Shias, Sunnis, Kurds, Christians and others.

Iraqi army soldiers and fighters from allied Popular Mobilization Units are involved in operations to win back militant-held regions.

Protection of civilians

Meanwhile, Iraq's most respected Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani has called on the military and volunteer fighters battling Daesh in the west of the country to take maximum care of civilians trapped in the city of Fallujah.

"Saving innocent people from harm's way is the most important thing," Sistani's representative Ahmed al-Safi quoted the ayatollah as saying during a Friday Prayers sermon in the city of Karbala, adding that the cleric has described protection for the residents of Fallujah even more important "than targeting the enemy."

(Source: agencies)

Hezbollah won't let others push Lebanon into chaos: Sheikh Qassem

A senior Hezbollah official said the resistance movement will never abandon Lebanon for others to push it into chaos, stressing that "the country and the resistance walk together."

"We say no to those who believe we will focus on resistance and leave domestic matters to them," Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naeem Qassem said.

"The country and the resistance walk together, and we will not leave this country for others to mess with it, rather we want to be partners in building this country," the official added.

On Wednesday, Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah said certain groups were seeking to monopolize power in Lebanon.

Hezbollah is currently helping the Syrian government drive out foreign-backed Takfiri terrorists from the country.

In doing so, the movement says it is trying to prevent the Syrian conflict from spilling over to Lebanon and keep Takfiri terrorists at bay.

Daesh and al-Nusra Front terrorists have been active on the outskirts of the Lebanese town of Aarsal, located on the border with Syria.

The militants briefly overran Aarsal in August 2014, taking several Lebanese army and police forces hostage, some of whom were executed. Nine soldiers are still being held after being captured almost two years ago.

Hezbollah swept to remarkable gains in municipal elections in south Lebanon and Nabatieh on Sunday.

Sheikh Qassem expressed relief over the polls, saying they "complete the resistance project."

The official hailed the alliance between Hezbollah and Amal movement "which enabled [the two parties] to be sponsors to families, different political forces, and to the parties in the region... easing tension and producing a capable council that works in harmony."

Suspicious death in prison

Meanwhile, a senior cleric in southern Lebanon on Friday called for calm following the death of a suspected militant in the Roumieh prison.

Sheikh Hussam al-Ilani, the imam at Ghufran Mosque in Sidon, said Fadi Akkoush's death should not be exploited for those who speak of "defending the rights of the Sunni people."

According to security sources, Akkoush suffered from heart disease and died Wednesday night. He had been detained in connection with the 2014 Bhanine battles in the northern district of Minyeh.

Inmates launched a protest Thursday and accused security forces of negligence, a claim officials have denied.

(Source: Daily Star)

NEWS

Indonesia to sign oil, LPG import deal with Iran

Indonesia expects to sign an initial deal on Sunday with Iran for the purchase of crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), an official at Indonesia's state energy company, Pertamina, said on Friday, providing no further details.

Indonesia's energy minister Sudirman Said is heading to Iran on Sunday, a ministry spokesman, Sujatmiko, said separately, Reuters reported.

The energy minister is also expected to join the OPEC meeting in Vienna on June 2.

Earlier in March, Iran and Indonesia inked an MOU on expanding cooperation in oil, gas and petrochemical industry, among other fields, the Shana news agency reported.

An Iranian delegation traveled to Indonesia on February 23 to attend the two countries' first joint economic committee, which was held in Bogor, West Java.

An agreement was signed on February 24 by Wiratmaja Puja, the oil and gas director general at Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, and Marzieh Riahi, the director of Asia and Pacific affairs at the Department of International Affairs of Iran's Oil Ministry.

Sudirman also attended the meeting, where he said upstream oil and gas sector, as well as data and technology exchange were the main areas in which the two sides can cooperate.

He added that Indonesia would build a chemical fertilizer-production facility in Iran.

Meanwhile, Wiratmaja said Iran offered to supply crude oil, condensate and LPG as well as to develop refineries in Indonesia. In addition, the two countries also agreed to develop human resources as well as conduct research and development together.

According to Indonesian newspaper, Jakarta Post, in the meeting, Iran also offered Indonesia to take advantage of the growing business opportunities in the country. Pertamina and Saka Energy were among those that were offered the opportunity to develop the upstream oil and gas sector in Iran.

Many major oil companies have expressed their interest in getting involved in oil and gas exploration in the country following the lifting of the sanctions in mid-January.

(Source: agencies)

Iranian appetite for German goods prompts surge in Q1 exports

German exports to Iran, especially of machines and equipment, rose significantly in the first quarter following the removal of international sanctions against the Islamic Republic, government data showed on Thursday.

Exports to Iran surged by 7 percent year-on-year in the January-March period to 500 million euros (\$558.85 million), the Federal Statistics Office said. This compares with a 0.7 percent rise in overall, year-on-year German exports in the same period.

"This is quite reasonable," said Michael Tockuss, head of the German-Iranian Chamber of Commerce. "Machines and equipment are doing exceptionally well, but also grain and wheat."

For decades before sanctions were imposed, Germany was Iran's biggest trading partner. The gap in Iranian imports from Germany and other Western countries was subsequently filled by Chinese, Korean and Middle Eastern competitors.

German industry anticipated a steep rise in exports to Iran after world powers lifted sanctions against the Islamic Republic in January in return for Tehran's compliance with a deal to curb its nuclear program.

However, Tockuss said great expectations arising from the nuclear deal have been dampened by difficulties in financing.

He added that Iran had shown interest in large-scale projects to build refineries and petrochemical factories and cement plants, but was unable to finance such undertakings with credit from foreign banks.

Despite such difficulties, he said, Germany should expect business with Iran to outperform activity with most other emerging markets.

German exports to Iran could reach 2.5-3 billion euros this year, up from 2 billion euros in 2015, he added.

Germany's Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) expects exports to Iran to reach 5 billion euros in the coming years and reach twice that figure in the long term.

(Source: Reuters)

Greek debt deal reflects shifting powers among IMF members

The International Monetary Fund stepped back from confrontation on Greece this week — to the delight of eurozone policy-makers above all in Berlin.

After months of squaring up against Germany over the fund's insistence on upfront measures to ease Greece's enormous debt burden, the IMF signed off on yet another compromise that delays the day of reckoning and left any commitment on debt restructuring implicit at best.

Poul Thomsen, the fund's Europe chief, acknowledged an "important concession" in its difficult talks with eurozone finance ministers about Greece's bailout.

The deal opened the way for the payment of €10.3bn in bailout funds to Athens heading off the short-term possibility of another Greek budget crisis. Markets rallied on the compromise sending Greece's benchmark 10 year borrowing rate below 7 per cent for the first time in six months.

However, lingering questions about the IMF's involvement and the lack of long-term debt sustainability meant the rally in Greek bonds lost steam in less than 24 hours, pushing 10-year bond yields above 7 percent once again by Thursday.

(Source: Financial Times)

Entrusting development projects to private sector, a main policy of Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's **d e s k** Economy Minister Ali Tayyebnia stressed entrusting of the country's development projects to the private sector as one of the main policies of the government, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

According to the report, Tayyebnia made the remarks in the 59th government and private sector joint meeting.

"This year, the country's Management and Planning Organization is committed to hand over 1000 development projects to the private sector" he said.



The minister believed that most of the country's economic problems stem from low private sector activity rate and that merging Export Guarantee Fund with Bank Saderat would be a principled and effective solution to help and provide better services to the private sector.

He urged the private sector to help the government in identifying target countries in terms of economic cooperation and investment potential.

The minister also said, "We must focus on countries that are inclined to finance our projects through direct investment in Iran."

Germany's ADKL inks €2b petrochemical contract in Iran

→ This contract was signed during the visit of Garrelt Duin, the state minister for economic affairs and energy of Germa-

ny's North Rhine-Westphalia State to Iran. The production control director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Alimohammad Bossaqzadeh said

in April that domestic petrochemical industry requires attracting \$77 billion of finance by 2020.

Meanwhile, NPC managing director

Marzieh Shahdaie said in January that the Islamic Republic has developed up 30 new petrochemical projects to be implemented in the post-sanctions time.

Why bust for offshore drillers might last another 2 years

By Irina Slav

Statoil cancelled a contract for a drillship with Seadrill, which it had intended to use for drilling operations in the Atlantic, near Newfoundland. The cancellation is the second drillship contract to be terminated for Seadrill, coming shortly after Exxon canceled a contract for its drillship, West Capella, that had been dispatched off the Nigerian coast.

West Hercules, the Newfoundland drillship, was bringing in \$445,000 per day for Seadrill, and it was supposed to continue to do so until January next year. Statoil, however, has decided to save some money and pay Seadrill some \$61 million as compensation for canceling the contract. Revenues until January 2017 would have exceeded \$90 million.

Things are not looking good for offshore drillers at the moment, and Seadrill is not the only one that's had contracts canceled. Drillers have accumulated huge piles of debt and have been left with few



ways of tackling it in an industry where everybody is thinking about cutting costs. What makes the downturn worse for these drillers is that they don't have an alternative source of revenue, while major integrated E&Ps can rely on their downstream operations to support their balance sheet until prices recover and upstream operations rebound.

There's gloom across the drilling world. Demand for drilling services is

extremely weak. Although most industry leaders are still in the black, there are not enough new orders coming in to sustain these performances. Credit rating agencies are revising their stance on drillers downward, despite positive quarterly results, and some are forced to suspend dividends as a way to realize more cost savings. Bad news all around.

There is some good news, however. At least in the medium term, there will be a

pick-up in demand for drilling services as existing fields are depleted and E&Ps are forced to look for new ones. Once prices start climbing back up, and demand begins to outstrip supply, drilling should return.

Estimates as to when this will happen vary from two to five years. With new oil discoveries at a 60-year low, and severe cut backs in spending assuring that exploration will remain moribund for the next few years, chances are that demand will inch up higher than supply sooner rather than later.

When this happens, the surviving drillers will get a new chance to thrive. Meanwhile, in a bid to guarantee their survival, some are betting on consolidation: Technip and FMC recently announced their planned \$13-billion all-stock tie-up that should result in annual cost savings of up to \$400 million. More deals like this could follow in offshore drilling as mergers and acquisitions have remained the only option for some embattled drillers.

(Source: oilprice.com)

China flags room to boost government debt to support growth

China's government still has room to borrow more to finance the investment and construction needed to shore up economic growth, the Ministry of Finance said.

Overall risks associated with government debt, which amounted to 26.66 trillion yuan (\$4.1 trillion) at the end of last year, are under control, the ministry said in a statement late on Thursday. The government can add leverage gradually because its debt ratio is still below international warning levels, it said.

Separately, a research paper by the People's Bank of China's monetary policy analysis team posted Thursday on the China Business News website suggested ongoing support. The central bank will create "neutral and appropriate" monetary policy while the fiscal environment will serve the nation's structural reform, it said.

The finance ministry statement appears to say "they have more room to leverage the government balance sheet to help the corporate sector to deleverage," said Ding Shuang, head

of greater China economic research at Standard Chartered Plc in Hong Kong. "On balance, it gives me the impression they are ready to run a more expansionary fiscal policy."

China's leaders are seeking to add fiscal firepower to underpin a slowing economy and clear the path for structural reforms including cutting overcapacity in sectors like coal and steel. With the nation's total debt already about two and a half times economic output, policy makers face a tricky balancing act: further leveraging risks undermining long-term stability, while a sharp credit contraction risks derailing growth and stability.

The current budget deficit target is 3 percent of gross domestic product this year. Ding estimates the actual level will be close to 4 percent, and could run even higher if needed. While debt concerns have shaken investor confidence, the ratio of government borrowings to GDP is low by global standards -- 39.4 percent, according to the finance ministry.

