

TEHRAN TIMES

12 Pages | Price 10,000 Rials | 38th year | No.12611 | Sunday | JULY 31, 2016 | Mordad 10, 1395 | Shawwal 26, 1437

'Iran resolved
to open new
chapter in
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with ASEAN'
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Failed coup strengthened Turkish unity: ambassador

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Ali Kushki and Parvin Tell

TEHRAN — Two weeks after the July 15 coup, the Tehran Times sat face-to-face with Turkish ambassador to Tehran Riza Hakan Tekin to hear his remarks about the pre- and post-coup Turkey.

Too strong to be defeated by tanks and helicopters, said the ambassador, hailing the Turkish people's will. Following is the first part of the interview.

■ **Your country has been in a complicated situation over the past two weeks, experiencing a coup and this is what we would like to start with. What happened?**

A: Right. This it is no longer a secret due to access to media outlets, not comparable with other coups in Turkey's contemporary history from this perspective. What happened has to do with Fetullah Gülen's terrorist group which had infiltrated into virtually all important state institutions, including the Army, security organizations, interior ministry, and judicial organizations. This had been going on, it was understood, for many years and they sought to obtain power through this very illegal and wild act particularly through their people in army.

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Iranian movies line up for Melbourne festival

TEHRAN — A lineup of Iranian movies are currently on screen at the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF), which opened in Melbourne, Australia on July 28.

Asghar Farhadi's acclaimed drama "The Salesman" is a highlight of the lineup. The social drama won awards for best screenplay and best actor at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in May.

Also among the films are "A Dragon Arrives" by Mani Hagiqi and the joint Iranian-American production "Radio Dreams" by Babak Jalali.

Earlier in February, "Radio Dreams" won the Tiger Award at the Rotterdam Film Festival.

The lineup also includes two acclaimed documentaries, Mehrdad Oskui's "Starless Dreams" and Rokhsareh Qaem-Maqami's "Sonita".

"Starless Dreams" is the winner of the Amnesty International Film Prize at the 2016 Berlin Film Festival and the True Vision Award at the 2016 True/False Film Festival while "Sonita" has received the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance Film Festival and Audience Award at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam. Around 360 movies from over 60 countries are at the festival that runs until August 14.

Iran basketball earns spot at U19 Worlds

TEHRAN — Iran defeated South Korea 88-63 at the 24th FIBA Asia U18 Championship semifinals.

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Hall on Saturday, the Iranian team booked a place in the final match.

Earlier on the day, the Japanese team defeated Lebanon 75-59. Iran will meet Japan in the final on Sunday and South Korea face Lebanon in the bronze-medal match.

Iran advanced to the 2017 FIBA U19 World Championship as one of the tournament's top three teams.

The 2017 FIBA U19 World Championship will be held in Cairo, Egypt from 1 to 9 July 2017.

Tehran, Moscow set roadmap for strategic economic co-op

Iran and Russia are to sign a five-year strategic cooperation plan on more than 70 industrial projects.

The two countries conferred on taking bilateral economic partnership into a new level during the four-day visit of

Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Mahmoud Vaezi to Moscow, starting from July 26, and his meetings with various Russian senior officials including Energy Minister Alexander Novak.

Vaezi and Novak, who co-chaired the Russian-Iranian intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation, told reporters about the outcomes of their meeting in a news conference on Friday.

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Germany, Italy and France send most tourists to Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — Most of the tourists who apply for getting visa to visit Iran are from Germany, Italy and France, the head of Iranian Tour Operators Association, Ebrahim Pourfaraj, told IRNA on Thursday.

"Not taking religious tourists [visiting holy shrines] into account, Europeans rank first among tourists who visit the country," he said.

The number of foreign tourists who visited Iran was doubled after the nuclear agreement in January 2016, he said.



Earlier this month, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicraft Organization Director Masoud Soltanifar announced that Iran has increased its visa on arrival extension from 1 month to 3 months. For the time being, citizens of 190

countries can obtain visa on arrival at the country's airports with one-month validation, he added.

In October 2015, Soltanifar said the easing of visa rules was opening the door for the return of foreign tourists to Iran.

The number of foreigners visiting Iran has grown 12 percent in each of the past two years.

In 2014, Iran hosted over five million tourists, bringing in some \$7.5 billion in revenue.

JCPOA has been a success so far: Fitzpatrick

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Mark Fitzpatrick, director of the non-proliferation program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), says the nuclear deal between Iran and great powers, officially called the JCPOA, has been a "success" so far as the

sides have respected their obligations.

"I judge the JCPOA to be a success, so far," Fitzpatrick tells the Tehran Times.

However Fitzpatrick de-

fends the report by the UN secretary general about the Resolution 2231 which endorsed the July 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and great powers, arguing Ban

"was correct to criticize Iran's missile program".

The resolution calls upon Iran not to test missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

"Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons," part of the resolution states.

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Asia's June Iran oil imports jump 47.1% y/y to more than 4-year high

Imports of Iranian oil by four major buyers in Asia in June jumped 47.1 percent from a year ago to the highest level in more than four years, evidence Tehran's determination to recoup market share, lost under international sanctions, is paying off.

Iran is regaining market share at a faster pace than analysts had projected since sanctions were lifted in January, helped by securing more tankers through a temporary shipping insurance fix.

Robust Iranian oil sales may continue as OPEC producers cut prices for

August crude sales to Asia, the Mediterranean and from the port of Sidi Kerir in Egypt, in a continuing effort to regain market share in these regions post-sanctions.

Tehran's oil sales hit 4-1/2 year high in June, nearly doubling since December as sanctions were lifted on its oil exports in January.

By discounting prices for its crude against Saudi Arabia and Iraq, Iran has attracted new customers in countries such as Poland and spurred higher demand from existing buyers in Asia. The four countries, South Korea, Ja-

pan, China and India, imported 1.72 million barrels per day (bpd) in June, government and ship-tracking data showed. Japan's trade ministry on Friday released official data showing its imports almost tripled from a year earlier to 275,000 bpd last month. Iran has also gained new customers this year. Japanese oil refiner Tonen-General Sekiyu has bought its first oil from Iran since becoming independent from U.S. oil major Exxon Mobil Corp, three industry sources familiar with the matter said.

(Source: Reuters)

Zarif calls extremism 'common pain of Islamic world'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that extremism is "the common pain of the Islamic world".

During a meeting with Mali's Prime Minister Modibo Keita, Zarif also said that Iran is ready to cooperate with Mali in fighting terrorism and extremism.



"Mali has been cradle of moderate Islam but we are upset about presence of extremist groups in Mali," he said.

Zarif also said that Iran has "very good relations" with Mali.

He added that the two countries can expand cooperation in areas of culture and economy.

Iran can provide Mali with its experiences in counter drug trafficking, he also said.

Keita said that Iran proved that all problems can be resolved through "courage" and "effort".

"Iran can be a role model for all developing countries," he said, calling for expansion of relations.

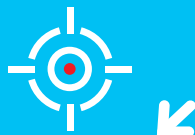
"We have many common views. The government of Mali supports expansion of relations with Iran especially in sphere of economy," the prime minister noted.

Zarif started a tour of West Africa on July 24. He was accompanied by representatives of 35 companies from private sector. He visited Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali.

He arrived in Tehran on Friday morning.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



UN envoy to visit Iran ahead of Syria peace talks

TEHRAN — United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura will arrive in Tehran on Sunday to hold talks with senior Iranian officials ahead of the resumption of peace talks on the five-year-long conflict in Syria.

He will exchange views with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari, Press TV reported.



'Iran resolved to open new chapter in cooperation with ASEAN'

TEHRAN — Iran is determined to open a new chapter in its cooperation with the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Iranian deputy foreign minister for Asia and Pacific affairs has said.

In a meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi in Jakarta on Friday, Ebrahim Rahimpour thanked Indonesia as an ASEAN member for its support for Iran's accession to the bloc's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), IRIB reported.

Rahimpour said Indonesia has a special status in Iran's foreign policy, adding a planned visit by Indonesian President Joko Widodo to Tehran will accelerate implementation of previously signed bilateral agreements.



Cleric condemns Saudi crimes in Yemen

TEHRAN — Tehran's Friday prayers leader condemned Saudi Arabia for its continued slaughtering of civilians in Yemen, ABNA reported.

"The Saudis in an attack on a Yemeni village worsened their black record of killing the Yemeni civilians. They attacked the villages and massacred all their residents and cut their bodies into pieces," Ayatollah Kazzem Seddiqi told worshippers.

"What human rights body approves of the Saudi regime's behavior?" the ayatollah asked.



Iraqi defense chief thanks Iran for military support

TEHRAN — The Iraqi defense minister has lauded Iran for its "continuous support" for his country in anti-terrorism campaigns, saying Tehran is helping Baghdad to take back the strategic city of Mosul from Daesh.

"There is a great military cooperation between Iran's Defense Ministry and its Iraqi counterpart, and as part of this military cooperation, Iran supports Iraq's Defense Ministry and Iraqi security forces, directly or indirectly, in the liberation of Mosul," Khalid al-Obeidi said, Fars reported.

He underlined that Iranian military engineers and advisers are providing support and advice in full coordination with the Iraqi Army, adding that the Iranian advisers are present in the country with the consent of the Iraqi government.



IAEA says hasn't leaked document on Iran's nuclear program

TEHRAN — The International Atomic Energy Agency has said it disagrees with any statement by Iranian officials implying that the agency has leaked confidential information relating to Tehran's nuclear energy plans.

"The IAEA received a letter from Iran this week which referred to a leaked document and to the possibility of leakage by the Agency of parts of Iran's initial declaration of its Additional Protocol," the IAEA said in a statement published on its website on Friday.

"The Agency has sent a letter in reply strongly disagreeing with and rejecting any statement implying that the Agency has leaked information related to Iran's initial declaration of its Additional Protocol," the statement added.



Police sieze over 3 tons of drugs in Iran

TEHRAN — Iran's police on Friday seized 3.4 tons of drugs from armed smugglers in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

Hossein Rahimi, the provincial police chief, said in one operation the police seized over two tons of drugs following an armed clash with smugglers near the city of Saravan, IRNA reported.

In another operation on the same day in Khash County, they arrested three smugglers and seized 900 kilogram of opium, he added.

The police also seized 496 kilograms of opium in Iranshahr country on the same day, Rahimi said.

Multi-layered defense strategy in place for securing borders, commander says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Commander of the Army's Ground Forces says with a multi-layered defense strategy in place, the Iranian borders are the most secure ones in the world.

"The Iranian Army's Ground Forces play a key role in securing borders and recently, we have deployed units at a number of layers," Tasnim reported on Saturday, quoting Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Pourdastan.

Iran shares land borders with seven countries of Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Afghanistan.

With Iraq alone, it shares more than 1400km borders, the longest compared to other neighbors.

Pourdastan seems to be referring to the borders with Iraq after the self-proclaimed Daesh captured swathes of land

across the Iraqi territory, mounting a direct threat to Iran.

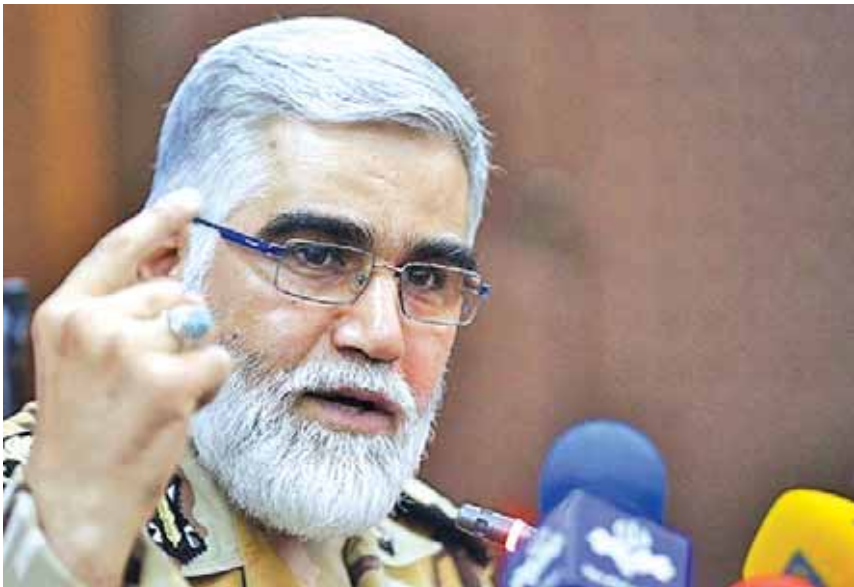
The multi-layered technique contributes to better reconnaissance operations and more prompt reactions, he explained.

Earlier in June, Pourdastan said destroying Daesh beyond borders was a major strategy for Iran.

He also had asserted Iran would order its forces into combat within 40 kilometers outside its borders with Iraq as a preemptive measure just in case.

To keep its forces prepared for real combats as well as testig of new warfare, Iran will stage regular military maneuvers year round.

This year, the Army will stage three military drills in southeastern, southwestern, and central parts of the country, according to Pourdastan.



Iraq would have fallen without Iran, ambassador says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Iraqi ambassador to Tehran has said that his country would have fallen into the hands of Daesh if Iran had not rushed to the support of the Iraqi army and popular mobilization forces.

In an interview with IRNA published on Saturday, Rajeh Saber Abboud al-Mousavi said that Iran's support for Iraq in fight against terrorists is "historic" and "important".

The ambassador said Iran has an advisory presence in Iraq upon a request by the Iraqi government, he said.

He also dismissed claims that Iran is interfering in Iraq's internal affairs.

The diplomat expressed hope that other Islamic countries would follow the path taken by Iran in fighting terrorism.

"Unfortunately, some of the regional countries,

backed by Westerners, support the terrorists and kill the Muslims under the name of human rights," he regretted.

The ambassador added that terrorism and violence have been spread in the Mideast to destabilize the region.

He added that the regional countries are able to resolve their problems without foreigners.

'Strategic ties'

Ambassador Abboud al-Mousavi also said that relations between Iran and Iraq are "strategic" and both countries seek peace and stability in the region.

Elsewhere, the ambassador said that there is no way but "dialogue" and "cooperation" among Islamic countries to settle regional crises.

Iran and Iraq had warned of the consequences of military presence in Syria and the fact that the crisis cannot be resolved militarily, he added.



Mousavi also expressed hope that the situation in Iraq and Syria will be improved.

Iran's parliamentary group to visit Damascus

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Three members of the Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee will start a five-day visit to Syria on July 31, showing unfailing support for the Syrian government amid the recent Syrian army victories, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

On the visit's agenda will be meetings with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Parliament Speaker Hadiyeh al-Abbas, the first female speaker in history of

the country's legislature elected in June.

