

# TEHRAN TIMES

Russia honors Iran Constitution, no airbase sought: ambassador

2

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## Leader receives cabinet, outlines 7 priorities



**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei received the cabinet on Wednesday on the occasion of the Government Week.

During the meeting with President Hassan Rou-

hani and his ministers, the Leader outlined seven priorities to be adopted by the government that included resistance economy, foreign policy, science and technology, security, culture, the sixth development plan, and social media.

Lauding efforts made by the government over

the past three years, the Leader stressed, "Today, economic bottlenecks are the foremost problem of the country, which must be resolved. Their resolution depends on the correct and accurate implementation of the policies of resistance economy."

See page 2

## Nicaragua seeks Iranian investment in energy, industry projects

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Nicaragua seeks to attract Iranian investment in its energy and industry projects, Laureano Ortega, the Nicaraguan presidential advisor for foreign investment, said on Tuesday.

He made the remarks in a conference on review-

ing economic opportunities in Nicaragua, saying that his country warmly welcomes Iranian companies in various sectors namely construction, renewable energy, industry and agriculture, sectors, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

→4

## Turkish tanks enter Syria, claim to clear ISIL from Jarablus

By staff & agencies

Turkish tank units have entered Syria as part of a military operation backed by Turkish and United States-led coalition warplanes to clear the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group from the Syrian border

town of Jarablus, according to Turkish state media.

The epicenter of the military action, dubbed "Euphrates Shield", is the Syrian border city of Jarablus, from where Ankara says militants have fired rockets into Turkey.

→13

## FM warns against putting actional goals before national interests

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday that the country's national interests and security should not be sacrificed for factional objectives.

Qassemi's comments came as a response to claims by a parliamentarian on detention of what he called a spy in a team which accompanied Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif during his trip to Turkey. The Foreign Ministry spokesman described the claims as "unfounded, wrong, and sheer lie."

"The Foreign Ministry does not intend to enter into such wrong political games and fabrications and insists that a few ones should not sacrifice national security and interests for their factional and personal objectives and motivations," Qassemi added.

## Khosrotaj appointed new TPO head

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh appointed Mojtaba Khosrotaj as the new head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Mehr news agency reported on Wednesday.



Khosrotaj has previously served as the deputy industry minister for economic and trade affairs and the government's representative to the boards of Iran and Tehran chambers of commerce, industries, mines and agriculture.

He was also the spokesman for the ministry and during the Iranian calendar year 1376 (March 1997-March 1998) he served as the managing director of Export Promotion Center of Iran. Nematzadeh also appointed Valiollah Afkhamirad, the former head of TPO, as his advisor.

## "Washington unlikely to extradite Fethullah Gulen to Turkey"

**INTERVIEW**  
By: Fateme Mohammadipour

TEHRAN — Tension has been on the rise between Washington and Ankara after Turkey pointed the finger of suspicion at U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen for the mid July abortive putsch.

Having provided evidence, Turkey has been asking Washington formally for the extradition of the cleric. However, the U.S. officials have conditioned the decision upon more cogent evidence by Turkey.

In this regard, Mark N. Katz, professor of Government and Politics at George Mason University, said, "It is highly unlikely that the U.S. will ever extradite Fethullah Gulen to Turkey."

"Ankara does not seem to have

the sort of hard evidence needed to convince the American courts that Gulen was behind the coup attempt," he reasoned.

Also, on the Syrian crisis and Turkey's recent change of tack, former Soviet affairs analyst at the U.S. Department of State further stated, "even if Turkish policy on Syria is moving closer to Iran's and Russia's, it is not clear that this will help resolve the Syrian crisis."

This is the text of the interview:

**■ Do you think the U.S. will extradite Fethullah Gulen to Turkey? How do you think bilateral ties between the two will be influenced if Washington will not extradite him?**

A: It is highly unlikely that the U.S. will ever extradite Fethullah Gulen to Turkey. Ankara does not



seem to have the sort of hard evidence needed to convince the American courts that Gulen was behind the coup attempt. I, for one, do not think he was, and that

## FAO: Iran to become self-sufficient in meat production if losses reduced

Based on research conducted under the FAO sub-regional project "Capacity Building for Food Loss Reduction in the Near East", every year in Iran at least 100,000 tons of red meat is lost in the supply chain, which if reduced would lead to the country's self-sufficiency in red meat production.

According to a press release published by the FAO Representation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, roughly one-third of the edible parts of food produced for human consumption, gets lost or wasted globally, which is about 1.3 billion ton per year.

Studies commissioned by FAO estimated yearly global food loss and waste by quantity at roughly 30 percent of cereals, 40-50 percent of root crops, fruits and vegetables, 20 percent of oilseeds, meat and dairy products, and 35 percent of fish.

According to FAO estimates in 2015, the average per capita consumption of meat in the world

was 41.3 kg, which is estimated to reach 45.3kg by 2030 as the world's population grows.

Currently in Iran the average per capita consumption of meat is 35.5 comprising of 12.5 kg of red meat and 23kg of poultry meat.

According to statics released by the Ministry of Jihad-e Agriculture, Iran produces 950,000 tons of red meat and 1.75 million tons of poultry meat on an annual basis, which when taking into account the import of 100,000 tons of red and poultry meat each year, results in a total figure of 2.8 million tons of meat in the country.

Although the meat loss figures in Iran are relatively low, the country still loses 300,000 tons of meat in the form of waste.

In the Oriental Near East sub region alone, about 50 million metric tons (MT) of foods produced are lost every year (not accounting for losses in imported foods) between harvest and consumption. Total production of major grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat and fish is about

191 million metric tons.

A large portion of these losses (27.8 million metric tons) could be recovered if losses could be reduced from an estimated 25% to a more reasonable 10%.

Although reducing loss and waste requires investments in capacity building and value chain development, the enormous quantity of recovered food production would require no additional land, water or other farm production inputs, thereby making a positive contribution towards conserving the natural resource base.

One-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, which amounts to about 1.3 billion tons per year.

Food is lost or wasted throughout the supply chain, from initial agricultural production down to final household consumption.

Food losses represent a waste of resources used in production such as land, water, energy and inputs, increasing the green gas emissions in vain.

## Cinema Verite dedicates new section to docs on agriculture

**ART** TEHRAN — Cinema Verite, the Iranian international festival for documentary films, has dedicated a new section to documentaries with the central theme of agriculture.



A selection of documentaries focusing on topics such as cultivation, irrigation, animal husbandry, natural resources, forestry and fishery are scheduled to go on screen in this new section, organizers of the festival have announced in a press release published on Wednesday.

A new team of juries and a new selection board are due to choose and award the participating docs in this section.

All the interested applicants are asked to submit their docs on agriculture produced not before 2013 to the secretariat of the festival no later than September 21. The new section has been organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. The 10th edition of the festival will be running from December 4 to 11 in Tehran.

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### CONDOLENCES

Dear Mr. Saki

We would like to offer your family and you our deepest and most sincere condolences on the sad demise of your beloved father. May our sympathy brings you comfort and our prayers ease the pain of this loss.

TEHRAN TIMES  
staff and management

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

It can benefit a wide range of tastes from students to professional journalists. Persian equivalents have been given for all entries, including idioms and expressions. The glossary also includes example sentences for entries the authors thought it would be a bit difficult to learn.

For more information contact:

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**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**MPs condemn Al-Khalifa for treatment of senior cleric**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian legislators decried the al-Khalifa regime for arresting religious and political leaders and stripping Shiite cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Issa Qassim of citizenship, calling it a big disgrace for those who claim to support human rights. "The Iranian MPs condemn the Bahraini rulers' harassment of the prominent cleric, violation of citizenship rights and hundreds of other crimes, including imprisonment of children and women, and detention of the political and religious leaders," the statement said on Wednesday, the YJC reported.



**Iranian speaker warns of adverse effects of regional conflicts on Muslims**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran's Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani urged concerted action by Muslim countries to settle regional conflicts via political tools, warning that the skirmishes undermine the Islamic community.

The Israeli regime is the one that gets the maximum benefit from the clashes in the Middle East, Larijani warned at a meeting with his Malaysian counterpart Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia, held in Tehran on Tuesday, Tasnim reported.

For his part, the Malaysian speaker hailed Iran as a major country with an influential role in the establishment of regional security and stability.



**Rouhani congratulates Ukraine on National Day**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sent a message to Petro Poroshenko, the Ukrainian president, on Wednesday, congratulating the National Day of Ukraine.

Ukraine commemorates its Independence Day on 24 August, Mehr reported.



**Russian planes only refueling at Nojeh air base: MP**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — A senior member of the Iranian parliament (Majlis) has stressed that Russian planes would refuel only at Nojeh Airbase in western Iran, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Touching upon the issue of Iran-Russia close cooperation to fight against terrorists in Syria, Chairman of Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Ala'eddin Boroujerdi said, "That was a joint decision made (by Iran and Russia) to help eliminate terrorists, the sinister phenomenon of the region, and their supporters including the United States and Europe."

He added the cooperation was the decision made by a joint Iranian-Russian operations room that was set up a year ago.



**Tehran to use international lawyers over Hajj crush**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran is going to use international lawyers in its efforts to sue Saudi Arabia over a mass crush that killed thousands of pilgrims, including more than four hundred Iranians, during the Hajj last year, a diplomat has said.

Iran is not going to appear lax on the issue and will pursue the case legally in full force, Deputy Foreign Minister Hassan Qashqavi told the IRIB news agency on Wednesday.



**Iran oil ministry to own billionaire's assets**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Public Prosecutor's Office in Tehran has accepted to let the Ministry of Petroleum take over assets of billionaire Babak Zanjani who has been sentenced to death for embezzlement, Press TV reported on Monday.

"The Prosecutor's Office, as per the most recent views of a team of experts, agreed with the transfer of the convict's assets worth 20 trillion rials (\$642 million) to the Ministry of Petroleum," Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari-Dowlatabadi was quoted as saying.

**Iran names Daesh leader killed in Kermanshah, says nothing is off the country's radar**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi revealed in a live TV program on Wednesday that Abu Aeshe Kurdi, commander of a Daesh brigade in Mosul, was one of those killed in recent clashes with a terrorist cell in Kermanshah province, western Iran.

"In collaboration with special forces, we managed to kill commander of Daesh brigade in Mosul Abu Aeshe Kurdi and arrest and took out nine of his accomplices," said Alavi.

Alavi gave the details one week after Iranian security forces announced they had dismantled a Daesh-affiliated terrorist cell in separate clashes in western Kermanshah province, killing four and arrested more six.

The news also come amid preparation made by Iraqi forces to launch an assault to retake Mosul, which fell to Daesh control in 2014, after they could successfully liberated Fallujah.



*Iranian Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi*

Iran, which borders Iraq to its west, has been a safe haven in a region torn apart by terrorism and extremism. This is while

even some European countries, including France, have been experiencing difficult times over the past months.

The Iranian minister viewed the unique security of the Middle East powerhouse as a function of a widespread net of security eyes, where all Iranians play the role of a security agent against suspicious cases in the form of national neighborhood watch.

"160 million eyes are watching the security of the country and until now, the clues and information we have received from the people have proven effective," he said.

He also stressed that Iran is watching every move made by terrorists in the region: "we have intelligence sway over all terrorists who are acting against Iran."

"In southeastern of the country we noticed some tunnels being dug in the direction of two security-military sites where we could catch them off-guard."

In June, Iran announced it had thwarted several planned bombings in Tehran and other cities, in what it called a major plot by Sunni Muslim militants against the country.

**Leader receives cabinet, outlines 7 priorities**

➔ To achieve this, provinces should be given the leeway to make decisions, banking loans and liquidity should be channeled into the production sector, export incentives should be considered, agricultural products should be purchased and paid for on time, and finally, heed should be paid to villages and processing industries.

As the second priority, the Leader referred to the foreign policy pursued by the administration, calling for more accurate and vigilant approaches to regional issues.

He also advised the government to act eclectically in its foreign policy: "Asia, Africa, and Latin America must be given their due share in the country's foreign policy."