(Source: Bloomberg)

World leaders tangle over global growth recipe amid rising risk

World leaders meeting in Japan tangled over how to push the global economy toward growth amid an array of risks including geopolitical tensions, a slowdown in China and Britain's potential exit from the European Union.

The Group of seven industrial nations -- the U.S., Japan, Germany, the UK, France, Italy and Canada -- sought a coordinated approach at a summit in central Japan amid discord over the best policy mix of fiscal spending, monetary stimulus or structural reforms.

G-7 nations will use "all policy tools -- monetary, fiscal and structural -- individually and collectively to strengthen global demand and address supply constraints while continuing our efforts to put debt on a sustainable path," the group said in a statement Friday after the two-day meeting in Ise-Shima.

The show of comity disguised an undercurrent of dissent over how to create jobs and growth, whether through spending and stimulus meas-

ures championed by leaders like Japan's Shinzo Abe and Canada's Justin Trudeau, or an approach of budget discipline supported by looser labor markets and better competitiveness, the hallmark of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Regional differences played a role, as Asian economies feel the brunt of a Chinese slowdown, while the 19-member euro area struggles with seven years of crisis and a dearth of demand and the U.S. economy revives.

"It is not entirely surprising that a coordinated response to an unevenly felt dynamic could not be reached at the G-7 negotiating table," Glenn Maguire, Asia-Pacific chief economist at Australia & New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. in Singapore, said in an e-mail.

"Moreover, the G-7 is obviously aware of the 'announcement effect' the official communique has," he said. "In such a situation, warning of negative risks and sentiment can become self-fulfilling."

(Source: Bloomberg)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Google beats Oracle on copyright, defeating \$9 billion claim

Google won a jury verdict that kills Oracle Corp's claim to a \$9 billion slice of the search giant's Android phone business and may give comfort to programmers who write applications that run across different platforms without a license.

Oracle contended that Google needed a license to use its Java programming language to develop Android, the operating system in 80 percent of the world's mobile devices. Jurors in San Francisco federal court on Thursday rejected that argument and concluded Google made fair use of the code under copyright law.

Oracle started the second trial in a case spanning almost six years at an advantage, with the judge explaining that it had already been established that Google had infringed Oracle's copyrights.



Daimler invests 3 billion euro in clean diesel technology

Daimler said it will spend 3 billion euros (\$3.35 billion) to curtail diesel exhaust pollution levels by modifying its engines and exhaust treatment systems including through a software update for some Mercedes-Benz passenger cars.

The 3 billion euros includes a 2.6 billion euros investment announced in February.

Daimler Mercedes-Benz will equip its entire range of diesel cars in Europe with selective catalytic reduction technology and roll out particulate filters for gasoline engines.

Daimler said improvements in engine technology include optimizations of turbocharging, fuel injection and intercooling, as well as the application of new materials which help extend exhaust-gas recirculation treatments at lower operating temperatures.



Philips Lighting unit valued at 3.0 billion euros in IPO

Philips said on Thursday it has set pricing in the initial public offering of its lighting division at 20 euros per share.

The offer price implies a market capitalization of 3.0 billion euros for the Philips Lighting division as a standalone company, or an enterprise value of 4.5 billion euros including debt.

After the IPO Philips Lighting will be the world's largest independent lighting maker, surpassing rival Osram of Germany.

Frans van Houten, the chief executive of parent company Royal Philips called the spin off a "strategic milestone" that will allow the main company to "focus on the fast-growing health technology market."

Offbeat Tehran: A somber visit to the Polish Cemetery

The WWII started by the invasion of Poland in the hands of Nazi Germany on the west which was later followed by the attack of the Soviets on the east. Considering Poland's economical weakness, the consequences were extremely drastic and over 5 million Polish citizens perished. A deal was later made between the Germans and the Soviets which resulted in dividing and annexing all of Poland between themselves.

Thousands of Polish citizens were imprisoned and forced into labor. The huge wave of arrests under Soviet occupation caused for overloaded prisons and so they were sent to other labor camps and resettled in remote areas of the USSR. Almost a million of them were sent to Siberia with half of them being women and children. A huge number died there due to horrible conditions, cold and hunger.

Soon after, the Nazis broke the treaty and attacked Soviet territory. USSR, now betrayed by the Germans, initiated diplomatic relationships with Poland and agreed to release many of its Polish prisoners held in labor camps.

Here's when Iran comes into the story. By accepting to host all these Polish refugees under British command and with the help of India, many Polish prisoners found their way to Iran, from where they would be sent to India, South Africa and New Zealand.

The young men were trained to join the Anders army (Polish Armed Forces in the East) who would later fight courageously in Italy against the fascism regime.

Former Polish prisoners were sheltered in Iran for years before being sent to other countries. They entered Iran either from the port of Anzali in the north west of Iran or Khorasan on the east of the Caspian sea. Although not everyone made it alive, which explains why there's a Polish cemetery in both Anzali and Mashhad.

The survivors were divided in between different cities and most orphan children



were sent to Esfahan where the Polish cemetery holds many of their bodies. Most of these refugees were later sent to other countries but a number of them stayed in Iran and called it a second home.

Today the Polish cemetery of Tehran holds over 2000 graves of Polish citizens. Most of them casualties of WWII, some going back to Iran-Poland relationships during the Safavid era and others are those who stayed in Iran and died later.

When reading on the location on the internet I had read that access was limited.

Although the cemetery is famously known as the Polish cemetery, it's actually a Christian cemetery where a big section of it is dedicated to Polish graves. However Italians, French and Hungarians also have their own section.

We walked through lines of dead bodies who would probably never expect to be buried in Iranian soil. There was a tomb made for a French doctor who was the royal doctor for a Qajar king. There was a woman who we were told had intended to board the Titanic but didn't, due to her families' disagreement and life somehow

calculated her time of death in Iran instead of the Atlantic. There were Polish children as young as one years old and rows and rows of similar graves belonging to Polish war casualties who had not seen a bright day since the war had started.

Since I had shown my fair share of interest in the story I was given a book in Persian from the guard called "From Warsaw to Tehran" which depicts the life of a woman named "Helen" who was sent to Siberia with her mother when she was only eight. Helen and her mother fled the Soviet Union for Iran in the most catastrophic way. She later resides permanently in Tehran and marries an Iranian man with whom she lives until now. The book is written by her son and is quite easy to read. If you're interested, I'd highly recommend reading it before heading to the cemetery. Not to mention, you can find Emilia's (Helen's mother) grave in the cemetery too.

Visiting a cemetery is probably not the most attractive place to be, but traveling is not all about glorious palaces, art museums and restaurants. It's sometimes about

shedding light on gruesome facts of history and reminding yourself why it's important to stand up against those who benefit from wars and segregation of people and to be grateful for the people who went through hell for our freedom and comfort.

Though I'm proud to know my country was the first to give home to Polish refugees, visiting this place had me wondering why we're not told about this side of the story as much.

And now more than ever must we feel responsible to bring stories and places like this into spotlight.

■ Tips:

#1 If you're Polish or interested in this part of the history I assume visiting this place is going to be a moving experience, so I highly recommend it.

#2 The cemetery is located in Doolab area and is easy to find on Google Maps. If you're using public transportation then the easiest way would be to get yourself to Pirouzi metro station and grab a shared taxi from there to Pasdar-e Gornam Street. It's a short walk after that and you're at the cemetery.

#3 Access to the cemetery is limited and even more restricted for non-Christians. If you're Polish, Italian, French or Hungarian you probably won't have any problem getting in. If you're accompanied with any of these nationalities like I was then it's fine.

However if you're Iranian, there's a big chance you won't be let in! So you're way of getting in would be either by joining a tour or going with someone who's trusted by the guard. It's nothing serious.

I went there just once, talked to him and he assured that I would be let in if I ever come alone. He just really wants to avoid any sort of hassle.

#4 Those Polish refugees who were Jewish are buried in other cemeteries such as the Jewish cemetery of Gholhak.

(Source: travestyle.com)

Egypt's travel sector reels from series of disasters

Terror attacks and plane disasters have taken their toll on Egypt's vital tourism sector, with receipts down by almost half in the first three months of the year, delivering another blow to the struggling economy.

The downing of a Russian passenger jet over the Sinai Peninsula last fall, which was claimed by an Islamic State affiliate, had the biggest impact, prompting some countries to impose bans on flights to Egyptian destinations.

The result was a drop in the sector's receipts by 46% in the first quarter of 2016 compared with a year-earlier period, Tourism Minister Yahya Rashed said in an interview this week.

He said he was hopeful last week's still-unexplained crash of an Egypt Air flight from Paris to Cairo wouldn't have the same impact on tourist numbers.

"We're targeting a gradual quarterly growth till the year-end, and for 2017, we are sticking to our target of 10 million tourists," Mr. Rashed added.

Investigations are ongoing after Flight 804 carrying 66 people plunged into the eastern Mediterranean on May 19. No one has claimed responsibility for downing the Airbus A320, but Egyptian authorities have said a terrorist attack was more likely than a technical fault to have caused the crash.

It was the latest in a run of trouble for Egypt's travel sector.

In March, a disturbed passenger hijacked a domestic EgyptAir flight wearing an authentic-looking suicide vest that turned out to be fake. It landed in Cyprus and no one was hurt.

In September, Egyptian security forces accidentally bombed a group of Mexican tourists and their guides in the western desert, mistaking them for terrorists in an air raid that left 12 dead. There have been other incidents as well, often carried out by suspected Islamist extremists.

But it was the Oct. 31 downing of a Russian passenger jet shortly after it left the Egyptian resort town of Sharm El Sheikh, killing all 224 aboard, that had the most measurable impact. Tourists from Russia, usually a major source, have dried up since then as a result of Moscow's flight ban.

Egypt's tourism sector employs between three and four million people—nearly 12% of the workforce—and is a key source of hard currency for the import-dependent economy.

With fewer tourists arriving, an existing dollar shortage quickly exacerbated, slowing growth, hampering industries, and curtailing import of strategic items.



A lone tourist shopping at the Khan al-Khalili market in Cairo last week. (Getty Images/Maram Mazer)

"Egypt's tourism sector has had a torrid time in recent months," said Jason Tuvey, a Middle East economist at Capital Economics. "Overall, we think tourism receipts could be down by around \$5 billion [close to 2% of GDP] compared with last year," he said.

(Source: Wall Street Journal)

PICTURE OF THE DAY ISNA/Hadi Zand



CHTHO Director Masoud Soltanifar attended the opening ceremony of 26th Iran National Handicraft Exhibition on Wednesday

Craftspersons from across Iran gather at Tehran exhibition

TOURISM TEHRAN — Over 360 participants from different parts of Iran are participating in the 26th Iran National Handicraft Exhibition, which is being held at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

The director of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization (CHTHO) Masoud Soltanifar, CHTHO Deputy Director Bahman Namvar-Motlaq and several other officials attended the opening ceremony on Wednesday.

During the ceremony, Soltanifar honored some exquisite works of needle working, etching and traditional weaving.

The exhibition will run until May 30 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

A CLOSER LOOK

Some adventures around the world



A climber sleeps on a portledge on a cliff (Photograph by mariachily, flickr)

Itching for an adventure, but want to set your sights on something a little out of the ordinary? Look no further.

Treat yourself to a wholly unique experience with any one of these offbeat adventures:

■ Live Like a Bedouin in Egypt

If commonplace adventures sound too tame for you, consider immersing yourself in the life of a desert nomad in Egypt. U.K.-based Secret Compass offers a unique minimalist two-week expedition to steep travelers in Bedouin culture while leading them across the Sinai Peninsula with camels in tow.

