

TEHRAN TIMES



Mohammadi appointed new head of Iran's SEO

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Tehran says long walk to diplomatic handshake with Washington

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman has put the prospect of an all-out diplomatic thaw between Washington and Tehran too distant, citing numerous hurdles on the path to normalization.

Bahram Qassemi made the remarks on Tuesday when asked by Kyodo news agency senior journalist Hiroki Sugita about the possibility that Iran and the U.S. open embassies in Washington and Tehran.

"Naturally, there may have been some convergence on regional issues, but negotiations have been solely on the nuclear issue," he said.

Tehran and Washington have had no political exchange since November 1979 when the U.S. embassy in Tehran was stormed by a clutch of students on revelations it was used by Washington as an "espionage den".

To understand how long it takes for a thaw, the nuclear deal is a good yardstick, a point referred to by Qassemi.

"The lengthy nuclear negotiations, as an example, can show how bumpy the path to establishing relations is and how long it takes to normalize ties."

Unlike optimism about closer bonds in the wake of the successful nuclear deal, it will not be possible to bring down the wall of mistrust so easily. →2

HUMAN INTEREST

By Marjan Golpira

Diplomatic policeman Abbas Saraei saves the day

TEHRAN — The other day, on the way to the gym in the morning, I witnessed a horrifying accident.

I had just turned onto the main road when I heard a man shouting at the top of his lungs.

Looking closer, I noticed a man being dragged behind a motorcycle. It truly looked like a horror movie except that I was living it at far too early of an hour.

Half awake and baffled, I sought assistance and immediately spotted a diplomatic police booth at the south gate of the Russian Federation Embassy.

Fortunately, Neauphle-le-Chateau, the street where the accident occurred, is sandwiched between the British embassy on the left and Russian embassy on the right and has diplomatic police booths in a few areas.

I ran across the street to get the diplomatic police officer's attention, whose name later I discovered was Abbas Saraei.

The diplomatic policemen in Iran had never impressed me much, and quite frankly, my previous experiences with them were mostly sour.

I found them to be indifferent to the accidents around them. Their reasoning normally is "We are supposed to be protecting the embassy and cannot respond to the incidents in our surroundings." If you ask me, it is nothing but a lame excuse.

Having had that background in mind, I approached officer Saraei. Before I get to him, he had already taken the initiative to step out of the booth, of course, with a walkie-talkie in his hand.

Desperate, I said please call 911, which soon it came back to me that the emergency number in Iran is 110.

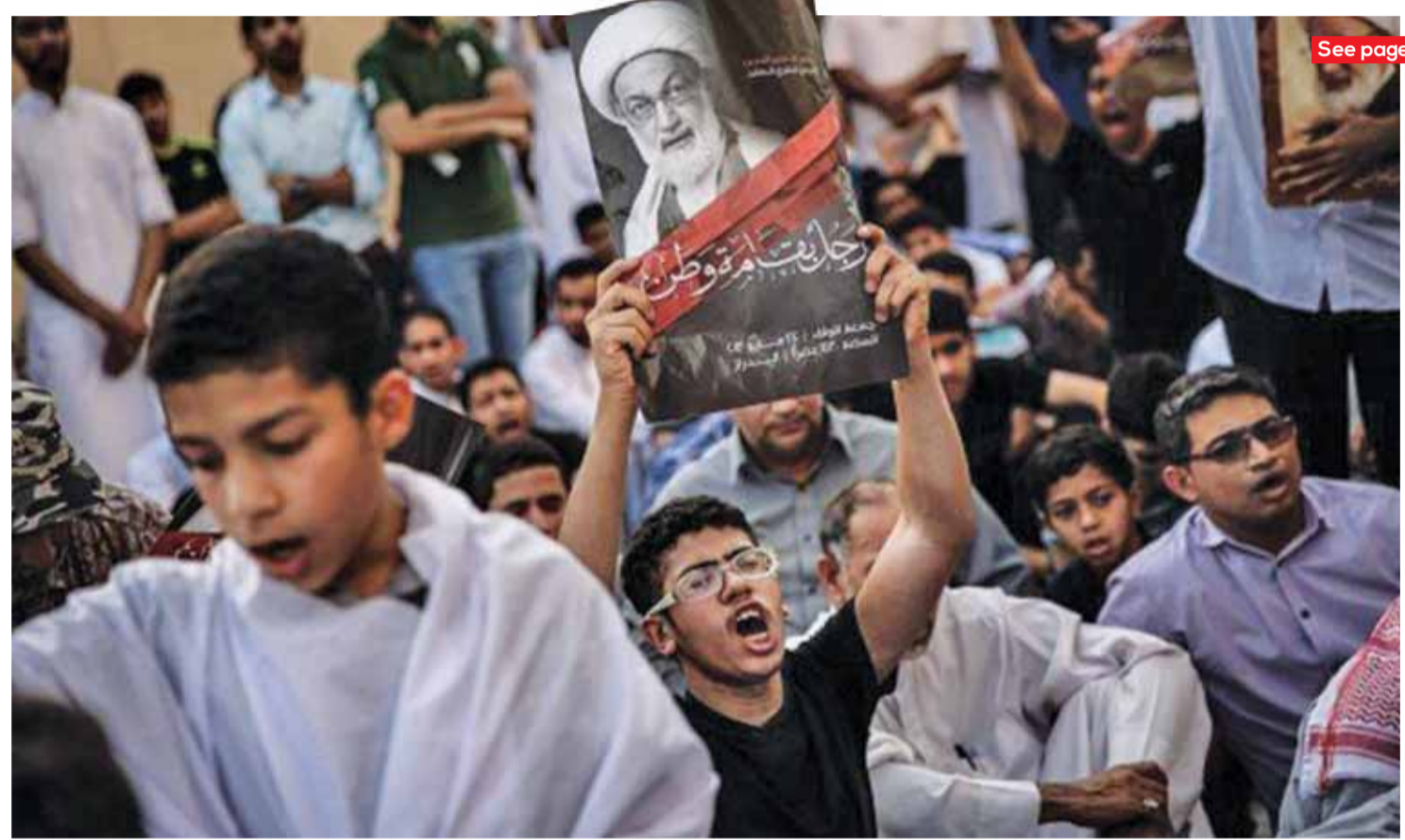
Officer Saraei, who seemed to have kept his cool, dialed a number and asked for assistance, as we both walked toward the scene where the motorbike had come to a standstill and a man on the ground was holding on to the back of it.

→9

State Department, OFAC must stop contradicting each other: Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran says good progress has been made regarding financial and banking interactions, albeit at a sluggish pace. "As of the implementation of the JCPOA, good progress has been made regarding the removal of Sanctions and banking and financial ties," Majid Takh-Ravanchi, the deputy foreign minister, told ISNA in an interview published on Wednesday. →2

Protests force Bahrain to delay trial of top cleric



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Iran sets May 19 for presidential election

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran will hold its next presidential election on May 19, 2017.

The Guardian Council said in a letter to the Interior Ministry

that it had agreed on a date of May 19 proposed by the ministry, the ministry confirmed late Wednesday.

"The 29th of Ordibehesht of 1396 (May 19, 2017) has been

announced as the definite date for the 12th presidential and fifth city and village council elections to the Interior Ministry by the Guardian Council," Salman Samani told IRNA.

Iranian officials have said that the election would be held earlier than usual so as not to coincide with the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan which starts in late May.

Toronto Intel. Film Festival to screen "Salesman"

ART TEHRAN — Iranian director and writer Asghar Farhadi's latest blockbuster "Salesman" will go on screen in the special presentations section of the 41st Toronto International Film Festival, which will be held in the Canadian city from September 8 to 18.

The social media scooped the awards for best screenplay by Farhadi and best actor, won by Shahab Hosseini, at the 69th Cannes Film Festival.

Early in July, the film also won the ARRI/Osram Award at the Munich International Film Festival.



"Salesman" 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.

India's Essar Oil imports from Iran in H1 up 55% y/y

India's Essar Oil Company's crude imports from Iran rose by more than 55 percent in the first six months of 2016 compared to the same period last year.

Based on tanker arrival data obtained from trade sources and ship-tracking services on the Thomson Reuters terminal, the top Indian buyer of Iranian crude imported about 154,200 barrels of Iranian crude during the mentioned period which is 55,000 barrels more compared to the 99,200 barrels of 2015.

The data shows that Iran's share of Essar's total import has reached 44 percent during the



first six months of 2016 while it was only 29 percent in the same period last year.

In June 2016 the company imported 178,100 barrels of crude oil from Iran, the data shows.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran beats Lebanon at FIBA Asia U18 Basketball Championship

SPORTS Host Iran defeated Lebanon 76-54 at the 2016 FIBA Asia U18 Basketball Championship here at the Azadi Hall on Wednesday.

The Iranian team, who had already defeated Indonesia (106-40) and Kazakhstan (90-59) in its first two matches, suffered two successive defeats against Japan 81-77 and South Korea



86-83 in Group B.

Ehsan Samadi led Iran with 13 points and Lebanese Mark Alkhoury scored 14 points.

Iran will play China on Friday.

The top three teams from the 24th FIBA Asia U18 Championship will represent Asia at the 2017 FIBA U19 World Championship.

The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

It can benefit a wide range of tastes from students to professional journalists.

For more information contact: (021) 430 51 603-4



Syria calls Iran best friend of difficult days

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Syrian Prime Minister Imad Khamis said on Wednesday praised Iran's support for the Syrian people and government, noting that Iran has been the "best supporter" of Syria in the most difficult times.

Khamis made the remarks during a meeting in Damascus with Ayatollah Mohsen Araki, secretary general of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought.



The prime minister said that the Syrian religious scholars back moderate Islam and proximity among different Islamic denominations.

Iran has been supporting Syria against militants especially after the emergence of ISIL which its extremely horrific crimes have shocked the world.

Ayatollah Mohsen Araki also predicted that the Syrian government and people will win the battle against terrorists soon.

A new important chapter, which will be "promotion of true Islam" will be opened in the history of Syria after the victory over terrorism, the ayatollah remarked.

The top cleric said religious scholars shoulder heavy responsibility in presenting a true image of Islam to the world.

He added, "Syria can take fundamental steps in promoting true Islam and Islamic unity and become a role model for the world of Islam in this respect."

Ayatollah Araki held a separate meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem during which he said that Syria has many capacities to serve the world of Islam.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Free Hajj sign-up is rumor: official

TEHRAN — Claims about free sign-up for the Hajj pilgrimage are false and people should not believe them, the head of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization said on Wednesday.

These claims are mere "alluring promises void of truth", Said Owahdi said, adding that sending pilgrims to Hajj by means other than those previously provided by the official organization is virtually impossible, ISNA reported.



Iran able to make U.S. leave S. Arabia alone: Rezaei

TEHRAN — The secretary of Iran's Expediency Council on Wednesday warned Saudi Arabia against carrying out mischievous acts against Tehran, saying Tehran is able to make Washington leave Riyadh alone.

"Saudi Arabia has taken certain measures (against Iran) in Pakistan and adjacent to Sistan-Baluchistan and in northern Iraq and these recent moves are the result of its full failure in regional projects," Rezaei was quoted as saying by Fars.

"Saudi Arabia has pinned hope on U.S. support, but we have found a formula and will do something so that the U.S. would leave it alone in the battlefield and will create a disastrous situation for it to remember forever."



All-out ties with Turkey on Iran's agenda: ambassador

TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to Ankara has said expansion of comprehensive relations with Turkey is on the agenda.

Mohammad Ebrahim Taherianfard made the remarks at a meeting of heads of Iran's representative offices in Turkey on Wednesday, Mehr reported.

During the meeting the Iranian diplomats also reviewed acceleration of process of bilateral economic cooperation as well as stability in friendly and neighboring country of Turkey.



Tehran, Baku enjoy strategic relations: envoy

TEHRAN — The Iranian ambassador to Baku on Wednesday described Iran-Baku relations as "strategic".

Talking to IRNA, Mohsen Pakaeen said President Hassan Rouhani is slated to take part in a trilateral meeting between Iran, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Russia in the coming weeks when he visits Baku.

Pakaeen underscored that Iran and Azerbaijan share close cultural affinities, adding that there is no limit to the development of comprehensive cooperation and strengthening of relations with Azerbaijan.



Iranian commandos in Russia to take part in International Army Games

TEHRAN — A number of prominent commandos from the Iranian Army and IRGC are in Russia to participate in the upcoming International Army Games 2016.

The annual event is scheduled to be held on August 1-14, Tasnim reported on Wednesday.

The commandos who consist of seven military teams will compete in various categories, including Sniper Frontier, Tank Biathlon, Suvorov Attack, Elbrus Ring, Airborne Platoon, Seaborne Assault, and Depth.

Military representatives from 17 countries, including Iran, Russia, China, Egypt, Venezuela, Belarus, and Kazakhstan will take part in the contest in southwestern Russia.



Principlists to start campaign for councils in October

TEHRAN — Iran's principlists will start to campaign for the next year's city council elections in October.

Announcing the news, Ahmad Nikfar, a member of the central council of the Islamic Engineers' Society, told Nasim that the campaign will start way in advance of the elections due to the "extensiveness of the elections".

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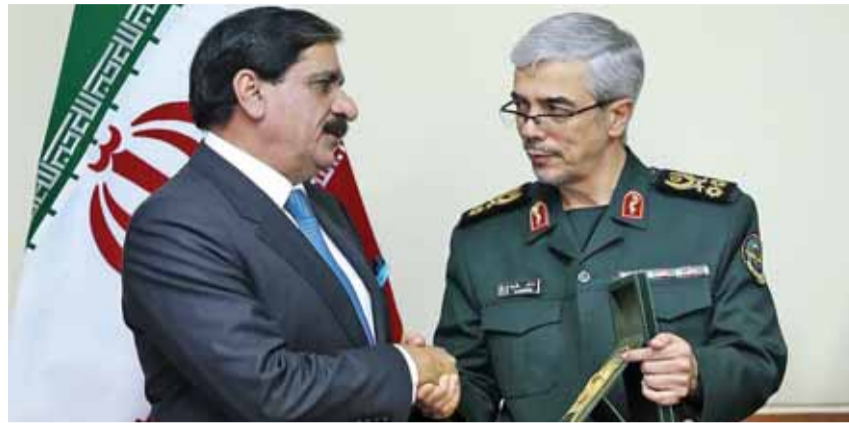
NASIM

Tehran, Islamabad stress counterterrorism co-op in joint statement

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Closer ties, regional stability and peace, and cooperation to fight terrorism are highlights of a joint statement by Pakistan and Iran issued on Wednesday after meetings between senior officials of the two countries in Tehran.