"As decided by the presiding board of the Majlis National Security Committee, a group consisting of the committee's Chairman Alaeddin Boroujerdi, Shahrour Barzegar, and I will be heading for Syria for a five-day visit," said Hajar Chenarani, a member of the security committee.

This is the first international visit of the committee members after the new Iranian parliament was sworn in on May 28.

As a key parliamentary body, the security committee discusses security and foreign policy issues.

On July 3, Hossein Naqavi Hosseini, the committee spokesman, said, "The visit is in line with the latest political and field developments in Syria and the committee members are to review the developments as well as meet some Syrian officials."

The visit comes amid recent developments in the Syrian province of Aleppo.

The Syrian Army has succeeded in besieging a rebel-held sector of the strategic city.

Another key development is the Thursday announcement by the al-Nusra Front that it was ending its relationship with the Al Qaeda.

Iran has announced the rebranding does not change the terrorist nature of the group which has been wreaking havoc in the country along with other terrorist groups operating there.

Failed coup strengthened Turkish unity: ambassador



They used tanks, helicopters and F16s and even bombed the parliament and the civilians who were resisting this coup attempt. But, thanks to God and due to the unity of our people who entered the scene regardless of their political background, the coup failed. Even those opposing the government resisted the coup attempt.

Also, the media played a very important role during the coup. You know, these guys tried to send their message through the public TV because they invaded the TRT headquarters (the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) and made their statement read by one of the anchor women. But, thanks to other media, especially the private ones, our president's message was transmitted to the Turkish people. Other Turkish officials also called on the Turkish people to resist and take to the streets to resist the coup plotters. The parliament also made an amazing performance, holding a morning meeting immediately on that night. Coupled with this, other parties, even those opposing the current government made a very strong declaration against the attempt. Now, we are in the restoration stage. Our government, institutions, and official bodies are trying to clean up the state from these terrorist groups who have been infiltrating into the organizations for decades.

We try to punish all perpetrators of this wild act who killed civilians and bombed our parliament. We all believe we emerged very strongly from this unfortunate event. I think the abortive coup has strengthened the unity of the Turkish people, which is very important. Coup plotters had never imagined this.

Also, as Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on the eve of the coup the era of coup is over. So, the Turkish people proved that very dramatically, scarifying themselves. Coup plotters martyred 246 people, showing to the world, to our region and to the world that even tanks and F16s are doomed to failure in the face of the will of our people. This was one of the most important lessons of what happened in Turkey at the coup night.

Your government has been elected by votes cast by the Turkish people. Don't you think the widespread post-coup purges may question democratic principles of your country? How do you put these two together?

A: This is a very good question but these purges or all these activities to find who were behind the coup and who the elements of this terrorist group are within



state-run institutions are being done to strengthen our democracy. Because they have nothing to do with democracy or human rights or the will of the people. What they were aiming all this time was a creeping infiltration into official bodies of our country and waiting for the right moment to seize power.

That is the only motivation behind these all purges or detentions or firings as you would like to call it. We experienced a serious incident. I don't know if incidences like bombing a parliament or using tanks to kill civilians who only had flags in their hands have ever happened anywhere else in the world.

Accordingly we have to be very careful and we have to clarify that nothing has been done against other people. The sole aim of all these activities is to clean up both our state structure and other components like newspapers.

'Fetullah Gülen has a very divisive mindset. He, for instance, is categorically against Iran; he and his group did everything to block Turkish-Iranian relations'

■ We heard that as many as 45 newspapers have been shut down. Is that right?

A: Those newspapers have been openly supporting Fetullah Gülen for many years. This group is not a traditional group, not even a traditional terrorist organization. They have been very secretive; they have always been carrying out activities under the disguise of other things. They, for example, started with the interface dialogue. They have established many schools, high schools, and universities. You may think they are doing very good things if you don't know what they really are doing. Or you may think they are helping the society by making investment in education or establishing some hospitals. But, all these media, educational institutions are a tool to take power. And with their media, they have been trying to disseminate propaganda but in a very smart way.

Fetullah Gülen has a very divisive mindset. He, for instance, is categorically against Iran; he and his group did everything to block Turkish-Iranian relations. He has very offensive views towards Shias and does not accept them as Muslims. What has been going on in Turkey after the coup in terms of detention, in terms of closure of media or other media, has not been done to impose a certain view on Turkey or eliminate some opposition figures. It is to finish up this organization with all its elements.

U.S. led strikes kill dozens of civilians in Syria

Damascus denounces U.S.-led 'massacre', calls on UN to intervene

At least 28 civilians have reportedly been killed and several wounded in U.S.-led air strikes on the suburbs of the northern Syrian city of Manbij, according to a monitoring group.

The reports on Friday come a day after the U.S.-led coalition announced it had enough evidence of civilian casualties from its attacks on the same area last week to launch a formal investigation.

Meanwhile, Syria has called on the United Nations to take immediate action against the so-called U.S.-led coalition, and to prevent it from conducting further airstrikes.

In two separate letters sent to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the UN Security Council President Koro Bessho on Friday, the Syrian Foreign Ministry strongly denounced the U.S.-led coalitions "atrocities committed against civilians," and called for bringing the perpetrators to justice, Syria's official SANA news agency reported.

The letters written after U.S.-led warplanes launched airstrikes on the town of Ghandour, which is more than 23 kilometers (14.2 miles) away from the violence-ridden city of Manbij, in Syria's strategic northern province of Aleppo on Thursday.

At least "45 civilians were brutally killed... and 50 others were injured" in the deadly airstrikes, the report further said.

The development came after at least 15 people were killed and injured in US-



led airstrikes against al-Nawajah village east of Manbij on July 23, a few days after another deadly U.S.-led raid left 120 civilians dead near Manbij.

On July 22, the military coalition also killed at least 20 civilians in Manbij and claimed the lives of at least 30 more, including 11 children, in the same city on June 9, in aerial attacks purportedly conducted against positions of Daesh in the area.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry also censured the ceaseless support of France,

U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar for the so-called "moderate opposition" groups, calling it an overt support for the terrorists wreaking havoc across the world, specifically in Syria.

The letters further said that any anti-terror campaign in Syria is doomed to failure unless done in cooperation with the Syrian government and in accordance with international law and the UN Charter.

The ministry also cited remarkable similarities between the "massacres" per-

petrated by the U.S.-led coalition and the terror groups operating in Syria, saying both sides are trying to exacerbate the situation across the country following the Syrian army's recent victories in Aleppo city.

It also called on "the UN Security Council to enforce its anti-terrorism resolutions against the countries backing terrorism."

The letters said in conclusion that Syria would not give up its fight against terrorism while pursuing a political solution to the crisis "without foreign interference."

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be the Daesh terrorists inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from Damascus or a UN mandate. The coalition has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying Daesh.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. UN special envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimates that over 400,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The UN has stopped its official casualty count in Syria, citing its inability to verify the figures that it receives from various sources.

(Source: agencies)

Erdogan drops 'insult' lawsuits and condemns West

Turkish prosecutor claims CIA, FBI trained coup plotters

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says he is dropping all lawsuits filed against people accused of "insulting" him, as a one-off gesture.

Prosecutors have opened almost two-thousand cases since he took power 18 months ago.

"I take this opportunity to withdraw all the lawsuits, for this once, against those who showed disrespect to me and insulted me in every way," Erdogan confirmed.

Insulting the president is a crime in Turkey punishable by up to four years in jail, but the law has previously been invoked only rarely. Critics accuse Erdogan of intolerance and say he is using the law to stifle dissent.

Erdogan also rejected Western criticism of purges in Turkey's military and other state institutions, following the recent failed coup.

"Let me say this explicitly. Any country and any leader who does not worry about the sake of Turkish democracy, about our people's right to live and about our nation's future, the future of our people, as much as they worry over the fate of put schists, are not our friends. They should know this," he told hundreds of supporters at the presidential palace in the Turkish capital.

Late on Friday, 17 journalists were formally arrested

over their alleged links with the coup plot – which Ankara claims was masterminded by U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen.

More than 60-thousand people have been detained, removed or suspended as part of the purges.

■ CIA, FBI trained coup plotters

Meanwhile, a Turkish prosecutor has claimed that the CIA and FBI provided training for the followers of powerful U.S.-based Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara blames for the coup attempt earlier this month.

The indictment, prepared by the Edirne Public Prosecutor's office and accepted by the local Second Heavy Penal Court, seeks the harshest possible punishment for 43 suspects that have allegedly been linked to the failed coup attempt on July 15, including the coup's supposed mastermind, Fethullah Gulen, the arch-nemesis of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The prosecutor said on Thursday that members of what it describes as "the Fethullah Terrorist Organization" were trained by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

"The CIA and FBI provided training in several subjects to the cadre raised in the culture centers belong-

ing to the Gulen movement. The operations carried out by prosecutors and security officials during the Dec. 17 process can be taken as a good example of this," the document says, referring to a high profile corruption probe that targeted senior government officials between December 17 and December 25 of 2013, as reported by the Turkish Hurriyet daily.

The investigation affected many officials linked to the Turkish Cabinet, which was headed by Recep Tayyip Erdogan at that time. Erdogan, who is now Turkey's president, called it "a judicial coup" attempt, while accusing Gulen and his movement of orchestrating it with the help of some "foreign forces."

The indictment states that Gulen loyalists received US training and infiltrated judicial and security institutions.

"This [failed coup] attempt aimed to weaken the state with all its institutions by getting rid of the government completely. Those in the Gulen movement who work in the judicial and security institutions and who received the aforementioned training, took on this task and moved into action," the document says, as quoted by the Anadolu news agency.

(Source: Euro News)

Clinton campaign also hacked in attacks on Democrats

Hillary leads Trump by 6 points after Democratic confab: Reuters/Ipsos poll

A computer network used by Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's campaign was hacked as part of a broad cyber attack on Democratic political organizations, people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The latest attack, which was disclosed to Reuters on Friday, follows two other hacks on the Democratic National Committee, or DNC, and the party's fundraising committee for candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives.

A Clinton campaign spokesman said in a statement late on Friday that an analytics data program maintained by the DNC and used by the campaign and a number of other entities "was accessed as part of the DNC hack."

"Our campaign computer system has been under review by outside security experts. To date, they have found no evidence that our internal systems have been compromised," said Clinton campaign spokesman Nick Merrill.

■ Clinton leads Trump

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton held a 6- percentage-point lead over Republican rival Donald Trump, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll with new wording that was released on Friday, the

day after she formally accepted her party's nomination for the Nov. 8 election.

Nearly 41 percent of likely voters favor Clinton, 35 percent favor Trump, and 25 percent picked "Other," according to the new July 25-29 online poll of 1,043 likely voters, which overlapped with the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia.

The poll has a credibility interval of 4 percentage points.

The presidential tracking poll reflects a slight change of wording from previous surveys, replacing the "Neither/Other" option given to respondents with just "Other." An internal review had found the word "Neither" has, at times, siphoned support away from one or the other candidate.

Former Secretary of State Clinton delivered an upbeat keynote address at the Democratic convention on Thursday night, as she became the first woman to accept the presidential nomination from a major party. [nLN1AD041]

In the biggest speech of her more than 25-year-old career in the public eye, Clinton, 68, cast herself as a steady leader at a "moment of reckoning" for the country, and contrasted her character with what she described as Trump's dangerous and volatile temperament.



Trump, a 70-year-old New York businessman and former reality TV show host who has never held political office, responded in a Twitter post late on Thursday that "Hillary's vision is a borderless world where working people have no power, no jobs, no safety."

Both candidates were on the campaign trail on Friday, kicking off what is expected to be a hotly contested general election battle.

A separate Reuters/Ipsos survey that

provided respondents with the option to choose from Clinton, Trump, Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson and Green Party candidate Jill Stein, has Clinton and Trump tied at 37 percentage points.

Of the alternative party candidates, Johnson came in third with 5 percentage points, followed by Stein at 1 percentage point, according to the July 25-29 survey of 1,426 likely voters, which has a credibility interval of 3 percentage points.

(Source: Reuters)

Bahrain forces arrest senior Shia cleric

Bahraini regime forces have arrested yet another senior Shia cleric as the ruling Al Khalifah regime continues a heavy-handed crackdown on the Shia community in the country.

Bahraini forces arrested Seyyed Majid al-Mashaal, the secretary of Muslim Scholars Council, after raiding his home on Saturday morning.

On January 29, 2014, a Bahraini court decided to dissolve the council, which includes a number of prominent Bahraini Shia scholars, and ordered the liquidation of its assets.

Bahrain's Islamic Scholars Council was founded in 2004 under the leadership of prominent Bahraini Shia

religious scholar Sheikh Issa Qassim.

Sheikh Qassim himself has been stripped of his citizenship and is being tried at a court over trumped-up charges.

Earlier on July 24, Bahraini forces arrested two Shia clergymen, identified as Sayed Yassin al-Mosawi and Sheikh Jassim al-Kayyat, over their participation in a sit-in outside the residence of Sheikh Qassim to denounce the regime's decision to revoke his citizenship.

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 — themselves repressive Arab regimes — were deployed to the country to assist Manama in its crackdown on protests.

Bahrain has already sentenced Sheikh Ali Salman, another revered opposition cleric, to nine years in prison on charges 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.

(Source: Press TV)

Iraqi Commander Declares Full Liberation of Fallujah-Ramadi Highway

The commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, Hadi al-Ameri, announced that the Fallujah-Ramadi highway has completely been purged of terrorists.

"The Iraqi security and Hash al-Shaabi (popular forces) could liberate the highway during their efforts to retake al-Khaleidiya Island," Ameri said on Saturday.

Noting that Bobali, Abu Obaid and al-Qartan villages and a number of towns adjacent to the highway have also been freed, he underlined that liberation of these villages and towns indicates the collapse of Fallujah and Ramadi.

The Iraqi popular forces, supported by the air force, could retake 3km of al-Khaleidiya Island (23km East of Ramadi) only hours after the start of operations to liberate the region on Saturday.

The attacks to free al-Khaleidiya Island in al-Anbar province from the ISIL terrorists are being led by al-Jazira and Badiya operations command center.

An army officer said on Saturday that the Iraqi forces entered al-Khaleidiya Island from al-Zouya region.

Reports said earlier this week that commanders of the ISIL terrorist group have ordered their forces and family members to leave their last bases and strongholds in Western Iraq as Iraq's military forces are preparing to launch massive military operations in the region, local sources said Tuesday.