The 143-mile route meanders past desert dunes, slot canyons, natural plunge pools, and lush desert oases, and includes scaling the country's highest peak—Mount Catherine, at 8,625 feet. Expect to help bake bread each morning, trade camels and barter for food with Bedouin tribes, and sleep beneath a wool blanket under a black sky sprayed with twinkling stars.

■ Climb trees in the Amazon

To experience the Amazon rain forest from the ground is to scratch just the surface of its vast tangle of diversity. Most of the action takes place far overhead. Embrace your inner kid with Tropical Tree Climbing to get a bird's-eye view, deep in the wilds of Amazonas, in northern Brazil.

After ascending on ropes up to 200 feet, settle into a canvas hammock for close encounters with monkeys, orchids, birds, butterflies, and other flora and fauna that thrive high in the forest canopy. Feeling especially bold? Opt to stay in the trees after dark to hear the night forest come alive as fireflies emit their magical intermittent glow.

■ Raft tidal bore rapids in Canada

Imagine a flat, placid river that works itself up into a raging boil of rapids. That's just what you'll experience in the Bay of Fundy, a giant funnel-shaped bay between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that's known for having the highest tidal range in the world.

Twice each day, a tidal bore temporarily reverses the flow of the Shubenacadie River. The resulting rapids form as the incoming sea wrestles with the river's current, pushing up incredible waves that move with the tide.

Several outfitters lead Zodiac trips on the Shubenacadie at high tide. Prepare to hold on tightly, giggle uncontrollably, and get soaking wet as your boat launches over the tumultuous white water.

■ Sleep on a cliff in Colorado

Have you ever shuddered at photographs of climbers sacked out on a portable ledge suspended from the side of a cliff, but secretly wanted to join them? Kent Mountain Adventure Center makes it possible for amateurs to experience the high-altitude thrill firsthand—in the heart of the Rockies.

The Estes Park outfitter's cliff-camping adventure package allows travelers to get a taste of the vertical life unscathed and within cell range. Guides lead guests through climbing and safety basics, including rappelling and ascending a fixed rope using Jumar ascenders, before leading them up hundreds of feet to set up their own "wall camp" on a seven-by-four-foot portledge.

■ Snorkel with sailfish off the Yucatán Peninsula

Each winter, sailfish—the world's fastest fish, reaching speeds of more than 60 miles per hour—prowl the balmy waters off Isla Mujeres, Mexico, in search of sardines. Poetry in motion is one way to describe the graceful dance of this spear-nosed predator as it attacks a swirling school of baitfish that contracts and scatters rhythmically to evade its hungry jaws. To witness it while snorkeling is like having a courtside seat.

■ Go log driving in Sweden

How would you like to navigate a wooden raft down a meandering river for a day or even a week, camping at secluded spots along the way? Huckleberry Finn-types will delight in this one-of-a-kind adventure in the wilds of Sweden, which National Geographic Traveler named one of its "Tours of a Lifetime" in 2013.

Vildmark i Värmland has been helping travelers experience the self-reliant life of log drivers—workers hired in the early days of the logging industry to ensure timber made it to its final destination downstream, usually a mill or factory—on the Klarälven River for 35 years.

Show up to a stack of timbers on shore and learn how to construct your own craft, then work your way down the river, stopping to take a quick hike, admire a beaver on the shoreline, or to pitch a tent for the night (the company offers timber-raft tours that range from one to eight days).

■ Swim with horses in Jamaica

It's one thing to ride a horse bareback on a white-sand beach alongside a dreamy tropical blue ocean. (Cue the sweeping movie soundtrack.) But to notch it up to a surreal level, imagine venturing into the waves until your horse's hooves can no longer touch the seafloor. Then sliding off into the water and trailing behind your steed holding on to its tail (yes, its tail. Don't worry, it doesn't hurt). Take my word for it: You won't be able to contain your glee.

If this equine adventure sounds like your cup of tea, head to the Half Moon Equestrian Center in Montego Bay. The stable, associated with the adjacent Half Moon resort, takes in retired racehorses and employs them for riding lessons, strolls in the sand, and these "Surf and Turf" excursions where you and your horse move as one through the lulling ocean.

(Source: National Geography)

An opening for peace in Afghanistan?

After a U.S. drone killed the Taliban leader, a new leader emerges whose background suggests he might not oppose peace talks with the Afghan government. All countries involved in possible negotiations must pursue this possibility -- especially Pakistan.

Americans were starkly reminded last week that their military's role in Afghanistan is far from finished, nearly 15 years after the 9/11 attacks.

A U.S. drone strike killed the leader of the Taliban, Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. While the strike may seem aimed at a military defeat of the insurgent group, it was not. Rather, Mansour was targeted for being an obstacle to peace talks -- and to the hopes for national reconciliation.

This is why his replacement, Moulavi Haibatullah Akhonzada, is drawing so much interest. As head of the Taliban's group of religious

scholars -- rather than a military commander -- he may have a different temperament toward the prospect of peace.

And as the group's longtime clerical leader, he could bring greater authority in persuading other Taliban leaders to start negotiations with the Afghan government.

■ Launching peace talks

That possibility, while currently slim in the eyes of many experts, must not be ignored by the nations of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group -- Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the United States. This group has tried for three years to launch peace talks for Afghanistan.

Its efforts are based on the belief that the only and best way to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan is through negotiation and a peace process. Despite the Afghan Army's improved performance on the battlefield under a recently elected government, a

military victory over the Taliban seems remote.

To start the negotiations, however, Pakistan must finally implement its stated policy of opposing all violent extremists on its territory, not just those that strike its own people.

The U.S. was able to locate Mansour as he traveled openly in

Moulavi Haibatullah Akhonzada, as head of the Taliban's group of religious scholars -- rather than a military commander -- may have a different temperament toward the prospect of peace.

Pakistan before hitting him with a drone.

While the strike was an embarrassing intrusion on Pakistani sovereignty, it revealed how little the Taliban worries about the Pakistani intelligence service.

China, as a close partner of Pakistan, has a peculiar interest in the Afghan peace process. It is spending billions on roads, railways, and other infrastructure to link its economy with countries to its west. It will need stability in the "Af-Pak" region to build what it calls a new "Silk Road."

With President Obama planning to draw down U.S. troop levels to a residual force of 5,500 by the time he leaves office early next year, the Taliban have an incentive to negotiate a peaceful role for the group in Afghan society. The obstacles to peace are not worth more war.

(Source: The CSM)



Moulavi Haibatullah Akhonzada

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France's next president

By Dominique Moisi

In a little more than a year, the French will vote to elect their new president. It is, of course, far too early to make any predictions. If "one week is a long time in politics," as former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson is reported to have said, then a year is an eternity. And yet, given the high stakes of the outcome for France and Europe, a first assessment should be attempted.

If opinion polls are to be believed, France's next president will not be François Hollande or Nicolas Sarkozy, the two most recent holders of the office. Hollande is the incumbent, but his performance has been disappointing on nearly all fronts, especially when it comes to tackling unemployment. Sarkozy's chances are crippled by his unsavory character.

The French president under the Fifth Republic is, in British terms, both monarch and prime minister. He holds symbolic as well as real powers. Sarkozy failed, above all, to incarnate the Republic with dignity; Hollande has failed in the realms of both incarnation and action. To put it bluntly, a man who was simply "too much" was succeeded by one that was just "not enough." As a result of this tandem, badly needed structural reforms have been left undone or were implemented only when it was too late.

The resulting disequilibrium

The impact on Europe has been no less disappointing. Not since the end of François Mitterrand's term in 1995 has there been a French president that is a match for a German chancellor. The resulting disequilibrium – not enough France, and thus too much Germany – has been one of the major political problems facing the European Union.

It is hard not to attribute the divergence in the two countries' fortunes to the leadership they have experienced. In Germany, the reform-minded Gerhard Schröder was succeeded by the courageous Angela Merkel. In France, by contrast, Jacques Chirac's globally passive leadership was followed by Sarkozy's energetic but ultimately disappointing single term in office and Hollande's irresolute, lackluster leadership.

The majority of French voters believe that next year's election will be their last chance to regain control of their country's destiny, rekindle its influence in Europe, and forge a new sense of direction. The disagreement – as in the United States – is over what form the change should take. A dramatic division has emerged between reformists and radicals, between those who want to make deep changes from within the system and those – on both the extreme right and the extreme left – who want to change the system from the outside.

The political atmosphere is dominated by two major



JACQUES CHIRAC

NICOLAS SARKOZY

FRANÇOIS HOLLAND

developments. On one hand, Hollande's Socialist party seems on the verge of political annihilation, much like the Republican party in the U.S. On the other hand, the far-right National Front and its leader, Marine Le Pen, are enjoying a steady rise; polls give the party one-third popular support, the highest in the country, making it very likely that Le Pen will reach the second round of the presidential election.

Fortunately, there seems to be a limit to the National Front's level of support. Whatever electoral strengths Le Pen in France or Donald Trump in the U.S. may have, they will almost surely fail in their quests for their countries' highest offices. Populism may be on the rise, and elites may be deeply unpopular. But unless something terrible happens – such as a series of spectacular terrorist attacks – sanity will prevail on both sides of the Atlantic.

Popular figures

So what does sanity look like in today's France? Aside from Le Pen, the two most popular figures on the right and the left are, respectively, the oldest and youngest potential candidates: Alain Juppé, who

served as Prime Minister under Chirac, and Emmanuel Macron, Hollande's Minister of Economy, Industry, and Digital Affairs.

Juppé's ratings in opinion polls have been remarkably steady, and Macron's have been surprisingly high. It is easy to conclude that a significant majority of French voters would welcome a ticket with both of them on it – the wise, experienced man with gravitas as President and his much younger colleague as Prime Minister. Indeed, the pair would constitute a formidable cross-generational, cross-party team that might finally be able to implement much-needed reforms.

To be sure, a German-style grand coalition would not be in line with how politics is usually practiced in France, which is accustomed to a rigid left-right divide. Moreover, both men have rejected the idea of joining forces. But in politics, anything is possible.

Macron's youth is a weakness, and he lacks the support of a party machine. Popularity is not the same thing as real political support, especially if your ambition is to rock the boat.

Juppé's liabilities are very different. He is more adept at exercising power than he is at obtaining it. His natural shyness makes him seem distant, not unlike Hillary Clinton in the U.S. But he also has a unique advantage. Given his age – he will be 72 next year – he intends to run for one mandate only and does not have to think about his reelection. France may have already found its next president.

(Source: project-syndicate)

The majority of French voters believe that next year's election will be their last chance to regain control of their country's destiny.

COMMENT

What Russia, U.S., EU could do to stabilize Middle East

For decades, the Middle East has been the center of big diplomatic moves and military operations carried out by global powers. The Russian operation in Syria, a U.S.-led anti-Daesh coalition in Syria and Iraq as well as Brussels' efforts to resolve the migrant crisis – all of the above show that concerns are growing over the threats from the region.

However, neither the U.S. nor Russia or the EU can single-handedly stabilize the situation in the region.

Amid other global problems, Washington, Moscow and Brussels could start a constructive dialogue on the Middle East, political analyst Igor Istomin wrote in an article for the Russian newspaper Izvestia.

There are three factors making such cooperation possible, according to the author.

First, the threats coming from the Middle East are rather similar for the U.S., Russia and the European Union. Despite the fact that from time to time priorities can vary (from terrorism to piracy or migration) there is a basic problem – the lack of stability and weak institutions of power in the Middle East.