As the third lap of the roadmap, the Leader pointed to the importance of science and technology.

"For the country to make progress it needs science and technology and over the past years, good progress has been made."

Elsewhere in his remark, Ayatollah Khamenei put emphasis on the issue of security, thanking Allah and armed forces for high security and stability indexes of the country. "...while countries in the region are fraught with incidents and insecurity, the country enjoys a strong security shield."

This is owing to "the revolutionary and religious spirit of the people," as well as "defense capabilities" of the county, he added.

Culture was the fifth priority the Leader touched upon, warning against dogmatism.

"Culture includes literature, art, life style, and social code of conduct; and all cultural entities have responsi-

bilities in all these areas."

"Personally, I do not support dogmatism, pressure, or suppression in the cultural arena, but I do strongly believe in liberalism, however it should not be taken to mean slackness and leaving room for the enemy to cause damage."

Referring to delays in drafting the sixth five-year development plan of the country, the Leader called for accelerating the process.

"Development plans bring coordination and synergy and act like the links of a chain, pushing the country toward objectives of the Outlook Plan."

Last but not least, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to social media, saying, "Social media are a progressive, extensive, and unstoppable world that can bring with them great opportunities and at the same time, threats."

**Zarif says Tehran attaches importance to ties with Nicaragua**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Wednesday Iran attaches great importance to ties with Nicaragua.

"We attach great importance to relations with Latin America and Nicaragua and we discussed expansion of economic ties," he said during a joint press confer-

ence with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Samuel Santos López in Managua.

Zarif also said that the two countries can cooperate in agriculture, energy, banking, transportation, as well as science and technology, expressing readiness to cooperate in construction of a massive canal across Nicaragua.

According to France 24, a Chinese com-

pany is to build the canal and the plan calls for a waterway linking the Pacific and Atlantic oceans that would rival the century-old one in Panama, which has recently been expanded to take bigger ships.

During his visit to Nicaragua, he also met with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and René Nuñez Tellez, the head of Nicaragua's National Assembly (Parliament).

Zarif started Latin America's tour on Monday, starting with Cuba, where he met with Cuban President Raul Castro, Bruno Rodriguez, the Cuban foreign minister, and the country's Minister of Economy and Vice-President Ricardo Cabrisas.

He arrived in Ecuador on Wednesday. He is scheduled to visit Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela, as well.

**Tehran chides Afghanistan, Pakistan for border insecurity, drug smuggling**



**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli has censured insecurities across eastern borders albeit strong measures taken by Iran to ensure stability.

"Across eastern borders we are facing instabilities. Afghanistan and Pakistan have insecure borders although our forces have taken measures to soothe the concerns," he said on a live TV program aired on Tuesday night.

Previously, Qassem Rezaei, the commander of Iran's border police, had said drugs seizures had decreased along Iran's borders with Afghanistan but increased near the Pakistani border.

The threats Iran is grappling with across its eastern borders in terms of drug smuggling, among others, are costing the country heavily.

Only from 2013 to 2015 has the country seized upwards of 1748 tons of opium and arrested 922,000 people in connection with drug smuggling, including some drug lords.

"Over the time span from 2013 to 2015, our forces had 67,000 clashes with drug smugglers where we managed to seize 1748 tons of opium," according to the Rahmani Fazli, who also acts as the secretary general of Iran's Drugs Control Headquarters.

Iran is neighbor to Afghanistan, the biggest producer of opium and

heroin in the world and is located on the Balkan route which traverses Iran (often through Pakistan), Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria across South-East Europe to the Western European market.

The Balkan and northern routes are the main heroin trafficking corridors linking Afghanistan to the huge markets of the Russian Federation and Western Europe.

"75 percent, 61 percent, and 17 percent of respectively opium, morphine, and heroin seized worldwide are seized across the transit route of Iran," Rahmani Fazli pointed out.

According to Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Yury Fedotov, Iran is directly or indirectly involved in almost 40 percent of all such confiscations around the world.

Iran's efforts to staunch the unbridled flow of the narcotics into other countries, particularly European ones, could have been more fruitful if the international community had shown more commitments.

During the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem held in April, Rahmani Fazli lamented European countries' lack of cooperation with Iran in its anti-drugs battle.

A more cooperative Europe could lend Iran a hand with the hardware demanded by anti-drugs missions, the official had stated in the session.

**Russia honors Iran Constitution, no airbase sought: ambassador**



**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levon Dzhagaryan has thanked Iran for allowing Russian bombers to use an airbase in its territory for launching airstrikes in Syria, nevertheless indicating that the world power recognizes its limits.

Moscow respects the Iranian Constitution and is not seeking to have an airbase in Iran, the Russian official stated on Wednesday.

"Our message to the (Iranian) people and their representatives in the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament) is that there is nothing to worry about because Russia has never ever been, nor will it be, seeking an airbase in Iran. We do respect Article 146 of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution and observe it seriously," said the ambassador.

Last week the Russian Defense Ministry announced it was using the Nojeh airbase, located in Hamadan, western Iran, to fly sorties over Syria.

"On August 16, 2016, Tu-22M3 long-range bombers and Su-34 tactical bombers took off from the "Hamedan" airbase (the Islamic Republic of Iran) and carried out a concentrated airstrike on objects of the ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist groupings in the provinces of Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, and Idlib," the Russian ministry said.

While senior Iranian officials saw it a step forward in ties with the military power, some parliamentarians voiced concern over a possible breach of the Constitution.

The most fervent criticism was leveled by MP Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh,

who said the cooperation breaches Article 146 of the Constitution.

"The establishment of any type of [foreign] military base in the country, even for peaceful purposes, is forbidden," he said.

Article 146 of the Constitution forbids "the establishment of any kind of foreign military base in Iran, even for peaceful purposes," the lawmaker quoted from the Constitution last Wednesday.

Reacting to the comments, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan said on Sunday, "We have not given any military base to the Russians and they are not here to stay."

The Russian ambassador further highlighted that the decision to use the airbase had already been approved by Iran's Supreme National Security Council and future deployments would also be subject to mutual agreements.

"The deployment of Russian fighters and bombers in Iran was temporary and approved by senior Iranian officials... If Tehran and Moscow deem it necessary, the cooperation with continue in the future under agreements by officials of the two sides," the ambassador elucidated.

The same was spoken by Russia's Defense Ministry, when on August 22, spokesman Igor Konashenkov said, "Further use of the Hamadan airbase in the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Russian Aerospace Forces will be carried out on the basis of mutual agreements to fight terrorism and depending on the prevailing circumstances in Syria."

# Over 6000 killed in U.S.-led coalition raids in Syria: report

Airstrikes by the so-called United States led anti-ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Daesh) coalition have killed more than 6000 people in Syria since the beginning of the aerial military in late 2014, a monitoring group says.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Wednesday that 6004 people had been killed in coalition airstrikes in Syria during a period of 23 months, from September 23, 2014 to August 23, 2016.

Of the total figure released, 599 people were civilians, according to the pro-opposition group.

Some 163 children were also among the civilians killed in the coalition airstrikes.

The report further said that hundreds of people, most of them ISIL Takfiri terrorists, had been also injured in the air attacks.

The so-called multinational task force against ISIL started its controversial mission in Iraq in late 2014 after ISIL seized control over territories west and north of the country. The air campaign was later expanded to cover areas in northern Syria despite criticism from the Syrian government that the attacks violate the sovereignty of the country.

The United States claims the attacks are carried out to help Syrian Kurds and Arabs fighting against ISIL in areas along the Turkish border in the province of Aleppo. However, the attacks have resulted in numerous deaths among the civilians and Syrian military forces.

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

(Source: Press TV)



## N. Korea 'fires' submarine-launched ballistic missile

North Korea has fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile off its east coast, according to South Korea's military, the latest in a string of missile launches by Pyongyang in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The missile was test-fired at around 5:30am (08:30 GMT) on Wednesday near the coastal city of Sinpo, where satellite imagery shows a submarine base is located, an official at South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

Yoshihide Suga, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary, said the projectile reached Japan's air defense identification zone - an area of control designated by countries to help maintain air security.

The launch comes two days after South Korea and the U.S. began annual military exercises that North



Korea condemned as a preparation for invasion. It has threatened retaliation.

China's Xinhua news agency said the launch could be seen as a response to the drills, calling the exercises "a dangerous game".

North Korea has become further isolated after a January nuclear test, its fourth, and the launch of a long-range rocket in February brought tightened UN sanctions.

It has launched numerous missiles of various types this year, including one this month that landed in or near Japanese-controlled waters.

Tensions on the Korean peninsula were exacerbated by the recent defection of North Korea's deputy ambassador in London to South Korea, an embarrassing setback to the regime of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

(Source: Reuters)

## Japan, China, South Korea agree to urge North Korea to stop provocation

Japan, China and South Korea agreed to urge North Korea to refrain from provocation and follow the United Nations Security Council resolutions, after its latest missile launch towards Japan early on Wednesday.

Foreign ministers from the three Asian neighbors also sought to soothe their often-testy relations, and have reached an understanding on a trilateral summit meeting in Japan this year, a Japanese official said.

"We have confirmed that we will urge North Korea to exercise self-restraint regarding its provocative action, and to observe the UN Security Council's resolutions," Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida told a news conference after hosting the meeting with his Chinese and South Korean counterparts.

A North Korean submarine fired a ballistic missile on Wednesday that flew about 500 km (300 miles) towards Japan, a show of improving technological ca-

pability for the isolated country that has conducted a nuclear test and as series of missile launches this year in defiance of UN sanctions.

In the face of the North Korean threat, cooperation among Japan, China and South Korea was more important than ever, Kishida said after his meeting with China's Wang Yi and South Korea's Yun Byung-se.

Yun promised South Korea's support to realize a trilateral summit by year's end, as well as to cooperate economically and to achieve a successful summit of the Group of 20 big economies next month in China.

Wang said China opposed North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and any "words or actions" that cause tension on the Korean peninsula, China's foreign ministry said in a statement.

China will continue to push for the peninsula's denuclearization, seek a resolution through talks and uphold regional

peace and stability, Wang added.

The three ministers share the understanding that Japan will host a trilateral summit this year, though dates have yet to be worked out, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official told reporters.

Relations between the three big Asian economies are often difficult with the legacy of Japan's wartime aggression affecting ties between it and China and South Korea, territorial disputes hurting links between Japan and China, and Japan and South Korea, and China suspicious of the others' United States ties.

The meeting marked the first visit to Japan by a Chinese foreign minister since the Japanese government took over three of the tiny islands at the center of a dispute with China, from private Japanese owners in September 2012.

China's state-run Xinhua news agency said Wang's willingness to go to Tokyo showed "China's sufficient sincerity to co-

operate with Japan and South Korea".

At the same time, it warned Japan and South Korea to "abandon the Cold War mentality and view the peaceful rise of China as vigor to regional development", while avoiding "being the tools for some countries outside the region to undermine regional stability".

Wednesday's meeting had earlier appeared in doubt after a flare-up in Sino-Japanese tension over their dispute over tiny islands in the East China Sea.

South Korea and Japan have a territorial dispute over small islands about half way between their mainlands.

Tensions have also been escalating between South Korea and China over a decision by Seoul and Washington to deploy an advanced anti-missile defense, which the allies say is meant to counter growing threats from North Korea.

(Source: Reuters)

## Israeli soldier kills Palestinian near Nablus

An Israeli soldier has shot dead a Palestinian near the occupied West Bank city of Nablus after the victim allegedly stabbed the trooper.

The incident took place on Wednesday close to the illegal Israeli settlement of Ariel south of Nablus.

An Israeli army statement said the regime's forces had been chasing a group of rock throwers in a car, but one of the Palestinians took off the vehicle and stabbed an Israeli soldier.

The Israeli trooper "fired towards the perpetrator, resulting in his death," the statement added.

The Israeli media reported that the soldier was taken to hospital for treatment of light wounds.

The identity of the slain Palestinian has not been revealed yet.

Israeli police and soldiers have come under heavy criticism for "extrajudicial executions" of Palestinian citizens, who did not pose a threat or who could have been detained through non-lethal means.