"The Iraqi military forces are preparing to capture the last ISIL strongholds in Western Iraq and the military equipment for these operations have been fully supplied and transferred, and we are waiting for the final order by the joint operations command center to attack al-Khaleidiya Island and Heet town in the Western parts of al-Anbar province," Head of the Security Committee of al-Anbar province's Council Rajeh al-Issawi said on Tuesday.

Also, a local source in Western Iraq said that the ISIL commanders and their families have fled the al-Baghdadi island in the Western parts of Heet, one of the most notorious ISIL bases.

The source added that ISIL commanders, fearing the Iraqi army and popular forces' rapid advance, have fled towards al-Qae'm town in Western al-Anbar.

(Source: FNA)

U.S. delegation meets Assad in Damascus

Syria's President Bashar al-Assad says the United States' policies are in contrast with the interests of the American people and the world as a whole.

Assad made the remarks in a meeting with representatives of the US Peace Council, the American branch of the World Peace Council international organization on Thursday, SANA reported.

"The US policies are at a collision course with the interests of the US citizens and the peoples of the world," Assad said.

"The role of the United States as a superpower should otherwise be positive and based on fostering knowledge, science and technology instead of chaos and destruction," he said.

Washington and some of its international allies have been lending generous financial and military support to the militants who have been fighting the Syrian government since 2011. The foreign-backed militancy has cost thousands of lives.

A US-led coalition grouping dozens of countries has been bombarding Syria since September 2014 without authorization from Damascus or the United Nations. The coalition purports to be targeting the positions of Daesh.

In a statement to journalists, Henry Lowendorf, who headed the visiting American delegation to Syria, said the group had held "fruitful and constructive" talks with Assad.

"We had the honor to meet President al-Assad. He was straightforward and wanted us to be so. We related to him what we saw and he provided rational, accurate and wise answers for our questions... He impressed us with his insight not only about the situation in Syria but also about world powers," he added.

Earlier in the week, Assad told a visiting delegation of Greek parliamentarians that Western countries started supporting anti-Damascus militants because they could not bear to see the Arab country leading an independent existence.

Although many Western countries have been supporting the anti-Damascus militants, some of them have come to realize the importance of Damascus' fight against terrorism, sending delegations to Damascus and voicing tacit willingness to restore ties with the government of President Assad.

(Source: SANA)



Japan's TonenGeneral buys first oil from Iran: sources

Japanese oil refiner TonenGeneral Sekiyu has bought its first oil from Iran since becoming independent from U.S. oil major Exxon Mobil Corp, three industry sources familiar with the matter said.

The company bought the Iranian spot cargo through a trading house due to attractive pricing and the shipment arrived Japan earlier this month, the sources said.

TonenGeneral, formerly a unit of Exxon Mobil, previously could not buy Iranian oil due to its affiliation with the U.S. oil company.

TonenGeneral bought a controlling stake in itself from Exxon in 2012, reducing Exxon's stake from 50 percent to 22 percent as the oil major pulled back from Japan due to the country's declining oil demand.

Exxon Mobil has since sold that remaining stake in Japan's second-biggest oil refiner by capacity, shedding its last holding in TonenGeneral by early this year.

TonenGeneral Sekiyu, an aggressive buyer of cheaper crude grades, is known for having one of Japan's highest ratios of spot crude compared to term volumes, and will consider buying more Iranian oil depending on economics, the sources said.

A TonenGeneral spokesman said the company cannot comment on the spot crude purchase.

Iran has been regaining market share faster than analysts had expected after sanctions were lifted in January, and its exports are projected to be above 2 million barrels per day for a fourth month in July.

Japan's crude imports from Iran nearly halved last year from 2011 levels due to the sanctions, but there are signs of a recovery in imports this year, with industry sources saying some Japanese buyers are looking to hike purchases of Iranian oil on a spot basis.

Japan has imported 192,180 bpd of Iranian crude January-May this year, up 1.9 percent from the same period a year ago.

(Source: Reuters)

Tehran examining alternatives for U.S. dollar

According to a report on Friday, a senior Iranian official has told Reuters that Tehran is examining alternatives for dollar based banking transactions. "Iran will continue to work with small banks, institutions as long as major European banks are reluctant to return to Iran," said the official.

He said, "Our estimation is that this uncertainty will continue for a few years. We are in talks with many countries, mainly China, Russia and African countries to widen our banking cooperation aimed at resolving existing banking, financial problems."

Iranian Officials have been to Russia several times since the nuclear deal, while Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has also visited African countries in recent days, with Iran expressing willingness to boost economic cooperation.

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Iran in January, discussing trade opportunities. That same month a top Iranian central bank official said the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China wanted to open branches in Iran.

(Source: Reuters)

OPEC oil output set to reach record high in July: survey

OPEC's oil output is likely in July to reach its highest in recent history, a Reuters survey found on Friday, as Iraq pumps more and Nigeria manages to export additional crude despite militant attacks on oil installations.

Top OPEC exporter Saudi Arabia has kept output close to a record high, the survey found, as it meets seasonally higher domestic demand and focuses on maintaining market share rather than trimming supply to boost prices.

Supply from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has risen to 33.41 million barrels per day (bpd) in July from a revised 33.31 million bpd in June, according to the survey based on shipping data and information from industry sources.

The increase in OPEC production has added to downward pressure on prices. Oil has fallen from a 2016 high near \$53 a barrel in June to \$42 as of Friday, pressured also by concern about weaker demand.

OPEC's production could rise even further should talks to reopen some of Libya's oil facilities succeed. Conflict has been keeping Libyan output at a fraction of the pre-war rate.

"This could shortly release more oil into an already abundantly supplied market," Carsten Fritsch of Commerzbank said, although earlier hopes of a restart have not been realized.

"It therefore remains to be seen whether this time will be different."

OPEC's output has climbed due to the return of former member Indonesia in 2015 and another, Gabon, this month, skewing historical comparisons. July's supply from the remaining members, at 32.46 million bpd, is the highest in Reuters survey records, starting in 1997.

Supply has also risen since OPEC abandoned in 2014 its historic role of cutting supply to prop up prices as major producers Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran pump more.

In July, the biggest increase of 90,000 bpd has come from Iraq, which has exported more barrels from its southern and northern ports despite a pipeline leak that restrained southern exports.

Nigeria, where output has been hit by militant attacks on oil facilities, has nonetheless exported slightly more in July than June, the survey found, although crude exports remain significantly below the 2 million bpd seen in early 2016.

Output in two major producers is largely stable. Iran, OPEC's fastest-growing source of supply expansion this year after the lifting of Western sanctions, has pumped only 20,000 bpd more as the growth rate tops out for now, the survey found.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Tehran, Moscow set roadmap for strategic economic co-op

Establishing free trade zone and building 1,400MW power plant are among 70 projects undertaken by Russia and Iran



"My colleague [Vaezi] and I have agreed to sign in the near future a roadmap for projects in the field of industry between Russia and Iran... This roadmap is currently being finalized and it consists of more than 70 specific projects to be implemented between Iran and Russia," Novak told the TV channel Rossiya 24.

■ Building 1,400MW power plant

The sides signed a contract for the construction of a power station in Iran's southern Hormozgan province. The power plant's four generators will have a 1,400-megawatt capacity, RT reported.

According to Vaezi, Tehran plans new energy contracts with Russia in the near future.

■ Approving deal on €2.2b loan to Iran

Russia and Iran have prepared a package of agreements on allocating a 2.2 billion euro loan to Tehran for infrastructure projects in Iran, including the construction of the aforementioned power station, TASS reported.

"These two draft agreements were coordinated in the Russian government - 2.2 billion euros in total in the framework of agreements will be provided as an inter-state loan," Novak said.

■ Establishing free trade zone

The two sides expect a joint study group working on the establishment of a free trade zone (FTZ) by the end of 2016, Novak was quoted by Sputnik as saying.

"We discussed the issues related to the study into the possibility of establishing the FTZ and have noted the progress made in this direction. We expect that by the end of the year, a joint study group will finish the



Iran's Communications and Information Technology Minister Mahmoud Vaezi (L) and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak explored avenues of economic cooperation in Moscow.

work and will submit proposals of the action plan for the FTZ preparation," he explained.

■ Expanding oil ties

Almost all Russian oil and gas companies have shown an interest in energy exploration and production projects in Iran, Novak admitted, RT reported.

Gazprom is interested in developing Iranian gas supply and production, said the Russian energy minister, while Lukoil wants to resume cooperation in the Anaran oil project which it had to abandon in 2010 due to Western sanctions against Iran.

In two or three months Iran will reach its pre-sanctions oil output level of four million barrels a day. As Vaezi announced, the country has already regained 80 percent of the market share it held before the U.S. and EU imposed sanctions on its oil industry in 2012.

■ Enhancing banking relations

Moscow and Tehran have also agreed to continue cooperation in the banking sector, with the central banks meeting in August, RT wrote.

"Development of the interbank lending opportunities, mutual credit, provides additional opportunities and momentum for our companies in cooperation," Novak said.

"As far as I know, the nearest meeting between our [Russia and Iran] central banks will be held in August. A relevant working team meeting to summarize once again measures for cooperation development in this [banking] sphere will be held in September," Novak said.

"We have agreed that the president of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) will pay a visit to Russia," Vaezi affirmed.

■ Broadening trade ties

Relations between Russia and Iran have improved dramatically in recent years, with Russian President Vladimir Putin visiting Tehran in November last year, Novak said, according to the Moscow Times.

"During this time, our trade turnover has increased by 70 percent, and we have agreed to create the necessary legal framework to aid the growing relationships between entrepreneurs in our two countries."

The ministers also agreed on a further 13 treaties dealing with trade, customs clearance and investment.

■ Improving communication ties

Moscow and Tehran will hold talks on the resumption of the Russian search engine Yandex in Iran, the ban on which can be removed before the end of the year, according to the Iranian communications minister, Sputnik reported.

"Four different committees will be set up after the meeting I had. They will organize everything and will cover many issues, including Yandex," Vaezi said.

In addition, Russia's Roscosmos space corporation might receive an order for the supply of components for Iranian satellites, Russian Minister of Communications and Mass Media Nikolai Nikiforov said.

As reported, before going to Moscow, Iranian communications minister, visited Russian city of Astrakhan, which has turned to be a hub for Iranian businessmen in Southern Russia.

During his stay in Russia, Vaezi also met with Russian Minister of Communication and Mass Media Nikolai Nikiforov and Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. allows American-made planes to be flown to Iran

The United States said on Friday it would allow foreign airlines to fly U.S.-made aircraft to Iran, providing greater assurance to aviation companies as Iran tries to re-establish trade and business links following the lifting of sanctions.

The U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control on Friday issued a license allowing U.S.-made planes to have "temporary sojourn" in Iran, meaning airlines such

as Lufthansa, Turkish Airlines, or others flying frequently to Iran are expressly allowed to use U.S.-made planes, or planes with U.S. parts, to fly there.

Iran and world powers reached a deal on Tehran's nuclear program last July that allowed for the lifting of most sanctions on the country, although many U.S. sanctions remain in place.

The deal allows for U.S. companies to

obtain licenses to sell civil aircraft to Iran, but a proposed deal between Boeing Co. and Iran has drawn the ire of members of the U.S. Congress, who are trying to block it.

The license issued on Friday has no impact on the proposed Boeing deal.

Because of a quirk in the law, U.S.-made planes could be flown to other countries under U.S. sanction, such as Cuba, Sudan,

Syria, and North Korea. Iran was an exception to this, said Jonathan Epstein, an attorney at Holland & Knight in Washington.

"Technically there was no legal way to fly to Iran, so U.S. lessors tended to say no, or it caused a lot of angst in the U.S. leasing community that these planes were being flown there," said Epstein, who advises aviation leasing firms on sanctions issues.

(Source: Reuters)

PICTURE OF THE DAY

SHANA/Hasan Hosseini



South Pars phase 21 platform installed after weather subsides

IT **ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) personnel, standby in the Persian Gulf for almost a week, finally succeeded Friday afternoon to fix the platform of South Pars gas field's phase 21 on its jacket in the Persian Gulf.

The 2,700-ton platform was built in Khorramshahr yard in a 20-month period and moved by Abouzar barge last Friday to be installed on its current location but the operation was postponed due to weather conditions.

According to Farrokh Alikhani, the deputy managing director of POGC, with this platform, 28.3 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas will be added to the current 420 mcm daily production of the giant gas field.

Phase 21 of South Pars includes 11 rigs which will be put into operation within the next 110 days.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

South Pars is divided into 24 standard phases, of which phases 1-10, 12, 15 and 16 are fully operational. Each standard phase is projected to produce 50 mcm of gas per day. Phases 17 and 18 as well as 19 are operating at half capacity.

Phases 20 and 21 are projected to produce 50 million cubic meters of sweet gas per day for home consumption and will recover one million tons of Ethane per annum for petrochemical industry consumption. They will also recover 1,050 million tons of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) per year, produce 75,000 barrels of gas condensate and recover 400 tons of sulfur per day for exports.



Iran emerges 4th biggest oil supplier to India in April-June

India counted for 5.1 million metric tons of India's total crude import during April-June 2016 according to a statement submitted to parliament by Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on July 25.

India bought 34.9 million metric tons crude oil from Middle East out of total imports of 53.2 million tons during the mentioned period.

Imports from Africa were 8.4 million tons and South America 6.5 million tons. Iraq stood at the top in the list for oil suppliers to India during April-June 2016 with 11 million metric tons of crude shipped to the country.



Apple asks U.S. Supreme Court to rule against Samsung over patents

Apple Inc on Friday asked the U.S. Supreme Court to clear the way for the iPhone maker to secure hundreds of millions in damages from Samsung Electronics Co Ltd in a case over smartphone design patents.

The world's top smartphone rivals have been feuding over patents since 2011, when Apple sued Samsung in a northern California court alleging infringement of the iPhone's patents, designs and trademarked appearance.

Apple said there was no need for the Supreme Court to send the case back to a lower court for further proceedings.



California regulator says testing to begin on Volkswagen diesel fix

Volkswagen AG and the California Air Resources Board will begin testing hardware and software that could help the German automaker avoid buying back as many as 475,000 diesel cars sold in the United States with improperly designed pollution controls, the head of the board told Reuters.

Air Resources Board Chair Mary Nichols said the agency is working with the German automaker to test potential fixes for three generations of Volkswagen cars equipped with 2.0-liter diesel engines and pollution control systems improperly designed to operate only during government pollution control tests.

Tourism on the rebound in Iran

More visitors have been exploring Iran since last year's landmark nuclear deal and the lifting of sanctions.

When the video "Don't go to Iran" first hit the internet this spring, the title made some Iranians fear it would be yet another effort to taint the country's image.