Second, the U.S., Russia and the EU have significant resources to stabilize the situation in the Middle East. Moreover, their capabilities complement each other. Washington leads in projecting military power. Moscow has a wide network of contacts with regional players. And the EU has huge financial resources.

Third, despite the fact that the Middle East is the center of global attention the region is not as important as many other regions. The U.S., Russia and the EU understand this.

The author also underscored that despite tensions between Russia and the West both sides have a long history of effective cooperation, including the issue of Syrian chemical weapons, Afghanistan, the Iranian nuclear program, and Syria.

Istomin suggested that any attempts to stabilize the Middle East by creating regional organizations (like OSCE, for example) would not be effective due to the level of hostility and activity of non-government actors in the region.

Instead, dialogue channels established by the U.S., Russia and the EU would help to partially resolve regional tensions, he said.

"The US, Russia and the EU would benefit if they coordinate their signals to Middle East countries. Because instability in the region poses threats to their security too," the author concluded.

(Source: Sputnik)



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NEWS IN BRIEF

A giant ball that can protect you against tsunamis, hurricanes and earthquakes

Survival Capsule, a giant spherical ball with a concept of the personal safety system (PSS) is designed specifically to protect you against tornadoes, tsunamis, storm surges, hurricanes and earthquakes. It is developed by aircraft engineers from Survival Capsule LLC.

The company stated that using a PSS, as opposed to a municipal safety system like a safe house, lets individual groups and families to be safer during their survival in an emergency situation. It further explained that the capsule is also a flexible disaster solution, which means it can differ position according to water depth, so it will never be flooded by water levels rising too high. The capsule provides warmth, safety and shelter during the initial post-disaster period before rescue crews and relief workers have appeared on the scene.



The giant Survival Capsule can withstand the initial impact of a natural disaster, heat exposure, rapid deceleration, sharp object penetration and blunt object impact. It can be mounted inside or outside the house or business establishment. It comes in different sizes from two-person to a ten-person capacity. The smaller capsules are appropriate for family and private dwellings.

On the other hand, the larger capsules are fitted for business, schools, hospital, municipal buildings and general public safe havens.

The capsule is designed to float with a self-righting system that can prevent it from rolling upside down, according to Daily Mail. It is made from a hardened aluminum shell and frame and its interior is also insulated.

(Source: Science World Report)

This weight loss pill inflates a balloon in your stomach

It sounds like a load of hot air. But it's now possible for some people to lose weight by inflating a balloon inside their stomach, according to the results of a new study.

The device, created by the California Company Obalon, is a deflated balloon stuffed inside a small capsule. Attached to the pill is a thin catheter, and when it's swallowed, the tube sticks out.

Once the pill hits the stomach, the balloon is released, and a doctor pumps gas into the tube to inflate the balloon. The tube is then pulled out and the balloon remains, taking up room in the stomach and, in turn, curbing appetite. Multiple balloons can be inside the stomach at the same time.

The "balloons work by taking up space in your stomach and making you feel full earlier in the meal," says study author Dr. Shelby Sullivan, assistant professor of medicine at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. "Patients definitely feel fuller and eat less with it."

Obalon is currently approved in Europe, but hasn't been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The new trial, which was funded by the company, was designed to seek that approval. A similar approach, called an intragastric balloon, is FDA-approved, though it is not covered by insurance. One intragastric balloon company, called ReShape Integrated Dual Balloon System, received FDA approval in 2015; the balloons are filled with saline and the procedure costs \$7,000-\$9,000, according to the company.

(Source: Time)

Can drones be used to protect wildlife?

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, can help protect wildlife – but they can make animals dangerously stressed out, finds a study published Monday.

Two researchers from The University of Adelaide's Unmanned Research Aircraft Facility (URAF), Ph.D. candidate Jarrod Hodgson and professor Lian Pin Koh, published a report in the Cell Press journal Current Biology that suggests a set of best practices for researchers to follow when employing drones around wildlife.



"Considering the growing popularity of UAVs as a tool among field biologists, we advocate for the precautionary principle to manage these risks," write the authors in their article, which is expected to be published Monday. "Specifically, we provide a suite of recommendations as the basis for a code of best practice in the use of UAVs in the vicinity of animals or for the purpose of animal research, which supplement current standards in animal field research and reporting."

Along with adopting the precautionary principle, Koh and Hodgson suggest adhering to civil aviation rules, which can include restrictions on flying above a certain altitude, at night or within a certain proximity to people and infrastructure. UAVs should also minimize visual and audio output as much as possible.

It may even be beneficial, suggest Koh and Hodgson, to design the shape and color of UAVs with the relevant environment in mind. UAVs can be modified to "mimic non-threatening wildlife" native to the area, such as a local, non-predatory bird.

(Source: The CSM)

Mars had water and habitable conditions in the past, suggest carbonate samples

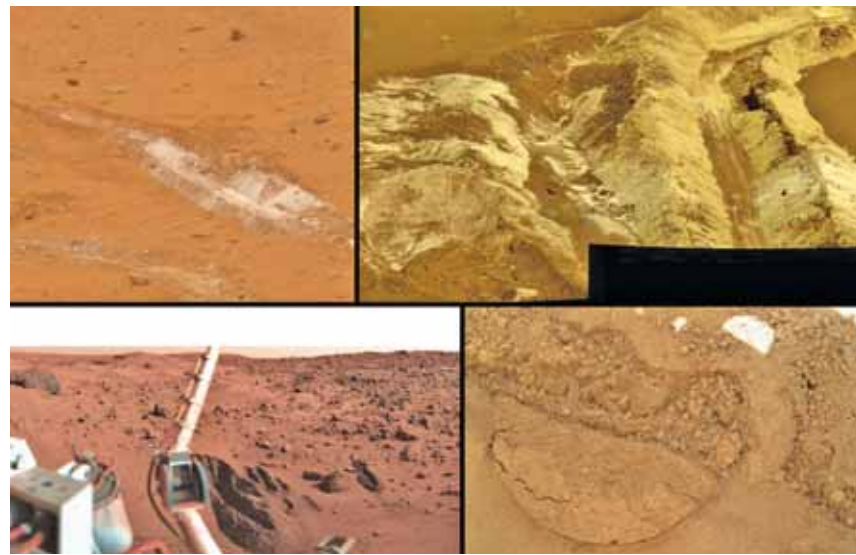
Mars once had water and habitable environment to support life, say scientists after finding the traces of iron and calcium carbonate ores on the Red Planet. According to scientists, these carbonates are widely spread on the Martian surface that suggests climate was a lot different on the ancient Mars than it is today.

"Identification of these ancient carbonates and clays on Mars represents a window into history when the climate on Mars was very different from the cold and dry desert of today," said Janice Bishop of the SETI Institute in the U.S.

Presence of carbonates and sand means, the climate was lot warmer and it had liquid water in the past. Warm, humid atmosphere and presence of water are the basic necessities for the survival of life forms. Thus, researchers cannot deny the possibilities of the existence of life several million years ago on the Red Planet.

Water on Martian surface

Scientists have long debated about the presence of water molecules on the Martian surface in the past. However, if water did flow once then the bedrock must con-

**Scientists have found water marks and pebbles on the Mars that point towards the existence of rivers in the past.**

tain carbonates and clays. Scientists have also found water marks and pebbles on the

Mars that pointed towards the existence of rivers in the past.

(Source: The TeCake)

GM foods pose no risk to health says Royal Society

Genetically modified (GM) foods do not pose a threat to human health or the environment and will aid in feeding a growing world population in a sustainable manner, the Royal Society says. It published a factual Q&A guide on 24 May aimed at dispelling myths and misconceptions about GM food.

The 40-page document, written by leading British scientists in the field, said half the UK population was ill informed about GM crops and a further 6% had never heard of them.

It stated that currently available GM produce is "at least as safe to eat" as non-GM food, but conceded that new GM varieties can potentially cross-breed with closely-related plants and lead to undesirable environmental side effects.

A GM crop variety is created by altering the plant's DNA in a lab. This typically involves adding a new trait it does not naturally possess, such as resistance to certain pests or pesticides.

**Genetically altered crops**

Several European countries have banned the commercial cultivation of genetically altered crops, but the European Union as a whole imports large quantities of GM produce from overseas – mostly soy bean, cotton and maize from the U.S.

"There is no evidence that a crop is dangerous to eat just because it is GM," the Royal Society guide said. "There

could be risks associated with the specific new gene introduced, which is why each crop with a new characteristic introduced by GM is subject to close scrutiny. Since the first widespread commercialization of GM produce 18 years ago, there has been no evidence of ill effects linked to the consumption of any approved GM crop."

Currently, GM produce is grown by 28 countries around the world, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, China, India and Brazil, and on 10% of the planet's arable land. There are no GM crops cultivated in the UK.

The Royal Society said there was no documented evidence to suggest a crop is bad for the environment just because it is GM. However, "there could be unexpected side effects from any new crop variety, GM or non-GM, as well as with any agricultural practices," it added. "Risk assessment and appropriate testing of all new crops, along with ongoing monitoring should mitigate the risks."

(Source: International Business Times)

Air pollution could increase risk of stillbirth, research suggests

Exposure to air pollution may increase the risk of stillbirth, new research suggests.

Stillbirths, which are classed as such if a baby is born dead after at least 24 weeks of pregnancy, occur in one in every 200 births. Around 11 babies are stillborn every day in the UK, with around 3,600 cases a year.

Researchers have called for tighter curbs on car exhausts and industrial waste emissions to reduce the risk of air pollutants after their research concluded that exposure to ambient air pollution heightens the risk of stillbirth.

Following a systematic review of 13 studies on the subject, published in the journal Occupational & Environmental Medicine, the researchers found the risk was particularly heightened during the third trimester of pregnancy.

"Our results provide suggestive evidence that ambient air pollution is a risk factor for stillbirth," they wrote.

Potential adverse effects

"Pregnant women should be aware of the potential adverse effects of ambient air pollution, although the prevention against exposure to air pollutants generally requires more action by the government than by the individual."

They added: "Policies such as control of vehicular emissions, fuel quality improvement and control of industrial waste emissions should be developed and implemented to reduce the risk of air pollutants."

The air pollutants linked to a height-



ened risk included: small particulate matter of less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5), PM10, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone.

Dr. Marie Pedersen, of the Center for Epidemiology and Screening at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, wrote: "Stillbirth is one of the most neglected tragedies in global health today, and the existing evidence deserves additional investigation."

"If the evidence of an association between ambient air pollution and stillbirth is confirmed in future studies, it would be of major public health importance."

"Although the reported summary effect estimates were relatively small, the ubiquitous nature of ambient air pollution exposure suggests that exposure to ambient air pollution may have a large population-attributable risk for stillbirth."

(Source: The Telegraph)

Nanomaterials could double efficiency of solar cells by converting waste heat into usable energy

An experimental solar cell created by MIT researchers could massively increase the amount of power generated by a given area of panels, while simultaneously reducing the amount of waste heat. Even better, it sounds super cool when scientists talk about it: "with our own unoptimized geometry, we in fact could break the Shockley-Queisser limit."

The Shockley-Queisser limit, which is definitely not made up, is the theoretical maximum efficiency of a solar cell, and it's somewhere around 32 percent for the most common silicon-based ones.

You can get around this by various tricks like stacking cells, but the better option, according to David Bierman, a doctoral student on the team (and who is quoted above), will be thermophotovoltaics — whereby sunlight is turned into heat and then re-emitted as light better suited for the cell to absorb.

Sound weird? Here's the thing. Solar cells work best with a certain wavelength of light — perhaps ultraviolet is too short, while infrared is too long, but let's say 600nm (orange visible light) is perfect.