### ■ Palestinian protesters force closure of ICRC office

Elsewhere, Palestinian protesters have stormed the office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, blaming it for inaction in the case of a prisoner now on his 70th day of hunger strike in Israeli detention.

The protesters forced the temporary closure of the relief agency's headquarters in the city of Ramallah on

Wednesday, reported the Palestinian news agency Safa.

A day earlier, Palestinian inmate Bilal Kayed, for whom the Wednesday protest action was taken, addressed a letter to his fellow Palestinians, asserting he would keep up his hunger strike.

Kayed's health has sharply deteriorated, with his lawyer saying that the 35-year-old is now unable to move or speak on his own. Bilal's mother, Raheeba Kayed, has been barred from visiting her son in the hospital. Lawyers have told her that Israeli authorities refuse to allow her son to be uncuffed from his hospital bed.

Kayed was to be released in June after serving a 14-and-a-half-year sentence for activities in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Instead, Israeli authorities ordered that he remain in "administrative detention," an Israeli practice that effectively leaves Palestinian prisoners in a legal limbo.

More than 7,000 Palestinian prisoners, among them 350 children, are currently being held in some 17 Israeli jails.

Separately, Israeli forces were reported to have assaulted Palestinian houses in the Beit Einun village to the east of the city of al-Khalil (Hebron) in southern West Bank and demolished two residential buildings in the Umm al-Khair district southeast of the city.

Israeli forces, meanwhile, confronted Palestinian



youths in the town of Hazma elsewhere in the West Bank, injuring two of them with rubber bullets.

The occupied territories have been the scene of heightened tensions since August 2015, when the Tel Aviv regime imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East al-Quds (Jerusalem) in an alleged bid to change the status quo of the Muslim site.

More than 230 Palestinians, including children and women, have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces in what is regarded as the third Palestinian Intifada (uprising) since the beginning of last October.

(Source: Press TV)

## Foreign workers in Saudi Arabia subject to abuse

Foreign workers at a construction company in Saudi Arabia say they have not been paid for months, face possible imprisonment because their permits have not been renewed, and their employer is refusing to grant them permission to leave the oil-rich kingdom.

The employees at Riyadh-based building firm United Seemac, which

mostly does roadwork for the Saudi government, say they have not been paid for at least five months, and the House of Saud regime authorities and officials from their embassies have done little to address their worsening situation.

The Saudi economy is in the doldrums amid falling oil prices, a rising public debt as well as diminishing foreign reserves.

Saudi Arabia has announced plans for an economic overhaul under a plan called Saudi Vision 2030.

It was publicized by Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in a televised announcement on April 25 and appears to be the brainchild of the king's inexperienced son, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

It focuses on privatizations, further

reductions in subsidies, selling a stake of less than 5 percent in Saudi Aramco, and the creation of a giant \$2-trillion Sovereign Wealth Fund.

Economists and financial experts, however, maintain that Saudi Arabia's plan looks blurry, and the creation of a sustainable Saudi economy remains a mirage.

(Source: agencies)

## "Voices under the rubble" after quake hits Italy; at least 38 dead

A powerful earthquake devastated a string of mountainous towns in central Italy on Wednesday, trapping residents under piles of rubble, killing at least 38 people and leaving thousands homeless.

The quake struck in the early hours of the morning when most residents were asleep, razing homes and buckling roads in a cluster of communities some 140 km (85 miles) east of Rome.

A family of four, including two boys aged 8 months and 9 years, were buried when their house in Accumoli imploded.

The army was mobilized to help with special heavy equipment and the treasury released 235 million euros (\$265 million) of emergency funds. At the Vatican, Pope Francis cancelled part of his general audience to pray for the victims.

Aerial photographs showed whole areas of Amatrice, voted last year as one of Italy's most beautiful historic towns, flattened by the 6.2 magnitude quake.

Accumoli mayor Stefano Petrucci said some 2,500 were left homeless in the local community, which is made up of 17 hamlets.

The national Civil Protection Department said some survivors would be put up elsewhere in central Italy, while others would be housed in tents that were being dispatched to the area.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said he would visit the disaster area later in the day: "No one will be left alone, no family, no community, no neighborhood. We must get down to work ... to restore hope to this area which has been so badly hit," he said in a brief televised address.

The quake hit during the summer when the area, usually sparsely populated, hosts large numbers of holidaymakers.

A spokeswoman for the civil protection department, Immacolata Postiglione, said the dead were in Amatrice, Accumoli and other villages including Pescara del Tronto and Arquata del Tronto. She put the initial death toll at 38, but said rescue teams had only just reached some stricken areas.

The earthquake caused damage in three regions -- Umbria, Lazio and Marche -- and was felt as far away as the southern Italian port city of Naples.

The hospital in Amatrice was among the buildings that were badly damaged, and patients were moved into the streets.

"Three quarters of the town is not there anymore," Amatrice mayor Sergio Pirozzi told state broadcaster RAI. "The aim now is to save as many lives as possible. There are voices under the rubble, we have to save the people there."

RAI reported that two Afghan girls, believed to be asylum-seekers, were also missing in the town.

The United States Geological Survey, which measured the quake at 6.2 magnitude, said it struck near the Umbrian city of Norcia, while Italy's earthquake institute INGV registered it at 6.0 and put the epicenter further south, closer to Accumoli and Amatrice.

INGV reported 60 aftershocks in the four hours following the initial quake, the strongest measuring 5.5.

Italy sits on two fault lines, making it one of the most seismically active countries in Europe.

The last major earthquake to hit the country struck the central city of L'Aquila in 2009, killing more than 300 people.

The most deadly since the start of the 20th century came in 1908, when an earthquake followed by a tsunami killed an estimated 80,000 people in the southern regions of Reggio Calabria and Sicily.

(Source: Reuters)

## Powerful earthquakes strikes central Myanmar, rattles region

A powerful earthquake of 6.8 magnitude struck central Myanmar on Wednesday, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and local authorities said, shaking buildings across the Southeast Asian nation and the region.

The quake hit the town of Chauk, southwest of Mandalay, the Myanmar government said, with tremors felt as far away as Bangkok, where witnesses reported high rise buildings swaying, and the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka.

There were no immediate reports of casualties and initial reports suggested limited damage.

Chauk is about 35 km from Myanmar's ancient capital of Bagan, known as the "City of 4 Million Pagodas" and a major draw for Myanmar's nascent tourism industry.

According to the 2014 census, the town has a population of about 45,000, with around 185,000 living in the surrounding area. It was a thriving oilfield during the British colonial era.

The quake shook buildings in Myanmar's biggest city of Yangon and in other towns and cities, witnesses said.

Office buildings in the Thai capital Bangkok, to the east of Myanmar, shook for a few seconds, residents there said.

The quake was also felt in Bangladesh, to the west of Myanmar, where some people ran out into the street as buildings shook, residents said.

Myanmar is in a seismically active part of the world where the Indo-Australian Plate runs up against the Eurasian Plate.

In March, 2011, at least 74 people were killed in an earthquake in Myanmar near its borders with Thailand and Laos.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS

**Iran's annual agricultural output to rise to 117 million tons**

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran's annual output of agricultural products is planned to rise to 117 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (will end on March 20, 2017) from 112 million tons in the previous year, according to an official in the Ministry of Agriculture.



Shahrokh Ramezan-Nejad, the secretary of headquarters to celebrate the Government Week (August 23-29) in the Ministry of Agriculture, put the worth of annual output at \$77 billion in the preceding year, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

The official mentioned adopting modern engineering principles and advanced mechanization technology, developing modern irrigation systems, equipping and renovating agricultural lands and transferring the modern

scientific methods to the farmers as some of the measures taken by the ministry within the two past years to boost efficiency in the agriculture sector.

**Iran to open trade center in Belgrade for Southeast Europe**

Iran is to open its economic and trade center in Belgrade for the Balkans and Southeast Europe in the next two months, the Serbian trade ministry said after a meeting with Iran's ambassador to Serbia, Majid Fahimpour.

The ambassador also informed the ministry of the interest of certain representatives of Iran's financial sector to acquire a bank in Serbia in order to establish payment transactions between the two countries and thereby facilitate business ties between Iran and Serbia, the ministry added in its press release on Monday.

Last year the two countries set up the Serbian-Iranian Chamber of Business to boost cooperation between the two countries. (Source: seenews.com)

**Asian stocks slip on profit-taking; oil falls**

Asian stocks edged lower on Wednesday as strong U.S. housing data overnight increased the chances of an interest rate increase in coming months, prompting some investors to take profits, while oil prices slipped after a surprise jump in U.S. inventories.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.4 percent in early trade. It has risen more than 14 percent since late June, and hit a 1-year high last week, helped by increased interest in emerging markets after a shock vote by Britain to exit the European Union.

Since late July, emerging market funds have seen net inflows of some \$13.2 billion, more than developed market funds in terms of assets under management, according to Institute of International Finance data.

Within the region, Hong Kong stocks slid 0.8 percent on Wednesday as investors sold financials, while Japanese markets led gainers, rising 0.6 percent.

"China's stock markets have benefited from Brexit-related capital flows but that impact is fading and we are cautious on the market outlook given increasing signs of economic weakness," said Francis Cheung, head of China and Hong Kong strategy at brokerage CLSA.

While Hong Kong's benchmark index has rallied 18 percent since late June, on a price-to-earnings basis, it still remains around one standard deviation below a 20-year average, indicating investors are not fully convinced about the durability of the gains.

Compounding the anxiety, recent Chinese economic data has been anything but cheerful. Both exports and imports fell more than expected in July and government officials have repeatedly said the economy is facing downward pressure.

However, the pessimism around China has been balanced by growing optimism around emerging markets as some investors such as bond giant PIMCO are slowly turning more bullish, citing a rebound in growth and improving economic fundamentals.

On a year-to-date basis, MSCI's emerging market index has outperformed the world index on a total returns basis, with most of the gains seen since June, according to Thomson Reuters Datastream.

U.S. housing-related stocks jumped 2 percent on Tuesday after the Commerce Department reported new U.S. single-family home sales soared unexpectedly in July to near nine-year highs. Stocks in both Europe and the U.S. ended higher.

Global central bankers gather in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, late this week with investors focused on a speech by Fed Chair Janet Yellen on Friday, hoping for more clues on policy.

"At this juncture, the consensus is coalescing around the view that Yellen will bait the market enough to sustain further rate normalization expectations for this year without telegraphing a September hike," analysts at OCBC in Singapore wrote in a note.

In currency markets, the spike in new U.S. home sales pushed the dollar to 94.6 against a trade-weighted basket of currencies after a drop of more than 2 percent at this month.

The Australian dollar looked set to add to recent gains as Australia's relatively higher interest rates attracted overseas investors.

Oil prices tumbled, reversing early gains, after the American Petroleum Institute (API) reported on Tuesday that U.S. crude inventories rose by a 4.5 million barrels last week.

Brent crude fell 1 percent to \$49.46 a barrel, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude slipped 1.3 percent to \$47.48 in early deals. (Source: Reuters)

**50 railway projects ready to come on stream in Iran**

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — On the occasion of the Government Week (August 23-29), Iran has 50 railway projects ready for inauguration, Saeid Mohammadzadeh, the deputy head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (IRIR) for technical and infrastructure affairs, announced.

The official explained that these projects include removing accident-prone spots, building railways, constructing unlevel crossings, as well as buildings and installations, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Some projects are also ready for inauguration in the passenger sector, Mohammadzadeh added.

Previously, in mid June, the official had said that the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (IRIR) gives any support to the domestic manufacturers for the manufacturing of railways' required parts, components and equipments in a bid to make the country sovereign in development of its railway transportation.

"The country's policies of Resistance Economy require us to move toward development of railway transportation as the fuel consumption for transporting one ton of cargo via railway is one fifth that of the road," the official asserted.

Transportation through railway rose 100 percent in



Iran over the past Iranian calendar year 1394 (ended on March 19) from its previous year and also in 1393 from its preceding year, according to head of IRIR Mohsen Pour Seyed Aqaei.