But it was quite the opposite. French filmmaker Benjamin Martinie said the video aimed to clear up misconceptions about Iran, by countering common stereotypes through clips from his recent visit. The video has now been viewed hundreds of thousands of times on YouTube and Vimeo, and is frequently shared among Iranians within the country via social media.

"I would say a lot of people might not know [much] about Iran, outside of the things you hear on the news," Martinie, who specializes in travel videography, told Al Jazeera. "Iran is changing, and the tourism potential is really high. The warmth of the people, the cultural warmth and the many amazing landscapes are all assets."

After the 2013 election of President Hassan Rouhani, who is viewed as a moderate, the number of incoming tourists to Iran surged by a nearly a quarter to 4.8 million, according to the World Tourism Organization. The landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, along with the lifting of sanctions, has opened the door for more visitors: Last year, the country's tourism affairs department reported 5.2 million tourists, with each spending an average of \$1,700 during their stay, bringing in a total revenue of more than \$8bn.

Iran is home to 21 UNESCO-designated World Heritage sites, more than any other country in the Middle East. From the 2,500-year-old ruins of Persepolis to the large, historic bazaars of Tabriz and Tehran, there is a variety of cultural options for tourists to embrace.

"Even now, it was hard for us to get hotels. It was completely full, mainly in Tehran and Isfahan," Leo Wong, a tourist from the United Kingdom who recently

visited the southern city of Shiraz with his wife Sera, told Al Jazeera.

Sera said Iran has been on the couple's travel radar for close to a decade, but friends and family at home were initially worried about their safety: "Everyone was, like, freaking out," she said. "Some people's impression of Iran is terrorists, no alcohol and veils, because they don't really understand."

But is Iran ready for a tourism boom?

According to Mojtaba Rahmanian, the cofounder of Iran Travel Service - a company that offers a variety of tours to Iran - the industry is growing rapidly, and will need significant investment in order to continue.

"We need more five-star hotels, and more service of a high calibre," Rahmanian told Al Jazeera.

As part of its 20-year economic plan, Iran has an ambitious goal to host 20 million overseas tourists annually by 2025, and is in need of more places to house them.

With exhausted infrastructure frequently cited as an issue for the tourism industry, a recent deal to bolster tourism ties with Turkey gave the green light for several Turkish investors to build hotels in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz and Mashhad. Hotel groups from France and Spain have also invested in Iran in recent years, while Iran has bolstered tourism ties with China by establishing tourism offices in Shanghai and Guangzhou, in the hope of attracting Chinese tourists and investors.

"We've seen a lot of Americans take an interest in wanting to explore Iran - but because they need a guided tour, the price has gone up for them, and a lot of people don't like travelling that way."

The lifting of sanctions has also enabled Iran to upgrade its ageing fleet of passenger planes, while airlines such as Air France and British Airways have announced that they will resume flights to Tehran.

But Rahmanian says tourists may still face challenges when it comes to book-



ing hotels or purchasing plane or train tickets within the country. The use of credit cards is still not available in Iran, forcing many tourists to bring cash.

Despite these issues, Rahmanian says he has seen an increase in visitors through his own tours.

"Last year, tourists were mostly from Australia and Germany, but we've seen a lot more from places like Italy, Spain, and even the United States too," he said.

"We even had two Americans come to Iran for their honeymoon," Rahmanian added, noting that they customised their tour to include a trip to northern Iran, a trendy mountainous region covered in forests.

As part of its efforts to attract more visitors, Iran has recently allowed for citizens of 190 countries to obtain a 30-day visa on arrival, although nationals of several countries - including the US and the UK - are not eligible to travel to Iran independently, and must be bound to a tour guide.

"Because of improved political relations between the two countries, we've seen a lot of Americans take an interest in wanting to explore Iran - but because

they need a guided tour, the price has gone up for them, and a lot of people don't like travelling that way," Rahmanian said.

For those who do, Rahmanian said his tours allow for customization, so that tourists can add experiences not included in their preset packages: "Tourists recently have found an interest in the Kurdistan region and Hawraman, because it's a bit more untouched and natural."

For his part, Martinie says that while he had some of the same concerns about Iran that many tourists do, he found the country to be "incredibly welcoming and helpful."

"Iran is a very hospitable country," he said. "People will go out of their way to help you with something or to have you over for dinner."

The popularity of his video within Iran in the ensuing months was not a surprise, he added.

"Every time Iranians see something that could change the image of their country," Martinie said, "they will share it to do their best to change it."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

NEWS

French tourism falls victim to terror attacks

At the annual Paris-Plages event tourists and locals share bottles of rosé and lounge on artificial beaches on the banks of the Seine. This year, the merrymakers have been joined by a less jovial group: camouflaged soldiers with automatic rifles hanging from their shoulders.

"It's a bit disconcerting," says Serena, an American tourist from Vermont. "But I guess this is the new normal."

Other tourists seem to be even more unnerved after an 18-month stretch that has featured a spate of deadly terrorist attacks from Nice to Normandy and left France under a prolonged "state of emergency".

Through June, France reported a 5.8 per cent fall in air passenger traffic compared with the same period a year earlier. Hotel reservations in the Riviera region have dropped as much as 30 per cent in the weeks after the Nice attack, according to the economy ministry.

"There is clear pressure on France as a destination," Pierre-Francois Riolacci, Air France-KLM's chief financial officer, warned this week.

For France, the most visited country in the world, tourism is a central cog in an economy that has struggled to generate growth. The industry, which attracted 83m overseas visitors last year, accounts for 7 per cent of output and employs more than 2m people.

"We can't allow ourselves to tolerate the threat of a new retreat or even of stagnation in this sector," said Jean-Marc Ayrault, minister of foreign affairs, after an emergency meeting in July with tourism business leaders and public officials. It was a day before the Nice massacre.

The UK's vote to leave the EU, precipitating a sharp fall in the pound, has also not helped. France is now a pricier destination for British tourists.

Before this month's attack on Nice — in which 84 people were killed by a man driving a 19-tonne truck — the damage had mostly been confined to Paris, France's top attraction. In April and May, hotel stays in the capital were down 10 per cent from the previous year.

Still, the most recent numbers were not as bad as they had been in the weeks after the November attacks on the city that claimed 130 lives. And France's successful hosting in June and July of the 2016 European football championships, an event free of terror incidents, raised hopes of a wider turnaround.

(Source: Financial Times)



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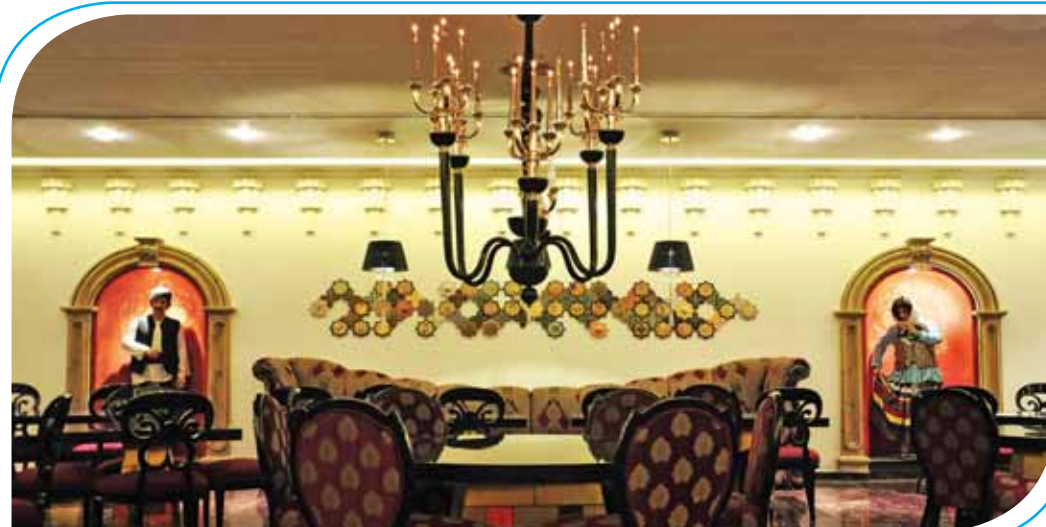
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The real plot against America

By Timothy Egan

In retrospect, it worked out much better than planned. Who'd have thought a pariah nation, run by an authoritarian who makes his political opponents disappear, could so easily hijack a great democracy? It didn't take much. A talented nerd can bring down a minnow of a nation. But this level of political crime requires more refined

mechanics — you need everyone to play their assigned roles.

You start with a stooge, a fugitive holed up in London, releasing stolen emails on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, in the name of "transparency." Cyberburglars rely on a partner in crime to pick up stolen goods. And WikiLeaks has always been there for Russia, a nation with no transparency.

The emails show office gossip — catty, sometimes crude back-and-forth by party operatives, and a bias for one candidate. Ho-hum. To make the plot work, reporters have to take the bait. On cue, they decry the fact that politics is going on inside a major political party. The horror — Democratic hacks saying nasty things about Senator Bernie Sanders.

Next, lefty extremists have to act like



lefty extremists — that is, myopic to the greater good, guided by a Trumpian sense that they alone know how to solve the world's problems, and everyone else is a sellout. Angered at the contents of the cybertheft, they boo any mention of their party's nominee. And told by Senator Sanders, the man who brought them there, that booing is too easy, they boo his call to unite to save their country from a monster.

→9

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt. in Elahieh
160 sq.m, 2 bdrs, furn, \$2500
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Apt. in Zaferanieh
2nd Fl., 350 sq.m, 4 bdrs,
fully furn, SPJ, Pkg,
Diplomatic Bldg., 5000 Euro
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Jordan
2nd Fl., 150 sq.m, 3 bdrs,
fully furn, Pkg, 1800 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Zaferanieh
300 sq.m, 4 bdrs, fully furn,
large living room, \$3500
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Duplex Apt. in Farmanieh
220 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn & unfurn,
nice balcony with flower boxes,
Pkg, **Diplomatic**, 4500 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Jordan
150 sq.m, 2 bdrs, furn,
nice view, 2300 USD
Mr. Arvin: 09128103207

Apt. in Elahieh
160 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn, \$3000
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Villa

Duplex Villa in Pasdaran
1800 sq.m built up in 2200 sq.m land,
5 bdrs, furn & unfurn, big salon,
meeting room, Pkg, pool, renovated,
garden, **Suitable for Embassy & Residency**
Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Elahieh
700 sq.m built up in 1800 sq.m land, 5
bdrs, large living room,
nice garden, 9000 USD
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Duplex Villa in Farmanieh
900 sq.m built up in 2000 sq.m land, 6
bdrs, beautiful garden, extra apt at the
end of garden
150 sq.m, Pkg
Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Elahieh
700 sq.m built up in 1800 sq.m land, 5
bdrs, large living room,
nice garden, 9000 USD
Mr. Arvin: 09128103207

Duplex Villa in Farmanieh
500 sq.m built up in 600 sq.m land,
4 bdrs, semi furn, renovated, small
garden, Pkg, outdoor pool, **Suitable**
for Residency, \$6000
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5-Storey, 3200 built up in 5000 sq.m
land, lobby, **security, Suitable for Companies**, price: reasonable
Diba: 09128103206

Administrative license Office in Vozara
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Pkg lot, \$40 per sq.m
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Administrative license Bldg. in Jordan
From 100 sq.m, to 3200 sq.m,
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the best area, Pkg lot
Diba: 09128103206

Commercial Bldg. in Vozara
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Apt. in Qeytarieh
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View of park, nice & cozy,
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Apt. in Shahrak-Qarb
2nd Fl., 120 sq.m, 2 bdrs,
fully furn, renovated, **1300 USD**
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Jordan
130 sq.m, 2 bdrs, furn, **\$1700**
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Apt. in Qeytarieh
150 sq.m, 3 bdrs, fully furn, Pkg,
International Bld., 1700USD
Diba: 09128103206

مالکین محترم
ویلاي شمارا جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر
و مدیران شرکت های بین المللی
در مناطق شمالی تهران نیازمندیم

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No clean bill of health for EU banks in stress test

Banks from Italy, Ireland, Spain and Austria fared worst in the latest European Union stress test, which the region's banking watchdog said on Friday showed there was still work to do in order to boost credit to the bloc's economy.

Eight years since the collapse of Lehman Brothers sparked a global banking meltdown, many of Europe's banks are still saddled with billions of euros in poorly performing loans, crimping their ability to lend and putting off investors.

Italy's Monte dei Paschi, Austria's Raiffeisen, Spain's Banco Popular and two of Ireland's main banks came out with the worst results in the EBA's test of 51 European Union (EU) lenders.

"Whilst we recognize the extensive capital raising done so far, this is not a clean bill of health," EBA Chairman Andrea Enria said in a statement. "There remains work to do."

Italy's largest lender, UniCredit, was also among those banks which fared badly, and it said it will work with supervisors to see if it should take further measures.

Germany's biggest banks, Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank, were also among the 12 weakest banks in the test, along with British rival Barclays.

Monte dei Paschi, Italy's third largest lender, had been scrambling to pull together a rescue plan and win approval for it from the European Central Bank ahead of the test results.

The Italian bank confirmed less than an hour before the results that it had finalized a plan to sell off its entire portfolio of non-performing loans and had assembled a consortium of banks to back a 5 billion euro capital increase.

The EBA looked at how banks could withstand a three-year theo-



retical economic shock which ended with the Italian lender, the world's oldest, having a core equity capital ratio of minus 2.44 percent.

This was the third stress test in the EU since taxpayers had to bail out lenders in the 2007-09 financial crisis, with no pass or fail mark this time round. The test involved scenarios including EU economic output 7.1 percent below the baseline over the next three years and a 20 percent drop in interest income.

Analysts have informally set a basic pass mark of 5.5 percent, the threshold set in the last round of tests

in 2014, and a weak result could raise question marks over dividend payments.

More resilient

Like Monte dei Paschi, Allied Irish Banks was also below the 5.5 percent level at 4.31 percent, but said it has undergone fundamental restructuring and is now sustainably profitable.

Markets will also look at how many banks were able to maintain a core ratio of capital to risk-weighted assets of 7 percent. This is a typical level for triggering the writedown of bonds issued by banks to replenish capital.

The EBA looked at how banks could withstand a three-year theoretical economic shock which ended with the Italian lender, the world's oldest, having a core equity capital ratio of minus 2.44 percent.

Spain's Banco Popular, Bank of Ireland and Austria's Raiffeisen all ended the test below this level at 6.62 percent, 6.15 percent, and 6.12 percent, respectively.

"We are aware of our capital situation and have been implementing for some time appropriate measures to strengthen our capital base," Raiffeisen CEO Walter Rothensteiner said.