On Monday and Tuesday Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani held meetings with Nasser Khan Janjua, the National Security Advisor of Pakistan, in Tehran, exchanging views on a range of issues.

While emphasizing "brotherly and close ties," Iran and Pakistan attach importance to expansion of ties and dialogue to address border insecurities and counter instability in the region as well



Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Baqeri held talks on Wednesday with Pakistan's National Security Chief Nasser Khan Janjua.

as the Islamic world, part of the statement read.

The two also underscored strong cooperation to battle terrorism and extremist groups and saw "guaranteeing regional peace and stability" as one key goal of the synergy.

"Fighting Daesh as a deviant and divisive current in the world of Islam which is a joint plot hatched by the enemies of Islam and Islamic countries against the unity and cooperation of Islamic countries is another issue the two countries agreed on," the statement said.

Iran hopes to make its eastern borders with Pakistan safer through joint protocols to prevent terrorist cells penetrating into the country.

New chapter opening in Iran-Ghana ties: Zarif

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that relations between Iran and Ghana has entered a new stage.

"A new chapter has been opened in relations between Iran and Ghana," Zarif said during a meeting with Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama in Accra on Tuesday.

Zarif who started a tour of Africa along with 35 representatives from 35 the private sector said that relations between Iran and Ghana are at a "very good level".

"The economic delegation that is accompanying me is one of the largest delegations in the recent years; it is ready to expand and deepen cooperation in various areas with Ghana," he explained.



President Mahama, for his part, said Accra welcomes business activities of Iranian companies in his country, especially in the health sector.

He suggested that Iran and Ghana can cooperate in areas of education and agriculture as well as oil and gas industry.

Elsewhere, he said that Ghana supports political moves to settle the crisis in Syria.

Zarif also said Iran is ready to expand cooperation with Ghana in fighting terrorism and extremism.

During a meeting with Iranian residents in Ghana on Monday, Zarif also said, "Iranophobia is being propagated through large investment by the Zionists and ill-wishers especially the brutal Saudi regime."

Islamic division benefits Islamophobia project: Rouhani



POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday that the current division among the Muslims is in line with "the Islamophobia project".

"Divisions that have been created during the recent years through violence and murder in the name of Islam are caused by the enemy and are in line with a big plot named Islamophobia," Rouhani said during a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

He said that unity among Shia and Sunni is one of the "fundamental principles" of the Islamic Revolution's political ideology.

The president also said the end of the Iran-Iraq war in the summer of 1988 was a glorious milestone in the history of the Islamic Republic. The 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war was ended after acceptance of the UN Resolution 598 by both countries.

Iraq used chemical weapons against Iranian forces and civilians during the war.

Part of the Resolution 598 said the UN is "deeply dismayed by the unanimous conclusions of the specialists that there has been repeated use of chemical weapons against Iranian forces by Iraqi forces, that civilians in Iran also have been injured by chemical weapons."

Iran says it only backs democracy in Bahrain



POLITICAL TEHRAN — The special advisor to Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Tuesday that Iran does not interfere in Bahrain's affairs, but supports democracy, freedom of speech, and observation of human rights in the country.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian also said that trial of cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim is an "audacious" action.

"The Bahraini government will be harmed if it does not learn lesson from history and repeats its mistakes," he added.

He reiterated on Tehran's position that

the crisis in Bahrain can be settled politically.

Bahraini sources said on Monday that Manama will put the 79-year-old Shia cleric on trial on charges of "illegal fund collections, money laundering and helping terrorism".

The trial was set to be held on Wednesday, July 27.

In June, the dictatorial regime of Bahrain announced that it had revoked the citizenship of the major figure due to what they have called serving "foreign interest". The act has been condemned by the UN and several human rights bodies.

State Department, OFAC must stop contradicting each other: Iran

1→ "Partially, part of the problem we are facing now is related to primary sanctions by the U.S., still in place. This has been a cause of concern for some European financial institutes," said the diplomat who served as a nuclear negotiator with great powers.

European banks have given Iran the cold shoulder over re-opening channels of communication, fearing falling foul to fines by Washington.

Particularly, Iran has been critical of an ambiguous Washington over the banking row, accusing U.S. officials of sending incongruous messages.

"We think Washington is sending two messages: one by the Department of State clarifying that there is no obstacles to banking and financial interactions with Iran, and the one by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) which contradicts the first one," Takht-Ravanchi remarked.

As an affiliate of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, OFAC administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on the country's foreign policy and national security goals against targeted foreign countries.

And this dual stance, so to speak, is what Iranian officials have repetitively raised in post-deal meetings with Americans.

In this regard, Takht-Ravanchi said, "In all sessions we have had at ministerial and deputy levels with Americans ever since the implementation day, we have emphasized the point that the messages they are sending are neither a message nor even a positive one."

Of course the Iranian diplomat sees Iranian banks to blame as well, as they have not kept abreast of the international banking system.

"We were under sanctions for nearly ten years. Not only have our banks been in limited

contacts with international players, but international banking regulations have changed, as well."

Also, anti-money laundering and counterterrorism measures have been a hurdle "which we have of course ratified relevant bills", the top diplomat explained.

Having said that, OFAC and the U.S. government together have to find a way to soothe the banking concerns either by issuing a general license or separate licenses in the shortest time, Takht-Ravanchi underscored.



Tehran says long walk to diplomatic handshake with Washington

1→ While Washington says it is open to a more democratic, secular Iran which respects human rights, Tehran characterizes the U.S. hostility toward the country as ideological in essence.

Iran calls on Japanese firms to seize post-sanction opportunities

Qassemi also called on Japanese companies to seize the opportunity to take part in joint ventures with Iran in the post-sanctions era.

If Japanese firms hesitate to compete with European, South Korean and Chinese companies, they will lag behind, Qassemi remarked, the Foreign Ministry said on its website.

Since Iran is the most secure country in the Middle East, it is a good choice for foreign investors, including Japan, the spokesman said.

Iran has a "strategic look" towards the East and it depends on Japanese companies and officials to take a timely decision, he added.

Iran can choose its partners, Qassemi noted.

Democrats nominate Hillary Clinton for U.S. presidency

Obama warns Democrats to 'stay worried' about Trump

The Democratic Party has made history by nominating Hillary Clinton to run for U.S. president as the first woman to head a major party's presidential ticket.

Speaking via video link from New York after her nomination, Hillary Clinton told the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia that she was honored to have been chosen as the party's nominee.

"I am so happy. It's been a great day and night. What an incredible honor that you have given me. And I can't believe that we've just put the biggest crack in that glass ceiling yet. Thanks to you and everyone who has fought so hard to make this possible," she said.

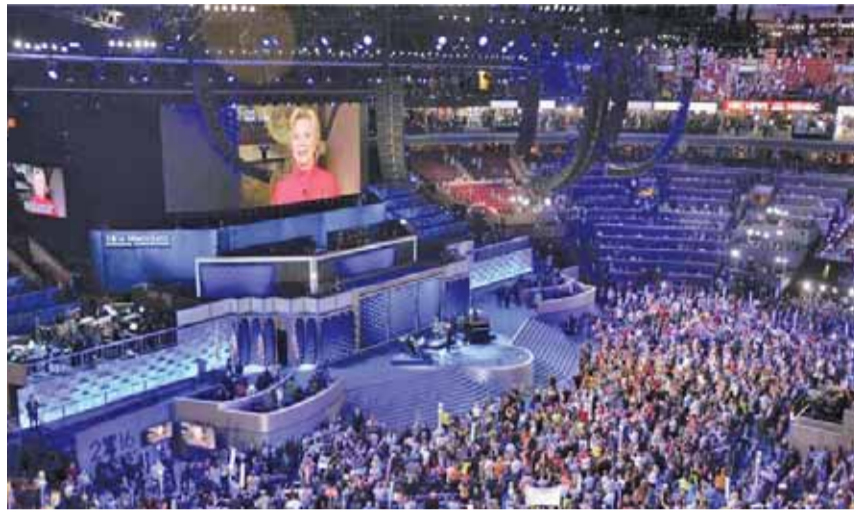
"And if there are any little girls out there, who have stayed up late to watch, let me just say: I may become the first woman president, but one of you is next."

Obama warns about Trump

Meanwhile, U.S. President Barack Obama warned Democrats Wednesday that anything was possible in the U.S. elections and to "stay worried until all the votes are counted."

Obama, who is the keynote speaker Wednesday at the Democratic National Convention, was asked in an interview with NBC's Today Show whether Republican candidate Donald Trump could defeat the Democrat's Hillary Clinton, AFP reported.

"Anything is possible," he said.



"As somebody who has now been in elected office at various levels for about 20 years, I have seen all kinds of crazy stuff happen, and I think everybody that goes into campaigns not running scared can end up losing."

"My advice to Democrats - I don't have to give this advice to Hillary Clinton because she already knows it - is you stay worried until all the votes are cast and counted, because one of the dangers in an election like this is that people don't take the challenge seriously, they stay home, and we end up getting something else."

Clinton was proclaimed the Demo-

cratic presidential nominee Tuesday night at a star-studded convention in Philadelphia keynoted by husband and former president Bill Clinton.

Divisions were on display, however, after leaked emails showed that leaders of the supposedly neutral Democratic National Committee worked to undermine the candidacy of Clinton primary rival, Bernie Sanders.

The Clinton campaign has blamed the leak on Russian hackers bent on helping the Trump campaign. The FBI has said it is investigating.

"Anything is possible," Obama said when asked in the interview about the

hack.

"Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed admiration for Vladimir Putin," Obama said in an excerpt of the interview that aired earlier.

"And I think that Trump's gotten pretty favorable coverage back in Russia."

Obama praised Clinton as an "outstanding secretary of state" who helped make the country safer and defended her against Republican accusations that her use of a private email account while in office had compromised national security.

"What I think is scary is a president who doesn't know their stuff and doesn't seem to have an interest in learning what they don't know," he said, referring to Trump.

"I think if you listen to any press conference he has given or any debates, basic knowledge about the world or what a nuclear triad is, or the difference between Sunni and Shia in the Muslim world, those are things he doesn't know and hasn't seem to spend a lot of time trying to find out about."

Obama, who speaks to the convention Wednesday night, said his message would be that "the president of the United States is profoundly optimistic about America's future, and is 100% convinced that Hillary Clinton can be a great president."

(Source: agencies)

Syria's war: 50 killed in ISIL attack in Qamishli

Two explosions have struck a predominantly Kurdish town in northern Syria, killing at least 50 people and wounding dozens.

Syrian state TV said a truck loaded with explosives blew up on the western edge of the town of Qamishli, near the Turkish border, on Wednesday. Minutes later, a motorcycle packed with explosives blew up in the same area.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the explosion targeted a center of the local Kurdish police and a nearby government building.

ISIL has carried out several bombings in Kurdish areas in Syria in the past.

The predominantly Kurdish U.S.-backed Syria Democratic Forces have been the main force fighting ISIL in northern Syria and have captured wide areas from the hardline fighters.

"This was a large attack," said Al Jazeera's Mohamed Jamjoom, reporting from Gaziantep in Turkey,



which is close to the Syrian border. "The death toll could significantly rise throughout the day".

The latest attack comes amid intense fighting in Aleppo, Syria's largest city, where more than 50 people have been killed in recent days.

As the war drags on towards its sixth year, there is a renewed international push to restart the stalled Syria

political talks next month.

Speaking in Geneva, Switzerland, on Tuesday, following a closed-door meeting with U.S. and Russian officials, Staffan de Mistura, UN special envoy to Syria, said Washington and Moscow had been discussing ways to work towards the reintroduction of a ceasefire.

De Mistura said that a third round of intra-Syrian peace talks is set for August.

"In the context of the bilateral meeting today, it was also agreed that we, the UN - the facilitator, the mediator - should continue preparing proposals for addressing difficult issues that are related to the [talks]," he said.

The Syrian Observatory estimates that more than 280,000 people have been killed throughout the five years of bloodshed. Efforts to negotiate a lasting ceasefire have collapsed time and again.

More than 4.8 million Syrians have become refugees displaced from their homeland, while more than 6.5 million people are internally displaced within the country's borders.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Turkey detains more journalists in clampdown on cleric's followers

Turkey ordered another 47 journalists detained Wednesday, part of a large-scale crackdown on suspected supporters of U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, who is accused by Ankara of masterminding a failed military coup.

Turkey has suspended, detained or placed under investigation more than 60,000 soldiers, judges, teachers, journalists and others suspected of ties to Gulen's movement since the July 15-16 coup, which was staged by a faction within the military.

Turkey's army General Staff Wednesday put the number of soldiers belonging to the Gulen network who took part in the coup attempt at 8,651, roughly about 1.5 percent of the armed forces, broadcaster NTV reported.

Gulen has denied any involvement in the failed coup.

Turkey's capital markets board said on Tuesday it had revoked the licence of the head of research at brokerage AK Investment and called for him to face charges over a report he wrote to investors analyzing the July 15 coup.

Western governments and human rights groups, while condemning the abortive coup in which at least 246 people were killed and more than 2,000 injured, have expressed alarm over the extent of the crackdown, suggesting President Tayyip Erdogan may be using it to stifle dissent and tighten his grip on power.

The detention of journalists ordered on Wednesday involved columnists and other staff of the now defunct Zaman newspaper, a government official said. Authorities in March shut down Zaman, widely seen as the Gulen movement's flagship media organization.

"The prosecutors aren't interested in what individual columnists wrote or said," said the official, who requested anonymity. "At this point, the reasoning is that prominent employees of Zaman are likely to have intimate knowledge of the Gulen network and as such could benefit the investigation."

However, the list includes journalists, such as Sahin Alpay, known for their leftist activism who do not share the religious world view of the Gulenist movement. This has fueled concerns that the investigation may be turning into a witch-hunt of the president's political opponents.

On Monday, media reported that arrest warrants had



been issued for 42 other journalists, 16 of whom have so far been taken into custody.

Alpay is a former official of Turkey's left-leaning, secularist main opposition CHP party. The Dogan news agency said police raided his home in Istanbul early on Wednesday and detained him after a 2-1/2 hour search of the property.