**Nicaragua seeks Iranian investment in energy, industry projects**

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Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who also attended the conference, for his part, announced that the Islamic Republic's administration will guarantee the investments made by the Iranian private sector in the Latin American countries, including Nicaragua.

Zarif began his first Latin American visit on Monday in Havana, where he met with Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez in an effort to improve bilateral economic rela-

tions.

He continued his tour with arriving in Nicaragua on Tuesday. Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela will be his next destinations.

On his Latin American tour, the Iranian foreign minister is being accompanied by 120 businessmen seeking investment and cooperation opportunities to boost several Iranian industries, especially the oil industry.

Iran's Foreign Ministry has announced that the tour of Latin America signifies Teh-

ran's plans to boost non-oil exports.

**Iran interested in proposed Chinese-built canal in Nicaragua**

Iranian firms want to participate in the construction of a massive canal across Nicaragua that a Chinese company has vowed to build, Zarif said Wednesday, Al-Monitor reported.

Representatives of private Iranian construction companies accompanying Zarif on the visit to Nicaragua's capital discussed the possibility of getting a slice of the \$50

billion project, the minister told a news conference.

The ambitious plan calls for a waterway linking the Pacific and Atlantic oceans that would rival the century-old one in Panama, which has recently been expanded to take bigger ships.

Yet work on Nicaragua's canal, meant to have started two years ago, has not begun. HKND, the Chinese group tasked with the huge job, now says it should start at the end of this year.

**Economy, education and research: China leads the way with G20**

By Tom Zwart

When the heads of state and government meet for the G20 summit in Hangzhou in early September, the state of the global economy will be foremost on their minds. The recovery from the 2008 financial crisis has been sluggish, which proves that fresh thinking will be necessary. The theme of the Hangzhou summit, which stresses the importance of an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy, shows that is exactly what the Chinese G20 Presidency has in mind.

As then President Hu Jintao emphasized in his speech during Tsinghua University's centennial celebration in 2011, high quality education is essential for the rapid development of the economy and society. Therefore, innovation requires strong investments in university research and education.

However, universities in many parts of the world are going through tough times. The economic crisis of 2008 has slashed large parts of the endowments of universities in the U.S. Many graduates avoid pursuing university degrees because they are not sure that they will be able to repay their student loans. This is the result of decreasing job opportunities and lower pay. This leads to lower enrollment numbers and decreasing university income. Because of low growth numbers, European governments struggle to find the money to adequately fund their universities. Consequently, the state of the economy in these parts of the world is diminishing the innovative capacity of universities, rather than getting a boost from it.

The summit participants may have noticed the recent Shanghai ranking, in which two of China's universities, Peking University and Tsinghua University, have made it into the top 100. As the saying goes, whether the water is cold or warm, the ducks are the first to know. Therefore, the fact that these two universities have been ranked so highly by the world's academic barometer is very significant. It exemplifies the high quality teaching and the path-breaking research which nowadays characterise China's leading universities. Western academics such as myself, who serve as visiting professors and foreign experts at Chinese universities, are privileged to be part of this exciting development.



The support the universities receive from the Chinese government has been a decisive factor. Since the mid 1990s, with the help of initiatives like Project 2011 and Project 985, the Ministry of Education has been working very hard to assist the leading universities in gaining world standing. This allows them to compete with the world's leading universities and to contribute to China's economic and social development. Consequently, the education offered by and the research conducted at these universities have grown in strength, while management, recruiting and promotion have been professionalized. These efforts to put Chinese universities on the map have not turned them into elite institutions. Quite the contrary, since more than 15% of the college-age group are enrolled in universities, China has mass higher education. And the good news is that this percentage keeps growing every year.

This Chinese academic upturn partly results from the internationalization efforts that have been undertaken. Chinese master students and PhD candidates study abroad in large numbers. There are active exchanges at faculty level, complemented by international conferences and joint research projects. Chinese scholars are encouraged and facilitated to publish in reputable international journals, especially those which are on the Social Sciences Citation Index.

But you need two to tango. When Chinese scholars reach out to the international academic community, they should be welcomed and included. This does not always happen, especially in the humanities and the social sciences. Chinese authors sometimes find it difficult to get

their articles published in foreign periodicals, even if they meet academic standards. And they are not adequately represented in the editorial boards and the key committees which set the research agenda.

This is caused by the fact that parts of academic science are still very much determined by Eurocentric concepts, insights and methodologies, as was the case during colonial times. Scholars operating out of the U.S. and Europe sometimes assume that their hypotheses represent global trends. They often seem unfamiliar with alternative approaches from the Global South, which can refresh and enrich the academic debate by challenging or complementing these assumptions. As a result, these Southern approaches do not get through to the mainstream academic discourse, and science is the poorer for it.

Thus, researchers in the behavioral sciences who publish in the leading journals frequently extend their findings to humanity in general, while 96% of their respondents come from Western industrialized countries. Despite the fact that they are only studying a narrow subpopulation, i.e. people from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic or 'WEIRD' societies, they present their conclusions as applying to human kind in general.

Therefore, to retain its validity and legitimacy, international academic research should become more inclusive. In the area of human rights this will be role of the "Cross-Cultural Human Rights Center," which is currently being set up in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The center is a collaborative effort of scholars from all corners of the world, mainly from China and Africa, who share the idea that local culture is an important building block for human rights protection. The aim of the center is to give a voice to the Southern wisdom in the area of human rights in a way which mainstream actors will find difficult to ignore. Similar centers deserve to be set up for other disciplines.

During the G20 summit the heads of state and government intend to make the world economy more inclusive. Actors in the area of academic research should follow their example by giving the floor to scholars from the Global South. In this way, academic science will become truly universal, while universities can deliver the innovation necessary for a thriving economy. (Source: china.org.cn)

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Tesla touts speed and driving range with new upgraded battery**

Tesla Motors Inc crowned itself the maker of the world's fastest production car on Tuesday, saying a new version of its Model S all-electric sedan can accelerate from 0-60 miles per hour in just 2-1/2 seconds.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk said the company will offer a larger upgraded battery pack for performance versions of its Model S and X vehicles that will extend range, while also allowing for super fast acceleration.

Tesla has long laid claim to bragging rights in the highly competitive luxury car market. But Tuesday's news is unlikely to change the equation on a host of challenges the company faces, from production and finances to regulation.



**VW, suppliers settle dispute after marathon talks**

Volkswagen and two of its parts suppliers on Tuesday resolved a contract dispute that had hit output at more than half of the carmaker's German plants and threatened to undermine its recovery from a diesel emissions scandal.

After more than 20 hours of negotiations that went on through the night, VW said it had settled its differences with CarTrim, which makes seats, and ES Automobiguss, which produces cast iron parts needed to make gearboxes, but gave no details. The suppliers confirmed an agreement had been reached.

The conflict had threatened VW's profitability following last year's diesel emissions test cheating scandal and also risked hurting hundreds of other VW suppliers.



**Judge denies GM's mid-trial bid to toss Texas ignition switch case**

General Motors Co said Tuesday a Texas judge had denied its bid to throw out a lawsuit over a fatal 2011 crash blamed on a faulty ignition switch, after the company accused a car driver and his lawyers of fabricating evidence about the vehicle's key.

Harris County Judge Robert Schaffer said in his mid-trial ruling, however, that he would instruct jurors that a key shown to them was not the one used by Zachary Stevens to drive the 2007 Saturn Sky involved in the crash, according to GM.

GM moved to dismiss the case on Monday, saying the key displayed in the courtroom did not belong to that vehicle and accused Stevens and his parents of trying to buttress their case by displaying a key chain carrying more weight than the one actually used in the crash.

# Iran carpet exhibit dedicates section for handicrafts

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — The 25th d e s k Iran Handmade Carpet Exhibition has added a side section devoted to showcasing a select of nationwide handicrafts, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

Based on the new scheme, the vast fairground also plays host to over 20 artisans and craftspersons who are from various Iranian provinces such as Kord-estan, Tehran, Zanjan, Kerman, West Azarbaijan, and Ardebil, Mehr reported.

Amongst the artworks have been put on show are traditional musical instruments, earthenware, ceramics, paintings on wood, folk needlework productions, metalwork and gabbeh carpets.

Earlier in May, over 360 artisans from different parts of Iran took part in the 26th Iran National Handicraft Exhibition, which was held at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

The 25th Iran Handmade Carpet Exhibition opened its doors to the public on Monday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds. The event will be running through August 28.



This file photo shows containers inlaid with enamel, a technique of decoration whereby metal objects or surfaces are given a vitreous glaze by intense heat to create a brilliantly colored decorative effect.

## 'Jihadist hub' Molenbeek lures tourists across Brussels canal

**BRUSSELS (Reuters)** — Molenbeek, the Brussels borough that gained unwanted notoriety last year when Islamic State militants from the area attacked Paris, has become an unlikely tourist draw - and not just for those with ghoulish tastes.

Even as the broader city's visitor numbers dropped after the French bloodshed and the March bombings in Brussels itself, tour guides report growing interest from those keen to see the long-blighted district for themselves and view an industrial heritage that once earned Molenbeek the sobriquet "Little Manchester".

"We are seeing rising curiosity about Molenbeek from Belgian tourists and foreigners alike since the attacks," said Corentin Descamps, an adviser to Brussels' tourism agency.

A borough of 95,000 people, up to 40 percent of them Muslim and mainly of Moroccan origin, it sits just across a once warehouse-lined canal from the old heart of Brussels, whose Renaissance Grand-Place, beer bars, chocolate shops and art galleries are the more typical destinations for tourist throngs.

Long shunned by fellow Bruxellois, Molenbeek hit world headlines in November when locals with links to Syria took part in the attacks that killed 130 in Paris.

Then in March, key fugitive Salah Abdeslam was



Tourists watch a fresco as they visit the Brussels district of Molenbeek

caught there after four months hiding just a few streets from his family home and suicide bombers struck Brussels airport and the city's metro.

Some of the new visitors curious about the neighborhood do have a ghoulish streak and ask to see places associated with the IS attacks, tour guide Alan Debaecke conceded.

"There are sometimes people looking for the places where those people lived or where they were arrested, where they were in hiding," he said. He tries to avoid satisfying their curiosity, however.

### Regeneration

Many tours take in Molenbeek's elegant town hall and the pretty square in front which hosts a lively twice-weekly market; it also houses the apartment where Abdeslam grew up alongside an elder brother who was among the Paris suicide bombers.

Debaecke says most tourists are happy to let him show them a bustling neighborhood where urban regeneration projects are drawing in affluent loft dwellers but also aim to improve lives for locals in one of Belgium's poorest boroughs, a 10-minute underground train ride from European Union headquarters.

"They're amazed to see the image they get of this area is totally unlike what they've seen in the media," he said. "They realize most of the population are people like you and me."

Officials report falls in visitor numbers to Brussels since November. Data is still being collated but officials stress that Molenbeek remains a marginal attraction for most visitors.

### PICTURE OF THE DAY

IRNA/Bahman Zarei



This combination photo depicts attendants to the opening ceremony of a local culinary festival titled "Iranian cuisine, tourism culture" at the Kermanshah Permanent International Fairgrounds on August 23, 2016.

So far the festival being organized under the auspices of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization has been held in several Iranian provinces including Mazandaran, Gilan, Golestan, Qazvin, Zanjan, and Ardebil.

## Paris tourism hit by militant attacks, strikes and floods

Attacks by Islamist militants as well as strikes and floods have led to a big fall in tourism in Paris.

There were a million fewer visitors between January and June compared with the same period in 2015.

Paris welcomes 16 million visitors a year and is one of the world's top tourist destinations.

The drop is estimated to have cost about €750m (£644m) in lost revenue. One senior official described it as "an industrial disaster". France relies heavily on tourism, which generates more than 7% of its annual GDP.

About half-a-million people in the Ile-de-France region, which includes Paris, have jobs linked to tourism, making it the biggest employer in the area. But tourism has dipped sharply since gunmen from the so-called Islamic State killed 130 people in the November Paris attack.

The city was only just beginning to recover from an attack in January 2015 on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.