Broad-based radiation

Only some of the broad-spectrum radiation emitted by the sun is at or around 600nm, which limits the amount of energy the cell can pull out of that radiation — that's one of the components of the Shockley-Queisser limit.

What Bierman and the others on his



team did was to add a step between the sun and the cell: a carefully engineered structure of carbon nanotubes.

Normally heat is undesirable in a solar cell, as it's just waste energy that can interfere with normal operation. But in this case, the heat is not allowed to dissipate; instead, the carbon nanostructure converts the heat back into light — at the exact optimum wavelength of the photovoltaic cell.

The result is a huge increase in efficiency, and that's not the only benefit. Heat, unlike light, is easy to store and move. If the day's sunlight was entirely converted to heat and stored away, it could be converted to light on demand — like, say, at night. In other words, this technique essentially allows sunlight to be saved for later.

(Source: Tech Crunch)

Mutation protects against heart disease

According to new international research, just less than one percent of the population is naturally protected against developing chronic coronary artery diseases.

The New England Journal of Medicine, one of the world's most highly renowned health journals, has just published the results of international genetic research collaborations.

Researchers from Iceland's deCode Genetics headed the project, which involved 292,000 participants of European origin, of which approx. 10,000 were from Denmark. Applying advanced gene sequencing techniques, the researchers located an area - a deletion - in the human genome, which lacked twelve DNA building blocks in 0.8 percent of the participants.

Subsequent cell experiments revealed that due to the deletion, the serried gene - ASGR1 - is unable to

establish the normal structure and function of the protein called the asialoglycoprotein receptor. The receptor protein binds certain sugars and surprisingly, it now turns out that the receptor plays an important role in our cholesterol metabolism and potentially related to vascular inflammation, and in whether or not we develop arteriosclerosis in coronary arteries.

"What's spectacular about the discovery is the fact that individuals with this rare and particular mutation have a lower level of cholesterol in their blood and their risk of developing arteriosclerosis is 34 percent less. In other words, just under one percent of the European population is fortunate to have been born with a mutation that decreases their cholesterol levels and thus to a certain extent protects them from developing coronary atherosclerosis," says Professor Oluf Pedersen, Novo

Nordisk Foundation Center for Basic Metabolic Research, University of Copenhagen.

The "mutated protein is expressed in a part of human biology, which we have not previously been focused on in our attempts to understand the mechanisms behind arteriosclerosis. This unexpected finding will undoubtedly result in many researchers examining the underlying biological systems very thoroughly; hoping to utilize this new knowledge to develop new preventive measures and treatments for cardiovascular diseases," Oluf Pedersen elaborates.

Researchers from the universities of Copenhagen, Aarhus and Aalborg as well as the Center for Prevention and Health in Glostrup, Gentofte Hospital, Roskilde Hospital and Hvidovre Hospital represent Denmark in the study.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Barack Obama on Friday became the first sitting U.S. president to visit the site of the world's first atomic bomb attack, bringing global attention both to survivors and to his unfulfilled vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

Obama touched down in Hiroshima after completing talks with world leaders at an international summit in Shima, Japan.

The visit presents a diplomatic tight-rope for a U.S. president trying to make history without ripping open old wounds. Obama planned to make a short speech and pay tribute to the 140,000 people killed in the bombing seven decades ago. But the White House has stressed he will not apologize for the attack, which is viewed by many in the U.S. as having hastened the end of World War II; others have called it a war crime that targeted civilians.

The president also is expected to renew his push for a world without nuclear weapons, an aspiration for which he received a Nobel Peace Prize early on his presidency but has since seen uneven progress.

The White House has said Obama will offer a simple reflection, acknowledging the devastating toll of war and coupling it with a message that the world can — and must — do better.

Here, at this place of so much suffering, where U.S. forces dropped the bomb that gave birth to the nuclear age, Obama will also place a wreath at the centropath, an arched monument in Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park honoring those killed on Aug. 6, 1945. A second atomic bomb, dropped on Nagasaki three days later, killed 70,000 more.

Obama will also look forward. Hiroshima is much more than "a reminder of the terrible toll in World War II and the death of innocents across the continents," Obama said Thursday.

It is a place, he said, "to remind ourselves that the job's not done in reducing conflict, building institutions of peace and reducing the prospect of nuclear war in the future."

Those who come to ground zero at

Obama becomes 1st U.S. president to visit Hiroshima bomb site



Hiroshima speak of its emotional impact, of the searing imagery of the exposed steel beams on the iconic A-bomb dome. The skeletal remains of the exhibition hall have become an international symbol of peace and a place for prayer.

The president is accompanied on his visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe — a demonstration of the friendship that exists between the only nation ever to use an atomic bomb and the only nation ever to have suffered from one.

Bomb survivor Kinuyo Ikegami, 82, paid her own respects at the cenotaph on Friday morning, well before Obama arrived, lighting incense and chanting a prayer.

Tears ran down her face as she described the immediate aftermath of the bomb.

"I could hear schoolchildren screaming: 'Help me! Help me!'" she said. "It was

too pitiful, too horrible. Even now it fills me with emotion."

Han Jeong-soon, the 58-year-old daughter of a Korean survivor, was also at the park Friday.

"The suffering, such as illness, gets carried on over the generations — that is what I want President Obama to know," she said. "I want him to understand our sufferings."

Obama's visit is a moment 71 years in the making. Other American presidents considered coming, but the politics were still too sensitive, the emotions too raw. Jimmy Carter visited as a former president in 1984.

Even now, when polls find 70 percent of the Japanese support Obama's decision to come to Hiroshima, Obama's visit is fraught.

His choreographed visit will be parsed by people with many agendas.

There are political foes at home who

are ready to seize on any hint of an un-welcome expression of regret.

There are Koreans who want to hear the president acknowledge the estimated 20,000-40,000 of their citizens who were among the dead in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

There are blast survivors who want Obama to listen to their stories, to see their scars — physical and otherwise.

There are activists looking for a pledge of new, concrete steps to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

There are American former POWs who want the president to fault Japan for starting the war in the Pacific.

Obama will try to navigate those shoals by saying less, not more.

The dropping of the bomb, he said Thursday, "was an inflection point in modern history. It is something that all of us have had to deal with in one way or another." (Source: AP)

Trump reaches the magic number to clinch nomination

Donald Trump reached the number of delegates needed to clinch the Republican nomination for president, completing an unlikely rise that has upended the political landscape and set the stage for a bitter fall campaign.

Trump was put over the top in the Associated Press delegate count by a small number of the party's unbound delegates who told the AP they would support him at the national convention in July. Among them is Oklahoma GOP chairwoman Pam Pollard.

"I think he has touched a part of our electorate that doesn't like where our country is," Pollard said. "I have no problem supporting Mr. Trump."

It takes 1,237 delegates to win the Republican nomination. Trump has reached 1,238. With 303 delegates at stake in five state primaries on June 7, Trump will easily pad his total, avoiding a contested convention in Cleveland.

Trump, a political neophyte who for years delivered caustic commentary on the state of the nation from the sidelines but had never run for office, fought off 16 other Republican contenders in an often ugly primary race.

Many on the right have been slow to warm to Trump, wary of his conservative bona fides. Others worry about his crass personality and the lewd comments he's made about women.

But millions of grass-roots activists, many of them outsiders to the political process, have embraced Trump as a plain-speaking populist who is not afraid to offend.

Steve House, chairman of the Colorado Republican Party and an unbound delegate who confirmed his support of Trump to the AP, said he likes the billionaire's background as a businessman.

"Leadership is leadership," House said. "If he can surround himself with the political talent, I think he will be fine."

Trump's pivotal moment comes amid a new sign of internal problems.

Hours before clinching the nomination, he announced the abrupt departure of political director Rick Wiley, who was in the midst of leading the campaign's push to hire staff in key battleground states. In a statement, Trump's campaign said Wiley had been hired only on a short-term basis until the candidate's organization "was running full steam."

His hiring about six weeks ago was seen as a sign that party veterans were embracing Trump's campaign. A person familiar with Wiley's ouster said the operative



clashed with others in Trump's operation and didn't want to put longtime Trump allies in key jobs. The person insisted on anonymity because the person was not authorized to publicly discuss the internal campaign dynamics.

Some delegates who confirmed their decisions to back Trump were tepid at best, saying they are supporting him out of a sense of obligation because he won their state's primary.

Cameron Linton of Pittsburgh said he will back Trump on the first ballot since he won the presidential primary vote in Linton's congressional district.

"If there's a second ballot I won't vote for Donald Trump," Linton said. "He's ridiculous. There's no other way to say it."

Trump's path to the Republican presidential nomination began with an escalator ride.

Trump and his wife, Melania, descended an escalator into the basement lobby of the Trump Tower on June 16, 2015, for an announcement many observers had said would never come: The celebrity real estate developer had flirted with running for office in the past.

His speech then set the tone for the candidate's ability to dominate the headlines with provocative statements, insults and hyperbole. He called Mexicans "rapists," promised to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico and proposed banning most Muslims from the U.S. for an indeterminate time.

He criticized women for their looks. And he unleashed an uncanny marketing ability in which he deduced his critics' weak points and distilled them to nicknames that stuck. "Little Marco" Rubio, "Weak" Jeb Bush and "Lyn"

Ted" Cruz, among others, all were forced into reacting to Trump. They fell one-by-one — leaving Trump the sole survivor of a riotous Republican primary.

His rallies became magnets for free publicity. On-stage, he dispensed populism that drew thousands of supporters, many wearing his trademark "Make America Great Again" hats and chanting, "Build the wall!"

The events drew protests too — with demonstrators sometimes forcibly ejected from the proceedings. One rally in Chicago was canceled after thousands of demonstrators surrounded the venue and the Secret Service could no longer vouch for the candidate's safety.

When voting started, Trump was not so fast out of the gate.

He lost the Iowa caucuses in February, falling behind Cruz and barely edging Rubio for second. He recovered in New Hampshire. From there he and Cruz fiercely engaged, with Trump winning some and losing some but one way or another dominating the rest of the primary season — in votes or at least in attention — and ultimately in delegates.

Republican leaders declared themselves appalled by Trump's rise. Conservatives called the onetime Democrat a fraud. But many slowly, warily, began meeting with Trump and his staff. And he began winning endorsements from a few members of Congress.

As with other aspects of his campaign, Trump upended the traditional role of money in the race.

He incurred relatively low campaign costs — just \$57 million through the end of April. He covered most of it with at least \$43 million of his own money loaned to the campaign. He spent less than \$21 million on paid television and radio commercials. That's about one-quarter of what Jeb Bush and his allies spent on TV.

Trump entered a new phase of his campaign Tuesday night by holding his first major campaign fundraiser: a \$25,000-per-ticket dinner in Los Angeles.

Trump, 69, the son of a New York City real estate magnate, had risen to fame in the 1980s and 1990s, overseeing major real estate deals, watching his financial fortunes rise, then fall, hosting "The Apprentice" TV show and authoring more than a dozen books.

(Source: AP)

Israel environment minister quits 'extremist' cabinet

The Israeli environment minister has officially resigned in protest at the appointment of hawkish politician Avigdor Lieberman as the regime's new minister for military affairs.

Avi Gabbay said in a resignation statement on Friday that the recent "political maneuvering" and replacement are "grave actions that ignore what is important for [Israel's] security and will bring about more extremism and rifts among the people."

The public wants a rightist cabinet, but they do not support the establishment of

an extremist cabinet, Gabbay added.

His decision came after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed up Lieberman as Israel's new war minister on Wednesday in a pact beefing up his coalition to six parties with control over 66 of parliament's 120 seats, up from a razor-thin majority of 61.