Spirit of unity

Erdogan's ruling Islamic-rooted AK Party and opposition parties, usually bitterly divided, have demonstrated a rare spirit of unity since the abortive coup and are seeking consensus on constitutional amendments partly aimed at "cleansing" the state apparatus of Gulenist supporters.

A senior AK Party official said on Wednesday they were discussing plans to increase parliamentary control of a key state body that appoints judges and prosecutors.

Also on Wednesday a government official said Turkish special forces were still hunting in hills around the Mediterranean resort of Marmaris for a group of 11 commandos thought to have tried to capture or kill Erdogan on the night of the coup.

Erdogan was holidaying in Marmaris at the time and only narrowly avoided capture before flying to Istanbul where he rallied his supporters who helped to defeat the coup plotters.

Erdogan, a popular but polarizing figure who has dominated Turkish politics for more than a decade, will chair an annual meeting of the Supreme Military Council

(YAS) on Thursday after vowing to restructure the armed forces following the coup.

The military said 35 planes, including 24 fighter jets, 37 helicopters, 74 tanks and three ships had been used by the coup plotters, NTV reported.

In Greece, authorities on Wednesday postponed hearings for eight Turkish soldiers who sought asylum there after fleeing Turkey. The men - three majors, three captains and two sergeant majors - deny being involved in the coup but Turkey has branded them "traitors" and is demanding their extradition.

Erdogan has signaled Turkey might restore the death penalty in the wake of the failed coup, citing strong public support for such a move, though the European Union has made clear this would scupper Ankara's decades-old bid to join the bloc.

Pivot to Moscow

Turkish officials have complained of what they perceive as a lack of support from the EU over the coup, while European leaders have urged Ankara to show restraint and a sense of proportion in bringing those responsible to justice.

The attempted coup has also tested Turkey's ties with its NATO ally the United States, where Gulen has lived in self-imposed exile since 1999. Responding to Turkey's request for Gulen's swift extradition, Washington has said Ankara must first provide clear evidence of his involvement in the coup.

The strains with the EU and the United States have coincided with Turkey's renewed push to repair ties with Russia, badly hurt last November by the Turkish downing of a Russian jet near Syria and Moscow's subsequent imposition of trade sanctions.

On Wednesday, Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek said his talks with Russian officials this week on improving bilateral relations had taken place "in a very positive atmosphere".

Simsek, respected by Western investors as a safe pair of hands in guiding the Turkish economy, also said he saw no reason to downgrade Turkey's credit rating following the coup. Standard & Poor's recently downgraded the sovereign debt outlook to negative from stable and Moody's has said it will review the rating for a possible downgrade. (Source: Reuters)

West can't stand independent Syria: Assad

Syria's president says Western countries started supporting anti-Damascus militants because they could not bear to see the Arab country leading an independent existence.

Bashar al-Assad made the remarks in a meeting with a visiting delegation of Greek parliamentarians in the Syrian capital on Tuesday, the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported.

"The problem of many Western states' leaders with Syria is that it has an independent decision, and so they supported terrorists to weaken it and make it a satellite state," Assad said.

He said the U.S.-led campaign in Syria, which purports to be targeting ISIL (Daesh), has boomeranged in the face of the



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (R) meets with a member of a Greek parliamentary delegation in the Syrian capital, Damascus, July 26, 2016.

West for sparing the Takfiri terrorist group and striking the Syrian people instead.

Earlier in the month, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said French warplanes had targeted the village of Tukhan al-Kubra on the outskirts of the northern city of Manbij, killing 120 civilians. The fatalities came a day after a U.S. airstrike killed 20 civilians in Manbij, it said. Both airstrikes were conducted under the U.S.-led coalition command.

"There are many lessons that the region and the world can learn from the terrorist war that targets the Syrian people," the Syrian head of state said.

"The proof of that is the wave of terrorism that struck in several states in Europe and the world recently," Assad said, referring to several attacks across the US and Europe over the past two years that have been claimed by Daesh.

The U.S.-led coalition has been bombarding Syria since September 2014 without authorization from Damascus or the United Nations. Analysts say the U.S.-led campaign has failed to dislodge the terrorists, who have seized parts of land in Iraq and Syria and are engaged in crimes against humanity in the areas under their control. (Source: SANA)

UN calls for humanitarian truce in Yemen's Taiz province

The United Nations called for a humanitarian truce in the Yemeni province of Taiz after government forces captured a town from Houthi movement in heavy fighting that has spurred allegations of war crimes.

The fighting has complicated UN-sponsored peace talks, as envoys for the Houthis have delayed responding to UN proposals calling for Houthi pullouts from cities they control, including the capital Sanaa, and the creation of an inclusive government.

James McGoldrick, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, voiced alarm at increasing bloodshed in the southwestern Taiz Governorate, particularly the al-Sarari area, and the closure of Taiz city, the regional capital.

He urged all warring parties to agree immediately to a "humanitarian pause" to protect civilians and cooperate with humanitarian agencies to help treat and evacuate war-wounded and deliver urgently needed medicine into the embattled zone.

McGoldrick warned both parties that holding civilian populations hostage and depriving them of humanitarian assistance was illegal under international humanitarian law. (Source: AP)

Climate change risk threatens 18 U.S. military sites: study

Rising sea levels due to hurricanes and tidal flooding intensified by climate change will put military bases along the U.S. East Coast and Gulf Coast at risk, according to a report released on Wednesday.

Nonprofit group the Union of Concerned Scientists analyzed 18 military installations that represent more than 120 coastal bases nationwide to weigh the impact of climate change on their operations.

Faster rates of sea level rises in the second half of this century could mean that tidal flooding will become a daily occurrence for some installations, pushing useable land needed for military training and testing into tidal zones, said the report titled "The U.S. Military on the Front Lines of Rising Seas."

By 2050, most of these sites will be hit by more than 10 times the number of floods than at present, the report said, and at least half of them will experience daily floods.

Four of those - including the Naval Air Station in Key West, Florida, and the Marine Corps recruit depot in South Carolina - could lose between 75 and 95 percent of their land in this century.

The report said the Pentagon already recognizes the threat of climate change on its military installations but warned that more resources and monitoring systems are needed to boost preparedness.

But last month, the U.S. House appropriations committee passed an amendment that blocked funding for the Pentagon's climate adaptation strategy.

"Our defense leadership has a special responsibility to protect the sites that hundreds of thousands of Americans depend on for their livelihoods and millions depend on for national security," the report said. (Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Mohammadi appointed new head of Iran's SEO

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Shapour Mohammadi has been appointed as the new head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), replacing Mohammad Fatanat. Mohammadi, who was previously the deputy Iranian finance minister for economic affairs, was appointed to the new post for a term of five years, Tasnim news agency reported.

While his appointment was on Wednesday, he will be introduced formally as the new head of SEO by Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ali Tayyebnia in a ceremony next week.

Meanwhile, Fatanat, who was the head of SEO since 2014, has been appointed as the advisor to Tayyebnia.



Iran Air discussing aircraft deal follow-up with ATR

ECONOMY TEHRAN — A team of ATR aircraft manufacturer representatives are visiting Tehran to hold technical talks with Iran's flag carrier, Iran Air, Fars news agency quoted Farhad Parvaresh, the managing director of Iran Air, as saying on Tuesday.

According to Fars, Parvaresh noted that negotiations about financing, technical follow-up on the contracts and selection of the aircraft parts are among the subjects of ongoing negotiations with Airbus and ATR. "None of the projects are stopped," he added.



Seoul ready to take part in Iran's development projects

ECONOMY TEHRAN — South Korean official expressed his country's readiness to participate in road and urban development projects in Iran, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

According to the report, South Korean Vice Minister for Land, Infrastructure and Transport Kim Kyung-hwan made the remarks in a meeting with Iran's Deputy Head of Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mohammad Saeed Izadi on the sidelines of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III on Wednesday.

In the event, Kim called for Iran's support for Korean companies.



17 intl. shipping lines dock in Iranian ports: transport min

ECONOMY TEHRAN — 17 international shipping lines directly commute to the Iranian ports including Shahid Rajaei port and Chabahar port in south, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhondi announced, the semi-official Khabar Online news website reported on Wednesday.

Akhondi who made the remarks during his visit to the western Iranian province of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari added that the international shipping lines enjoy low transportation costs and tariffs in Iranian ports and that will improve the volume of Iran's trade transactions.

Iranian private sector calls for development of international insurance ties

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

The Secretary of Iran's National Productivity Celebration Farshid Shokr-Khodaie called for international insurance companies to make co-operation agreements with Iranian insurance ones on the way to facilitate a more rapid and effective resumption of trade and investment ties between the Islamic country and the world.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times on the sidelines of the Conference on Industrial Competitiveness in Iran, held in Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) on Tuesday, Shokr-Khodaie, who was one of the lecturers of the conference, blamed the insufficiency of international insurance coverage for business activities and foreign investments in Iran as the main challenge of Iranian private sector activists and their foreign counterparts who want to invest or start a business in Iran.

Underscoring the role of insurance coverage as the developer of business activities, he exemplified the Italian insurance company, SACE, who signed three collaboration agreements with the



Secretary of National Productivity Celebration Farshid Shokr-Khodaie

major Iranian private banks, Bank Pasargad, Bank Parsian and Saman Bank, in November 2015 and said "as well as the Iranian banks which are improving their connections with international financial institutes and banks in post-sanction era, it is crucial for Iranian insurance companies to expand their ties with prominent insurance institutes across the globe to assure foreign investors about the safety of their investments and business with Iranians."



Head of Industry and Mine Commission of the TCCIMA Mehdi Poorghazi

Shokr-Khodaie, elsewhere, referred to the essential role of the Iranian private sector in attraction of foreign investments into domestic economic projects, specifically after the execution of the country's nuclear deal with the six world powers and invited foreign investors to pay a specific attention to Iranian SMEs (small-to-medium enterprises) active in the fields of foodstuff, pharmaceutical, chemical and etc. regarding the available untapped market of the country with its

80 million consumers.

He also admitted that to soothe SMEs cooperation with their foreign counterparts, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), as the body heading Iranian private sector enterprises, is on the process of preparing a list of the Iranian SMEs as well as their profiles to offer to applicant foreign companies for future cooperation.

'Future of Iranian industry in hands of world leading powers'

The other conference lecturer, Mehdi Poorghazi, the head of Industry and Mine Commission of the TCCIMA, told the Tehran Times that considering the measures taken by President Rouhani's administration during the past three years in general and as of the implementation of the nuclear agreement in particular, it can be said that Iran has achieved a relative stability in its economy.

"Inflation rate has been tamed and fluctuations of exchange rate have been controlled," he said, "the current stable economic situation can be the good news for foreign investors."

"However, what will happen to our economy and industry highly relies on international political affairs and what leading power will do."

Inflation rate hits 9.2% in Iran: CBI

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced the inflation rate for the 12-month period ended in the last day of the fourth Iranian calendar month of Tir (July 21) stands at 9.2 percent, com-

pared to the same period of time last year.

The goods and services consumer price index for urban areas in the fourth month was 242.8, increasing 0.8 percent compared with its preceding

month and 8.1 percent compared with the same month in the previous year, the Mehr news agency reported.

Earlier on July 23, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that the inflation rate for the 12-month period

ended in the last day of Tir hit 9 percent.

Meanwhile, the center put the point-to-point inflation rate at 6.5 percent in this month, increasing from 6.1 percent in its previous month.

Democratic congressman slams resistance to Boeing-Iran deal

A Democratic lawmaker criticized opponents of a multi-billion dollar deal between Boeing and Iran Air and urged economic engagement with the Islamic Republic Tuesday.

"I think it's appalling that people are marching a crusade against selling Boeing airplanes to Iran," said Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer during a panel hosted by the progressive advocacy group J Street. "That order would create about 100,000 American jobs over the next ten years."



Blumenauer stressed the "profound opportunities" available for "economic linkage" with Iran.

"We've got an election coming up in Iran," he said. "These will be positive signals, that, you know, this is a different era."

The congressman said that "the odds are very strong that there will be change" in Iran and lamented that the U.S. opened up to Cuba too late.

(Source: Weekly Standard)

Iran's post-sanction economy is on the mend

A jump in oil exports, business deals signed with global companies and inflation tamed: One year since Iranian negotiators gathered with the world's top diplomats to unveil their nuclear accord and Iran's economy is on the mend. That's the good news for President Hassan Rouhani in the final year of his first term.

Six months after oil sanctions were lifted, Iran's producing 3.8 million barrels a day, 2 million of which are exported. Holding out against efforts by some OPEC members to freeze bloc output and lift prices, it has regained 80 percent of market share held before the U.S. and European Union tightened crude sanctions in 2012, says Mohsen Ghamsari, National Iranian Oil Co's director of international affairs.

Helped by greater monetary and fis-

cal discipline, prices are rising slower than at any point in the past quarter-century. Inflation slowed into single digits in June, meeting the central bank's stated goal and delivering on a Rouhani commitment.

While authorities expect Iran's economy to expand as much as 4.5 percent in the year to March, Rouhani's target of 8-percent annual expansion would require major changes, according to Robert Powell, Middle East and Africa regional manager at the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Executive air miles

Iran's 80 million people are a mouth-watering prospect for major companies battling sluggish growth at home. So following the July accord, dozens of chief executives booked flights to Tehran. The deals have built up: a \$27 billion order for 118 Airbus Group SE planes and a contract

with Boeing Co. worth \$17.6 billion. Siemens AG in March signed a preliminary rail accord worth as much as \$2.3 billion.

Foreign direct investment rose to \$4.5 billion in the first quarter of this year, with 26 projects, the highest uptick in over a decade in Iran, according to fDi Intelligence, a division of the Financial Times Ltd. That's still way below the government's hopes of drawing \$30 billion to \$50 billion in foreign financial resources a year.

"Real inflows will happen when sentiment toward investing into the Iranian economy improves among global banks and institutional investors," says Payam Afzali, head of investment banking at Kian Capital in Tehran. "When Iran's risk is efficiently priced in international debt markets, we can expect a more fluid movement of capital."

Stocks get real

The value of the Tehran Stock Exchange has jumped as investment deals favoring local manufacturers such as car company Iran Khodro were announced. But the mood has since turned more subdued.