A souvenir shop owner near Arc de Triomphe, who did not want to be named, said: "It's due to terrorism, nobody mentions it but everyone watches the news. We've sold fewer postcards and souvenirs this summer."

(Source: BBC)

## Oviedo's statues:

### The Return of Williams B. Arrensberg



Statue of El Regreso de Williams B. Arrensberg by Eduardo Úrculo in Oviedo, Spain

Oviedo in northern Spain is renowned for the statues which have been graced its streets since the early 1990s. From classic sculptures to modern art, a walk through Oviedo is like strolling through a giant open-air museum. A few really stand out, none more so than El Regreso de Williams B. Arrensberg, by Eduardo Úrculo, in the Plaza de Porlier.

The life-size Arrensberg stands si-

lently with a trench coat thrown over his shoulders, surrounded by luggage. Leaning against his largest suitcase, he's wearing a fedora, sporting a moustache, and carrying an umbrella. But who is he? And where has he returned from?

Nobody knows, and the artist never provided any clues. Arrensberg's expression is one of bitter contemplation,

and when you step behind him, you can see what he's staring at: the city's Cathedral.

Something sinister must have happened in the Cathedral, years ago. And something else will surely occur, now that he's returned! Studying the statue, it's easy to get sucked into the spirit of film noir, and invent possible scenarios for the mysterious Mr. Arrensberg.

## IN THE NEWS

### Lalejin to celebrate designation as world pottery capital

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Lalejin will today celebrate its d e s k registration as the world pottery capital, a privilege given to the western Iranian city by jurors of the UNESCO-affiliated World Crafts Council.

The event will be attended by a number of cultural officials including Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization (CHTO) Director Masud Soltanifar, as well as some enthusiasts for arts from the country and across the globe.

Located in Hamedan Province, Lalejin is one of the most essential centers for production of the earthenware and ceramics in the country.

Earlier in July, Ghada Hijawi-Qaddumi, the president of the World Crafts Council-Asia Pacific Region, announced that the city of Mashhad has been designated as the world's city of gemstone.

Precious gemstones like agates and turquoise are found in Mashhad, which is also well-known for intricately designed silver jeweler studded with rubies and emeralds.

Last year, World Crafts Council declared Isfahan and Tabriz as the world cities of handicraft and carpet weaving.



## ISLAMIC SCHOLARS

### Ibn Miskawayh: Trendsetter Persian scientist, philosopher and historian

Ibn Miskawayh, in full Abu Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Miskawayh (born c. 930—died 1030, Rayy, Iran) Persian scientist, philosopher, and historian whose scholarly works became models for later generations of Islamic thinkers.

Little is known of Ibn Miskawayh's personal life. It is believed he converted to Islam from Zoroastrianism, the religion of pre-Islamic Iran. His interests included alchemy and poetry, and some 20 works are attributed to him. His most notable contributions, however, were in ethics and history.

His moral treatise Tahdhib al-akhlaq, influenced by the Aristotelian concept of the mean, is considered one of the best statements of Islamic philosophy. The Islamic philosopher Nahir al-Din Tusi (died 1274) modelled his Akhlaq Nasiri ("The Nasiri Ethics") on the Tahdhib al-akhlaq.

As a historian Ibn Miskawayh is noted for his Persian "nationalist" bias and his conviction that the history of peoples offers moral instruction, as well as his abandonment of legends as a source.

His universal history Kitab tajarib al-umam wa ta'aqub al-himam (7 vol.; Eng. trans. by D.S. Margoliouth, The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate, 1921), was noted for its use of all available sources and greatly stimulated the development of Islamic historiography.

(Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Luxor Museum

This wonderful museum has a well-chosen and brilliantly displayed and explained collection of antiquities dating from the end of the Old Kingdom right through to the Mamluk period, mostly gathered from the Theban temples and necropolis.

The ticket price puts off many, but don't let that stop you: this is one of the most rewarding sights in Luxor.

The ground-floor gallery has several masterpieces including a well-preserved limestone relief of Tuthmosis III, an exquisitely carved statue of Tuthmosis III in greywacke from the Temple of Karnak, an alabaster figure of Amenhotep III protected by the great crocodile god Sobek and, one of the few examples of Old Kingdom art found at Thebes, a relief of Unas-anh, found in his tomb on the west bank.

A new wing was opened in 2004, dedicated to the glory of Thebes during the New Kingdom period. The highlight, and the main reason for the new construction, is the two royal mummies, Ahmose I (founder of the 18th dynasty) and the mummy some believe to be Ramses I (founder of the 19th dynasty and father of Seti I), beautifully displayed without their wrappings in dark rooms.

Other well-labelled displays illustrate the military might of Thebes during the New Kingdom, the age of Egypt's empire-building, including chariots and weapons. On the upper floor the military theme is diluted with scenes from daily life showing the technology used in the New Kingdom.

Multimedia displays show workers harvesting papyrus and processing it into sheets to be used for writing. Young boys are shown learning to read and write hieroglyphs beside a display of a scribe's implements and an architect's tools.

(Source: Lonely Planet)



Statue of Sobek with Amenhotep III being kept at Luxor Museum located in the Egyptian city of Luxor

## FEATURE

## Afghanistan's unity government must actually unite

When the Office of the Director of National Intelligence published the Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community earlier this year, Afghanistan earned this assessment: "Political cohesion will remain a challenge for Kabul as the National Unity Government will confront larger and more divisive issues later in 2016, including the implementation of election reforms, long-delayed parliamentary elections, and a potential change by a Loya Jirga that might fundamentally alter Afghanistan's constitutional order."



Ashraf Ghani Abdullah Abdullah

At the time, the leaders of the National Unity Government and their senior officials disagreed with the prognosis of impending divisiveness. In contrast, they emphasized the likely challenges they would face as centering around threats from the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Islamic State (terrorist group).

The void of regional cooperation, particularly Pakistan's inaction, brings the Taliban leaders to the negotiating table and denying them sanctuary in Pakistan.

## ■ Rising tension

Yet the rising tension between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah that was recently rendered embarrassingly public suggests that Afghanistan is indeed confronting a looming crisis of division.

The frustrations of Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah became public after Abdullah went on criticizing Ashraf Ghani in a press conference for not meeting him in the past three months, and calling the president unfit for the job. In response, to Abdullah's criticism Ashraf Ghani's office issued a statement called Abdullah's comments irresponsible and not in line with the standard and spirit of governance.

The political crisis between the leaders of the National Unity Government comes at a time when Taliban are gaining momentum in strategic parts of Afghanistan.

The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces are losing a key battleground. They are in full retreat from key strategic areas such as southern Helmand province.

The presence of the Taliban around Lashkar Gah, in some places as close as only four or five kilometers from the provincial capital, suggest they intend to encircle the city similar to the siege of Kunduz last September, using the adjacent districts as a launching pad.

## ■ Taliban's ambition

These moves show plainly the Taliban's ambition to capture an important provincial capital. If the Taliban managed to capture Lashkar Gah, it would have incalculable political and security consequences for the Government in Kabul, and to the allied efforts of the international community, in particular the United States. Similarly, key districts in Kunduz, Baghlan and Takhar provinces fell into the hands of the Taliban.

Since the beginning of the year, the Afghan National Army has faced a dramatic casualty rate in the battlefield.

Army recruitment has reached its lowest point to date and desertion has risen to an all-time highest. These events are ultimately attributed to the weak leadership and lack of political will of the National Unity Government to implement desperately needed reforms. There are also indications of growing ethnic polarization in the northern provinces of Afghanistan as a sizeable number of the former warlords are scheming ways to remobilize and re-arm their followers against the Taliban if the political and security situation deteriorates further.

If such trends manifest, Afghanistan will face a heightened political and military fragmentation as the means of violence is decentralized in the hands of competitive rearmament by different groups, with their diverse agendas.

## ■ Political threat

Another serious political threat facing the National Unity Government is former Afghan president Hamid Karzai, who has been engaged in ceaseless politicking with influential figures and groups from around the country.

It is speculated that the hive of intrigues buzzing behind the walls of Karzai's fortress next door to the presidential palace are aimed at manipulating a take-over of an expected upcoming Loya Jirga ("grand council") mandated to decide upon changing the Constitution, one of the provisions of the formation of the Unity Government. If Karzai has control, whether direct or indirect, over the outcome of the Loya Jirga, he could contrive to dissolve the NUG and establish a provisional government, headed by himself. This has served as an excuse for the NUG leaders to delay the Loya Jirga. Yet, these very delays are emboldening Karzai and leading to further deterioration of political legitimacy ultimately more harmful than Karzai's meddling.

If any or all of these processes are allowed to continue unhindered — a re-armament by warlord militias, a territory grab by the Taliban, or further delay of the promises of electoral and constitutional reform of the Unity Government—it would drastically intensify the conflict, militarize the society even further and sabotage the precarious progress in strengthening the rule of law. There will be a deepening of the crisis of political legitimacy. Under these fragile circumstances, Afghanistan cannot afford any of those outcomes.

(Source: nationalinterest.org)

# Evidence points to another Snowden at the NSA

By James Bamford

In the summer of 1972, state-of-the-art campaign spying consisted of amateur burglars, armed with duct tape and microphones, penetrating the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee. Today, amateur burglars have been replaced by cyberspies, who penetrated the DNC armed with computers and sophisticated hacking tools.

Where the Watergate burglars came away empty-handed and in handcuffs, the modern-day cyber thieves walked away with tens of thousands of sensitive political documents and are still unidentified.

Now, in the latest twist, hacking tools themselves, likely stolen from the National Security Agency, are on the digital auction block. Once again, the usual suspects start with Russia -- though there seems little evidence backing up the accusation.

In addition, if Russia had stolen the hacking tools, it would be senseless to publicize the theft, let alone put them up for sale. It would be like a safecracker stealing the combination to a bank vault and putting it on Facebook. Once revealed, companies and governments would patch their firewalls, just as the bank would change its combination.

A more logical explanation could also be insider theft. If that's the case, it's one more reason to question the usefulness of an agency that secretly collects private information on millions of Americans but can't keep its most valuable data from being stolen, or as it appears in this case, being used against us.

In what appeared more like a Saturday Night Live skit than an act of cybercrime, a group calling itself the Shadow Brokers put up for bid on the Internet what it called a "full state-sponsored toolset" of "cyberweapons." "!!! Attention government sponsors of cyberwarfare and those who profit from it !!!! How much would

**The authenticity of the NSA hacking tools were also confirmed by several ex-NSA officials who spoke to the media, including former members of the agency's Tailored Access Operations (TAO) unit, the home of hacking specialists.**

you pay for enemies cyberweapons?" said the announcement.

The group said it was releasing some NSA files for "free" and promised "better" ones to the highest bidder. However, those with losing bids "Lose Lose," it said, because they would not receive their money back. And should the total sum of the bids, in bitcoins, reach the equivalent of half a billion dollars, the group would make the whole lot public.

## ■ Tongue in cheek

While the "auction" seemed tongue in cheek, more like hacktivists than Russian high command, the sample documents were almost certainly real. The draft of a top-secret NSA manual for implanting offensive malware, released by Edward Snowden, contains code for a program codenamed SECONDDATE. That same 16-character string of numbers and characters is in the code released by the Shadow Brokers. The details from the manual were first released by The Intercept last Friday.

The authenticity of the NSA hacking tools were also confirmed by several ex-NSA officials who spoke to the

media, including former members of the agency's Tailored Access Operations (TAO) unit, the home of hacking specialists.

"Without a doubt, they're the keys to the kingdom," one former TAO employee told the Washington Post. The "stuff you're talking about would undermine the security of a lot of major government and corporate networks both here and abroad." Another added, "From what I saw, there was no doubt in my mind that it was legitimate."

Like a bank robber's tool kit for breaking into a vault, cyber exploitation tools,



with codenames like EPICBANANA and BUZZDIRECTION, are designed to break into computer systems and networks. Just as the bank robber hopes to find a crack in the vault that has never been discovered, hackers search for digital cracks, or "exploits," in computer programs like Windows.