Later in the day, the party of far-right Israeli politician Lieberman announced it will join the ruling coalition of Netanyahu under the agreement between him and Netanyahu.

Lieberman had reportedly earlier ac-

cepted an offer by Netanyahu to become the minister of military affairs.

Netanyahu had summoned Lieberman's predecessor Moshe Ya'alon and reproached him over supporting an analogy between Israel's situation and Nazi Germany.

Ya'alon then officially resigned both from the cabinet and the Knesset (parliament), citing "lack of trust" in the premier. He also said Israel and the ruling Likud Party was taken over by "dangerous and radical officials."

(Source: al Alam)

JUMP

Syrian president denies media report of new Russian-drafted constitution

Syrian President Bashar Assad denied media reports Friday that his ally Russia had drawn up a new constitution for his country and presented it to his government as part of international efforts to end the long conflict.



Lebanese daily al-Akhbar had reported Tuesday that Russia had finished drafting a constitution which would remove many of the president's powers and set up a more decentralized government, both possible concessions to rebel groups fighting Assad.

"No draft constitution has been shown to the Syrian Arab Republic. Everything which has been said in the media about this subject is totally untrue," a statement on the Syrian Presidency's official Facebook page said.

"Any new future constitution for Syria will not be presented from abroad, but will be entirely Syrian: discussed and agreed upon by Syrians themselves and after that put to a referendum. Anything else would be worthless and meaningless," the statement added.

Bloomberg reported last month that Russia, which supports Assad, and the United States, which mediates on behalf of the Syrian opposition, were working on a draft constitution together.

A peace plan endorsed by the U.N. Security Council in December called for a Syrian-led transition process that establishes "credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance," a new constitution, and free, fair elections within 18 months.

(Source: Reuters)

Taliban or ISIL, which one!?



The official who requested not to be named went on to say: "No one is ready to answer the question that why our efforts to negotiate with Taliban in the past year did not bear any fruit."

He said, "They have closed their eyes on a reality named Islamabad."

Analyzing the election of Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada as Taliban leader, the official said: "Did you expect anything else? He is the first name of the past two months' acts of terrorism and a professional drug dealer. But his outstanding character is being a full servant of ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence). Our friends do not want to realize this fact."

However what would be the political and security consequences of Mullah Mansoor's death and the succession of Akhundzada in Afghanistan's developments?

From my point of view this is not a very important issue. The Taliban issue is not just abbreviated in its leadership. Washington and Kabul say by Mullah Mansoor's death an obstacle to peace negotiations has been removed. Well, attack on a vehicle that Mullah Mansoor was travelling in was a masterpiece in military attacks. But if we look and analyze the Taliban beyond its leadership we will find ourselves facing a bunch of Taliban loyalists that ISIL is trying to hunt them and eventually make optimum use of such fighters.

The terrorists who are not so loyal to their leaders anymore, within such framework it does not make a big difference if the Taliban leader be the slain Mullah Mansoor or Akhundzada or Mullah Yaqoob or Mullah Rasool.

The main cause of worry is the ability of Taliban fighters to run out of the traditional circle of Taliban leadership and join more organized forces or groups such as ISIL.

Many of the aforementioned Taliban fighters in north and northeast, under the guidance of a man called Shahidullah Shahid, made allegiance with ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in mid-July last year.

The ISIL terrorist group - enjoying the charm of "limitless geographical boundaries," "self-interpreted Islamic rule" and "high level of financial power" - has a very good chance in attracting the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters and so far ISIL has proven to be successful in recruiting them.

Local reports also indicated the vast and calm influence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. An official from Helmand province says: "We feel their eyes and the frigidity of their weapons behind our heads (hunting us)."

The shock of the fall of Kunduz province to the Taliban in late September or the loss of the strategic town of Sangin in Helmand province with the help of ISIL has not been forgotten yet, while Mullah Mansoor was still alive.

We have to be more concerned and worried about ISIL in Afghanistan than Mullah Mansoor or Haibatullah, particularly when it comes to Western and Central Asia.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The best thing to hold onto in life is each other. Audrey Hepburn

LEARN ENGLISH

Cheering Someone Up

Eleanor: Isn't it a beautiful day? The sun is shining; the birds are singing. It's good to be alive!
 Porter: Okay, Pollyanna, go spread good cheer somewhere else.
 Eleanor: What's wrong with you? You must have woken up on the wrong side of the bed.
 Porter: I'm just having a bad day - no, make that a bad month. Nothing is going my way.
 Eleanor: Cheer up! Every cloud has a silver lining and it's no use crying over spilled milk.
 Porter: Spare me your platitudes, and let me wallow in my own misery.
 Eleanor: I can't do that. If your work isn't going well, then practice makes perfect. You'll just do better next time.
 Porter: It's not my work.
 Eleanor: Is it your girlfriend? If your girlfriend isn't being nice to you then there are plenty of fish in the sea. Don't you see? Whatever the problem is, it's not the end of the world.
 Porter: My biggest problem right now is easy to fix.
 Eleanor: How?
 [Door slams.]

(Source: espod.com)

Words & phrases

Pollyanna: someone who is always happy and always thinks something good is going to happen
spread good cheer: to spread joy, love, happiness and a feeling of confidence
wake up on the wrong side of the bed: to feel slightly angry or annoyed for no particular reason
go your way: if an event goes your way, it happens in the way you want
cheer up: to become less sad
every cloud has a silver lining: used to say that there is something good even in a situation that seems very sad or difficult
cry over spilled milk: to waste time feeling sorry about an earlier mistake or problem that cannot be changed
spare me: it usually means someone is fed up listening to you and doesn't want to hear anything more about the subject
platitude: a statement that has been made many times before and is not interesting or clever - used to show disapproval
wallow: to seem to enjoy being sad etc., especially because you get sympathy from other people - used to show disapproval
misery: great unhappiness
practice makes perfect: used to say that if you do an activity regularly, you will become very good at it
there are plenty of fish in the sea: used to tell someone whose relationship has ended that there are other people they can have a relationship with
it is not the end of the world: used to tell someone that a problem is not as bad as they think
slam: if a door, gate etc. slams, or if someone slams it, it shuts with a loud noise; bang

QUIZ OF THE DAY

159) What does the idiom mean?
 My jaw dropped.
 a) I was very surprised
 b) I ate too much
 c) I was hit in the jaw
 (Quiz No. 158 answer: a)

PHRASAL VERB

Stick to

■ **Meaning:** continue without changing anything
 ■ **For example:** We must decide on a plan of action and stick to it.

ENGLISH PROVERB

(The) end justifies the means

■ **Explanation:** wrong or unfair methods may be used if the result of the action is good



Without earth no birth!

Iran, UNEP sign environmental joint plan of action

SOCIAL TEHRAN — The chief of desk the Department of Environment, Masoumeh Ebtekar, and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Executive Director Achim Steiner signed a joint plan of action on Friday, IRNA news agency reported.

The two officials signed the document on the sidelines of the second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) held on May 23-27 in Kenya.

Hazardous waste management and promoting collaborative researches are of the main subjects of the plan.

Holding regional workshops, easing information exchange, and conducting joint researches on e-waste are of the other topics of this document.

■ **Regional conflicts a barrier to international cooperation**

In addition to the signing of the agreement, Ebtekar followed up plans on combating sand and dust storms haunting many cities in Iran and the whole region in UNEA-2.

In a meeting with Shamshad Akhtar, the



Masoumeh Ebtekar, and Achim Steiner signed a joint plan of action

Executive Secretary for UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Ebtekar regretted that regional conflicts in the Middle East has created a barrier to international cooperation for resolving dust storms.

"The conflicts have minimized cooperation or in some cases made it impossi-

ble," she lamented.

Thanking Akhtar for ESCAP's adoption of the resolution on combating sand and dust storms submitted by Iran she emphasized on the importance of the regional cooperation to solve the matter.

Soil erosion, deforestation, land degradation, drying lakes and lagoons and

climate change are of the issues affecting dust storms, she said, adding, "we have come up with a scientifically justified and practical plan to fight dust particles."

Akhtar also proposed for a regional conference led by Iran on the dust particle.

In respond to Akhtar's suggestion Ebtekar said that the conference can be held concurrent with ESCAP's sub-regional office opening in Iran in September 2016.

According to DOE website, in line with activities to stop dust storms a meeting with Iranian and Mongolian experts and also specialists from University of Oxford was held on Thursday.

■ **UNEP to establish an office in Iran**

Over a meeting with Erik Solheim, the executive director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Ebtekar asked for establishment of a UNEP office in Iran.

Solheim expressed readiness to cooperate with Iran and made a pledge to follow through the establishment of a sub-regional office in Iran.

Sand storm in northeastern Iran leaves one dead

SOCIAL TEHRAN — Sand storm in Sabzevar, Khorasan Razavi province, northeastern Iran, on Wednesday left one dead, IRNA news agency reported.

Following the sand storm one got hit by the debris and passed away and three others sustained injuries, Alireza

Abdollahi the province's deputy governor general said.

The sand storm has also caused huge loss to the electricity grid of the city and resulted in power cut in some of the villages, he added.

Additionally the storm has done massive damages to the farm-

ing lands, gardens and water supply facilities, Abdollahi added.

Sabzevar traffic police, Ali Fat'hi also explained that the storm led to a pile-up and left three injured.

Fat'hi went on to say that "the road was closed for one hour and it was not possible for the drivers to steer their cars."

The question each state Googles more than all other states

Estately is back at it again with the gratuitous Google data. Known for its maps breaking down Google queries by state, the real estate website has found yet another way to make you concerned about your fellow American citizens.

Using a combination of autocomplete and 12 years of Google Trends information, Estately has discovered the questions each state asks the most compared to the other 49 similarly inquisitive states.

If you think this map is disconcerting, try delving deeper into the many searches that keep folks up at night around the country.

Just three states were stumped by singular questions from 2004-2016. Alaskans still have no idea how the fuck to smoke salmon, Minnesotans are worried about

just how fun they are, and Wyoming has been caught in an existential crisis for the better part of this millennium.

Regarding food-related inquiries, California is deeply concerned about its diet. Perhaps another kind-hearted state can explain to them about Jello, bacon, coconuts, coffee, bread, and honey. Bonus points if they do so at the nearest Starbucks, effectively answering yet another question curious citizens of the Golden State have become preoccupied with.

You can check out the entire expanded and awful list on Estately's website. By the time you're done perusing, you may be more aligned with Montana than any other state. "How to move to Canada?"

(Source: Daily Dot)

New England beachgoers warned: Don't take selfies with seals

BOSTON (AP) — The feds have a warning for beachgoers in New England during Memorial Day weekend: Don't take selfies with the seals.

Seal pupping season is underway in the region, but people who approach a seal pup on the beach can put both themselves and the animal at risk, the Greater Atlantic Region of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries said in a statement Thursday.

"There is no selfie stick long enough!" officials warned. "As tempting as it might be to get that perfect shot of yourself or your child with an adorable seal pup, please do the right thing and leave the seal pup alone."

It is normal behavior for a mother seal to leave her pup on the beach for up to

24 hours while she feeds, experts said. But if the mother sees people near her pup, she might feel it is too dangerous to return and abandon her young, with "devastating" consequences for the pup.

The statement also notes that wild animals act unpredictably and seals can leave a "lasting impression" with their powerful jaws.

"We have received reports of a number of injuries to humans as a result of getting too close to an animal during a quick photo op," officials wrote.

Experts have long warned about the dangers of swimming too close to seals in the water, since seals are a favorite food for sharks and the sharks might not distinguish between people and their intended prey.