"There was euphoria all the way to March and then a reality check. What's happening today is in line with the fundamentals of the economy," says Reza Soltanzadeh, chief executive of Iran Industries Investment Co.

The benchmark TEDPIX index slipped 2.8 percent in June. Commodities represent more than 50 percent of market capitalization, so falling oil and metal prices have hit stocks, says Florence Eid-Oakden, chief economist of Arabia Monitor.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Nigeria, Iran to forge trade ties

The Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) and Iran have agreed to forge stronger trade partnership that would promote bilateral ties between both countries.

This was disclosed recently by the Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer of NEPC, Olusegun Awolowo while receiving the new Iranian Ambassador to Nige-

ria, Morteza Rahimi Zarchi in his office in Abuja.

Awolowo acknowledged the cordial relationship that existed between the Council and his predecessor HE Saeed Koozechi adding that it was on this premise that he urged Zarchi to assist in attracting Iranian investors to help industrialize Nigeria

through ownership of plantations in areas like rice and cocoa.

He pointed out that such investments will help to scale up production, improve quality and increase exportation of Nigeria goods particularly in areas such as real estate, petrochemical, automobile and transportation where Iran has high degree of

expertise.

Ambassador Zarchi who confirmed his visit as the first since assumption of office expressed that Iranian mission attaches importance to Nigeria and hopes to attract significant development to the country and draw symbiotic benefits to both nations.

(Source: guardian.ng)

NEWS

Italian companies to exhibit latest textile machinery at Irantex

The Irantex 2016 is a comprehensive international trade fair for textile machinery and textile products. Because of its range of products and depth of range, this exhibition is, for both exhibitors and visitors, an informative platform for the latest trends in the industry. Italian companies will exhibit their latest textile machinery at the Italian pavilion at the forthcoming 2016 edition of Irantex, aiming to further enhance the relationship between the local textile industry and the Italian textile machinery sector.

The upcoming Irantex will feature the usual significant contingent of Italian textile machinery manufacturers, with 25 Italian companies exhibiting in the Italian pavilion, the common area set up by the Italian Trade Agency and ACIMIT. The international sanctions of the past years delayed the modernization process necessary for the Iranian industry to continue to be competitive within a global context, the Association of Italian Textile Machinery Manufacturers reported.

In 2004, Iran was ranked among the top ten markets for Italian exports in the sector. After years of stagnation, Italian sales to Iran registered a recovery. In 2016 first quarter the Italian sales to Iranian market totaled a value of €2 million, while 2015 sales were worth €8 million. Iranian demand is spread out over all types of production, but Italian finishing and spinning machines are the primary exports.

(Source: yarnsandfibers.com)

NEWS IN BRIEF

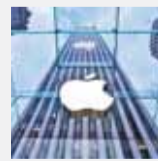


Škoda Auto plans expansion to Iran, South Korea, eyes U.S.

Carmaker Škoda Auto plans to expand to Iran, which the firm sees as a market with high growth potential.

The brand also plans expansion to South Korea. The spokesperson for Škoda Auto, Tomas Kubik, has told CIANEWS that the firm is analyzing the situation in many markets and regions that could become lucrative in the long run.

These markets include also North America, including the U.S. No specific decision has been made yet, though. Škoda Auto is now active on more than 100 markets around the world. The brand's global sales in first five months of 2016 grew 4.6% y/y to 470,600 vehicles, a new all-time high for the five-month period.



Apple sells more iPhones than expected, shares jump after hours

Apple Inc. sold more iPhones than Wall Street expected in the third quarter and estimated its revenue in the current period would top many analysts' targets, soothing fears that demand for the company's most important product had hit a wall.

Its shares rose 7 percent in after-hours trading.

The world's most valuable publicly traded company said it sold 40.4 million iPhones in the third quarter, down 15 percent from the year-ago quarter but slightly more than the average analyst forecast of 40.02 million, according to research firm FactSet StreetAccount.



Volkswagen's \$14.7b diesel U.S. emissions settlement clears hurdle

Volkswagen AG's \$14.7 billion settlement of its U.S. diesel emissions cheating scandal cleared another legal hurdle on Tuesday, as a federal judge gave the automaker preliminary approval to buy back up to 475,000 vehicles.

U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer in San Francisco set an October 18 hearing for final approval. Preliminary approval means Volkswagen will soon enable owners of the 2.0 liter diesel-powered vehicles to access a website to learn how much they are eligible to receive.

The settlement, announced in June, centers around the largest-ever automotive buy-back offer in the United States.

By H.E. Wulff

A traveller flying over Iran can see plainly that the country has an arid climate. The Iranian plateau is largely desert. Most of Iran (excepting areas in the north-western provinces and along the southern shores of the Caspian Sea) receives only six to 10 inches of rainfall a year. Other regions of the world with so little rainfall (for example the dry heart of Australia) are barren of attempts at agriculture. Yet Iran is a farming country that not only grows its own food but also manages to produce crops for export, such as cotton, dried fruits, oilseeds and so on. It has achieved this remarkable accomplishment by developing an ingenious system for tapping underground water. The system, called qanat (from a Semitic word meaning "to dig"), was invented in Iran thousands of years ago, and it is so simple and effective that it was adopted in many other and regions of the Middle East and around the Mediterranean.

The qanat system consists of underground channels that convey water from aquifers in highlands to the surface at lower levels by gravity. The qanat works of Iran were built on a scale that rivaled the great aqueducts of the Roman Empire. Whereas the Roman aqueducts now are only a historical curiosity, the Iranian system is still in use after 3,000 years and has continually been expanded. There are some 22,000 qanat units in Iran, comprising more than 170,000 miles of underground channels. The system supplies 75 percent of all the water used in that country, providing water not only for irrigation but also for house-hold consumption. Until recently (before the building of the Karaj Dam) the million inhabitants of the city of Tehran depended on a qanat system tapping the foothills of the Elburz Mountains for their entire water supply.

Discoveries of underground conduits in a number of ancient Roman sites led some modern archaeologists to suppose the Romans had invented the qanat system. Written records and recent excavations leave no doubt,

The Qanats of Iran: How it works?

Eleven Persian Qantas were registered on UNESCO Heritage List last week. These Qantas are located in different parts of Iran. But what is qanat and how does it work?



however, that ancient Iran (Persia) was its actual birthplace. As early as the seventh century B.C. the Assyrian king Sargon II reported that during a campaign in Persia he had found an underground system for tapping water in operation near Lake Urmia. His son, King Sennacherib, applied the "secret" of using underground conduits in building an irrigation system around Nineveh, and he constructed a qanat on the Persian model to supply water for the city of Arbela. Egyptian inscriptions disclose that the Persians donated the idea to Egypt after Darius I conquered that country in 518 B.C. Scylax, a captain in Darius' navy, built a qanat that brought water to the oasis of Karg, apparently from the underground water table of the Nile River 100 miles away. Remnants of the qanat are still in operation. This contribution may well have been partly responsible for the Egyptians' friendliness to their

conqueror and their bestowal of the title of Pharaoh on Darius.

References to qanat systems, known by various names, are fairly common in the literature of ancient and medieval times. The Greek historian Polybius in the second century B.C. described a qanat that had been built in an Iranian desert "during the Persian ascendancy." It had been constructed underground, he remarked, "at infinite toil and expense ... through a large tract of country" and brought water to the desert from sources that were mysterious to "the people who use the water now."

Qanats have been found throughout the regions that came within the cultural sphere of ancient Persia: in Pakistan, in Chinese oasis settlements of Turkistan, in southern areas of the U.S.S.R., in Iraq, Syria, Arabia and Yemen. During the periods of Roman and then Arabian domination the system spread west-

ward to North Africa, Spain and Sicily. In the Sahara region a number of oasis settlements are irrigated by the qanat method, and some of the peoples still call the underground conduits "Persian works." In the Middle East several particularly interesting qanats constructed by Arab rulers of early medieval times have been excavated. In A.D. 728 the caliph of Damascus built a small qanat to supply water for a palace in the country. A century later the caliph Mutawakkil in Iraq likewise constructed a qanat system, presumably with the aid of Persian engineers, that brought water to his residence at Samarra from the upper Tigris River 300 miles away.

Thanks to detailed descriptions by several early writers, we have a good idea of the techniques used by the original qanat builders. Vitruvius, the first systematic historian of technology, gave an account of the qanat system in technical detail in his historic work *De Architectura* (about 80 B.C.). In the ninth century A.D., at the request of a Persian provincial governor, Abdullah ibn-Tahir, a group of writers compiled a treatise on the subject titled *Kitab-e Quniy*. And about A.D. 1000 Hasan al-Hasib, an Arabian authority on engineering, wrote a technical work that fortunately is still available and gives surprisingly good details of the construction and maintenance of the ancient qanats.

The methods used in Iran today are not greatly different from the system devised thousands of years ago, and I shall describe the system as it can now be observed. The project begins with a careful survey of the terrain by an expert engaged by the prospective builders. A qanat system is usually dug in the slope of a mountain or hillside where material washed down the slope has been deposited in alluvial fans. The surveyor examines these fans closely, generally during the fall, looking for traces of seepage to the surface or slight variations in the vegetation that may suggest the presence of water sources buried in the hillside. On locating a promising spot, he arranges for the digging of a trial well.

(Source: bart.nl)

NEWS

China tourism: Driving-in tourist numbers plunge after ban

A ban on inbound motorists driving deeper into Thailand may have been too effective, with the number of vehicles entering Chiang Mai from China plunging from about 600 a day to only 10.

Vehicles entering Chiang Mai from China plunge from 600 a day to only 10, ban on inbound tourists driving car deeper into Thailand too effective.

The number of vehicles from China to Chiang Mai province has plummeted by 98% to 10 vehicles from 600 vehicles daily following a ban on inbound motorists from China driving deeper into Thailand.

The much lighter inbound tourism traffic obviously resulted from the Land Transport Department's ban on visiting motorists from driving beyond the province of entry. The measure took effect on June 27.

The Fourth Friendship Bridge between Laos and Thailand located in Chiang Khong.

The measure affected the number of driving Chinese tourists who normally arrived in caravans through the R3A highway route from southern China via Laos and Chiang Rai's Chiang Khong district to Chiang Mai.

These Chinese tourists travelling in caravans are said to have high purchasing power.

Before the ban, most of these visitors went to Chiang Mai and other destinations deeper in the country including Bangkok.

Previously, each visiting vehicle from southern China carried three or more tourists who spent at least 5,000 baht each per day, tourism industry groups claim.

The declining arrivals are estimated to cost Chiang Mai one million a day in tourism income.

Tourism authorities in Chiang Mai would call for a review of the ban and oppose other future conditions that would add inconveniences to visiting motorists, said Boontha Chailert, president of the Chiang Mai Tourism Business Association.

He cited requirements for them to seek entry permission at least 30 days in advance and exit the country through the same border checkpoint. Up to 3,000-5,000 workers in the tourism sector in the northern province could lose their jobs in three months, so the ban should be reviewed according to Boontha.

The Land Transport Department imposed the rule after an influx of visiting motorists resulted in a spike in road accidents and waste management problems.

Besides, the merits of this group of tourists were questioned since many of them did not stay at hotels, but in motorhomes (campers, camping vehicles) traveling in caravans instead.

(Source: Bangkok Post)

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Mercy for the corrupt who come clean?

The U.S. and Tunisia are each testing whether leniency toward individuals or businesses that are open about their corruption might lead to less corruption. Confession can be a shorter path to reconciliation.

To expose and punish corruption, governments have long relied on tough tools, from wiretaps to time in prison. But what if a business volunteers that it committed bribery? Should the confession lead to mercy if the company also amends its ways and makes amends?

The issue is front-and-center for two countries, Tunisia and the United States that are highly focused on curbing corruption. They are each in the midst of an experiment to find out if judicial leniency, granted in return for truth-telling, can be a major tool against corruption.

In April, the U.S. Justice Department started a pilot program aimed at motivating companies to voluntar-

ily disclose any violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, such as paying bribes to a foreign official. If a firm fesses up on its own, it may see up to a 50 percent reduction in penalties and be free of independent monitoring of their businesses.

Preventing further corruption

It would also need to fully cooperate with federal investigators and fix internal practices to prevent further corruption.

So far, the program has worked in two cases of U.S.-based companies self-reporting their foreign bribery and quickly settling with the Depart-

ment of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission. The program, however, does not prevent prosecution of individuals who committed bribery. Only a firm receives official mercy.

If this technique continues to work, it will not only save government resources but achieve the same results of deterrence and the rehabilitation of corrupt companies.

Confession is a far better and quicker way to justice than the long process of a trial and a guilty verdict.

Arab Spring

In Tunisia, where protests against



Tunisians celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Arab Spring last January in Tunis. (file photo)

the corruption of a dictatorship triggered the Arab Spring in 2011, a truth commission is expected to soon decide on how to mediate in cases in which individuals were harmed by corruption and economic crimes.

The process is an attempt to encourage former officials to fully reveal past corruption in exchange for some leniency.

The government of President Beji Caïd Essebsi, however, has sought to

preempt this process by proposing a law that requires much less transparency for individuals about their ill-gotten wealth.

The ousted dictator

Passage of the law has been delayed by large protests demanding the truth about corruption under the ousted dictator, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The protesters see the proposed law as a way to protect those still practicing corruption.

These experiments show the difficulty of finding the right balance between justice and mercy in cases when individuals or businesses come clean on past wrongdoing.

Those who confess must first be totally open and honest and then be ready to make some amends in return for some forgiveness.

If done right, the process can lead to reconciliation and renewal. For that end alone, these experiments bear watching.

(Source: The CSM)

Passage of the law has been delayed by large protests demanding the truth about corruption under the ousted dictator, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The protesters see the proposed law as a way to protect those still practicing corruption.

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Bank capital fight makes Japan, EU allies against U.S. push

Bank regulators from Tokyo to Frankfurt are joining forces to resist a U.S.-backed push for stiffer capital rules that could heap billions of dollars of new requirements on lenders.

Highlighting the stakes, top regulators from Europe, Japan and India are pressing their case in public, shedding light on divisions in the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision as it races to wrap up work this year on the post-crisis capital framework. They want the global standard-setter to soften key proposals for how banks calculate the capital they need to finance lending and trading.

The proposals now on the table could result in an overall increase of as much as 70 percent in the capital banks must have, said Shunsuke Shirakawa, vice commissioner for international affairs at Japan's Financial Services Agency, a member of the Basel Committee. Disagreement also exists on how much banks should be allowed to borrow against their assets and how far to limit their holdings of government bonds.