The most valuable are "zero day" exploits, meaning there have been zero days since Windows has discovered the "crack" in their programs. Through this crack, the hacker would be able to get into a system and exploit it, by stealing information, until the breach is eventually discovered and patched. According to the former NSA officials who viewed the Shadow Broker files, they contained a number of exploits, including zero-day exploits that the NSA often pays thousands of dollars for to private hacking groups.

The reasons given for laying the blame on Russia appear less convincing, however. "This is probably some Russian mind game, down to the bogus accent," James A. Lewis, a computer expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, told the New York Times. Why the Russians would engage in such a mind game, he never explained.

## ■ NSA hacking tools

Rather than the NSA hacking tools being snatched as a result of a sophisticated cyber operation by Russia or some other nation, it seems more likely that an employee stole them. Experts who have analyzed the files suspect that they date to October 2013, five months after Edward Snowden left his contractor position with the NSA and fled to Hong Kong carrying flash drives containing hundreds of thousands of pages of NSA documents.

So, if Snowden could not have stolen the hacking tools, there are indications that after he departed in May 2013, someone else did, possibly someone as-

signed to the agency's highly sensitive Tailored Access Operations.

In December 2013, another highly secret NSA document quietly became public. It was a top secret TAO catalog of NSA hacking tools. Known as the Advanced Network Technology (ANT) catalog, it consisted of 50 pages of extensive pictures, diagrams and descriptions of tools for every kind of hack, mostly targeted at devices manufactured by U.S. companies, including Apple, Cisco, Dell and many others.

Like the hacking tools, the catalog used similar codenames. Among the tools targeting Apple was one codenamed DROUPTJEEP, which gives NSA total control of iPhones. A "software implant for the Apple iPhone," says the ANT catalog, "includes the ability to remotely push/pull files from the device. SMS retrieval, contact-list retrieval, voicemail, geolocation, hot mic, camera capture, cell-tower location, etc."

Another, codenamed IRATEMONK, is "Technology that can infiltrate the firmware of hard drives manufactured by Maxtor, Samsung, Seagate and Western Digital."

## ■ Another whistleblower

In 2014, I spent three days in Moscow with Snowden for a magazine assignment and a PBS documentary. During our on-the-record conversations, he would not talk about the ANT catalog, perhaps not wanting to bring attention to another possible NSA whistleblower.

I was, however, given unrestricted access to his cache of documents. These included both the entire British, or GCHQ, files and the entire NSA files.

But going through this archive using a

Rolling Stone magazine profile labeled him the "most dangerous man in cyberspace."

In December 2013, Appelbaum was the first person to reveal the existence of the ANT catalog, at a conference in Berlin, without identifying the source. That same month he said he suspected the U.S. government of breaking into his Berlin apartment. He also co-wrote an article about the catalog in Der Spiegel. But again, he never named a source, which led many to assume, mistakenly, that it was Snowden.

In addition to WikiLeaks, for years Appelbaum worked for Tor, an organization focused on providing its customers anonymity on the Internet. But last May, he stepped down as a result of "serious, public allegations of sexual mistreatment" made by unnamed victims, according to a statement put out by Tor. Appelbaum has denied the charges.

## ■ Screening of documentary

Shortly thereafter, he turned his attention to Hillary Clinton. At a screening of a documentary about Assange in Cannes, France, Appelbaum accused her of having a grudge against him and Assange, and that if she were elected president, she would make their lives difficult. "It's a situation that will probably get worse" if she is elected to the White House, he said, according to Yahoo News.

It was only a few months later that Assange released the 20,000 DNC emails. Intelligence agencies have again pointed the finger at Russia for hacking into these emails.

Yet there has been no explanation as to how Assange obtained them. He told NBC News, "There is no proof whatsoever" that he obtained the emails from Russian intelligence. Moscow has also denied involvement.

There are, of course, many sophisticated hackers in Russia, some with close government ties and some without. And planting false and misleading indicators in messages is an old trick. Now Assange has promised to release many more emails before the election, while apparently ignoring email involving Trump. (Trump opposition research was also stolen.)

In hacktivist style, and in what appears to be phony broken English, this new release of cyberweapons also seems to be targeting Clinton. It ends with a long and angry "final message" against "Wealthy Elites ... breaking laws" but "Elites top friends announce, no law broken, no crime commit (ed) ... then Elites run for president. Why run for president when already control country like dictatorship?"

Then after what they call the "fun Cyber Weapons Auction" comes the real message, a serious threat. "We want make sure Wealthy Elite recognizes the danger (of) cyberweapons. Let us spell out for Elites. Your wealth and control depends on electronic data." Now, they warned, they have control of the NSAs

**Snowden's leaks served a public good. He alerted Americans to illegal eavesdropping on their telephone records and other privacy violations, and Congress changed the law as a result. The DNC leaks exposed corrupt policies within the Democratic Party.**

cyber hacking tools that can take that wealth away. "You see attacks on banks and SWIFT (a worldwide network for financial services) in news. If electronic data go bye-bye where leave Wealthy Elites? Maybe with dumb cattle?"

Snowden's leaks served a public good. He alerted Americans to illegal eavesdropping on their telephone records and other privacy violations, and Congress changed the law as a result. The DNC leaks exposed corrupt policies within the Democratic Party.

But we now have entered a period many have warned about, when NSAs cyber weapons could be stolen like loose nukes and used against us. It opens the door to criminal hackers, cyber anarchists and hostile foreign governments that can use the tools to gain access to thousands of computers in order to steal data, plant malware and cause chaos.

It's one more reason why NSA may prove to be one of Washington's greatest liabilities rather than assets.

(Source: Reuters)

# JCPOA implementation unblocked oil, gas equipment: POGC head

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

**BOUSHEHR, ASSALOUYEH** — On the sidelines of a visit by reporters to phases 19, 20, and 21 of the massive South Pars gas field on the occasion of Iran's Government Week (August 23-29), Managing Director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) Ali-Akbar Shabanpour told the Tehran Times that the implementation of the nuclear deal, known as JCPOA, in January, has played a pivotal role in releasing the frozen equipment needed in oil and gas industry and lubricating the development of undergoing South Pars projects.

South Pars is a huge offshore field, Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. The field 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 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas per day.

"Some of the instruments that had been purchased by Iran such as turbo compressors were blocked in different countries such as the United Arab Emirates and some European countries under the anti-Iranian sanctions," Shabanpour said, "following the JCPOA implementation the gates became open for their imports."

"We had ordered some control and safety valves to Spanish companies, according to their specific alloy and after the implementation of the nuclear deal we could receive them," he added. As he further described, the other advantage of the deal execution was return of the vendors to oil and gas industry.

"We have bought some equipment from some specific vendors and due to hardware and software as well as guarantee issues the purchased instruments should be installed, controlled and become operational by the vendors themselves," he said, "now the ground is set for vendors to take part in Iranian oil and gas projects."

As the POGC managing director announced in the held news conference, "during the past two years, more than 150 mcm have been added to



News conference held on Tuesday in Assalouyeh on the occasion of Iran Government Week (Mohsen Mirzaei/POGC)

South Pars daily production capacity and its current production level stands at 430 mcm."

"Phases 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 will become online by the first months of the next Iranian calendar year (starts March

20, 2017) and they will add 100 mcm to the current daily output of South Pars gas field," he said, "therefore, the production in this gas field will hit 530 mcm per day by the said time."

He added that all the required contracts for development of South Pars, except that of phase 11, have been endorsed by the time being and up to \$11 billion of finance has been attracted for the completion of these projects.

Shabanpour underlined that all the achievements in South Pars has been obtained meeting safety standards and relying on domestic capabilities and experts, without foreigners' participation.

He also announced that having all phases of South Pars operational within the upcoming three years, the output will reach 800 mcm per day.



## Petchem products top in Iran's 5-month non-oil exports

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Petrochemical products comprised the largest portion of Iran's non-oil exports during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21, 2016), Shana reported on Tuesday.

According to the report, petrochemical commodities accounted for 39.05 percent of the total non-oil exports in the mentioned period.

The country's non-oil exports totaled \$19.108 billion in the first five months, a 10.22 percent rise com-

pared to the same period in the previous year.

Meanwhile, \$16.709 billion of non-oil goods were imported, showing 2.85 percent decline year on year.

In the past Iranian calendar year (which ended on March 19, 2016), 46 million tons of petrochemicals were produced in Iran by the use of 80 percent of the capacity of domestic plants, Alimohammad Bossaqzadeh, the control manager of National Petrochemical Company (NPC),

told the Shana news agency in early April.

In June 2015, Mohammad-Hasan Peyvandi, the then deputy managing director of NPC, said Iran planned to raise its petrochemical production to over 180 million tons in a course of ten years.

Also, as Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh announced in February, the country plans to augment the worth of its petrochemical production by about 30 percent to \$22 billion by the next two years.

## Malaysia calls for resuming oil purchase from Iran

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Malaysia called for the resumption of crude and oil products purchases from Iran, Iranian Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs and Trading Amirhossein Zamaninia was quoted by IRNA as saying on Tuesday.

The official made the statement after a meeting with Malaysia's Speaker of the House of Representatives Tan Sri Amin Haji Mulia in Tehran on Tuesday.

Mentioning Malaysia's willingness to resume transactions with Iran, Zamaninia also noted that the negotiations in this regard are ongoing.

Iran-Malaysia oil cooperation goes back to pre-sanctions era when Iran used to send a daily average of 50,000 to 60,000 barrels of oil to the country.

Early in May, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh met with Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman in Tehran and stressed that considering the lack of oil exports, the two countries should embark on short term business cooperation for a start.

Zanganeh also said that Malaysian companies were ready to resume cooperation with Iran and the two sides will soon begin the negotiations starting from the previously existed agreements.



Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (R) shaking hand with Malaysia's Speaker of the House of Representatives Tan Sri Amin Haji Mulia in Tehran on Tuesday

Business, sales of crude oil and oil products, oil and gas fields' development and investment in the downstream sector were among topics discussed during the meeting of Zanganeh and Aman in May.

such talks scheduled next month in Algeria.

"Iran is reaching its pre-sanctions production level soon and after that it can cooperate with the others," said a source familiar with Iranian thinking after a visit by Venezuelan Oil Minister Eulogio Del Pino to Tehran as part of a tour to convince OPEC of a production freeze.

Brent crude settled up 80 cents, or 1.6 percent, at \$49.96 a barrel, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose 69 cents, or 1.5 percent, to close at \$48.10.

Tehran has been boosting its oil

output since the lifting of Western sanctions in January. News of its potential support for a production freeze helped halt an abrupt slump in crude prices that began on Monday, after a 20-percent rally in the past two weeks.

"The current price level of well over \$40 does not provide non-OPEC producers with any kind of motivation to support oil prices by cutting or maintaining current production levels," said Tamas Varga, analyst at London-based energy broker PVM.

(Source: Reuters)

## NEWS

### Iran to sign first oil deals in 2017: Wood Mackenzie

Iran is set to sign major oil and gas deals with foreign companies in the second half of next year, its first such contracts since international sanctions were lifted in January, according to Wood Mackenzie Ltd.

The first oil under the agreements will flow in 2020, Homayoun Falakshahi, a research analyst at the consulting firm, said Tuesday in an interview in London. Iran has worked on the terms of the Iran Petroleum Contract -- known as the IPC -- for the past three years and should finalize them by the end of 2016, he said.

The IPC will allow oil companies to return to Iran after years of sanctions restrained crude and gas production. Tehran needs \$100 billion of foreign investment for the industry, according to National Iranian Oil Co. The country is expected to add an extra 500,000 barrels a day by 2025 from projects signed under the new terms, Falakshahi said.

"It comes down to how good the new contracts are," he said. "It's more likely they will still remain very tough; we are probably going to see a few deals but I don't think we are going to see a huge inflow of companies."

While the new IPC won't be as onerous as the previous fiscal terms, known as buybacks, they may still be among the harshest in the world, according to the analyst.

Iran pumped 3.55 million barrels of crude a day last month, almost a quarter more than in January, according to a Bloomberg survey. The country targets 4.8 million barrels a day by 2021, Falakshahi said, citing NIOC.