Popular earlier said that it had fired its chief executive Francisco Gomez after its profit was nearly wiped out in the second quarter. It said the EBA tests had not included the 2.5 billion euro share issue it completed in May to clean up toxic retail assets.

Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank both scored core ratios of below 8 percent, although Deutsche said it was on track to reach at least 12.5 percent by the end of 2018.

Of the banks tested, 37 are based in the euro zone and supervised by the ECB, which said the results reflected progress in repairing balance sheets.

"The banking sector today is more resilient and can much better absorb economic shocks than two years ago," said Daniele Nouy, who heads supervision at the ECB.

At the start of the test, the banks had an aggregate core ratio of 12.6 percent, with all capital requirements factored in. However, this fell to 9.2 percent by the end of the test, a drop of 340 basis points, equivalent to 226 billion euros of capital.

For the first time, the EU test included the impact of conduct risks such as fines and settlements.

EBA said the total hit from conduct costs was 71 billion euros. The largest impact was from credit or losses on loans, totaling nearly 350 billion euros across all the banks tested.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK and China regulators discuss framework for financial projects

British and Chinese securities watchdogs are discussing an agreement that will pave the way for landmark financial services projects between the countries, sources said, easing fears that Britain could be a less attractive partner for such deals after last month's vote to leave the European Union.

Britain's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) are cooperating on a regulatory framework for a scheme for distributing fund products in each other's jurisdiction and a proposed London-Shanghai link for trading shares, two people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Britain, home to the EU's biggest finance sector, has been pushing in recent years to deepen its financial services ties with China, which has agreed to these and other cross-border financial services schemes as part of the UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) program.

The UK's former Chancellor George Osborne and Chinese vice premier Ma Kai said at last September's EFD meeting in Beijing that they would explore the creation of a London-Shanghai equity link and mutual funds recognition scheme, but neither government has provided further details.

(Source: Reuters)

Warning for currency traders: worst to come for dollar

The dollar is set to fall 5 percent in the next few months, the Federal Reserve isn't raising interest rates anytime soon and U.S. economic data is only going to get worse.

That's what Morgan Stanley chief global currency strategist Hans Redeker told clients in a note published Thursday, citing in-house indicators showing U.S. domestic demand is set to fade in the coming months. It didn't take long for markets to prove him prescient. The greenback fell 1.3 percent Friday, capping its worst week since April, after the Commerce Department said U.S. second-quarter gross domestic product advanced at about half the rate economists had forecast.

The dollar had rallied in recent weeks on mounting speculation the Fed will hike rates in the coming months following better-than-expected data on jobs, retail sales and industrial production. Dollar bulls' hopes were dampened Wednesday after a lukewarm policy statement from Fed officials that signaled only a gradual pace towards tighter monetary policy. They were dashed after Friday's GDP print, which showed a 1.2 percent annualized increase in the April-June period, less than the 2.5 percent median forecast of economists surveyed by Bloomberg.

(Source: Bloomberg)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Solar capture technique turns CO2 into burnable fuel

Engineers at the University of Chicago have created a new kind of solar cell that efficiently converts atmospheric carbon dioxide into usable hydrocarbon fuel — and it does so using only sunlight for energy.



In a new paper published in *Science*, engineer Amin Salehi-Khojin and colleagues describe the new system, which can turn CO2 into fuel at a cost that's comparable to producing gasoline. "Instead of producing energy in an unsustainable one-way route from fossil fuels to greenhouse gas, we can now reverse the process and recycle atmospheric carbon into fuel using sunlight," noted Salehi-Khojin in a press statement.

To make it work, the researchers used a photosynthetic cell, as opposed to a conventional photovoltaic cell. So instead of converting sunlight into electricity and then storing that energy in batteries, the new device converts atmospheric carbon dioxide directly into fuel. In essence, it does the work of plants. But instead of turning fuel into sugar, the "artificial leaf" delivers synthetic gas, or "syngas," which is a mixture of hydrogen gas and carbon monoxide.

To make the process efficient, the researchers turned to a family of nano-structured compounds called transition metal dichalcogenides (TMDCs). These compounds served as active catalysts, breaking carbon dioxide's chemical bonds. Experiments showed that the new catalyst is 1,000 times faster than conventional catalysts, and about 20 times less expensive.

In the future, a solar farm could deploy thousands of these "artificial leaves," which in addition to producing fuel would remove significant amounts of CO2 from the atmosphere.

(Source: Gizmodo)

Recovery of dopamine function emerges with recovery from smoking

A new study in *Biological Psychiatry* reports that smoking-related deficits in brain dopamine, a chemical implicated in reward and addiction, return to normal three months after quitting.

The normalization of dopamine systems suggests smoking-related deficits are a consequence of chronic smoking, rather than a risk factor. These findings raise the possibility that treatments might be developed that normalize the dopamine system in smokers.

According to first author Dr. Lena Rademacher, postdoctoral fellow at the University of Lübeck in Germany, a major challenge in understanding substance-related disorders lies in uncovering why only some individuals become addicted.

Researchers think some people could possess a trait that predisposes them to addiction, and suspect that brain circuits involving dopamine may be involved.

Researchers are uncertain if smoking induces those abnormalities or if they already exist and contribute to risk of nicotine addiction.

Senior author Dr. Ingo Vernaleken, Professor at RWTH Aachen University in Germany, led a team of researchers examining dopamine function in chronic smokers before and after long-term cessation.

The researchers used a brain imaging technique called positron emission tomography to measure an index of the capacity for dopamine production in 30 men who were nicotine-dependent smokers and 15 nonsmokers.

After performing an initial scan on all participants, 15 smokers who successfully quit were scanned again after three months of abstinence from smoking and nicotine replacement.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Martian gully theory doesn't hold water, study finds

In spite of the flowing gouges they leave behind, gullies on the Red Planet may not have been formed by liquid water, according to data from NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter.

The findings, described in *Geophysical Research Letters*, showcase the complexity of Martian geology and highlight how some features on Mars are formed in ways that are unlike anything on Earth.



Scientists think that Mars, our rusty, dusty next-door neighbor, was once a far more Earthlike planet, with a thick atmosphere that could support puffy clouds, lakes of liquid water and perhaps even microbial life.

All of that, if it indeed existed, is long gone now — but scientists can look for clues in the planet's geography, finding physical and chemical signs that water once filled or flowed across a surface.

For example, NASA's 2004 rovers Spirit and Opportunity, as well as the 2012 rover Curiosity, have all found evidence that ancient Mars must have been awash in water. Curiosity has even found chemical and mineral evidence for a long-lived series of lakes, along with signs of the right chemical ingredients for life.

(Source: The LAT)

Iran's 'dying' saltwater giant Lake Urmia turns blood-red

A drought of epic proportions at Lake Urmia has brought the Iranian UNESCO site to the brink of disappearing off the face of the Earth, and is turning its once blue waters blood-red.

While once Urmia spanned an area five times larger than Hong Kong, its volume has decreased dramatically since 1972.

A study by hydrology experts at the University of California in 2014 painted the picture of a dying natural resource, highlighting how desiccation, or drying, had reduced the 5,000 sq km (1,930 sq mile) lake by almost 90 percent.

Its catastrophic demise has been compared to the loss of the Aral Sea, where poor irrigation and farming practices contributed to it drying up almost completely.

Massive salt content in the Urmia's dwindling waters has now given it a deathly tinge, turning it a dramatic blood-red color.

Scientists working with NASA's Earth Observatory have explained that as water



levels drop during the hot summer months, microscopic algae and bacteria become more apparent, causing the unusual hue.

The color phenomenon has occurred a number of times before but is becoming



increasingly common. Satellite monitoring of the site has revealed that the latest reddening occurred between April and July of this year.

Mohammad Tourian, of the University

of Stuttgart, has been observing Urmia's gradual disappearance. He indicated that alarming depletion of the lake at 1.03 cubic kilometers per year has allowed algae known as *Dunaliella salina* to take hold.

"Previous research suggests that *Dunaliella salina* [algae] is responsible for reddening of Lake Urmia," Tourian said.

"In the marine environment, *Dunaliella salina* appears green; however, in conditions of high salinity and light intensity, the microalgae turns red due to the production of carotenoids in the cells."

In 2014, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced funding of \$5 billion to save the former popular tourist location.

However, there are fears that the damage done is beyond repair.

"The results from satellite imagery revealed a loss of water extent at an average rate of 220 sq km per year, which indicates that the lake has lost about 70 percent of its surface area over the last 14 years," said Tourian.

(Source: RT)

NASA orders a second SpaceX crew mission to the ISS

NASA has ordered a second mission from SpaceX to send astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS). The order is part of the Commercial Crew Program, which was started by NASA six years ago as a way of making sure the United States continues to have human access to space. NASA ordered a first mission from SpaceX back in November of 2015, and it ordered two from Boeing — the other company involved in the CCP — in May and December of 2015.

NASA initially embarked on this program because the Space Shuttle program was scheduled to end in 2011. This left the agency with no primary space vehicle, and NASA has since had to rely on Russia's space agency, Roscosmos, to launch astronauts to the space station. That partnership has been effective, but it hasn't been cheap: NASA pays Roscosmos about \$80 million per seat to get astronauts to the ISS.

SpaceX and Boeing will be able to accomplish the same



task for millions of dollars less once their spacecraft are completed and tested. NASA typically orders these missions two to three years before their launch date in order to give the companies enough time to develop the spacecraft (and the launch vehicles that will send them to space). Those first crewed CCP flights are loosely scheduled for late

2017 or early 2018, and SpaceX is currently building four versions of its crewed Dragon spacecraft in Hawthorne, California, for the missions NASA has ordered. Two of those four vehicles will be used exclusively for testing.

Control systems

The Crew Dragon capsule is similar to the spacecraft that SpaceX uses to send cargo to the ISS, but it's fitted with life support and control systems. It can hold up to seven crew members, though NASA says a standard crew mission to the ISS will only carry "as many as four crew members and about 220 pounds of pressurized cargo." SpaceX plans to use a further-modified version of its Crew Dragon capsule to someday send humans to Mars.

NASA has not yet decided which of the two CCP companies will be the first to send astronauts to the ISS. In today's statement about the new order from SpaceX, the agency said that the decision will be made "at a later time."

(Source: The Verge)

Could slight brain zap during sleep boost memory?

Stimulating a targeted area of the brain with small doses of weak electricity while you sleep may enhance your ability to remember what you learned the night before, new research finds.

"We work with the brain, that's really unique about what we do. We listen in to brain activity and can boost what the brain already wants to do," said the study's senior author, Flavio Frohlich. He's an assistant professor of psychiatry at the Neuroscience Center at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

While you sleep your brain is not idle, but is actively storing things you learned during the day for later use. Stimulating the brain enhances what the brain is already doing naturally, Frohlich said.

During sleep, electrical brain activity oscillates, and can be seen as waves on an electroencephalogram (EEG). These waves, called sleep spindles, appear to be involved in sorting and storing memories, he said.

"We know there are a number of disorders of the brain where sleep spindles are impaired," Frohlich said. The researchers hope to test tACS on patients with schizophrenia and Alzheimer's disease, he said.

Common memory tests

To see if stimulating these spindles could boost memory, researchers had 16 men take two common memory tests -- associative word pairing and motor sequence tapping tasks, which involved repeatedly finger tapping a specific sequence before going to sleep.

During the first night of the study, participants had electrodes placed at specific points on their scalps. Some participants



received tACS synced to their natural sleep spindles, while others were given sham stimulation.

On the second night, the process was reversed. Those who received tACS received sham stimulation, while those given sham stimulation the first night received tACS.

The investigators found no improvement in test scores for associative word pairing but a substantial improvement in the finger-tapping task among those who received tACS, compared with those given sham stimulation.

This finding shows a direct link between electric activity during sleep and consolidation of motor memory, Frohlich said.

Dr. Sam Gandy, director of the Center for Cognitive Health at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, said, "My tendency is to believe it. There is good evidence that the brain remains accessible for input despite the absence of consciousness."

(Source: HealthDay News)

Can drones speak whale? No, but they can come close

Ecologists used drones to create more accurate lists of the whale and dolphin pods near Hawaii for the first time this summer.

Drones entered the public consciousness either as military weapons or as an obscure hobby that occasionally crash-landed on the White House lawn. The drone involvement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's recent whale-watching expedition is a window into a growing list of non-military functions for the drones, which play an increasing role in police work, real estate, or even firefighting.

Drone use in animal research and other forms of ecology is in its early stages, as researchers work with both the technology and process, improving their observational reach via drone.

"I believe that drones for conservation and research are akin to the invention of the microscope for cellular biology," said Iain Kerr, the chief executive officer of the whale and ocean research organization Ocean Alliance, during an interview with UAS Vision. Dr. Kerr uses a DJI Phantom drone to collect not only photos, but also DNA and respiratory information, from blue whales in the Sea of Cortez.

"If we truly want to understand what effects humanity is having on wildlife we need to study them in a non-invasive manner," Kerr said. "Today's drones are the ultimate realization of non-invasive research."

Better wildlife photos

For Hawaii researchers, camera drones could produce better wildlife photos than photographers on boats, they told the



Associated Press, because the drones do not disturb the whales. This is an important requirement for drones used in wildlife observation, as they must be engineered to avoid disturbing the animals themselves, according to engineers with the University of Florida's Unmanned Aircraft Systems Research Program.

The Hawaii research relied on a hexacopter drone, which can carry larger and higher quality cameras than more common hobby drones, according to Dronebly. The higher power level better suits them to the rough winds and seas where the NOAA researchers were operating.

Using drones enabled NOAA scientists to operate from a large, single boat during a month-long mission around Hawaii's outlying islands. Before they might have taken several smaller boats, which maneuver more easily around the marine mammals but can also be a liability in the often severe weather around the Hawaiian Islands.

(Source: The CSM)

Breastfeeding within hour of birth provides baby's 'first vaccine,' says UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned on Friday that some 77 million of the world's newborns -- or 1 in 2 -- are not breastfed within the first hour of birth, depriving them of essential nutrients and antibodies and thus exposing them to an increased risk of death.

According to the agency, delaying breastfeeding by two to 23 hours after birth increases the risk of dying in the first 28 days of life by 40 percent.

Delaying it by 24 hours or more increases that risk to 80 percent.

"Early breastfeeding can make the difference between life and death," France Bégin, UNICEF Senior Nutrition Adviser, said in a press release.

"If all babies are fed nothing but breastmilk from the

moment they are born until they are six months old, over 800,000 lives would be saved every year," she added.

Breastmilk is a baby's first vaccine, the first and best protection they have against illness and disease.