"If you add together all the proposals that have been made, it's a significant increase no matter how you look at it, and that is a fact," Shirakawa said in an interview late last month. "So there is a need to make adjustments by the end of the year."

One voice

The industry's concerns are now shared by the regulators, and Shirakawa isn't alone in his insistence that the Basel Committee keep its word. European Union finance ministers have made clear they expect the rules to come in as advertised. Valdis Dombrovskis, the EU's financial-services chief, said Europe needs to "speak with one voice" to influence decisions at Basel, where nine EU countries, as well as the European Central Bank, have seats at the table.

The Basel Committee brings together regulators from nearly 30 countries,



including Japan's FSA, the ECB, the U.S. Federal Reserve, the People's Bank of China and the Brazil's central bank. The committee reports to the Group of Governors and Heads of Supervision, chaired by ECB President Mario Draghi.

The Basel Committee's attempts to restrict banks' use of internal models for risk-assessment, in favor of prescribed formulas, has proven particularly divisive.

The clampdown is in line with U.S. views. The Fed's Tarullo has said regulators should consider "discarding" the internal-model approach to risk-weighted capital requirements altogether in favor of a one-size-fits-all standard for all

global banks.

Too conservative

That contrasts with the prevailing view in Japan and Europe. Shirakawa said an increasing reliance on the standardized approaches could hamper effective risk-management by the industry and may provide banks with a "perverse incentive" to take too much risk in some cases. Elements in the regulator's main proposals are "too conservative," he said.

Another battle ground is the leverage ratio, promoted by the U.S. and viewed more skeptically in Europe and Japan. The Basel Committee has already agreed on a 3 percent minimum level, and is

considering setting higher requirements for the world's most systemically important banks, including Japan's Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc.

Leverage ratio

"We think that the 3 percent is suitable and there is no need to go a lot higher," Shirakawa said. If Basel Committee members insist on an increase, then a bucketing approach, whereby charges increase along with the global importance of the bank, would be preferable, he said.

Shirakawa said the risk-blind leverage ratio is intended as a backstop for the risk-weighted capital rules, and is useful when banks can't reliably measure risk. "If the backstop is always binding, that is abnormal," he said.

He has an ally in Daniele Nouy, head of the ECB's oversight arm, who has also called for risk-sensitivity in the new standardized approaches to measuring risk.

Sovereign debt

Japan is also wary of bank regulators imposing restrictions on lenders' holdings of sovereign debt. That puts it in line with India, which opposes potential restrictions. The Basel Committee has moved more slowly on such curbs. Raghuram Rajan, governor of the Reserve Bank of India -- another Basel Committee member -- said his country is pushing back hard on the restrictions.

While the sovereign-debt issue is likely to run for years, the work on Basel III is supposed to be done by December.

That leaves Shirakawa and his allies with a lot to do in a very short time. Nouy said last month that an "overwhelming majority around the table" in Basel supports minimizing any increase in capital charges as a result of the latest plans. Shirakawa shares that objective.

"There's half a year left, so there's sufficient time," he said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Top regulators from Europe, Japan and India are pressing their case in public asking the global standard-setter to soften key proposals for how banks calculate the capital they need to finance lending and trading.

NEWS IN BRIEF

China June industrial profits rise but investment challenges grow

Profits earned by China's industrial firms grew at their fastest pace in three months in June, indicating government spending is supporting the corporate sector though uneven growth and soft investment pose headwinds.

Profits in June rose 5.1 percent to 616.31 billion Yuan (\$92.40 billion), the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on Wednesday, the fastest growth since March.

"The bottom line is that the worst has gone in terms of industrial profits," said Raymond Yeung, an economist at ANZ in Hong Kong.

He said the improvement in China's upstream prices, as seen in the recent moderation in producer price index declines, points to a pickup in profits in the second half of the year.

Total profits for the first half stood at 3.0 trillion Yuan, up 6.2 percent from the same period a year ago and compared with a 6.4 percent gain in the January to May period.

"June profits accelerated from May but unfavorable conditions for companies continue to exist," NBS official He Ping said in a statement accompanying the data.

(Source: Reuters)

Deutsche Bank's second-quarter net income plunges nearly 100% year-on-year

Deutsche Bank, the German bank which is an important part of the global financial system, announced revenue and income falls Wednesday which could add further concerns for investors made jittery by a combination of Brexit and previous issues at the bank.

Its second-quarter net income was down 98 percent from the same period in the previous year, to 20 million euro (\$22 million), while revenues were down 20 percent to 7.4 billion euro.

Deutsche's ratio - a key measure of financial strength - improved slightly to 10.8 percent.

The bank, one of Germany's largest lenders, has lost around 40 percent of its market value this year as concerns mount about its capital position and \$14 billion in fines over past misconduct.

John Cryan, the bank's co-chief executive has embarked on a drastic plan to meet its capital targets, including scrapping dividend payments to shareholders, thousands of job cuts and asset sales.

(Source: CNBC)

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9. Beneficial for bones
10. Helps control diabetes
11. Prevents excessive gas
12. Arthritis



NEWS IN BRIEF

Belgian scientists make novel water-from-urine machine

A team of scientists at a Belgian university say they have created a machine that turns urine into drinkable water and fertilizer using solar energy, a technique which could be applied in rural areas and developing countries.

While there are other options for treating waste water, the system applied at the University of Ghent uses a special membrane, is said to be energy-efficient and to be applicable in areas off the electricity grid.



"We're able to recover fertilizer and drinking water from urine using just a simple process and solar energy," said University of Ghent researcher Sebastiaan Derese.

The urine is collected in a big tank, heated in a solar-powered boiler before passing through the membrane

where the water is recovered and nutrients such as potassium, nitrogen and phosphorus are separated.

Under the slogan #peeforscience, the team recently deployed the machine at a 10-day music and theater festival in central Ghent, recovering 1,000 liters of water from the urine of revelers.

The aim is to install larger versions of the machine in sports venues or airports but also to take it to a rural community in the developing world where fertilizers and reliable drinking water are short in supply, Derese said.

As was the case with previous projects the research team was engaged in, the water recovered from the city festival will be used to make one of Belgium's most coveted specialties - beer.

(Source: StreetInsider)

Did oxygen jumpstart the rise of animals?

Life likely didn't arise on Earth and then immediately evolve into the complex organisms we call animals. Instead, the fossil record suggests that simpler organisms ruled the Earth for billions of years before animals started to take over around 600 million years ago. But why did it happen that way?

Scientists have long puzzled over what changed, or what was lacking, in the early Earth's environment to cause such staggered evolution. Some scientists proposed that an increase in atmospheric oxygen helped kick-start animal evolution, but the story might not be that simple.



In sorting out whether a change in oxygen could have triggered animal evolution, scientists are trying to figure out what exact oxygen levels and distribution might have been hundreds of millions of years ago.

One complexity of the model is that the life that did exist in the middle Proterozoic was in the world's oceans, so scientists wanted to pin down how a change in atmospheric oxygen levels would affect concentration in ocean waters. And a new study published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences takes a swing at just that challenge.

Christopher Reinhard, a biogeochemist at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, and his team ran simulations to see how oxygen would be distributed in the ocean at different atmospheric oxygen levels in a computer model. They also simulated how oxygen levels change in different parts of the ocean over time.

(Source: The CSM)

World's deepest underwater sinkhole in the South China Sea discovered

As local fishermen tell it, the deep blue "Dragon Hole" in the Paracel Islands, called the "eye" of the South China Sea, is where the Monkey King in "Journey to the West" acquired his famous golden cudgel.

The mythical tale was published in the 16th century and is among the four great classical novels of Chinese literature. Last week, the Dragon Hole earned a new claim to fame.

After nearly a year of exploration, Chinese researchers have determined that the underwater sinkhole is likely the world's deepest, reaching about 987 feet below the surface and surpassing the previous record holder, Dean's Blue Hole near the Bahamas, by more than 300 feet, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Blue holes are named as such for their rich, dark blue coloring, a stark contrast to the otherwise aqua waters that surround them. Best described as underwater caves, these striking and beautiful formations open up with underwater entrances and extend below sea level, mirroring the appearance of a sinkhole.

Exploring Dragon Hole

Researchers with the Sansha Ship Course



After nearly a year of exploration, Chinese researchers have determined that the underwater sinkhole is likely the world's deepest, reaching about 987 feet below the surface.

Research Institute for Coral Protection began exploring Dragon Hole, known as Longdong, in August 2015 and completed the project last month, Xinhua reported. It measures about 426 feet wide and is almost deep enough to hold the entire Eiffel Tower.

The research team used a Video Ray Pro 4 underwater robot to explore the sinkhole, reported CCTV News, where they discovered more than 20 species of fish and marine life near the surface of the vertical cave. Researchers told the television station that after about 330 feet, the water is oxygen free and likely unable to support life.

Across the globe, blue holes have been the source of magnificent discovery. Last year, the Guardian reported that a study conducted by scientists from Rice.

University and Louisiana State University found that sediment samples from the ancient Great Blue Hole in Belize confirmed the theory that "drought and climate conditions pushed the Mayans from a regional power to a smattering of rival survivors and finally a virtually lost civilization."

(Source: The Washington Post)

Protein rich, this insect milk may someday serve as a human superfood

A little cockroach milk with those cookies? Chock full of protein, the insect milk may someday be transformed into a food supplement worthy of human consumption, new research indicates.

Scientists have found that the Pacific Beetle Cockroach feeds its bug babies a formula which is remarkably rich in protein, fat and sugar.

Don't expect to find it next to the regular milk in the dairy section, however, at least not for now.

"Any liquid harvested from a cockroach is not true milk. At least not as we think of it," said Becky Facer, director of school and educator programs at Fernbank Museum of Natural History in Atlanta.

Most people would agree. After all, the insect liquid takes the form of protein crystals in the guts of baby cockroaches.

The "protein crystals are milk for the cockroach infant. It is important for its growth and development," said Leonard Chavas, one of the scientists behind the research. He



explained the crystals have a whopping three times the energy of an equivalent mass of buffalo milk, about four times the equivalent of cow's milk.

The cockroach is one of the hardiest creatures on the planet; it can live for a month without food.

One of hardest creatures

The cockroach is one of the hardiest creatures on the

planet; it can live for a month without food.

The "interest here was, what is it really made of?" said Chavas, one of the authors of the research, published in July in the journal International Union of Crystallography.

Chavas and his colleagues examined the species, also known as *Diploptera punctata*, which is the only species of cockroach known to be viviparous -- able to bring forth live babies that have developed within the mother's body, instead of the mother laying eggs to develop outside her body.

Like other viviparous creatures, this species of roach nourishes its growing embryos with a protein-rich liquid secreted by its brood sac -- the roach version of a uterus.

Soon after the embryo ingests the liquid, protein crystals develop within its midgut. Chavas and his colleagues extracted one of these crystals to learn more about it and its potential nutrition. Following tests and even genome sequencing, they discovered it was a complete food.

(Source: CNN)

Spinning Milky Way galaxy's halo discovered



Astronomers from the University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science and the Arts (LSA) discovered the spinning of the halo and it is expected to add significant information on how stars, planets, galaxies and other celestial bodies form through assembly of atoms.

"This flies in the face of expectations," Edmund Hodges-Kluck, assistant research scientist said in a statement. "People just assumed that the disk of the Milky Way spins while this enormous reservoir of hot gas is stationary - but that is wrong. This hot gas reservoir is rotating as well, just not quite as fast as the disk," Hodges-Kluck added.

The research was published in the *Astrophysical Journal* and was funded by NASA using the European Space Agency's (ESA) telescope. The study focused on the Milky Way hot gaseous halo that is a few times larger than the galaxy disk made up of ionized plasma. To arrive on their findings, the astronomers studied the shift in the wavelength of light around the sky by using lines of hot oxygen.

Momentous feat

This is the process responsible for discovering a momentous feat when they found out that the halo was spinning based on its patterns. The halo is said to spin at about 400,000 mph while the disk spins at 540,000 mph.

Because motion produces a shift in the wavelength of light, the U-M researchers measured such shifts around the sky using lines of very hot oxygen.

What they found was groundbreaking: The line shifts measured by the researchers show that the galaxy's halo spins in the same direction as the disk of the Milky Way and at a similar speed--about 400,000 mph for the halo versus 540,000 mph for the disk. The "rotation of the hot halo is an incredible clue to how the Milky Way formed," said Hodges Kluck in a statement.

This is an important discovery in understanding the origin of galaxies such as the Milky Way. Experts believe that the hot gas on the halo is vital in the formation of galaxies.

(Source: Nature World Report)

A sniff test for Alzheimer's checks for the ability to identify odors



Parkinson's disease, smoking, certain head injuries and even normal aging can influence our sense of smell. But certain patterns of loss in the ability to identify odors seem pronounced in Alzheimer's, researchers say.

Two studies released at an international Alzheimer's meeting Tuesday suggest doctors may eventually be able to screen people for this form of dementia by testing the ability to identify familiar odors, like smoke, coffee and raspberry.

In both studies, people who were in their 60s and older took a standard odor detection test. And in both cases, those who did poorly on the test were more likely to already have -- or go on to develop -- problems with memory and thinking.

Creating tests

The "whole idea is to create tests that a general clinician can use in an office setting," says Dr. William Kreis, a neurologist at Columbia University, where both studies were done.

The research was presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in Toronto.

Currently, any tests that are able to spot people in the earliest stages of Alzheimer's are costly and difficult. They include PET scans, which can detect sticky plaques in the brain, and spinal taps that measure the levels of certain proteins in spinal fluid.

Anne Jones, 62, and Robin Jones, 73, at their home in Menlo Park, Calif. He took a test that revealed proteins typical of Alzheimer's disease.

Odor detection

The idea of an odor detection test arose, in part, from something doctors have observed for many years in patients with Alzheimer's, Kreis says.

"Patients will tell us that food does not taste as good," he says. The reason is often that these patients have lost the ability to smell what they eat.

That's not surprising, Kreis says, given that odor signals from the nose have to be processed in areas of the brain that are among the first to be affected by Alzheimer's disease.