(Source: Bloomberg)

### Mexican development bank to issue first local green bonds

A Mexican development bank said on Monday it will issue up to 2 billion pesos (\$109 million) in green bonds, marking the country's first such issuance in the local market.

Nacional Financiera will sell the 7-year green bonds later this month to raise money for clean power generation projects in the states of Puebla and Nayarit. BBVA Bancomer and Banamex are underwriters for the August 31 sale.

Bonds are considered green when proceeds are used to finance certifiable environmentally friendly projects.

(Source: CNBC)

#### Tehran Water & Wastewater Supply and Treatment Company

Deadline Extended For: **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**  
**FOR ENGINEERING, PROCUREMENT, CONSTRUCTION AND FINANCE (EPCF)**  
**OF TEHRAN WATER AND WASTEWATER SCADA SYSTEMS**



#### BACKGROUND:

Tehran Water & Wastewater Supply and Treatment Company (the Employer) is in charge of supplying urban water as well as establishment of other installations related to the collection, disposal and treatment of wastewater and also their management in Tehran city. In line with its objectives it is tasked with the responsibility for implementation of Automation and SCADA systems based on "Master Plan of Tehran water and waste water telemetry systems".

The Employer intends to open an international tender and at this stage, invites interested and reputable EPC contractor ("Prospective Bidders") to register their interest for Financing and implementing EPC projects. Thereafter, Pre-Qualified Bidders will be issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) and other Bidding documents.

#### SCOPE OF WORK:

The scope of works includes but not limited to Financing, Engineering Design, Procurement, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Automation, SCADA systems, AMI, their associated telecommunications systems and building construction as follows:

1. Implementation of SCADA system for Tehran water wells
2. Upgrade and extension of existing SCADA center
3. Implementation of SCADA Systems for Waste Water installations
4. Review and upgrading existing UHF Radio Communication Network
5. Automation of Bilaghan intake
6. Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system for high consumption customers
7. Extension of existing SCADA center building and related equipment
8. Automation of input and output valves of Tehran Water Reservoirs
9. Study and design of Tehran water distribution network for a comprehensive automation system
10. Study, design and implementation of SCADA system for Water Treatment Plants
11. Implementation of National SCADA center for "National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company"

#### WHO MAY APPLY?

The Employer seeks to engage the services of EPC contractors with capability to finance the projects. The contractor should have technical experience in Automation, SCADA, telecommunication, AMI facilities and building construction. In case of a consortium at least one of the consortium members must be an experienced Automation, SCADA company (The "Technical Partner").

#### METHOD OF APPLICATION:

Prospective bidders are required to deposit **4000000 (four million) Rials** to the account number 4303738562, MELAT Bank, SAZMAN SANAYE MELI Branch, Branch No. 63545 on behalf of Tehran Water and Waste Water company. The related receipt and valid representative Letter should be delivered in person to central secretariat office located in HIJAB St., Dr. FATEMI St., Tehran, no later than **September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 4 PM** to receive Pre-Qualification Questionnaire.

All the prospective bidders are required to prepare their proposals based on the terms and conditions in Pre-Qualification Questionnaire. The signed and sealed documents should be received by the central secretariat office located in HIJAB St., Dr. FATEMI St., Tehran, no later than **October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at 4 PM**. In the time of delivery, the receipt should be received by bidder as well.

Upon receipt of Expressions of Interest from Prospective Bidders, the Employer shall evaluate and pre-qualify bidders. Only short listed Bidders will be contacted.

#### CONTACT:

For further clarification or enquiries contact the project consultant:

Monenco Iran Consulting Engineers - [savoj.maryam@monenco.com](mailto:savoj.maryam@monenco.com) - [kobariazar.amir@monenco.com](mailto:kobariazar.amir@monenco.com)

#### ATTENTION:

Please note that this is not an invitation to tender. The employer shall not be responsible for the cost of any submission. All submissions shall be at the cost of the Prospective Bidders. The employer reserves the right to accept or reject any submission. The cost of "Pre-Qualification Advertisements shall be paid by the winner of the tender.

Tender Holder Company Website: <http://tww.tpww.ir>

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Iran Water and Waste Water Engineering Company Website: <http://www.nww.ir>

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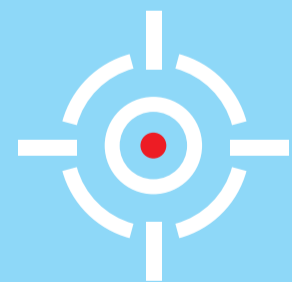
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# How to get rid of wrinkles naturally

There are various homemade remedies that can help to decrease lines and wrinkles. Here are a few remedies that help in decreasing the effect of old age, particularly around the eyes. Since the skin near and around the eyes is sensitive, it is advisable to first check on a small place before applying anything to the whole area.

## 1. Use grape seed oil

It has epidermis (skin) moisturizing and nourishing properties. It is especially efficient for maintenance of the epidermis around the eyes and in the maintenance of scars. This normal ingredient allows to combat wrinkles and rejuvenate the epidermis. Grape seed oil is full of anti-oxidants which help in reversing the loss of growing older. That is why many women use grape seed oil for wrinkles. If applied on dry epidermis, it keeps the epidermis moisturized, and as everybody knows, moisturized epidermis is less likely to get wrinkles than a dry one.

## 2. Use vitamin E

Vitamin E can also help decrease and prevent wrinkles. Supplement E is an antioxidant and the oil is very thick, so it hydrates dry epidermis very well. Supplement E will penetrate your epidermis with powerful anti-oxidants and will help wrinkles appear less defined, and help prevent the development of new wrinkles. Each evening before going to bed,



## 8 Remedies For Wrinkles Under Eyes

squeeze the liquid out from the vitamin E capsule and smear it where you see the wrinkles. Using the grape or pineapple during the day and vitamin E in the evening will show faster.

## 3. Try coconut oil on your wrinkles

Coconut oil apparently works wonders for wrinkles. Massaging oils into your epidermis that is old and wrinkly will help. After using coconut oil for per weeks' time, you will begin to see results. Continue using coconut oil on a regular basis to prevent wrinkles from coming back in the future.

## 4. Learn the value of avocados

Avocados are great for your epidermis. Take some mashed avocado, particularly under your eyes. As the oil with your skin's normal oil generation, will help the epidermis looks youthful and more attractive.

## 5. Try some cucumbers

You may use cucumber to deal with your old and wrinkly eye-lids. This is one of the best items not just for under eye wrinkles but for crow's feet. Put cucumber slices on your eyelids. The cucumber pieces will decrease these "experience"

wrinkles, and puffiness so your skin will feel re-energized afterwards.

## 6. Use some orange juice on your wrinkles

You can also use fresh orange juice for decreasing wrinkles around the eyes. Dip a cotton swab in fresh orange juice and use around them twice daily, morning and in the evening. Ensure you do not get the fresh orange juice in your eye. After a few weeks, you will find a recognizable decrease in line and wrinkles.

## 7. Use castor oil

Castor oil is one of the oldest known anti-aging treatments. Apply and massage a few drops of castor oil to your face in the evening after cleansing. This will help keep the epidermis smoother, more flexible and decrease wrinkles. You should repeat this treatment 1 to 2 times weekly after eye wrinkles have diminished to keep under eye wrinkles from redeveloping.

## 8. Maintain your health

Eat right; get omega3 from cold-water fish or supplements; rest; sleep; drink enough water to stay hydrated. •Avoid drinking alcohol and habitual smoking, both detrimental to your skin and health.

•Screen the sun's rays during your "sunny months" (winter is less problematic, unless you live near Earth's equatorial regions).  
(Source: wikihow.com)

## EAT YOUR VEGGIE

### Onions

Onions have a variety of medicinal effects. Early American settlers used wild onions to treat colds, coughs, and asthma, and to repel insects. In Chinese medicine, onions have been used to treat angina, coughs, bacterial infections, and breathing problems. However, consuming large quantities of onions can lead to stomach distress and gastrointestinal irritation that may result in nausea and diarrhea. Below is a list of health benefits of rich in vitamin veggie.



- Cardiovascular help
- Cancer prevention
- Support for bone and connective tissue
- Anti-inflammatory benefits
- Drastic decrease in blood sugar
- Skin benefits
- Hair benefits
- Detoxify body
- Good for liver

## NEWS

### 'Encyclopedia of Medical and Pharmaceutical Terms' released

Encyclopedia of Medical and Pharmaceutical Terms in Persian Literature' by the scholar Mahdi Mohaghegh is released by the Iranian Organization of Research and Composing Textbooks on Humanities (SAMT).

According to IBNA, the book 'Encyclopedia of Medical and Pharmaceutical Terms in Persian Literature', compiled by the Mahdi Mohaghegh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cultural Works and Figures Association has been published by the Iranian Organization of Research and Composing Textbooks on Humanities (SAMT).

The author of the book describes the preliminaries of applied and pure sciences referred to by the old poets and says that he's tried to use the medical and pharmaceutical expressions and terms used by some of the great Iranian poets with the source mentioned. The goal is to benefit the students of literature and those in medical fields and pharmaceutical sciences.

## 10 little hygiene rules all men should live by

### Reduce food odor

Scrub your feet every day, and make sure to dry them completely (don't forget between your toes!) as soon as you hop out of the shower. Before you slip on socks, apply antiperspirant to your feet to keep odors at bay. These are more foot odor home remedies that really work.

### Prevent a dull razor

Oxidation can dull your blades, but mineral oil will stop the process to keep them sharper longer. After shaving, soak your razor for a few minutes in a shallow dish of mineral oil, then use rubbing alcohol to clean the blades.

### Freshen up without the shower

If you don't have time for a full shower,

you can still leave the house feeling clean. Add 4 tablespoons of baking soda to a sink full of water, then use a washcloth or sponge to rub yourself down with the solution. These are pretty solid reasons you should shower less often.

### Don't be afraid of body grooming

If the hair on your head has started thinning, you might find that the hair on your nose, back, and ears is growing in full force. Clean up your look by trimming, plucking, or waxing any unwanted hair.

### Don't neglect your armpits

Armpit hair traps bacteria, making body odor more intense. During the summer, trim your armpit hair for fresher, cleaner pits.

### Prevent ingrown hairs

If you tend to get ingrown hairs, soften facial hair before you shave by lathering for five minutes with shaving cream. Use a shaving brush for a richer lather and even softer skin. Always use a sharp blade and shave in the direction your hair grows. Finish by applying a gentle moisturizer. Did you know you can substitute shaving cream for olive oil? Here are more creative uses for olive oil.

### Keep your armpits fresh

Rub a cotton ball soaked with tea tree oil or witch hazel to keep your underarms dry, fresh, and bacteria-free. Alternatively, vinegar, rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide will kill odor-causing bacteria.

### Shave after (or in) your shower

Hot water and steam open your pores and make your stubble softer, so wait until you're well into your shower to get the least painful shave. After five minutes under the spray, you might be able to get a nick-free shave without any shaving cream.

### Change your razor often

Without a sharp blade, you could end up with red blotches on your face and neck, so make sure to change it out regularly.

### Shave off five years from your look—literally

Facial hair tends to look older. Trim down a full beard into a goatee for a more youthful look, or go totally clean-shaven.  
(Source: msn.com)



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NEWS

**Feature: Iranians bathed in diverse culture from China's Xinjiang**

By: Hassan Rouhvand

**TEHRAN, (Xinhua)** — The words "Experience China in Iran" inscribed in the center of a big banner shaded with a deep azure hue and posted at the yard of Niavaran Cultural Center welcome the visitors to the opening ceremony of a Chinese cultural event in Iran's capital Tehran on Monday.



A further reading of the posters and designs in the interior setting of the cultural center invites us to learn more about the theme of the event, namely, cultural exploration of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The one-week event, titled "2016 Experience China in Iran," is open to public from Aug. 22 until Aug. 28 and features Xinjiang through a photo exhibition, seminars and other cultural activities.