Putting the baby to the breast also provides them with the essential nutrients, antibodies and skin-to-skin contact with their mother that protects them from disease.

Newborn's chances

A delay for this critical first contact not only decreases the newborn's chances of survival, it limits milk supply and reduces the chances of exclusive breastfeeding.

UNICEF has presented this information against the backdrop of the upcoming World Breastfeeding Week, which is celebrated annually from 1 to 7 August in over 170 countries

to promote breastfeeding and improve infant nutrition.

Particularly concerning is the situation in sub-Saharan Africa, where under-five mortality rates are the highest worldwide; early breastfeeding rates increased by just 10 percentage points since 2000 in East and Southern Africa, and remained unchanged in West and Central Africa.

Even in South Asia, where the rates of early breastfeeding initiation tripled in 15 years, from 16 percent in 2000 to 45 percent in 2015, the increase is far from enough: 21 million newborns still wait too long before they are breastfed.

UNICEF has also found that that women are not getting the help they need to start breastfeeding immediately after birth even when a doctor, nurse or midwife is assisting their delivery.

(Source: UN News Center)

A number of militants operating in the eastern areas of the Syrian city of Aleppo have laid down their weapons and surrendered themselves to government troops, who are making more gains in the embattled province.

The capitulation took place in Aleppo's Salaheddine neighborhood on Saturday, Syria's official SANA news agency reported.

The report further noted that tens of families went out through the corridors set up by army forces for the safe departure of the civilians trapped by terrorist groups in Aleppo's eastern districts.

The families were sent by the Syrian army to makeshift centers upon their arrival to the Salaheddine neighborhood, the report added.

Earlier this week, the Syrian army sent text messages to residents and terrorists in eastern Aleppo, saying it will grant safe passage to people wishing to leave the area.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad also vowed amnesty for those who turn in their weapons, stressing that the policy has been exercised by Damascus since the beginning of the crisis in the Middle Eastern country.

Meanwhile, Russia announced several corridors for civilians and surrendering militants to leave Aleppo's eastern parts.

Aleppo Province also completed arrangements to receive the citizens fleeing militant-held eastern Aleppo and house them in well-equipped temporary accommodation centers.

However, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group, said that several Aleppo residents, who were seeking to exit, were turned back by terrorists.

Since March 2011, Syria has been gripped by militancy it blames on some Western states and their regional allies.

The Takfiri terrorists operating in the Arab country have suffered major setbacks over the past few months as the Syrian

Militants surrender to Syria Army in Aleppo

Nusra Front breaks ties with al-Qaeda



Abu Mohamad al-Jolani

army has managed to liberate a number of areas from the grip of the extremists.

■ **Nusra Front breaks ties with al-Qaeda**

Meanwhile, The al-Qaeda branch in Syria, al-Nusra Front, has announced its break from the parent terror organization in an apparent bid to gain more support from foreign powers.

In a rare televised message on Thursday, Nusra chief in Syria Abu Mohamad al-Jolani said his group will be rebranded and will end connections with entities outside Syria.

Jolani said Nusra would change its name to Jabhat Fath al-Sham (The Conquest of Syria Front), saying the new group "will have no links whatsoever with foreign parties."

He said Nusra took the step "to remove the excuse used by the international community, spearheaded by America and Russia, that they are targeting the Nusra Front, which is associated with al-Qaeda."

The statement was preceded by an audio message from al-Qaeda leaders, in which they endorsed the break in organizational ties.

Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahri said Thursday that Nusra leaders "can sacrifice without hesitation" the organizational and party ties if those links conflict with their unity and working.

"Your unity and unification is more important to us than any organizational link," said Zawahri.

Many had expected the announcement as there were speculations that by distancing itself from al-Qaeda, Nusra would seek to secure more financial and arms support from rich Arab states of the Persian Gulf region.

The break in ties could also facilitate relations between Nusra and other armed groups in Syria.

Nusra and Daesh, another Takfiri group which is mainly operating in eastern Syria, have been excluded from a cessation of hostilities agreement engineered by the United States and Russia since the end of February.

US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said last week that they had agreed on "concrete steps" to save a failing Syria truce and tackle extremist groups like Nusra and Daesh.

Kerry said Washington has proposed closer cooperation with Russia in sharing intelligence to coordinate air strikes against Nusra militants.

Nusra was created months after the start of the conflict in Syria in 2011. The group first enjoyed support from Daesh, but split from the group in 2013 and joined al-Qaeda.

Intelligence officials from some Persian Gulf states have reportedly met Nusra leader Abu Mohammad al-Jolani several times in the past few months to encourage him to abandon al-Qaeda and to promise funding for his terror outfit once it distances from al-Qaeda.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS

Turkey kills 35 militants after they try to storm base, officials say

Turkey's army killed 35 Kurdish militants after they attempted to storm a base in the southeastern Hakkari province early on Saturday, military officials said.

The overnight attack came hours after clashes in Hakkari's Cukurca district between soldiers and militants from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) that left eight soldiers dead, the officials said.

The militants attempted to take the base in three different groups, but were spotted by aerial reconnaissance. An air operation was launched, killing 23 of them, the officials said.

Four more were then killed in a ground operation, they said. The remaining eight were killed in clashes in Hakkari's Cukurca district.

Friday's clashes in Cukurca also left 25 soldiers wounded, the officials said.

Turkey's military - NATO's second-largest - is grappling with the insurgency in the mainly Kurdish southeast as its senior ranks undergo a major shake-up in following a July 15-16 coup attempt.

On Thursday, Turkey announced an overhaul of the armed forces, with 99 colonels promoted to the rank of general or admiral and nearly 1,700 military personnel given dishonourable discharges over their alleged roles in the coup.

About 40 percent of all generals and admirals in the military have been dismissed since the coup.

In the southeast, the military has frequently carried out air strikes after a 2 1/2-year ceasefire and peace process between the government and the PKK broke down last summer.

Thousands of militants and hundreds of civilians and soldiers have been killed since then. Some cities in the predominantly Kurdish southeast have been engulfed in the worst violence since the 1990s.

More than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict since the PKK - designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union - began its insurgency in 1984.

(Source: Reuters)

Failed coup strengthened Turkish unity: ambassador

➡ ■ **I want to merge two of my questions. Why are you calling Gülen a terrorist and what evidence do you have to support your claim that he is behind the coup?**

A: This is still very fresh. It was July 15 and just two weeks have passed. If you don't call them terrorists, how would you define them? They are not political actors, they are not civil activists; they are not members of religious groups. You can only call them a terrorist group because of what they are doing. They are killing civilians. They are infiltrating into state institutions with the aim of getting power through illegal means.

If they wish to have political activities like many other political groups, if they want to rule the country which is a legitimate thing, they can establish a political party, what they never did. If they don't want to establish a political party, they can join one political party as their platform.

form. They are doing everything secretly. They are like a terrorist sect. This is a very unique situation in terms of the history of politics or in terms of history of terrorism in the world.

We don't have such a group, such an example in any country. They have been very well organized not only in Turkey but also outside Turkey. For many years, they have been establishing lots of organizations, NGOs mainly, also schools. They have schools all over the world. Probably, they want to rule the world because they have established schools in Africa, in Asia, and in the U.S. I know they have schools even in the United States. They may in the long run want to have a universal empire. Who knows because this is not a healthy mind what is behind this and this is why we define them as terrorist group. There is no other definition for them.

■ **Your government is asking Americans to extradite Fetullah Gülen and Americans are asking for evidence. How far do you think you would be successful in handing over the evidence and they will return Gülen to you?**

A: We are confident in terms of the evidences we will be providing to the United States' authorities. This is not a new thing. The first time the true nature of the group was known was about two-and-a-half years ago, in December 2013 when they tried to detain high Turkish officials through their judiciary personnel within the Turkish system. Of course, we realized that these people have something else in their minds. So, Turkish authorities from then on started scrutinizing this group and their elements within state-run bodies. The decision was taken in 2014 at the National Security Council of Turkey. Last May, another decision was made at the

council to take measures to stop activities of the group both within and outside Turkey. So, there has already been a process of gathering information or making some legal cases against the group.

You know Gülen has been living in the United States since 1999, for almost 17 years. We have sent them some files. But, this is a much serious thing. What has happened in Turkey was open. I cannot talk in details about files which would be presented to the U.S. authorities. But now we have more information about that. For example, our chief of staff of armed forces who was detained by coup plotters that night and resisting the military guy who carried out the coup and, said one of the coup generals had asked him to support them and talk on phone with he wished so. This is only one telling evidence and I'm sure there are many other official documents, showing Gülen is behind the scene.

JCPOA has been a success so far: Fitzpatrick

➡ ■ **Iran has been insisting that its missiles have not been designed to carry nuclear weapons.**

In an interview with Radio New Zealand in March 2016, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, "We stated when the nuclear deal was approved by the Security Council and during the course of nuclear discussions that we will continue with our defense capabilities and that these defense capabilities have nothing to do with nuclear weapons."

In a tweet posted on March 15, Zarif also said, "Neither JCPOA nor SC Res prohibit Iran from missiles not designed for nuclear warheads. Read the document: It's plain English not legalese."

Fitzpatrick also endorses the leak of information about the content of the nuclear deal, saying, "I believe it is useful for the public to know these details, so that independent assessments can be made about the agreement."

Following is the text of the interview with Fitzpatrick:

■ **Q: Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, in his recent report claimed that the Iranian missile program is "not consistent" with the spirit of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Even the U.S. and Russia criticized Ban for the report, saying he had overstepped his mandate.**

For example, U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, told the council, "The United States disagrees strongly with elements of this report, including that its content goes beyond the appropriate scope. We understand that Iran also disagrees strongly with parts of the report." Regarding these comments what is your assessment of the report?

A: Ban Ki-moon was correct to criticize Iran's missile program, which is being developed in defiance of UN Security Council Resolution 2231. Annex B of the resolution calls on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons. The ballistic missiles that Iran has tested have a range and throw-weight that makes them intrinsically capable of delivering nuclear weapons. This is why the UN Secretary-General said the missile program is in contradiction of the JCPOA. The use of the verb "calls up"

introduced some ambiguity about the mandatory nature of this restriction. Hence Ban Ki-moon said it was up to the Security Council to determine if Iran's missile launches were a violation of the resolution.

While the U.S. and Russia both criticized Ban Ki-moon's report on grounds that it went beyond the UN's mandate, they objected to very different portions of the report. Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin questioned the use of the word 'restrictions' in relation to Iran's missiles and the UN's mandate in this regard. US Ambassador Samantha Powers questioned the inclusion of Iran's complaints about sanctions relief to date, and noted that this subject is included in UNSCR 2231 and thus is beyond the UN's mandate.

■ **The Associated Press recently claimed it has obtained a document that outlines Tehran's plans to**

While the U.S. and Russia both criticized Ban Ki-moon's report on grounds that it went beyond the UN's mandate, they objected to very different portions of the report. Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin questioned the use of the word 'restrictions' in relation to Iran's missiles and the UN's mandate in this regard. US Ambassador Samantha Powers questioned the inclusion of Iran's complaints about sanctions relief to date, and noted that this subject is included in UNSCR 2231 and thus is beyond the UN's mandate.

expand its uranium enrichment program after the first 10 years of the nuclear deal. It said that "confidential document eases Iran nuclear constraints". Why did the AP publish such a report at this time?

A: The AP report about the 'confidential document' which eases Iran's nuclear constraints adds important detail to what was already known about the JCPOA's treatment of centrifuge R&D. I believe it is useful for the public to know these details, so that independent assessments can be made about the agreement. I do not know why it was published at this time, but I assume the document was provided to AP by a government that is worried about Iran's ability after year 11 of the agreement to ramp up its enrichment capability, with the potential this gives for a nuclear weapons program. Releasing the information at the one-year anniversary of the JCPOA was probably done to draw attention to the serious concerns about Iran's future intentions.

■ **What is your assessment about the implementation of the JCPOA?**

A: I judge the JCPOA to be a success, so far. The deal has succeeded in doing what it set out to do: effectively blocking all paths to a nuclear-armed Iran. The quarterly IAEA reports published since the deal was signed confirm that Iran has met all the conditions. In addition, communications are working well. The United States and the other powers have also met their obligations regarding sanctions relief. It is true that Iran has yet to see the full economic benefits it had expected from the deal, but this is not the fault of the U.S. government. One reason is that Iran's non-transparent banking practices make international banks cautious about entering into risky business that in the past has resulted in massive fines for several of them. The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force is keeping Iran on its high-risk blacklist. U.S. sanctions still prohibit transactions involving members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Given the size and opaque nature of the IREG's involvement in the Iranian economy, foreign businesses find it hard to be certain that potential Iranian business partners are not connected with the IREG.

The real plot against America

➡ ■ But Russia still has to seal the deal. Some work remains. If enough angered lefties won't go for the Democratic nominee, a longtime foe of Vladimir Putin, it will be just enough to put a Putin puppet in the White House. And it would also usher in the term that drove the right wing crazy when George H.W. Bush used it — a New World Order.

What's in it for Russia? Well, everything. Territory. Hegemony. Its takeover of the Crimean Peninsula has brought sanctions and condemnation from the West. What stands between Putin and further aggression in, say, the Baltic States, is a NATO pact that has kept Europe safe for nearly 70 years. And if you thought Trump stiffed the poor suckers who signed up for his "university," wait till you see how he treats some of our oldest allies.

Plus, Putin despises Hillary Clinton. Like Trump, his skin is rice-paper-thin, albeit a paler shade of orange; and, like Trump, he never forgets a slight. He still hasn't gotten over Clinton's comment on George W. Bush's infamous look into Putin's soul. As a former K.G.B agent, said Clinton, "he doesn't have a soul."

What's in it for Trump? Help at winning the ultimate throne of his gilded dreams. And maybe some investment money from Russian oligarchs close to Putin, one of many things Trump may be hiding in his tax returns. The two narcissists share a love of torture, authoritarian rule, and women on runways in bathing suits.

But then, a wild card, something unplanned. Putin didn't expect Trump to be so all-in with his collusion. He knows Trump is a fool, world class in only one thing — ignorance. He doesn't need spies for that. He knows Trump is a man who will say anything, and deny in the same breath that he ever said it. The Talented Mr. Trump.

Last November, before a national television audience, Trump said of Putin, "I got to know him very well." And Wednesday, Trump said, "I never met Putin." That was a standard Trump lie, on one end or the other. But even Putin couldn't fathom that Trump really will say anything.

So there was the Republican Party nominee for president inviting an American adversary to wage cyberwar against the country he wants to lead. If that wasn't Trump's shoot-somebody-on-Fifth-Avenue moment, nothing will be. What's more, he was way too obvious about the role of the other pawns in the scheme. "I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press," he said to Mother Russia.