(Source: NPR)

Marine carbon sinking rates confirm importance of polar oceans

About the same amount of atmospheric carbon that goes into creating plants on land goes into the bodies of tiny marine plants known as plankton. When these plants die and sink, bacteria feed on their sinking corpses and return their carbon to the seawater. When plankton sink deep enough before being eaten, this carbon is taken out of circulation as a greenhouse gas to remain trapped in the deep ocean for centuries.

How much of this happens in different regions of the ocean would seem like an academic question, except during an era when humanity is spewing carbon dioxide into the air at record-high levels and wondering where all that carbon will go in the future.

A University of Washington study published on July 25 in

the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences uses a new approach to get a global picture of the fate of marine carbon. It finds that the polar seas export organic carbon to the deep sea, where it can no longer trap heat from the sun, about five times as efficiently as in other parts of the ocean.

High latitude

The "high latitudes are much more efficient at transferring carbon into the deep ocean," said first author Thomas Weber, who did the work as a postdoctoral researcher at the UW and is now an assistant professor at the University of Rochester in New York.

The planet has many carbon sinks, or routes that transfer heat-trapping carbon from the atmosphere into other parts of the Earth system.

This sink is a literal one. Carbon-rich plankton detritus clumps together to form marine snow that drifts down through the water and provides food for deeper-dwelling organisms. The continual supply of organic carbon in particles from the surface to the deep sea is known as the "biological pump."

This pump had been thought to operate at similar strength throughout the oceans, but the new study finds a strong regional pattern. The authors find that about 25 percent of organic particles sinking from the surface in the polar oceans reach at least 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) -- the depth required for long-term storage in deep waters or the seafloor.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Protests force Bahrain to delay trial of top cleric



that Sheikh Qassim has the support of the majority of the Bahraini population. Bahrain has already sentenced Sheikh Ali Salman, another revered opposition cleric, to nine years in prison on charges

A court in Bahrain has adjourned the trial of top Shia cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim amid widespread protests against the move.

The tribunal on Wednesday held a session which lasted only 10 minutes without the cleric's presence, deciding to put off the trial until August 14.

The Bahraini regime has pressed charges of "illegal fund collections, money laundering and helping terrorism" against Sheikh Qassim. He has rejected the accusations.

Manama has also revoked the cleric's citizenship.

The court session on Wednesday lasted a mere ten minutes and adjourned until August 14. Sheikh Qassim was not present at the session.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people have taken to the streets in Bahrain to express solidarity with prominent Shia Muslim cleric Sheikh Issa Qassim, whom the regime has recently stripped of his nationality and is shortly to put on trial.

On Tuesday evening, protesters marched along the streets in the capital, Manama, as well as its suburbs, to denounce measures against the 79-year-old cleric, who is the spiritual leader of Bahrain's main opposition bloc, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society.

They declared during the rallies

of seeking regime change and collaborating with foreign powers, which he has denied.

Sheikh Salman was the secretary general of the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, which was Bahrain's main opposition bloc before being dissolved by the regime earlier this month.

Both the trial of Sheikh Qassim and Sheikh Salman are viewed as part of Bahrain's crackdown on political dissent.

Since February 14, 2011, thousands of anti-regime protesters have held numerous demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis, calling on the Al Khalifah rulers to relinquish power.

In March that year, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to the country to assist the Bahraini regime in cracking down on the protests.

On the eve of Sheikh Qassim's trial, hundreds of people rallied in Bahrain to express solidarity with him. Shop owners also closed their stores on the streets and at various shopping malls.

Additionally, local residents switched off the lights of their houses in response to calls by opposition groups and chanted slogans on rooftops in condemnation of Sheikh Qassim's trial.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS

Russia beefs up military on southwestern flank as NATO approaches

Russia has strengthened its southwestern flank as NATO builds up its military presence near its borders and next-door Ukraine remains unstable, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Wednesday.

Moscow has deployed more air defense systems in the southwest and has also deployed a "self-sufficient" contingent of troops in Crimea, Shoigu told a meeting at the Defense Ministry broadcast on state television.

"Since 2013 ... we have formed four divisions, nine brigades and 22 regiments," he said. "They include two missile brigades armed with Iskander missile complexes, which has allowed to boost fire power to destroy the potential adversary."

Shoigu said "terrorist" groups were also active in the North Caucasus. (Source: RT)

Diplomatic policeman Abbas Saraei saves the day

To my surprise, the motorbike rider was being beaten by some other motorbike riders, passing by the scene, for dragging the other guy to the ground.

A few punches and kicks the bike rider received, as I was thinking how on earth beating a bad guy up is justified to some people.

All I had in my power at that time was to scream out 'STOP' a couple of times, which frankly did make a difference since it came out in English.

Officer Saraei pulled aside the bike rider and the victim, whose pants were pulled down and had scars and blood all over his legs, as another passerby handed over the officer some money and a wallet.

Without inquiring more about the accident, I left the scene, knowing full well everything would be alright as diplomatic police officer Saraei saved the day by improving the situation and helping relieve some of that tension while everyone was waiting patiently for the police to arrive.

Thank you officer Abbas Saraei. You were Tehran's district 11 hero on Wednesday.

Assange promises to leak 'a lot more' materials on U.S. presidential elections

WikiLeaks possesses "a lot more" documents to surprise American voters ahead of the upcoming presidential elections - and will not hesitate to make them public.

The leak of 20,000 internal emails from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), published by the whistleblowing website on July 22 "is having so much political impact in the United States," Julian Assange acknowledged to CNN in a Skype interview.

Speaking to America's primary media outlet from the safety of Ecuadorian embassy in London, the WikiLeaks founder refused to disclose the source of the leaked batch of DNC emails, particularly avoiding denial or to confirmation of alleged Russian involvement, much talked about by Hillary Clinton's campaign headquarters. He explained his lack of responsiveness by an obligation to protect WikiLeaks' information sources.

"Perhaps one day the source or sources will step forward and that might be an interesting moment. Some people may have egg on their faces," Assange said. "But to exclude certain actors is to make it easier to find out who our sources are. So we never do it."

The famous whistleblower said that Hillary Clinton's aides are focusing public's attention on the unsubstantiated "Russian trail" in the delicate situation they had found themselves in. This is instead of trying to address the principle issue of the DNC email scandal: roughly plotting against rival Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders. The hacked letters cover the period from January to late May this year.

What we have right now is the Hillary Clinton campaign using a speculative allegation about hacks that have occurred in the past to try and divert attention from our emails, another separate issue that WikiLeaks has published," Assange said.

"I think this raises a very serious question, which is that the natural instincts of Hillary Clinton and the people around her, that when confronted with a serious domestic political scandal, that she tries to blame the Russians, blame the Chinese, etc.," Assange noted.

"If she does that when she's in government, that's a political, managerial style that can lead to conflict," he concluded. (Source: Tass)



Kremlin denies interfering in U.S. election campaign

The Kremlin on Wednesday denied Moscow was interfering in the U.S. election campaign after President Barack Obama refused to rule out that Russia could be trying to sway the vote in favor of Donald Trump.

"President Putin has repeatedly said that Russia has never interfered and does not interfere in internal affairs, especially in the electoral processes of other countries," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters as he denied Russia was involved in a hack of Democratic National Committee emails.

"Moscow has carefully avoided any actions, any words that could be interpreted as direct or indirect influence on the electoral process."

The Kremlin had already shrugged off accusations by the Hillary Clinton campaign that Russia was involved in the embarrassing leak of emails

meant to help Republican presidential candidate Trump as "absurd".

"If you talk about some suspicions regarding our country, then you need at the very least to be precise and concrete," Peskov said Wednesday.

In an interview with NBC News set to air Wednesday, Obama said that "anything was possible" following suggestions that Russia could have been behind the hack.

Obama told NBC he could not speak about the precise motive for the hack or subsequent leak but was aware of Trump's positive comments about the Russian leadership.

"What we do know is that the Russians hack our systems. Not just government systems, but private systems," Obama said.

Trump has made no secret of his admiration for President Vladimir Putin, leading some to suggest the Kremlin strongman was working to help propel the real estate billionaire into the White House.

In December last year, Putin praised Trump as "a very striking man, unquestionably talented".

"It's not up to us to judge his virtues, that is up to U.S. voters, but he is the absolute leader of the presidential race," Putin said.

Trump responded by hailing Putin as a "strong leader, a powerful leader".

Peskov said Wednesday the Kremlin regretted that politicians in Washington were playing the "Russian card," adding that it had become "the main card of their game."

(Source: AFP)

Wife's bomb hoax caused security scare at Geneva airport

A woman who wanted to stop her husband boarding a plane at Geneva has admitted making a false bomb threat, prosecutors said on Wednesday, after hours of tightened security that caused traffic chaos around the airport on the French-Swiss border.

"Yesterday in the evening, a woman called Swiss customs at Geneva airport. She said that today a person carrying a bomb would be in the French sector of the airport," the Geneva prosecutor's office said in a statement.

The Swiss authorities traced the number to Anney in France, some 45 kms from Geneva, where French police raised an address.

"They found a woman who admitted to having made the call and explained that she wanted thereby to prevent her husband from leaving," the statement said.

Criminal proceedings have been opened against the woman, who was not identified, in both France and Switzerland, it said.

The hoax call caused French and Swiss police to massively scale up security at Geneva's Cointrin airport,



which straddles the border.

Officers armed with machine guns were on duty around the airport, and vehicles were stopped on approach roads so that police could check people's papers, causing long tailbacks.

Most entrances to the airport were closed. Passengers were channeled through a few doors where heavily armed police again checked identity documents. But airport officials said the airport was open and function-

ing normally, despite the delays.

"We have received information that is serious enough to put in place preventive controls here at Geneva airport. We cannot give details of staffing numbers, nor on the information we have received, for obvious reasons of security," a Geneva canton police spokeswoman said before the alert was lifted.

Airport spokesman Bertrand Staempfli advised passengers to arrive early because of the extra checks but said there were no serious problems with access.

Security was also heightened on the French side of the border. France itself is on high alert after a series of Islamist militant attacks, including the killing on Tuesday of a Catholic priest during a church service in northern France by knife-wielding assailants.

The Tribune de Geneve paper said one of the assailants in that case was arrested at Geneva airport last year while trying to travel to Syria and was later extradited to France.

(Source: Reuters)

Over 55k Americans injured, killed by U.S. police in just 1 yr.: study

More than 55,000 Americans were either killed or injured by U.S. police in just one year, a new study has revealed. Most of the deaths were from fatal firearm wounds or excessive use of Taser devices.

The study, titled 'Perils of police action: a cautionary tale from U.S. data sets,' covers the year 2012 and offers greater context to the issue of police brutality, which has only grown bigger in the four years since the research.

Published in the peer-reviewed British medical journal Injury Prevention, the study found that a total of 55,400 people were victims of police officers' "abuse of power" or "loss of control out of anger or fear" in 2012.

Among them, 1,063 people were either shot or tasered to death by law enforcement, out of an estimated 12.3 mil-

lion arrests or stop-and-search incidents. On average, nearly 34 people were killed or had to seek hospital treatment for injuries sustained from police per 10,000 stops or arrests.

The research found that the numbers aren't distributed evenly when it comes to race, ethnicity, or age.

"Blacks, Native Americans and Hispanics had higher stop/arrest rates per 10,000 population than white non-Hispanics and Asians," the study's authors stated.

"Given a national history of racism, the excess per capita death rate of blacks from U.S. police action rightly concerns policy analysts, advocates and the press," the study added.

"The excess appears to reflect exposure. Blacks are arrested more often than

whites, and youth more often than the elderly."

However, the study found that when black people are stopped or arrested by U.S. police, they are "no more likely" than white people to be killed during that incident.

In 2015, there were 1,207 people killed by police across the U.S., according to Killed By Police resource data.

It comes on the backdrop of the latest chilling events of the kind - the killings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, both African-American, in Louisiana and Minnesota. News of the events spurred massive protests nationwide.

One such protest in Dallas, initially peaceful, became violent when five police officers were killed and seven others wounded by a shooter, leading

to the deadliest single incident for U.S. law enforcement since September 11, 2001.

Earlier this month, black behavioral therapist Charles Kinsey was wounded in the leg while lying on the ground in a car park, his arms raised, after attempting to calm one of his autistic patients.

When police were asked why they shot the man, one of the officers simply said, "I don't know."

However, the most high-profile police violence case was when a white officer killed unarmed 18-year-old Michael Brown almost two years ago in Ferguson, Missouri. The incident sparked weeks of violent unrest across the U.S. and around the world.

(Source: RT)

Mir Business Bank expanding ties in post-sanctions era

ECONOMY Member of Board of Directors and Deputy Currency and Intl. Affairs of Bank Mellī Iran (BMI) Gholam-Reza Panahi announced the above statement and said: "Russian companies as contract party with Iranian companies, including exporters or importers of goods and services, can open account with Russia's Mir Business Bank against presentation of require documents within the framework of rules and regulations."

Turning to the growing trend of trade exchanges with Russia with regard to

easing the banking transactions and transferring money among economic activists and traders of the two countries, he said: "Issuance of domestic and foreign drafts, registration of transaction passport with the Islamic Republic of Iran, opening Letter of Credits (L/Cs), issuance of banking guarantee letter and also paying trade facilities, etc. are considered as salient services of Mir Business Bank to the Russian companies."

"We also offer payment orders, bank guarantees, letters of credit and business loans to Russian companies that are do-

ing business with Iran," he said, adding: "Iranian companies doing business with Russian and Central Asian companies can refer to Russian Embassy in Tehran to open accounts in MBB and have access to the above-mentioned services."

"Traders can receive money in their accounts in Iranian banks," Panahi said noting that the open market rate would be used for changing money.

MBB also transfers money in euro or ruble to their foreign exchange accounts in Iranian banks. "They can later use the money based on the Central Bank of

Iran's regulations."

Iranian banks can also open LCs through MBB for transactions in ruble or use BMI's Hamburg branch for euro transactions. "Lenders are also offered all common banking services."

Mir Business Bank is the only Iranian-founded bank operating in Russia. Prior to its establishment, Bank Mellī Iran was operating in Moscow. The bank is 100% owned by the Iranian government and has a central office in Moscow and another in Russia's Caspian Sea city of Astrakhan.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Full air rescue service coverage nationwide: official

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran is fully provided with **d e s k** air rescue service coverage, chief of the Rescue and Relief Organization, Nasser Charkhsaz, has said, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Mentioning the number of the helicopters for air rescue services Charkhsaz noted that since last year the number of the helicopters have increased by three becoming 20 over the last four months.