IN FOCUS ISNA/ Morteza Zanganeh



As the summer is approaching and it gets hotter it feels great to go for a swim. Those living in southwest Iran in Khuzestan province would choose to swim in Karun River.

Man arrested for dragging dog behind truck in Washington

Police have arrested a man for dragging a dog behind his truck in Vancouver.

Vancouver police said in a Wednesday news release that police went to a home on Sunday on a report of a dog being dragged by a truck to that location. Witnesses told police they had heard a dog yelping and crying loudly and saw a dog hanging by a leash on the side of a truck.

Police say they weren't able to make contact with the residents initially and returned with search warrants. Once inside, police say they found a dog's body which was taken to a county agency for a necropsy.

Police arrested 52-year-old David Kadow Wednesday, booking him into jail on charges of animal cruelty and driving with a suspended license.

(Source: ABC News)

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION



Female cheetah dies in a road accident

A female cheetah was killed in a road accident in Shahroud, northeastern Iran, Mehr news agency reported.

The dead cheetah was firstly spotted with its three cubs in 2012 and was being monitored in the region for two years.

Last year the aforesaid cheetah was once again spotted with another cub and during the same year one of its cubs, which is now a mother itself, was observed with its three cubs.

Most probably the cheetah's youngest cub cannot live on its own yet and would face difficulty to survive. Searches to find the cub are still ongoing in the area.

For the last decades accidents have been the leading cause of death for the cheetahs which are on the verge of extinction and the death of this successful mother is a shock to this small population of the cheetahs.

یک یوزپلنگ ماده ایرانی بر اثر تصادف جان باخت

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر یک یوزپلنگ ماده ایرانی در شاهرود در اثر تصادف تلف شد. این یوز ماده، اولین بار در سال ۱۳۹۱ در به همراه ۳ توله اش توسط دوربین ها ثبت شده بود که بمدت دو سال در منطقه پایش شد.

سال ۹۴ مجدد این مادر به همراه یک توله در دام دوربین های تله ای افتاد همچنین در همان سال، از یکی از توله های وی، که خود مادر شده بود، به همراه سه توله اش در منطقه عکسبرداری شد.

به احتمال زیاد توله پارسالی این یوز برای بقا مشکلات زیادی خواهد داشت. گشت زنی و بررسی محل تصادف برای پیدا کردن توله ادامه دارد.

طی دهه گذشته، تصادفات جاده ای، یکی از مهمترین عوامل کشته شدن یوزها که در معرض انقراض هستند در ایران بوده است. در این شرایط کشته شدن این مادر موفق، مانند یک شوک جمعیتی برای آخرین بازمانده های یوزپلنگ ایرانی است.

Iran wins Asian Snooker Championship

SPORTS Iran shocked India 3-2 (53-65, 54-7, 77-1, 64-69, 74-40) to clinch the final of the Asian Snooker 6-Reds Teams Championship at Novotel Al Bustan Hotel in Abu Dhabi on Thursday night.

Going into the match, Indian pair of Pankaj Advani and Aditya Mehta was the firm favorites against semi-professionals Amir Sarkhosh and Soheil Vahedi.

The title clash saw leaders changing hands in every frame. Also, each game saw many winners not getting converted. Vahedi was the difference-maker in the final, which was an edge-of-the-seat-thriller.

"This was one final, I was not going to lose," Vahedi told Khaleej Times with trophy in his hand.

Iran started off well with Sarkhosh playing Mehta. It was an even contest that set the tone for the rest of the game. Mehta used all his experience to hold nerves for a 65-53 win. In the second frame, Vahedi bundled up 6-red snooker world number 1 Advani 54-7. In the third, the doubles games saw all the four men on the table. And this saw Vahedi looming large over the Indian pair to single-handedly secure a 77-1 win.

With 2-1 Iran advantage, the fourth frame saw an enticing contest between Advani and Sarkhosh. With all red balls in, the two had at least 10 testing rounds to pot the yellow. Also, Sarkhosh had an opportunity to 'kill the game' while leading 64-51, he missed an easy brown. Advani jumped on the opportunity to seal the fourth frame.

And in the decider, Mehta started off well but a confident Vahedi never offered an inch. Mehta could have turned it around but he missed an easy brown while trailing 40-69. Thereafter, Vahedi went onto hit the final nail.

"It was an honor to play against Advani, the world champion. I had played him once last year in Malaysia and



he had won on the last black," Vahedi pointed out.

On his partner having an off day, he said: "Yes, Sarkhosh could have killed the game earlier but then we have won. To win the title is a very good feeling."

They are expecting a rousing reception back home and are richer by \$6,750.

On the other hand, Advani said: "We didn't play real-

ly well and didn't make the most of the chances we got." The Indian pair paid the price for a safety-first approach, but Advani said the Iranians, especially Vahedi was lucky to have got most of his long pots in.

"Some of the shots he tried we would never go for because the percentage of getting those shots right is very low. He was lucky," he added.

FOOTBALL

Jose Mourinho officially confirmed as Manchester United manager

Jose Mourinho has officially been named Manchester United's new manager.

The Portuguese manager, who has penned a three-year deal, succeeds Louis van Gaal at Old Trafford.

WHAT ED WOODWARD SAID - 'the best in the game'

"José is quite simply the best manager in the game today. He has won trophies and inspired players in countries across Europe and, of course, he knows the Premier League very well, having won three titles here," Ed Woodward told the club's official website.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome him to Manchester United. His track record of success is ideal to take the club forward."

Sky Sports reported on Thursday that Mourinho had agreed terms at a central London hotel, and the news was finalised on Friday morning.

WHAT JOSE MOURINHO SAID - 'A special honour'

"To become Manchester United manager is a special honour in the game. It is a club known and admired throughout the world," added Mourinho.

"There is a mystique and a romance about it which no other club can match. "I have always felt an affinity with Old Trafford; it has hosted some important memories for me in my career and I have always enjoyed a rapport with the United fans. I'm looking forward to being their manager and enjoying their magnificent support in the coming years."

A SUCCESS-LADEN CAREER

José Mário dos Santos Mourinho Félix first came to European prominence at Porto who he led to two Primeira Liga titles, the UEFA Cup and the Champions League over a two year period.

A move to Chelsea beckoned and over two spells at the club he claimed three Premier League titles, three League Cups and an FA Cup to an already burgeoning trophy cabinet.

He claimed a treble at Inter Milan and helped Real Madrid break Barcelona's dominance of Liga, claiming a first league title in four years back in 2012 having secured the Copa del Rey the season before.

DELAYED APPOINTMENT AND TASK AHEAD

The announcement had reportedly been delayed over a tangle between United and Chelsea over the 53-year-old's name, with the latter club apparently demanding payment to sign over three separate trademarks.

Mourinho will be tasked with restoring United to the upper echelons of European football. They endured a difficult season that saw them crash out of the Champions League group stages and finish fifth in the Premier League - albeit one that culminated with an FA Cup win.

(Source: Eurosport)



Iran drawn with Saudi Arabia in AFC U-16 Championship

Iran has been pitted against Saudi Arabia in the AFC U-16 Championship.

Iran has been drawn alongside host India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Group A of the championship, to be played in Goa in September-October 2016.

Saudi Arabia has previously won the tournament twice in 1985 and 1988, while Iran has won it once in 2008.

Draw Result

Group A: India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates

Group B: Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan
Group C: Korea Republic, Malaysia, Oman, Iraq
Group D: DPR Korea, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Yemen

Each group will play a one-round league, from which the top two teams in each group (eight teams in total) will qualify to the quarter-final where the four winners will qualify to the semi-final. The winners of semi-final will

advance to the final.

The top four ranked teams of this year's AFC U-16 Championship will qualify for the FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017, the-afc.com wrote.

In the event that India finish among the top four teams, three play-off matches will be organized among the four losing teams of the quarter-final to determine the fifth placed team that will qualify for India 2017.

(Source: Tasnim)

I deserve to play in the starting lineup, says Ezzatollahi

SPORTS Iranian international midfielder Saeid Ezzatollahi believes that he could play in the starting lineup for FC Rostov next season.

"We had a great season with Rostov as we finished in second place in the Russian Premier League. I missed the first half of the season due to not having the ITC while in the second half we were among the favorites so the coach took less risk and didn't use young players," Ezzatollahi said.

"But Kurban Berdyev believes in me as he asked me to move to Rostov. I have still six months left on my contract and will try my best for the next season to be among the start-



ing lineup," he added.

Rostov, who was fighting to avoid relegation last season, took a huge step forward and finished runners-up. Berdyev's side will play in the Champions League next season.

International Festival of Local Games held in Marivan

SPORTS The fifth edition of the International Festival of Traditional and Local Games was held on Thursday with participation of Iranian and Iraqi teams near Lake Zarivar in Marivan, Kurdistan Province, northwest of Iran.

The two-day festival brought athletes from Iranian provinces Kurdistan, Lorestan, Khuzestan, Sistan and Baluchistan, Ardabil, North Khorasan, Golestan and five Iraqi provinces Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Halabja, Erbil and Kirkuk together.

The festival is an annual event that brings the tribes closer together.

International Festival of Traditional and Local Games includes competition in various games along with traditional dances from the various regions.



"The festival is spreading hope and happiness among the people. In the third millennium, people are forgetting their history and tradition and the festival can bring them closer together," Marivan mayor Foad karimi told ISNA news agency.

Iran to play friendly with Kyrgyzstan

SPORTS Iran national football team will take on Kyrgyzstan in a friendly match on June 7, according to the local media.

Carlos Queiroz men, who are preparing for the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualification, will meet Macedonia five days earlier in Skopje. Iran's scheduled friendlies against Croa-

tia and Norway were called off earlier. Macedonia is currently in the 141th place in FIFA ranking while Kyrgyzstan stands in 100th spot. Iran has been drawn with South Korea, Uz-

bekistan, Qatar, Syria and China in Group A. Iran will host Qatar in the first game of 2018 World Cup qualification third round on September 1.

Real Madrid looking for change in fortunes at San Siro

MADRID (Reuters) — Real Madrid will be hoping that some of Gareth Bale's magic at Giuseppe Meazza stadium will rub off on the rest of the team when they face Atletico Madrid in the Champions League final at the stadium on Saturday.

A victory would be the club's first-ever win in Milan after 14 previous attempts. Eleven of those were Champions League matches, eight of which Real lost and three of which they drew.

When Bale played for Tottenham, Inter Milan beat the London club 4-3 in a 2010 Champions League match. But he remembers that visit fondly - he scored all three Spurs goals.

"I don't know about Real Madrid's history at the San Siro, but it's not important, the club's history in that stadium, as it's in the past," Bale said to Marca newspaper. "I have fond memories of the San Siro. It's a good one for me."

It was at San Siro that Real suffered their worst defeat in the Champions League's European Cup competition - a 5-0 loss against Arrigo Sacchi's AC Milan on April 19, 1989.

No Real player has played as part of a visiting side and won at the San Siro. Luka Modric was on the bench when his former club, Tottenham, won 1-0 at AC Milan in the Champions League in February 2011. Injury kept Bale from

featuring in that game.

But Real captain Sergio Ramos is confident his team will give the club the San Siro victory that has proved so elusive.

"I enjoy playing in great venues, and Saturday's is unique," he told Marca. "I admire the San Siro because one of my idols, Paolo Maldini, played there."

Real's all-time top scorer, Cristiano Ronaldo, has not won or scored at the stadium on three previous attempts, twice as a Manchester United player and once with Real.

"We have to think positive," Ronaldo said to La Sexta TV. "We will win the Champions League."