Also, he's getting carried away with his dictator-philia. On Thursday, he said Putin was a better leader than President Obama. Doh! In public, at least, you're supposed to root for the home team.

Trump misses the old days, back when you could "knock the crap out of" a demonstrator. Yeah, the old days. Back when it was disqualifying for an American politician to flirt with treason.

This all seems too preposterous to be planned. Where are the conspiracy nut jobs when you really need them? Even fiction, Philip Roth's "The Plot Against America," about a fascist-lite president during World War II, does not have this level of absurdity.

But it unfolds, still, if not according to Russia's design, then according to Russia's will. Trump is now a national security risk, actively rooting for a foreign adversary to tamper with an American election. And very soon, he will start receiving classified briefings on that adversary. Ehh-hhhcellent!

Source: (The NYT)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian hemodialysis center soon in Tajikistan

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran will open a hemodialysis center in Tajikistan in the near future, the head of Iran's Red Crescent Society, Amir Mohsen Ziaee, has said.

"Due to some issues we still have with the government of Tajikistan we don't know when exactly the center will be opened, but we are completely ready and are waiting for the foreign ministry to provide necessary coordination," Ziaee said, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

Soon in case we reach a final agreement, Iran's Red Crescent Society hemodialysis center will be inaugurated in Tajikistan, he noted.



Flood hits 6 provinces, 985 people receive relief services

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Over the past five days, flood hit six provinces of Iran and some 985 flood victims received relief services, the director of Rescue and Relief Organization has said.

Flood has stricken provinces of Sistan- Baluchestan and Kerman in southeast, Fars in south, Golestan in north, Khorasan Razavi in northeast, and South Khorasan in east, Nasser Charkhsaz said, YJC reported on Saturday.

He added that some 292 individuals were provided with emergency accommodation as well as 9 who were saved from death.

Additionally, water was pumped out of 15 flooded houses and 63 cars got stuck in flood were pulled out of the water, he stated.

LEARN ENGLISH

Being Forced Out of a Position

Julianna: Ha ha! The **wicked witch** is dead!
Hugo: What are you talking about?
Julianna: Bettina is **stepping down** as chairperson of the committee. I thought this day would never come.
Hugo: That's a big surprise. I never thought I'd live to see the day when Bettina would **willingly give up** her position.
Julianna: It wasn't her choice exactly. The rest of the committee **forced her out**, saying they couldn't work with her anymore. Oh how the **mighty** have **fallen**!
Hugo: But I thought she had the support of the **higher-ups** and they wanted her in the position.
Julianna: Well, she's somehow **fallen from grace** and they can't wait to **see the back of her**. It's nice to see her get her **comeuppance** – finally!
Hugo: Maybe we're not getting the **full story**. Maybe she had personal reasons for leaving.
Julianna: Whatever the reason, we'll **be rid of her once and for all**. **Hallelujah**!
Hugo: How do you know the next chairperson won't be worse?
Julianna: **Bite your tongue**!

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

wicked witch: from a character in The Wizard of Oz who is a very evil and ugly witch; a very unpleasant or cruel woman
step down: to leave your job or official position, because you want to or because you think you should
willingly: prepared to do something, or having no reason to not want to do it
give up: to stop doing something, especially something that you do regularly
force somebody out: compel someone to leave a job or position, especially by indirect means
mighty: very strong and powerful, or very big and impressive
fall: to lose power, loser your position of power
higher-ups: someone who has a high rank in an organization
fall from grace: a situation in which someone stops being respected by other people or loses their position of authority, especially because they have done something wrong
see someone's back: to be happy that someone is leaving or because you no longer have to deal with something
comeuppance: a punishment or something bad which happens to you that you really deserve
full story: everything that has happened
be rid of: to have taken action so that something or someone is no longer there to worry or annoy you
once and for all: if you deal with something once and for all, you deal with it completely and finally
hallelujah: used to express thanks, joy, or praise to God
bite your tongue: an expression said to someone who has just stated an unpleasant supposition that unfortunately maybe true



Without water,
everything
withers

Collaboration with non-resident Iranian elites gaining strength

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Collaboration with non-resident Iranian elites is now gaining strength after a scheme to encourage them to return to the country started one and a half years ago.

Since then, some 240 elites graduated from top 100 prestigious universities mostly in the U.S. and Canada have agreed to return to Iran, Nasim news agency quoted Ali-Morteza Birang, a vice president for international affairs, as saying on Thursday.

The scheme went into effect in February 2015 in association with Iran's National Elites Foundation (governmental organization with the purpose of recognizing, organizing, and supporting Iran's elite talents), Birang noted.

"First we started the pilot scheme in collaboration with five of the research centers in Iran and started to develop the scheme



Ali-Morteza Birang

into other universities and research centers as well," he said, adding "After eight months some 35 elites and experts started working with us."

"Over the second eight months of the execution of the scheme, we received a great feedback as the number of the elites grew into 205," he added.

Birang went on to say that elites can collaborate with academic centers in Iran in different forms including taking one-year post-doctoral courses, giving academic speeches, teaching for a one-month period in universities in Iran, and setting up knowledge-based companies.

Currently some 1,250 experts and elites have applied for this scheme, he highlighted, noting that it only takes 25 days to process the applications and finally accept or reject them.

Little girl has tea party with officer who saved her life

A fully uniformed police officer sitting in a tiny chair, at a tiny table, with a tiny girl -- having a tea party.

Cpl. Patrick Ray, 30, saved 2-year-old Bexley's life a year ago when she choked on a coin at her home in Rowlett, Texas.

"Her lips were completely blue," her mother, Tammy Norvell, 41, told CNN.

She called 911, and Ray was there within minutes.

"I could not believe how fast he got here," Norvell said.

He was able to pry Bexley's mouth open to perform a "finger sweep." His body camera captured the moment she started breathing again.

"It was the most beautiful sound I'd ever heard in my entire life," Ray told CNN affiliate KTVT.

He came to check on Bexley in the hospital after doctors determined she swallowed a coin.

"Last time I checked, that was not their job description," Norvell said.



To celebrate a year of life after that scary day, Bexley's mother, Tammy Norvell, wanted to do something to commemorate the occasion.

She decided on a photoshoot, in the theme of a tea party.

"We do tea parties all the time," said photographer Chelle Cates, "but we don't normally invite grown men to them."

Cates said Ray was a natural.

"He picked up that tiny little chair and sat down," she said, "I didn't give him a lot of direction."

The two unlikely friends shared Apple Jacks and Oreos. "He just talked to her and asked her how her Oreos were," she said.

But why mark a day that could have ended tragically?

"I wanted to make something positive out of a negative thing," Norvell told CNN.

Ray saved Bexley's life that day, "I'm not going to let someone like that walk out of my life," Norvelle said.

It was the beginning of a beautiful (albeit unlikely) friendship.

(Source: CNN)

Rare, foul-smelling 'corpse flower' blooms in New York City

NEW YORK (AP) — A foul smelling plant known as the "corpse flower" is finally blooming at the New York Botanical Garden in New York City.

Visitors were waiting in line more than an hour to see the rare bloom.

It started emerging Thursday afternoon after more than 10 years of growth.

It's native to Sumatra's equatorial rain forests and emits an odor like rotting flesh while it's briefly in bloom.

It's one of the largest flowers on earth and can reach 6 feet in height. It emits the stench to attract pollinators.

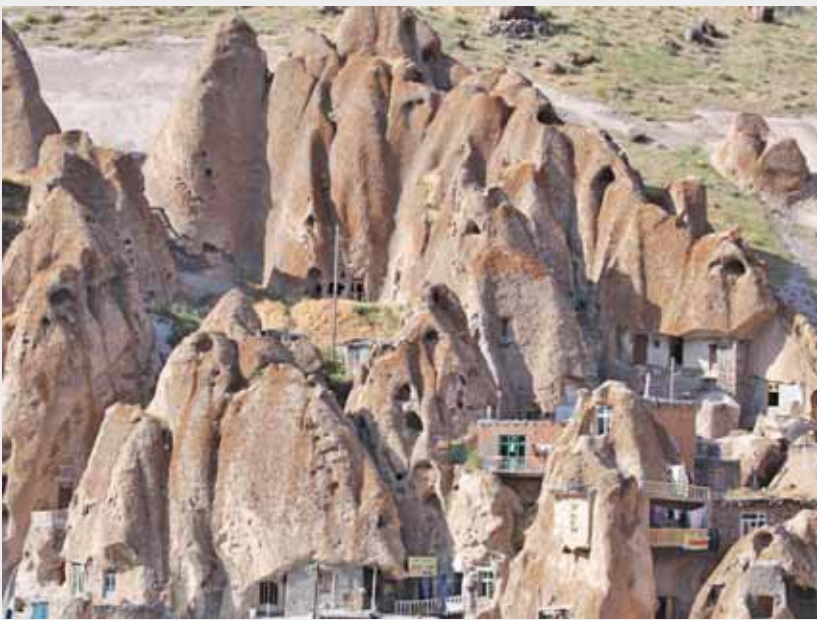
The bloom at its peak only lasts about 24 to 36 hours — and it could be years before the flower blooms again.



IN FOCUS IRNA/ Kazem Yousefi



Kandovan, northwest of Iran, exemplifies manmade cliff dwellings which are still inhabited. The houses are excavated inside volcanic rocks and tuffs.



ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

Heart failure leading cause of death in Tehran

Heart failure has been the leading cause of death in Tehran in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year, which corresponds to spring. The director general of Behesht-e Zahra cemetery organization said that during the 3-month period, 13,409 people have died, stating, 1,252 of the deaths are resulted from heart failure including 648 men, 598 women and 6 infants. Most of the deaths are related to the adults aged 65 or more that come to about 7,632 deaths comprising 3,958 men and 3,674 women, Akbar Tavakkoli told IRIB.

ایست قلبی نخستین علت فوت پایتخت نشینان

ایست قلبی نخستین علت فوت پایتخت نشینان در سه ماه نخست امسال بوده است. مدیرعامل سازمان بهشت زهرا(س) گفت: در این بازه ی سه ماهه ۱۳ هزار و ۴۰۹ نفر در شهر تهران فوت کرده اند که که ۱۲۵۲ نفر به علت سکتہ ی قلبی جان خود را از دست داده اند و شامل ۶۴۸ نفر مرد، ۵۹۸ نفر مونث و شش نفر نوزاد است. اکبر توکلۍ در مصاحبه با خبرگزاری صدا و سیما گفت: بیشترین آمار فوت شدگان مربوط به گروه سنی ۶۵ سال به بالا می شود که ۷۶۳۲ نفر شامل ۳۹۵۸ مذکر و ۳۶۷۴ مونث است.

ENGLISH PROVERB

In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king

■ **Explanation:** a man of even limited ability has an advantage over a person who is less able

QUIZ OF THE DAY

191) Choose if the sentence is true or false.

He's always lately for class.

a) True

b) False

(Quiz No. 190 answer: b)

PHRASAL VERB

Wipe off

■ **Meaning:** clean (board, table)

■ **For example:** The teacher asked Lee to wipe off the board.

I'm the player to watch this season, says Alireza Jahanbakhsh

T T S P O R T S Iranian international midfielder Alireza Jahanbakhsh, who is experiencing his second year at AZ Alkmaar, believes this season's Erdivisie could be his best as he's going to be the player to watch.

"We're at the beginning of the season and we have not reached our best forms. Last year was Vincent Janssen's season as he scored 27 goals in 34 appearances for AZ but this season is going to be mine. I will make every effort to improve during the season and play my best football for AZ," Jahanbakhsh told AZFanpage website.

Jahanbakhsh played 63 minutes in the AZ Alkmaar 1-0 win over Greek side PAS Giannina at the UEFA Europa League third qualifying round match on Thursday. He believes the team could have played better but the result is the most important thing.

"Obviously a win is the most important thing, however we could have played better and if we were more accurate in front of the goal we could have won the game with a better result," the 22-year old said.

"We had a very good pre-season preparation. As you can see the first official match is always difficult. I didn't play my best game but I will be better game by game. We have a long season in front of us and this was just the beginning. Hopefully, next week is a little better," he added.

Jahanbakhsh, who joined AZ last summer, scored four goals and provided eight assists in all competitions in his first season at the club.



Carlos Queiroz introduced Nekounam as an assistant – report

T T S P O R T S Iran national football team head coach Carlos Queiroz has officially invited former captain Javad Nekounam to join him at Team Melli as his assistant.

"We have asked Javad with the most respect and honor to join us at the Iran national team technical staff. He is a complete professional and a role model. I believe Javad has a bright future in coaching and he can be a big manager. I think he will be important for Team Melli and he can

improve his knowledge in a new atmosphere," Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz said.

Nekounam spent most of his professional career with Osasuna, appearing in 197 official games and scoring 31 goals during his two spells and also being team captain.

He has represented the Iranian national team 151 times, playing several major tournaments including two World Cups and four Asian Cups.



Iran's 2016 Olympic uniforms revealed

T T S P O R T S Both Iran's men's and women's 2016 Olympic uniforms are revealed on Thursday.

The Iran National Olympic Committee (NOC) has unveiled official country's Olympic uniforms.

The Iranian Olympic delegation comprises 63 athletes representing 14 sports federations including the Athletics, Archery, Boxing, Cycling, Fencing, Judo, Rowing, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Volleyball, Weightlifting, and Wrestling federations.

Iran looks forward to outdo its performance at London 2012, when it won four gold medals, five silvers and three



bronzes.

The 2016 Summer Olympic Games will begin on August 5 and runs until August 21.

Iran wins World Team Snooker Championship

T T S P O R T S Iran claimed the title of the 2016 IBSF World Team Snooker (Men) Championship on Friday.

The Iranian team consists of Soheil Vahedi and Amir Sarkhosh knocked out Team China 5 frames to 2 to win the competition.

Iranian players were in outstanding form and gave a brilliant start with superb break of 75 points in second to take 2 frames lead, ibsf.info reported.

Though Chinese pair Chen Zifan and Yuan Sijun recovered to come at par by winning next two frames but that remained only winning frames to them as Soheil and Sarkhosh put in all efforts to secure next three frames in a row and



sealed the match 5-2.

The IBSF World 6-Red & Team Snooker Championship took place at Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt from 20-30 July, 2016.

Iran's Meghdid wins bronze at Grass Ski Junior World Championships

Navid Meghdid from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the Grass Ski Junior World Championships underway in Dizin, Iran.

The Iranian representative finished in third place in giant slalom races on Thursday.

A total of 38 participants from eight nations are currently competing for medals in the season's highlight event for young Grass Skiing talents.