"We were planning allocating one helicopter to each province by the end of the [current Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2017) but we might not be able to do that as a result of insufficient funds," he lamented.



3 costly cancer drugs produced in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran succeeded in producing three of the 10 most expensive drugs in the world, Food and Drug Administration director Rasoul Dinarvand said on Wednesday.

Rituximab, Cantuzumab, and Bevacizumab, are the three monoclonal antibodies designed for treating cancers or autoimmune diseases, IRNA quoted Dinarvand as saying.

He explained that the first two drugs are now available in the market and the last one will be by the end of the current year (March 20, 2017).

The production of the drugs would save millions of dollars for the country and they would cost 50 to 60 percent less than foreign-made ones, he highlighted.



Italian marathon runner to explore Iran's Lut Desert

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Italian marathon runner **d e s k** Max Calderan also known as 'Son of the Desert' is planning on running Lut Desert, south-east of Iran, Mehr news agency reported.

Calderan is also a desert explorer with an ability to survive alone in the desert without food or medical help for unusually long periods of time. His dream is to cross some of the world's most dangerous and unexplored deserts on foot.

This time he is going to run through the Lut Desert in the current Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22 to August 21) which can also lead to setting a record in the Guinness World Records.

Ali Heidarifar, Calderan's agent, explained that some of the money made by this project would be spent on Asiatic Cheetah protection scheme.

Water crisis: Wake-up call for the country

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Supplying **d e s k** potable water to people nationwide has been turned into a predicament for the country, Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian warned.

Currently, 86 percent of renewable water resources are being exploited in the country, while using up to 40 percent of these resources in the world is deemed as a water crisis, Chitchian said on Tuesday in a national conference on water economics, IRNA news agency reported.

"Despite numerous dams being built in various places we are experiencing difficulties in supplying drinking water, therefore we have to come up with big water transferring projects which are extremely costly," he explained.

Precipitations in Iran is one third of the world average which results in two centigrade rise in the temperature and the heat would consequently drives greater evaporation, he added.

Emphasizing on the significance of cutting back on water consumption to achieve sustainable development in water sector he regretted that low water prices would not motivate any investors to put money into this sector.

"We are so short of water that we have to halt some profitable projects in the country," the minister said.



Supplying potable water is a top priority but unfortunately the budget which must be spent on the projects are yet to be allocated, he highlighted.

Climate change leads to higher temperature and accordingly higher level of

evaporation.

This week many media outlets have reported records of the highest temperature in the Middle East and according to the researches done by Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science the tempera-

ture rise is twice in speed in this region.

According to a report by World Resources Institute Iran holds the 13th place among top 33 water-stressed countries and 14 of the countries in this list are located in the Middle East.

California wildfire displaces exotic animals, horses, cats and dogs, too

A virtual Noah's Ark of wild beasts and livestock has been relocated to save them from a massive wildfire burning north of Los Angeles in a region that is home to exotic animal sanctuaries and horse ranches.

Officials and volunteers at the Wildlife Waystation in the northern Los Angeles suburb of Sylmar moved about three-quarters of the sprawling facility's 400 animals on Saturday, including dozens of large animals such as tigers, lions, bears and cougars, founder Martine Colette said in a telephone interview.

The animals were coaxed into cages by voice command and meat for bait, and then loaded onto trucks, vans and trailers, Colette said.

The so-called Sand Fire has charred 59 square miles (153 sq km) since it broke out on Friday in a mostly rural area around the community of Acton on the northwestern fringes of the Angeles National Forest.

Wildlife Waystation said it expects to return the animals to the Sylmar facility on Wednesday, since firefighters have made progress containing the blaze.

The creatures great and small, which were taken to



other wild animal sanctuaries in Southern California, have been stressed by the move, Colette said. "They absolutely hate it, and it will take them several days, maybe as long as a week, to settle down when they finally come home."

Most of the animals evacuated from the facility are small, including birds and lizards that could easily be harmed by smoke she said.

The fire also forced ranch and farm owners in the region to evacuate their livestock by trailer to a number of facilities. More than 300 horses, 165 goats, 33 pigs and two Brahman bulls were displaced by the fire, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control.

About 10 miles (16 km) north of the Wildlife Waystation, officials at the Lange Foundation's St. Bonnie's Sanctuary in Canyon Country on Saturday evacuated more than 40 dogs, over 60 cats and 14 horses, a board member with the organization, Diane Nelson, said in a telephone interview.

Most of them were taken by car and van to one of the foundation's centers in Los Angeles. The foundation saves animals from being euthanized at shelters.

Officials from two animal sanctuaries in the northern Los Angeles County region, the Gibbon Conservation Center that is home to arboreal apes, and the Shambala Preserve for big cats, said they were able to avoid moving their animals.

(Source: Reuters)

LEARN ENGLISH Wanting Peace and Quiet

After three days of travel and meetings, I returned to my hotel room ready for some **downtime**. All I wanted was some peace and quiet so I could get a good night's sleep.

[phone rings] Carl: Hello.

Hotel staff: Hello, Mr. Mendez. I'm calling to welcome you to our hotel. I hope you're finding everything **to your satisfaction**.

Carl: Yes, yes. Everything's fine. I just want to get some rest right now.

Hotel staff: Of course, Mr. Mendez. If there's anything we can do for you, don't hesitate to ask.

I hung up the phone and turned off the ringer. I didn't want any more **unsolicited** phone calls. But then, there was a knock on the door.

Hotel staff: Hello, sir. I'm here to **turn down your bed**. May I come in?

Carl: I don't need the bed turned down, thanks. Before I closed the door, I put the **do-not-disturb sign** on my door. I wanted no more **interruptions**.

All of a sudden, a loud alarm **went off**. I opened my door and a hotel employee was explaining that there was a small fire in the kitchen and that the guests were being **evacuated**. We would have to leave the building immediately.

I left my hotel room and wondered if there was a vast **conspiracy** to **rob me of** my sleep or if I'm just the unluckiest guy in the world!

(Source: *esipod.com*)

Words & phrases

downtime: a period of time when you have finished what you were doing, and you can relax or do something that you had not originally planned to do

to somebody's satisfaction: if something is done to someone's satisfaction, it is done as well or as completely as they want, so they are pleased

unsolicited: not asked for and often not wanted

turn down the bed: refers to the process of turning down the bed covers to prepare the bed to be slept in; turndown service is typically offered at high-end hotels and usually includes a brief cleaning and refreshing of the room.

do-not-disturb sign: Used to indicate that somebody does not wish to be disturbed, e.g. a sign on a hotel room door

interruption: the act of stopping the continuous progress of (an activity or process)

go off: if an alarm goes off, it makes a noise to warn you about something

evacuate: to send people away from a dangerous place to a safe place

conspiracy: a secret plan made by two or more people to do something that is harmful or illegal

rob somebody of something: to take away an important quality, ability etc. from someone or something

IN FOCUS IRNA/ Mojtaba Mohammadi



With mid-summer approaching, farmers are harvesting rice straws from paddy fields in Gilan province.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

72% of Iran's population struggling with long-term drought

72 percent of people in Iran are withstanding prolonged drought, the director for drought and crisis management department of Iran's Meteorological Organization said.

Since the beginning of the current crop year in Iran and based on the indices of the past nine months (September 23, 2015-June 20, 2016) periods of drought have affected parts of Isfahan, Yazd, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Kerman, Semnan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Qom, Markazi, Gilan, and Mazandaran to different extents, Shahrokh Fateh said.

According to statistics, 31 percent of the country's total land area is suffering mild drought, 29 percent is facing moderate drought, 12 percent is being plagued by severe drought, and one percent is struggling with extreme drought, Fateh told ISNA news agency.

۷۲ درصد جمعیت کشور درگیر خشکسالی بلندمدت

رئیس مرکز ملی خشکسالی و مدیریت بحران سازمان هواشناسی از درگیری ۷۲ درصد جمعیت کشور با پدیده خشکسالی خبر داد.

شاهرخ فاتح اظهار کرد: از ابتدای سال زراعی جاری و بر مبنای شاخص ۹ ماهه منتهی به خرداد ماه ۹۵، بخش‌هایی از استان‌های اصفهان، یزد، چهارمحال و بختیاری، خراسان جنوبی، جنوب خراسان رضوی، فارس، کرمان، سمنان، سیستان و بلوچستان، قم، مرکزی، گیلان و مازندران درجاتی از خشکسالی خفیف تا شدید وجود دارد.

فاتح در گفت و گو با ایسنا گفت: بر اساس آمار ۳۱ درصد مساحت کل کشور از خشکسالی خفیف، ۲۹ درصد خشکسالی متوسط، ۱۲ درصد خشکسالی شدید و یک درصد نیز با خشکسالی بسیار شدید درگیر هستند.

ENGLISH PROVERB

If two ride a horse, one must ride behind

Explanation: when two people do something together, one will be the leader and the other will be the subordinate

QUIZ OF THE DAY

190) Choose if the sentence is true or false.

The joke fell flatly.

a) True

b) False

(Quiz No. 189 answer: a)

PHRASAL VERB

Wolf down

Meaning: eat greedily and quickly

For example: The boys wolfed down the whole cake in no time!

Rio Olympic will be better for me than London: Leyla Rajabi

TIPS SPORTS Iran's Leyla Rajabi believes that the Rio Olympics will be better for her than London in 2012.

With just days to go until the start of the 2016 Games, the shot putter feels she can get a better result in the upcoming event.

Rajabi competes in the women's shot put qualification during the London 2012 Olympic Games and came 10th by throwing 17.55 meters.

"I am in good condition at the moment and I am doing my best to show a better performance in Rio. However, sport is not predictable and I don't know what will be my result in Rio," Rajabi told ISNA news agency.

"I have no chance of winning medal and I don't think about that. I just want to get better result at Rio Olympics. The Iranian officials have made clear that just weightlifters, wrestlers and taekwondokas could win medal," she added.

Rajabi acquired Iranian citizenship and converted to Islam after she married Iranian athlete Peiman Rajabi.

She changed her name to "Leyla Rajabi" and decided to represent Iran instead of her birthplace Belarus.

Rajabi immediately broke Iran national record in shot put, improving it about 3 meters and currently is the record holder.



I'm happy to pay back coach's trust, says Saeid Ezatollahi



TIPS SPORTS Iranian international midfielder Saeid Ezatollahi who scored FC Rostov's first official goal against Anderlecht in the UEFA Champions League third qualifying round match, stated that he is glad to repay Kurban Berdyev's trust.

"Last season I had ITC problem in the first six months and in the second half of the season the team was doing great and Berdyev preferred not to make changes in the squad. But in the pre-season camp I worked hard to reach the starting lineup and now I'm glad to repay the trust of Berdyev," Ezatollahi said.

"Anderlecht is a well-known club in Europe and they regularly play in the Cham-

pions League group stage. We conceded two goals on two mistakes but I don't think a 2-2 draw at home will be considered as a bad result. We will try our best for a win in Belgium for a place in the Champions League group stages," he added.

Ezatollahi is the first scorer of the club in the European match and also the youngest ever Iranian player to score at the Champions League.

He also scored the first goal by Iranian player at an UEFA Champions League official match after more than ten years. Last goal scored at an UEFA Champions League official match by former Bayern Munich player Ali Karimi in the 4-0 win against Rapid Wien in November 2005.

Azmoun signs two-year contract with Rostov



TIPS SPORTS Iranian international striker Sardar Azmoun has finally signed a two-year contract with Russian club FC Rostov.

Azmoun, who spent 2015-16 season at Rostov on loan from Rubin Kazan, was supposed to return to Tatars at the end of the season; however Rostov triggered the buyout clause in Azmoun's contract. Rubin denied this clause and claimed Sardar is the player of the team but Azmoun's lawyer appealed the case to CAS.

Finally CAS ruled in favor of Azmoun and he is currently a FC Rostov player. "Sardar has signed a two-year contract with us and will remain at the

club until the end of 2017-18 season," Chairman of the FC Rostov Board of Directors Ali Uzdenov said.

Azmoun who came as a substitute in the 2-2 draw against Anderlecht in the UEFA Champions League third qualifying round match finished seventh in 2015-16 Russian Premier League top scorer list scoring nine goals in 23 appearances, despite getting half as much playing time as some other top scorers.

He was also voted as the fifth most valuable player of the league, narrowly behind players such as Fyodor Smolov, Moussa Doumbia, and Brazilian superstar Hulk.



Iran traveled to Denmark on Tuesday to take part at the 2016 International Federation for Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF) World Championship Qualification Tournament.

The tournament will kick off on Friday in Vejle, Denmark. A qualification tournament is being held to decide who

Iran to participate at Football 7 Worlds Qualification

will compete in the 2017 IFCPF World Championships.

The competition will bring about 250 athletes from 13 countries, namely Denmark, Iran, Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan, Northern Ireland, Portugal, South Korea, Scotland, Spain and Venezuela together.

It is the first time a qualification tournament is being held without the top eight teams (all competing at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games) taking part, Paralympic.org wrote. The teams have been divided into four groups.

The Iranian team has been drawn into Group C along with Germany and Northern Ireland.

- **Group A**
- Scotland
- Australia

- Spain
- **Group B**
- Portugal
- Venezuela
- Republic of South Korea
- **Group C**
- Iran
- Northern Ireland
- Germany
- **Group D**
- Canada
- Japan
- Denmark
- Finland

(Source: Paralympic)

Gonzalo Higuain transfer to Juventus 'full of betrayal' - Napoli's De Laurentiis

Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis believes that the word "betrayal" is the best way of describing Gonzalo Higuain's transfer to Juventus.

Higuain arrived in Turin on Wednesday for his first day as a Juve player after the Turin-based club agreed to pay the €90-million release clause in his contract with the Azzurri.

Not only did De Laurentiis not expect the Bianconeri to pay the fee required to release the forward from his contract with them, he admitted to his shock at Higuain's decision to leave Napoli after signing for the club from Real Madrid in 2013.

"People say that talking about betrayal is exaggerated, but I think the opposite," De Laurentiis told Il Corriere dello Sport.

"This decision is full of betrayal, and it even includes ingratitude. I never seriously thought he would leave, nor that he would cancel three years in Naples with one throw of the sponge."