INSTAGRAM



@uefachampionsleague #Simeone touches down in #Milan! #Atletico #UCLfinal



@poldi_official Yes we did it!



@josemourinho Manchester United Football Club, Old Trafford, The Theatre Of Dreams

Cristiano Ronaldo: Jose Mourinho's first task at Manchester United is giving club back an 'identity'

Jose Mourinho must bring an identity back to Manchester United when he becomes the club's new manager, according to Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Real Madrid forward was quick to heap praise on his former Real Madrid coach, who is finalising a contract with United to succeed Louis van Gaal as manager at Old Trafford.

Ronaldo departed United for Madrid in a world record £80 million transfer in 2009 having scored 118 goals in 292 matches and collecting the world player of the year award after helping United beat Chelsea on penalties to win their third Champions League in 2008.

Ahead of this year's Champions League final between Real and Atletico on Saturday evening in Milan, Ronaldo said he felt Mourinho's first task must be to return United to winning ways and rediscover an identity they have lost since Sir Alex Ferguson retired as manager in 2013.

"He's already signed, hasn't he?" said Ronaldo. "I think it's good. If it's something United wanted I think it's good."

"I hope Manchester United get back to being what they were because it's an impressive club, but in the last years they lacked an identity a bit."

"And it hurts me seeing United like that because it's a club I carry in my heart. I wish Mourinho can restore them back to the top."

Ronaldo endured serious problems with Mourinho towards the end of his three-year spell as manager of Los Blancos with rumours that they fell out due to what Ronaldo viewed as negative tactics.

But Ronaldo says he does not hold a grudge against the 'Special One'.

"Without any problems I would embrace him. One of my great qualities is to not hold grudges at anyone regardless of the damage they may have done to me," said Ronaldo.

"I'm not saying he did, I'm saying in general. There were some problems like in life, like you have problems with your wife."

Is there any chance of Ronaldo returning to Old Trafford?

The thought of Ronaldo returning to United is one the club's fans must salivate over, but with every passing year its looks unlikelier.

At the age of 31, Ronaldo is hardly on the wane, but he must have one eye on the future without football. The end comes to all great players, and it will be interesting to see what the Portuguese striker does after Madrid. With Mourinho running United, he is hardly going to be relishing the prospect of turning out for his old club after the goings on at the Bernabeu when they argued over the correct style of play for the team.

An 11th Champions League success for Madrid in Milan would merely add to Ronaldo's willingness to keep scoring and picking up trophies in the Spanish capital. He might no longer hold a grudge against Mourinho, but that does not mean he suddenly wants to play for him.

(Source: Eurosport)



Poem of the day

Lest Sorrow's army waste thy heart's domain,
I send my life to bring thee peace again.

Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon:13:02 Evening: 20:33 Dawn: 4:08 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:51 (tomorrow)

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NEWS

Sotheby's official says Persian art enjoys many patrons

T A R T TEHRAN — Roxane Zand, Sotheby's deputy chairman for the Middle East, has said that Iranian artworks have found many adherents in Iran and other courtiers.



A painting by Mohsen Vaziri-Moqaddam

She made the remarks during a review session named "Collecting and Iranian Art" held at the Niavaran Cultural Center on Wednesday.

Rose Issa, an independent curator from London, and the economic advisor of Iranian culture minister, Gholamreza Khalil-Arjomand also attended the meeting.

"A great part of Iran's art market belongs to the contemporary art and the art created after (1980-1988 Iran-Iraq) war, indicating that the value of Iran's market has been gathered in this section," Zand said.

She added that Iran enjoys a mixed economy and about 45 percent of Iranian families earn over \$20,000 a year and are considered the main consumers, who can be the main target of the art market, as well.

Zand also said that the art of Iran has been successful amongst other countries, "Amongst the sold items at the auctions, the modern works enjoys high significance. Modern art works created by the artists active during 1960's sell better in the Iranian art market, especially if the artists are not living any longer," she remarked.

On the future of Iran's market of art, Zand regretted that Iran lacks artistic infrastructures and the existence of administrative formalities has had negative impact.

Ruhollah Short Film Festival announces winners

T A R T TEHRAN — The 1st Ruhollah Short Film Festival, which is dedicated to screening films on Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, came to an end in Isfahan on Wednesday by announcing winners in various sections.



A filmmaker leaves the stage after accepting an award during the closing ceremony of the 1st Ruhollah Short Film Festival in Isfahan on May 25, 2016. (ISNA/Ali Nejatbakhsh)

Mostafa Hamikah's "Plain White" was named best in the fiction film section the award for best animation film went to "My City, Sardasht" by Ziba Arjang.

"No Comment" by Behzad Rasolzadeh received the award for best documentary.

No work deserved the award for best music video while "The Land Filled with Grief" directed by Hojjat Mehrabifard won an honorable mention in this section.

Kamal Tabrizi, Merila Zarei, Abolfazl Jalili, Mohammad-Hossein Haqiqi, and Fereshteh Taerpur were the members of the jury.

Isfahan Municipality also honored filmmakers Ahmadreza Darvish, Ebrahim Hatamikia, Abolfazl Jalili for their lifetime achievements during a side-section program held on Tuesday.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Vocalist Alireza Qorbani to perform in Shiraz

CULTURE TEHRAN — Renowned Iranian vocalist Alireza Qorbani is scheduled to perform at Hafez Hall in Shiraz on May 29 and 30 as another leg of his Iranian tour.

Qorbani will song pieces from his latest albums composed by Fardin Khalatbari and Mahyar Alizadeh, the Persian service of MNA reported on Friday.

Behnam Abolqasem, Saman Samimi, Nilufar Mohebi, Meysam Marvasti are among musicians that accompany him during the concerts.

"The Salesman" director, stars receive warm welcome at home

T A R T TEHRAN — "The Salesman" director Asghar Farhadi and the film's stars Shahab Hosseini and Taraneh Alidusti got a tremendous welcome on Friday morning after arriving in home with the two awards they won at the 69th Cannes Film Festival.

Highly surprised to see the awaiting crowd, they were received by a large number of cineastes and fans at the Imam Khomeini International Airport, Persian media reported.

Farabi Cinema Foundation Managing Director Alireza Tabesh, filmmaker Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, actors Amin Tarokh, Habib Rezaei and Nima Raisi were seen amid the happy crowd.

"The Salesman" was this year's only film to win two awards at Cannes. Shahab Hosseini received the Palme d'Or for best actor and Farhadi was presented with the best screenplay prize.

The film is about Emad (Hosseini) and Rana (Taraneh Alidusti) who move into a new flat in the center of Tehran. An incident linked to the previous tenant dramatically changes the young couple's life.

Surrounded by the reporters, Farhadi in his short speech expressed thanks to all the individuals who had come to the airport from long distances and promised to respond to all the questions during the press conference set for May 30.

"Iran's cinema was missing a position in such an (international) event and this must have happened someday. However, we made our best efforts to be worthy representatives for the cinema of Iran and thank God it happened," Hosseini told the reporters at the airport.

"I am happy with the happiness of my people. Of course, happiness is not just to make comedy films all



"The Salesman" director Asghar Farhadi (L) and the film's stars Shahab Hosseini (R) and Taraneh Alidusti acknowledge fans during their arrival at the Imam Khomeini International Airport on May 27, 2016. (ISNA/Mohammadreza Nadimi)

the time. If we can bring happiness to people with our success, it is a positive act, and I thank God I have done my duty. Also, any event which brings an honor and respect to the people of this land makes me glad," he added.

Asked about his feeling on receiving the most significant award in the history of Iranian cinema, he replied, "Thanks God, I have done my duty to my homeland." He also added that he prefers to continue his career in his own country.

Alidusti on her part was overwhelmed to see the huge number of fans and said, "I guessed there would be a warm welcome, but could not guess this many number of people. I hope we can be good representatives for the cinema of Iran."

"I hope this success would act as a bridge for more appearance of Iranian cinema in international arena," she added.

Asghar Farhadi in talks to hire Penelope Cruz, Javier Bardem for his new film

T A R T TEHRAN — Oscar-winning director Asghar Farhadi is in negotiations to hire Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem for his Spanish-language film.

Pedro and Agustin Almodovar's Madrid-based El Deseo and Alexandre Mallet-Guy's Memento Films will produce the untitled project, Variety reported on Wednesday.

The project was born of Cruz and Farhadi's mutual wish to work together, explained Mallet-Guy, which produced "The Past", Farhadi's first film shot outside of his homeland in France and his "The Salesman", which won him the award for best screenplay and the Palme d'Or for best actor for Shahab Hosseini at Cannes.

Farhadi who is currently writing the original screenplay plans to visit Spain next month to scout



Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem celebrated the holidays at the Lakers game together on Christmas Day in 2010.

for locations that could help him to complete the script.

Shooting is expected to begin summer or early fall next year. A U.S. actor will also join the cast.

The plot is about a family of winemakers living in rural Spain.

"It's a psychological thriller with a dash of Agatha Christie in it. The script is a real page-turner," Mallet-Guy told Variety.

Agustin Almodovar, meanwhile, said "The film could offer cultural and industrial crossover which would be highly valuable in the current times."

Farhadi had initially planned to shoot this film last October but said he felt "nostalgic" for Iran and opted to shoot "The Salesman" instead.

Farhadi won the foreign-language Oscar and a Golden Globe for "A Separation" in 2012.

PICTURE OF THE DAY

© Mehr/Asghar Khamseh



Conductor Shahrdad Rohani (C) acknowledges the audience during a concert with the Tehran Symphony Orchestra at Vahdat Hall on May 25, 2016.

Tehran Symphony Orchestra gives first performance with new conductor

It also performed pieces by Iranian composers Hossein Dehlavi and Heshmat Sanjari.

"I selected maestro Heshmat Sanjari's 'Dance of Circle' for this concert because this great musician made very substantial contributions to the progress of the orchestra," Rohani said at the concert.

Rohani got a surprise when the orchestra celebrated his birthday by performing "Happy Birthday to You" when he had left the stage for an intermission.

"Sure, I will never forget this night," said Rohani after returning to the stage while his voice was full of emotion.

"I am happy that this celebration was held for me in my homeland this time," he added.

Rohani, who has led some prestigious orchestras, including London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, was appointed to the orchestra on May 8.

He has also been the guest conductor for Minnesota Orchestra, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony and the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras.

Florence fines Uffizi Gallery director for ticket tout warning

FLORENCE (Reuters) — The city of Florence has fined the head of the Uffizi Gallery for broadcasting publicity without authorization after he aired a recording warning visitors not to buy entry to one of the world's most famous art museums from ticket tout.

Uffizi director Eike Schmidt played the recording of his own voice in English and Italian into the square outside the muse-

um saying where and how much to pay for entry, and telling people to beware of unofficial street vendors and pickpockets.

City police slapped Schmidt with a 295 euro (\$329.78) fine for breaking a law governing audible advertising in the streets. The German art historian said he would pay up on Friday.

But Schmidt, who took over the job at the home of Botticelli's Birth of Venus last

year as part of Italy's campaign to overhaul a sclerotic museum system, criticized the fine.

"Instead of investing time and energy in working out whether we have made an administrative error with our initiative against ticket toutting, we should work together to fight crime and defend our cultural heritage," Schmidt said.

Tickets to the Uffizi, which also houses

Titian's Venus of Urbino, cost up to 12.50 euros, but vendors on the street charge 20-45 euros to skip the queue or have a guided tour.

Last year, authorities in the capital Rome cracked down on the armies of people who hawk sightseeing tours, rickshaw rides, and photos with centurions around the Colosseum amphitheatre, prompting protests.