It is the second time since 2010 that the experienced

FIS Grass Ski World Cup host is welcoming the world's best youngsters born between 1995-2000.

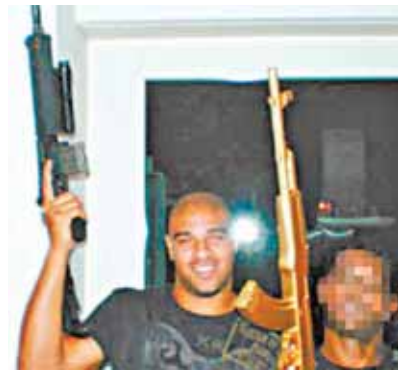
The Championships kicked off with an opening ceremony on July 26, 2016 followed by super combined races for both genders which were won by Kristin Hetfleisch (AUT) and Martin Bartak (CZE).

The Championships will continue with slalom and giant slalom races and conclude with a super-G on Friday, July 29.

(Source: Tasnim)



Football: Former Brazil striker Adriano now living on the wild side with gang members



Former Brazil striker Adriano, once regarded as one of the deadliest strikers in football, is living a very different life nowadays.

The 34-year-old is without a club, and is said to be living among violent gangs in Brazil.

Brazil lawyers claim that the

ex-striker, who suited up for his country, as well as for Parma and Inter Milan, relies on a deadly gang known as the Red Command for protection as he lives in the slums.

Adriano once earned £80,000-a-week, but how things have changed. He was recently photographed holding rifles along with Red Command gang members, and was also seen throwing up gang signals.

This is not the first controversial incident in Adriano's life. The 34-year-old has been arrested for drug trafficking before, and a woman was once shot in his car after a night of clubbing.

He last played for Miami United, a fourth tier team in the United States. His contract was cancelled in May, and no one knows if he is actively looking for a club at the moment.

(Source: YahooSport)

Walter Zenga appointed as new Wolves head coach



Wolverhampton Wanderers have appointed former Italy goalkeeper Walter Zenga as their new head coach, the English Championship club said on Saturday.

Wolves acted quickly in naming a replacement after they sacked manager Kenny Jackett on Friday, a little more than a week after China-based Fosun Group

took over the second tier side from long-standing owner Steve Morgan.

Zenga, whose previous managerial stint was in the Middle East with Al-Shaab last season, has managed sides including Steaua Bucharest, Red Star Belgrade, and Catania, Palermo and Sampdoria in Serie A during an 18-year coaching career.

"We're delighted to appoint Walter as the new head coach of Wolves. Walter is a hugely passionate personality who lives for football and is fiercely determined to succeed in everything he does," Wolves director Jeff Shi said in a statement.

"We are looking forward to working with him, and supporting him in the shared aim of trying to help Wolves achieve promotion back to the Premier League." The 56-year-old, who kept five clean sheets for hosts Italy when they finished third in the 1990 World Cup, will formally take charge of the squad on Monday.

(Source: Reuters)

FOOTBALL

Messi's retirement: We'll lure him to come back, says Argentina's FA chief

The acting head of Argentina's FA, Armando Perez, insisted he would do all he could to lure Lionel Messi out of international retirement during an upcoming visit to the Barcelona superstar in Spain.

"We need Messi," Perez stressed to AFP on Friday, with Argentina left in shock after the five-time world player of the year announced his retirement following a penalty shootout defeat to defending champions Chile in last month's Copa America Centenario final.

"I get to Madrid on Saturday. I've spoken with Jorge, his father, who told me he would be available on these days," said Perez, the head of a FIFA-appointed normalisation committee currently in charge of the AFA.

"We'll see what he tells me.

I want to know the reasons that drove him to quit the national team and to see if I can do something to get him to come back," he added. Perez is also due to meet Sevilla coach Jorge Sampaoli, the man who led Chile past Argentina to their maiden Copa America title a year ago and is AFA's "number one candidate" for the vacant manager's role.

"I spoke to him and I know he wants to manage the national team. But we have a huge obstacle in economic terms because he's under contract with Sevilla," said Perez. Sampaoli, 56, joined Europa League champions Sevilla last month after replacing Unai Emery and the club have ruled out the Argentine's departure or any job-sharing arrangement. He has a six-million-euro release clause, although Perez conceded the AFA didn't have the funds available to buy Sampaoli out of his contract.

"But we'll try and free it up one way or another," he said, with Perez also due to hold talks with sportswear giant Adidas over a new deal with the Argentine federation.

(Source: vanguardngr)



Bastian Schweinsteiger announces retirement from international football

Bastian Schweinsteiger has announced his retirement from international football.

Three weeks after Germany were knocked out of Euro 2016 following a semi-final defeat against France, Schweinsteiger has said he is stepping down as captain of the national team and ending his international playing career.

"Dear fans of the Germany national team I have just asked the national team coach not to consider me any more for his national team selections in future since I would like to retire," the Manchester United midfielder announced on Twitter.

It also looks likely that Schweinsteiger will be looking for a new club after he was omitted from United's squad for Saturday's friendly with Galatasaray in Gothenburg.

Schweinsteiger won 120 caps for Germany having made his debut in June 2004. A decade later he was part of the team who won the World Cup in Brazil and shortly after became captain of his country.

His international CV includes two third-place World Cup finishes and a runners-up spot at the 2008 European Championship. Schweinsteiger, 31, reached the semi-final of every major tournament in which he was involved, with his overall record standing at 81 wins, 19 draws and 20 defeats. He also scored 24 times for Germany.

"My thanks go to the fans, the team, the DFB [German Football Association], the coaches and the Germany national team," Schweinsteiger said. "I was able to run out 120 times for my country and experience moments which were indescribably beautiful and successful.

"Jogi Löw knew how much Euro 2016 in France meant to me because I desperately wanted to win this title, which we have not been able to bring back to Germany since 1996. It wasn't to be and I have to accept this.

"By winning the 2014 World Cup, we did something historic and also achieved something emotionally which will never be repeated again in my career. Therefore it is only right and sensible to call it a day now and wish the team all the best for qualifying for the 2018 World Cup, and for the final tournament.

"To finish with, I would like to say to the fans 'it was an honour to be able to play for you, many thanks for everything I was able to experience with you!' Yours, Bastian Schweinsteiger."

(Source: Gaurdian)

CHESS

Iran wins World U-16 Chess Olympiad 2016

Iran claimed the title of the World Youth U-16 Chess Olympiad 2016 on Friday.

The Iranian team defeated Romania 2.5-1.5 in its final match.

The competition took place in Poprad, a city in northern Slovakia.

The tournament provided a great platform for junior chess players.

The Chess Olympiad is organized by the NR Klub delegated by the Slovak Chess Federation, which started with an opening ceremony on July 27.

(Source: Tasnim)



Poem of the day

Trust not the word of that foe in the fight!
Shall the lamp of the synagogue lend its flame.

Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon:13:11 Evening: 20:29 Dawn: 4:35 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:12 (tomorrow)

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■ **Webmaster:** webmaster@tehrantimes.com
■ **Printed at:** Kayhan - ISSN: 1017-94

NEWS IN BRIEF



U.S. center screens Abbas Kiarostami's "Close-Up"

T T A R T TEHRAN — The U.S. Walker Art Center paid tribute to Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami by screening of his 1990 masterwork "Close-Up" on July 28. "Close-Up" is a documentary drama about Hossein Sabzian's real-life impersonation of the famous Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf and lying his way into the life of a family. The film was previously screened at the Walker Art Center in 1998 as a part of the Walker Dialogue and Retrospective series.



Nora Ephron's "Heartburn" translated into Persian

T T A R T TEHRAN — "Heartburn" by U.S. writer Nora Ephron has recently been translated into Persian by Mahsa Malek-Marzbani. The book is an autobiographical novel based on Ephron's life story about her marriage and divorce from her second husband. A screen adaptation of the book, starring Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep, was released in 1986. Aamout Publications in Tehran is scheduled to publish the book in the near future.



Iranian expert Mohsen Jafarimazhab to speak on Polish State Archives

T T CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian expert Mohsen Jafarimazhab is scheduled to deliver a speech on the Polish State Archive in a session, which will be held at the National Library and Archives of IRAN (NLAI) on Monday. The session has been organized by the NLAI and the Iranian and Islamic Studies Center (IISC).

Iranian theater troupe pays tribute to Anton Chekhov

T T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian theater troupe directed by Hamid Amjad paid tribute to Russian author and playwright Anton Chekhov (1860 – 1904) before their performance of "Three Sisters and Others" at Tehran's City Theater Complex on Thursday evening.

"Three Sisters and Others" is an adaptation of one of Chekhov's outstanding plays, "Three Sisters". Russian ambassador to Tehran Levan Dzhagaryan and a number of ambassadors from different countries including Spain, Pakistan and Ireland attended the honoring ceremony at the theater packed with a large audience that night, the Persian service of MNA reported.

Speaking at the ceremony, Amjad said, "There is no need to say that Chekhov belongs to a large country, which is not confined to a limited geographical area. He is a bright symbol of Russia and its culture, history and people, of course, but he has another land too, a land, which is even larger and richer, and is dominated by literature, art and plays.

"Tonight, representatives from the two lands are present: Ambassador Levan Dzhagaryan, who is the historical and geographical representative of Chekhov in this play, and on the other side, scholars and masters such as (actor and director) Akbar Zanjapur and (composer) Loris Tjeknavorian," Amjad added.

Levan Dzhagaryan, who was surprised to see such a large audience that follows works by Chekhov, expressed his delight that works by their beloved Russian author go on stage in Iran.

Zanjapur for his part also said, "I am so happy that I am among a serious artistic group and I am watching



The cast and crew of "Three Sisters and Others" acknowledge the audience after the opening performance of the play at Tehran's City Theater Complex on July 24, 2016. (Photo by Elaheh Askari)

a serious play."

Afshin Hashemi, Reyhaneh Salamat, Masumeh Rahmani, Maral Atashi, Behnsuh Bakhtiari, Alireza

Nasehi and Jamshid Jahanzadeh are among the main members of the cast.

The play will be on stage in August and September.

Kayhan Kalhor to join Silk Road on tour of U.S.

T T A R T TEHRAN — Accomplished Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor along with the multinational ensemble Silk Road will give concerts across the U.S. from August 7 to 27.

French-born Chinese-American top cellist Yo-Yo Ma will accompany the group during the summer tour, which starts at Tanglewood in Lenox, MA and will come to end at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, the Freeman Stage at Bayside in Selbyville, Delaware and Wolf Trap in Vienna, Virginia are among the other destinations for the ensemble.



The Silk Road Ensemble was formed in 2000 with the help of Yo-Yo Ma as a way of bringing together innovative performers and composers representing traditions from around the world.

Pop singer Fereidun Aserai reveals cancer diagnosis

T T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian pop singer Fereidun Aserai, 60, who shot to fame with hits "Hello" and "The Stranger" over ten years ago, revealed on Saturday that he has been diagnosed with laryngeal cancer.

His doctor made a radiofrequency ablation (RFA) on his larynx last week and he must spend six months in convalescence, Aserai told the Persian service of Honaronline.

"Thank God, I feel better now," he said. "The problem that I could hardly make my voice heard began early in Ramadan ... I told my doctor that my pain began after I gave 40 performances in a month; he told me that he suspects that I have cancer of the larynx," he added.



However, he said that he will perform in Salmanshahr on August 11 and in Tehran on August 12.

He also plans to release a single song titled "Tell that You're in Love" on August 5 to celebrate his 60th birthday.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ **Iranshahr Gallery** is currently hosting an exhibition of paintings by Hossein Maher.

The exhibit titled "Monument" runs until August 9 at the gallery, which can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.

■ **Sa Gallery** is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Royal Mohammadian.

The showcase entitled "The Silent Song" will run until August 5 at the gallery located at No. 134, 8th Bustan St., off Pasdaran Ave.

■ **Negar Gallery** is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Fereshteh Khaleqi.

The exhibition titled "When There Is No One Around" will be running until August 3 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, East Roshanai St., in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

■ A collection of paintings by Mitra Davarpanah is on show in an exhibition at the Niavaran Cultural Center.

The exhibit runs until August 5 at Gallery No. 2 of the center.

Photo

■ A selection of photographs displaying scenes of ordinary life of the Gilani people in the past and present time on display in an exhibition at the Arasbaran Cultural Center.

The exhibit arranged in collaboration with private collector Kobra Alipour runs until August 3 at the center, which can be found on Jolfa St., off Shariati Ave.

PICTURE OF THE DAY

📷 Mehr/Mehran Riazzi



Sadeq Vafai (L) and Rasul Hassanpur act in a scene from "Suspense in the Depths of the Atlantic" at Tehran's Nasser Khosro Hall on July 26, 2016. Vafai is also the director and writer of the play, which tells the story of a German submarine assigned the mission to attack ships of the Allies during World War II.

Adaptation of "The Yalta Game" to go on stage in Tehran

T T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian troupe Dimak directed by Albert Beigjanian will stage the puppet play "The Suitcase and the Cute Dog" based on Irish playwright Brian Patrick Friel's "The Yalta Game" in Tehran.

Friel wrote the play based on Anton Chekhov's short story "The Lady with the Little Dog," which the Russian

playwright composed in 1899 in Yalta, a resort city on the southern coast of the Crimean Peninsula.

The play will go on stage at the 16th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival running from August 22 to 28, the director told the Persian service of ISNA on Saturday.

"I mostly work on puppet plays outside Iran. I have performed many

works in international festivals, but this is the first time I will stage a puppet play in Iran," said director Beigjanian who is of Armenian origin.

"Puppet plays have always been interesting for me because they require artistic creativity, while my inner child is still a child and doesn't want to grow up," he added.

Puppeteers Mohammadreza Maleki,

Venice Intl. Film Festival to screen Iran's "Malaria"

T T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Parviz Shahbazi's "Malaria" will go on screen in the Horizon section of the 73rd Venice International Film Festival, which will be held from August 31 to September 10.

The social drama starring Saghar Qana'at and Saed Soheili tells the story of a young girl who elopes with her boyfriend to spend her time in the company of a band of street musicians in Tehran.

Afterwards, she plans to deceive her father and brothers by saying that she has been kidnapped and wants them to promptly send the ransom money.

Over 30 films from around the globe will compete in the section dedicated to works that represent the latest aesthetic and expressive trends in international cinema.

Fahimeh Abedini and Aida Kolahi are collaborating in this project.

Beigjanian has previously worked as a producer with Levon Haftvan who staged "The Yalta Game" at Tehran's Konesh-e Moaser Hall in April.

The play tells the story of an accountant who vacations alone, leaving his wife and family behind in Moscow.