Of the negotiations surrounding Serie



As record transfer, De Laurentiis added: "I would have expected a different kind of behaviour."

"It's true, there was this clause and nothing was formally incorrect, unless we want to consider their late-night medical as such, but in this unscrupulous world of football, there is not even respect of feelings."

(Source: Soccernet)

Roger Federer to miss Rio 2016 Olympics and rest of season with knee injury

Swiss tennis great Roger Federer will miss the Olympics and the rest of the season with a knee injury.

The 17-time Grand Slam champion said he needs "more extensive rehabilitation" if he wants to prolong his career.

Federer, 34, had knee surgery in February before missing May's French Open with a back problem.

Federer said on his Facebook page he was "extremely disappointed" to not be representing Switzerland in Rio and it was "tough" to miss the rest of 2016.

"I am as motivated as ever and plan to put all my energy towards coming back strong, healthy and in shape to play attacking tennis in 2017," he added.

Federer won doubles gold at Beijing in 2008, but has never won an Olympic singles title and lost to Britain's Andy Murray in the final at London 2012.

Federer twice required treatment during a five-set semi-final defeat by Canada's Milos Raonic at Wimbledon this month, but found



a "silver lining" in his injury-troubled year.

"This experience has made me realise how lucky I have been throughout my career with very few injuries," he said.

"The doctors advised that if I want to play on the ATP World Tour injury free for another few years, as I intend to do, I must give both my knee and body the proper time to fully recover."

(Source: BBC)

FOOTBALL

Zinedine Zidane suggests Real Madrid still in race for Juventus' Paul Pogba

Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane is not giving up on signing Juventus midfielder Paul Pogba this summer, saying "anything can happen" before the transfer deadline.

Manchester United appear best placed to sign Pogba, 23, although sources close to Juventus have told ESPN FC that the Italian champions will not accept less than €120 million for the France international and also want the Premier League club to pay the €25m fee for agent Mino Raiola, with the Old Trafford hierarchy reluctant to meet those demands.

Ex-France star Zidane has spoken regularly, if guardedly, through the summer on his admiration for his compatriot, and Pogba himself has also chosen his words carefully when asked if he would prefer to return to former club United or join the European champions.



Speaking at a news conference in Ohio ahead of Madrid's first preseason outing this summer against Paris Saint-Germain, Zidane was asked if there was now any chance of Pogba moving to the Bernabeu before the transfer deadline on Aug. 31.

"I don't know. At the moment we are here working," he replied. "Until [Aug. 31] anything can happen. He is not yet a Madrid player. We cannot talk about what will happen."

Madrid appear unlikely to pay anything like the €120m asking price unless they could first raise funds by selling squad players such as James Rodriguez or Alvaro Morata for significant sums.

Pressed as to whether this meant he had asked club president Florentino Perez to sign Pogba, he said: "Now is not the moment to talk about this."

"Everyone is interested in Pogba. He is a great player and when you are at Madrid, you always want the best. Now we must respect some things -- he is a Juve player. Today I can say nothing."

Zidane added that it was difficult but not impossible for a club in Madrid's position, having won two of the last three Champions Leagues, to sign players to keep improving.

"It is difficult to improve Madrid's squad. We won [the Champions League] with this squad," he said. "There are good players elsewhere too. You can always improve things and it will always be like that here. There are always players who can improve the team."

(Source: Soccernet)

Most Brazilians expect Rio Olympics to hurt Brazil: poll

Most Brazilians are pessimistic about impact on their country of the Olympic Games, scheduled to begin Aug. 5 in Rio de Janeiro, according to a study by polling group Ibope published in the Estado de S.Paulo daily newspaper.

According to the survey, 60 percent of Brazilians believe the games, expected to cost about 40 billion reais (\$12.2 billion), will bring more harm than good to Brazil, while 32 percent believe the games will bring more benefits to the country than losses, the paper reported.

Concern about the games has grown in Brazil as the country falls deeper into its worst recession in decades, Olympic preparations have been delayed or scaled back, and evidence of widespread corruption in construction contracts for Olympic infrastructure has been uncovered by police and the courts.

A similar study ahead of the soccer World Cup, held in Brazil in 2014, found that 43 percent of Brazilians were optimistic before the event, compared with 40 percent who were pessimistic.

The poll surveyed 2,002 people in all of Brazil between July 14 and 18.

(Source: Reuters)

Putin: Olympic ban on Russian athletes result of political campaign

President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday blamed a shadowy campaign for unfairly stripping some Russian sports people of the right to compete at the Rio Olympics over doping allegations, hitting out at what he called short-sighted political schemers.

Putin, addressing members of Russia's Olympic team in the Kremlin, said that the decision by international sporting organizations to ban some Russian athletes from the games, flew in the face of common sense and legality.

"The deliberate campaign targeting our athletes was characterized by so-called double standards and opted for the idea of collective responsibility, which is not compatible with sport, justice in general, or the basic norms of law," said Putin.

The Russian leader said the scandal, which centers on allegations that the Russian government and the FSB security service systematically covered up doping for years, had unfairly targeted many Russian sports people who had not even faced specific and proven accusations.

"This is a blow to the entire sporting world and to the Olympic Games," said Putin. "It is obvious that the absence of Russian sports people -- leaders in many sporting disciplines -- will significantly affect the intensity of the competition and diminish the spectator value of the forthcoming events."

Putin said any medal won in Rio in the absence of Russian athletes would be worth much less than otherwise and that such victories would have a completely different taste.

(Source: Reuters)





Poem of the day
MIRTH, Spring, to linger in a garden fair,
What more has earth to give? All ye that wait.

Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon:13:11 Evening: 20:32 Dawn: 4:32 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:10 (tomorrow)

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VIEW

“Barcode” warns of over-reliance on social media

By Manijeh Rezapoor

Mostafa Kiai’s “Barcode” lit a light in my head and gave me a warning as a mother of two sons on how social networks can threaten the lives of the youth if they are not fully aware of the very serious consequences.

“Barcode”, starring Bahram Radan and Pejman Bazeghi seeks to demonstrate how certain social factors can shape the fate of citizens as it tells the story of two young simple-minded friends who turn into dangerous criminals.

You take a group photo once, but the picture is modified with Photoshop and the result gets you into trouble.

You join Facebook to keep in touch with friends all over the world, but you also meet people who are operating under false identities to make friends with different individuals, leading to tragic outcomes.

I am not an expert on film and cinema, but as an observer who has watched the film with my two children, I realized that I must take social networks seriously, and be aware of what is going on around me in society and how poverty or greed can cause a young person to drown in a sea of corruption.

The young generation seeks excitement; they need to release their high energy and strength, but they should also be guided towards appropriate amusements, and more intelligent activities need to be substituted.

Care racing on highways is an activity shown in the film to illustrate the high energy of youths and one dangerous way they choose to increase their excitement.

Young people also seek excitement through addiction. Aimless friendship is also seen among those youth who only seek happy moments in life, despite frequent unhappy endings to these sorts of relationships.

To add to this bewildering array of difficulties for youths, embezzlement seems to be a major factor hidden behind these problems and unpleasant consequences their families suffer from according to this film.

The screenwriters (Mahyar Shahrokhi and Mostafa Kiai) have beautifully set the events one after another, going back in the story taking the audience from the end to the beginning step by step.

Humorous words and actions are also heard and seen here and there to keep the audience engaged with moments of happiness, which clashes with the bitter reality buried in the meanings of the words.

Parvin Etesami Literary Awards announce nominees

T I A R T TEHRAN — The **d e s k** nominees of Parvin Etesami Literary Awards, which are awarded for works by female literati with outstanding achievements in Persian literature, have been announced in the two sections of translation and children’s literature.

Five top translations have been selected as the nominees in this section, the Iranian Poetry and Fiction Foundation announced in a press release on Wednesday.

“My Dad’s A Birdman” (David Almond) translated by Reyhaneh Jafari, “Out of My Mind” (Sharon M. Draper) by Anita Yarmohammadi, “Dunger” (Joy Cowley) by Masuemh Rostamzad, “A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers” (Xiaolu Guo) by Reyhaneh

Vadivar and “We the Living” (Ayn Rand) by Jila Farhangi are the top translations.

Moreover, in the children’s literature section, the collection of poetry “Ab-o-Tab” by Saeideh Musavizadeh, “Bird of Rain” by Mahdieh Nazari and “Impatient Poetry” by Afsaneh Shabannejad are among the nominees.

The prize was named after Persian poet Parvin Etesami (1907-1940), one of the most prominent Persian poets of the 20th century. Her poetry is based upon themes of social, humanitarian and mystical concepts, and contains no allusions to romantic love or feminine sentiment.

The winners are due to be announced during a ceremony to be held in Tehran in less than two weeks.



A portrait of Persian poet Parvin Etesami

Top Iranian musicians to raise funds for children with cancer

T I A R T TEHRAN — A number of top Iranian **d e s k** musicians, composers and conductors are slated to hold charity concerts to raise funds for children with cancer during Barana Music Nights, which will be held from August 10 to 19 in the lavish Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in downtown Tehran.

Seven concerts are on the schedule for the event that is being organized by Barana Institute of Art in collaboration with the Mahak Charity Society, a Tehran-based major medical center for safeguarding children with cancer.

World-renowned maestro Shahrdad Rohani plans to



give a piano recital of his hits for the opening night while a duet by Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Sohrab Purnazeri and Spanish flamenco guitarist Antonio Rey Navas is slated to bring the event to end.

Among the highlights are concerts by an Iranian string orchestra under the baton of maestro Loris Tjeknavorian as well as Shams Ensemble led by veteran tambur virtuoso Keykhoro Purnazeri.

Barana Music Nights also includes performances by the pop band Pallet and the Kamkars, Iran’s leading Kurdish family music ensemble.

PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline/Saeid Rabiei



Darius Arjmand waves to his colleagues and friends who came together at Tehran’s Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum on July 26, 2016 to celebrate the veteran actor’s 72nd birthday.

UK producers guilty over Harrison Ford’s broken leg on Star Wars set

LONDON (Reuters) — A production company involved in making “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” has pleaded guilty in a British court to failing to protect actors and workers after an incident in which Harrison Ford’s leg was broken, officials said on Tuesday.

The star, who plays the much-loved character Han Solo, was injured after he became trapped under a rapidly closing metal-framed door during filming in June 2014 at Pinewood Studios, near London.

The power of the door’s drive system was comparable to the weight of a small car, said Britain’s Health and Safety Executive (HSE), a state agency which enforces workplace safety regulations.

“This was a foreseeable incident,” a spokesman for HSE said in a statement. “Managing on-set risks in a sensible

and proportionate way for all actors and staff -- regardless of their celebrity status -- is vital to protecting both on-screen and off-screen talent, as well as protecting the reputation of the industry,” he said.

The production firm, London-based Foodles Production (UK) Ltd, could not immediately be reached for comment. Representatives of the firm entered the guilty plea during a hearing earlier at Milton Keynes Magistrates Court.

Ford, who was 71 at the time, was airlifted to a hospital in Oxford after the incident and later had surgery on his left leg.

With global ticket sales worth well over \$2 billion, “The Force Awakens”, the seventh installment of the Star Wars saga, is the third highest-grossing movie in Hollywood history, behind “Avatar” and “Titanic”.

“Magnificent Seven” remake to be featured at Toronto Film Fest

TORONTO (Reuters) — Director Antoine Fuqua’s remake of the 1960s Western “The Magnificent Seven” is expected to kick off the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 8, which will include movies about whistleblower Edward Snowden and former U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson among the usual Oscar hopefuls.

The 10-day festival, now in its 41st year, has become a launching pad for Hollywood’s award season, with films such as “12 Years a Slave”, “The King’s Speech” and “Slumdog Millionaire” all gaining critical momentum in Toronto before going on to win the Academy Awards for best picture.

Organizers said in a statement on Tuesday that the festival is expected to start with the world premiere of “The Magnificent Seven”. The film stars Denzel Washington, Chris Pratt, Ethan

Egyptian filmmaker Mohamed Khan has died at 73

CAIRO (AP) — One of Egypt’s best-known film directors, Mohammed Khan, whose realism shed light on the country’s urban landscape since the 1980s, has died. He was 73.

Filmmakers and friends from his generation, including Said Shimi and Yousry Nasrallah, said on social media that he died on Tuesday morning. A funeral was due later in the day.

Educated in Britain before returning to Egypt in the 1960s, Khan’s work focused on social realities and often had prominent women protagonists. He rose to fame with the 1983 story of a troubled soccer player, “El-Harrif”, and his 2013 “Factory Girl” addressed Egypt’s rigid class society.

State-run Al-Ahram daily says Khan was born in Cairo in 1942 to an Egyptian mother and a Pakistani father. He acquired Egyptian nationality through a presidential decree in 2014.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Se-tar virtuoso Hamid Motabassem to tour Iran

T I A R T TEHRAN — Se-tar virtuoso **d e s k** Motabassem plans to embark on a tour of Iran, which will start with a performance in Isfahan on August 3.

Vocalist Hossein Alishapur will accompany him on the tour.

Abadeh in Fars province and the central Iranian city of Yazd will be the next stops for the duo on August 11 and 12. Next, they will leave Yazd to perform in Ahvaz on August 17.

The tour will come to an end in Tehran with two performances at Rudaki Hall on August 19 and 20.



Iranian filmmaker on Portuguese festival panel

T I A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director **d e s k** Masud Soheili has been selected for the jury of the short film section of the 20th Avanca Film Festival, which will be held in the Portuguese city from July 27 to 31.

Soheili is the director of several short films, including “Blue-Eyed Boy”, which has been acclaimed at several Iranian and international events.

In addition, Iranian director Faezeh-Sadat Alavi’s “There Is Nothing New Under the Sun” will compete at the international short film section of the festival.



Joint album by Iranian, Azerbaijani musicians “Banafsheh” released

T I A R T TEHRAN — “Banafsheh”, a joint **d e s k** album by Iranian and Azerbaijani musicians, has recently been released by the Rahgozar-e Haft Eqlim Art and Cultural Institute in Tehran.

Pianist Jeyhoun Dadashev and tar virtuoso Firouz Aliyev, the two musicians from Azerbaijan Republic, have cooperated with master of naqareh Vahid Asadollahi in this album, director of the institute Sepehr Saeidi said in a press release on Wednesday.

He added that the institute, which is active in music productions, does not have plans to hold a concert for the Azeri musicians in Iran.