As Iranian and other countries' cultural officials and diplomats, groups of Chinese and Iranian artists, media representatives and other guests stepped into the main hall for official opening, a live music by Xinjiang performers attracts sights and senses of the participants. The audience are then invited to listen to the remarks and messages of the officials from both countries to the event.

Cui Yuying, deputy director of China's State Council Information Office, said the festival will help the Iranian people know more about Xinjiang and feel the diverse culture in China. "Iran and China enjoy vast area of cultural commonalities ... and it would be a great success to keep this culture of deep friendship between two countries alive," Ali Moradkhani, Iran's deputy minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, said.

A photo exhibition, which occupies major space of Niavaran Cultural hall, presents Xinjiang with a long artistic history of singing and dancing, not only as China's cultural treasure but also an important component of the world's music and art.

The images also picture the colorful ethnoscape of Xinjiang where different ethnic groups such as Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Tajik and Mongolians have over time created the splendid music of harmonic life together in peace. Mohammad, a medical student from Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University who visited the exhibition, told Xinhua that "holding such exhibitions and gatherings will help us get familiar with the Chinese culture."

The musical performance is very good, very beautiful." The event was jointly organized by the State Council Information Office of China, the autonomous regional government of Xinjiang and the Chinese Embassy in Iran. Festival, which runs through Aug. 28, will showcase Xinjiang's music and dance, traditional costumes and other cultural heritage, in addition to its nature and tourist attractions.

**North Korea fires submarine-launched missile, says South**

Perfecting the technology would take the North's nuclear capability to a new level, allowing deployment far beyond the peninsula.

North Korea has test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile, according to the South.



State news agency Yonhap claimed the missile was launched off the North's eastern coast and travelled 300 miles before falling inside Japan's Air Defence Identification Zone.

The missile is said to have been fired shortly before 6am local time Wednesday (about 10pm BST on Tuesday).

An unnamed U.S. official said it detected and tracked what it believed to be a KN-11 ballistic missile.

If correct, it is the latest in a series of missile tests by the North - a show of muscle in full defiance of the UN.

Perfecting submarine-launched ballistic missile technology would take its nuclear capabilities to a new level, allowing deployment far beyond the Korean peninsula.

It comes as the state's southern neighbor holds joint military exercises with the U.S., which the North insists is preparation for an invasion.

North Korea described the drills, in which 75,000 troops are taking part, as an "unpardonable criminal act".

It warned that any violation of territorial sovereignty would result in a "pre-emptive nuclear strike". (Source: CNN)

**New Chapter of Ties between Iran-LatAm**

By Maryam Azish

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes in a balanced approach to all countries and geographical regions and in addition to fostering ties with neighboring and Muslim countries, which has always been among the priorities of the country's foreign policy, the reinforcement of all-out ties with Latin American has always been on the agenda of Tehran.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also believes that reinforcement of relations with Latin American countries is among the Islamic Republic's principled policies, stressing that no obstacle can hinder the expansion of mutual ties.

Due to political, cultural commonalities and congruity at international organizations and circles, particularly at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Latin American countries are vital for Iran and the Islamic Republic intends to establish balance and moderation in relations with Latin American nations.

The implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) clinched between Iran and the six countries of the P5+1 over Tehran's nuclear program, has led to progress of Iran's global situation, elimination of Western sanctions and reopening of economic development routes have driven the country's foreign policy to boost mutual ties - evident in Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif periodic trips to Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

On Aug 21, Zarif, heading a group comprised of 120 merchants, businessmen and financial executives in government and private sectors embarked on a six-nation tour of Latin America including Cuba, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela respectively.

Whiteout doubt, the visits signify an opening of an era of mutual ties between Iran and Latin American countries that are mulling to expand commercial cooperation through the channel of private sector activists.

The visit is made following the President Rouhani repeated emphasis on reinforcement of ties with all members of the international community within framework of mutual respect, non-intervention in internal affairs, and securing mutual interests.

By the time of writing this article, Zarif has attended several meeting and held separate talks with several high-ranking Latin American officials including his Cuban counterpart Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment



Rodrigo Malmierca Diaz, President Ra'ul Castro, Vice President Ricardo Cabrisas Ruíz and his Nicaraguan counterpart Samuel Santos.

**1st Iran-Cuba Trade Session**

On Aug 22, Zarif addressed the first joint trade meeting of Iran and Cuba attended by Cuban and Iranian officials and businessmen, including the son of former Cuban leader Fidel Castro and Diaz.

Addressing the first joint trade meeting of Iran and Cuba, Zarif underscored that resistance by the nations of the two countries has forced the dominant powers to give up their hostile policies and even tone down their rhetoric, citing removal of sanctions as an unique opportunity for fostering bilateral all-out ties especially in field of economy.

Top Iranian diplomat also appealed for expansion of cooperation between the two countries' private sectors, voicing Tehran willingness to pave the way for Cuba's engagement in the Central Asian countries and help Havana promote its health programs and other projects in the region.

Iranian foreign minister also believes that promotion of economic cooperation between Iranian and Cuban companies can help realization of Resistance Economy in Iran and at the same time help rebuild the Cuban economy.

Enjoying over 19.1 million sq.km area and 634-million population, Latin America accounts for six percent of global trade and the region could be considered as reliable partner for the Islamic Republic of Iran thanks to its huge raw materials.

**Call for Fostering Mutual Ties**

The Iranian and Cuban foreign minister reviewed latest regional and international developments as well as promotion of bilateral cooperation in all fields and examined the ways of developing mutual ties between Tehran and Havana.

Holding the upcoming summit of NAM was another topic of dialogue in the meeting between the two officials.

**Joint Cooperation Document**

On the sidelines of the first joint trade meeting, the Cuban and Iranian officials and businessmen, including Zarif and Diaz also signed a Memorandum

of Understanding to boost mutual economic cooperation.

The MoU was signed by Iran Chamber of Commerce Deputy of International Affairs Farhad Sharif and his Cuban counterpart Odalys Seijo Garcia.

**Iran an Important Economic Partner**

Diaz believes that Islamic Republic is not only an important economic partner for Havana but also it has the capacity to help Cuba access Asian markets.

Iran and Cuba share the same experience of living under embargos and they should use the experience as a roadmap for exploring new ways for furthering economic cooperation, Diaz said, adding Iran as an economic partner can help Cuba achieve its goals and expand its economic outreach as far as the markets in Asia.

**Zarif-Castro Meeting**

Zarif and Cuban President Ra'ul Castro also conferred issues of mutual interest and discussed latest regional and international developments and explored ways of enhancing bilateral ties between Tehran and Havana.

Before meeting with Castro, Zarif had also a meeting with Ruíz and discussed promotion of economic cooperation between the two states.

**Iran-Nicaragua Joint Economic Confab**

On Aug 23, Zarif also attended Iran-Nicaragua economic conference attended by son of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

**Zarif Meets Nicaraguan Counterpart**

On Aug 24, Zarif held talks Santos on expansion of bilateral ties, especially in the economic field, regional developments and international issues. The meeting between Zarif and Santos took place at the venue of Nicaragua Foreign Ministry Palace.

In the end, it is worth mentioning that the Iran and a number of Latin American countries have numerous commonalities such as resistance against unfair sanctions.

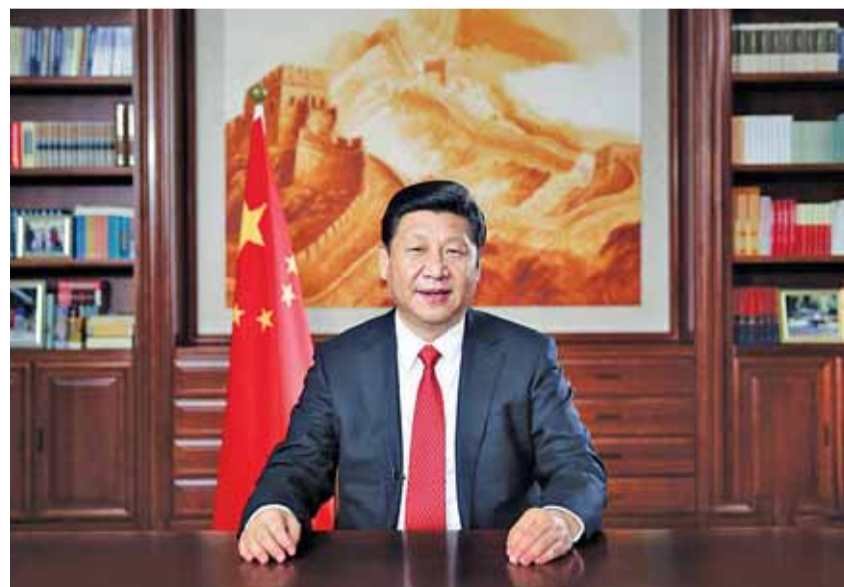
Although Iran's trade with Latin American countries diminished to its lowest level during 2011-2014, consequently, the current government is fully determined to reinforce its political and economic cooperation.

**Belt and Road Initiative facilitates win-win cooperation in Iran-China relations: experts**

**INTERVIEW**

By Hassan Rouhvand, Mu Dong

**TEHRAN, (Xinhua)** — The Belt and Road Initiative would further advance the win-win cooperation between Iran and China, Iranian experts have said. The China-proposed initiative could promote interaction between the Iranians and Chinese and can be a turning point with win-win venture in bilateral ties, Mohammad H. Emadi, advisor to Iran's Agricultural Ministry, told Xinhua in an interview. The Belt and Road Initiative is "a new paradigm and a turning point in the relationship between Iran and China and among all central Asian states," Emadi said. The initiative, proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, refers to building a Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. It is aimed at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along ancient trade routes. The initiative can be a win-win venture for all the parties involved and facilitate people-to-people cooperation, Emadi said. "It will give us a good opportunity to work with each other, to know each other more, to enjoy the diversity and difference of cultures, and to bring the people of the countries together closer than ever," he added. Another expert, Mohsen Shariati Nia, at Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University, said the initiative could be a platform for the promotion of relations between Iran and China. Iran and China should do more in order for the initiative to bear fruits, Shariati Nia said. Since some financial sanc-



tions by the West against Iran are still in place, he said, it would be a good idea to develop mechanisms for transactions between Iran on the one hand and China and other countries involved in the initiative on the other. In addition, the private sectors of both countries should engage in strategic cooperation and investment projects, so that short-term trade ties could grow into comprehensive economic interactions, Shariati Nia told Xinhua on the sidelines of a forum on "Silk Road Economic Belt," held in Iran's capital Tehran on Tuesday. He said Iran's role in the "Silk Road Initiative" should be more than a mere link between East and West. "Iran should play a key role as a partner of China, which will result in the strategic cooperation,"

Shariati Nia said. The forum coincides with a weeklong Chinese cultural festival in the Iranian capital. Commenting on the festival, which opened at Niavaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Monday, Shariati Nia said such cultural activities will help understanding and communication between the nations.

The event, titled "2016 Experience China in Iran," showcases northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, featuring a photo exhibition, music and dance performances, and other cultural activities. At the opening ceremony of the festival on Monday, Chinese top political advisor Yu Zhengsheng sent a congratulatory letter to the festival, saying the event "will help Iranian people from all walks of life

to understand a stable and harmonious Xinjiang with fast economic development, and further promote bilateral culture exchanges." "China and Iran are both ancient Asian countries with splendid culture, and the two countries share a long history of friendly exchanges," Yu said. "The two countries exchanged envoys as early as over 2,000 years ago, and have witnessed frequent exchanges in all areas, during which the two sides have developed profound friendship." "Since the diplomatic relations were established 45 years ago, the two countries have maintained a close high-level contact and the exchanges and cooperation in politics, economy, trade and culture are ever expanding," said Yu, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Cui Yuying, deputy director of China's State Council Information Office, said the festival is "the first comprehensive Xinjiang-themed cultural exchange event held in Iran by the Chinese government." It aims to help the Iranian people know more about Xinjiang and feel the diverse culture in China, Cui said. Abbas Khomeini, the international deputy of Iran's Islamic Culture and Communication Organization, said that the historical relations between two major civilizations of Iran and China have served as a means to peace and friendship between the people of two countries. Also, the Silk Road, which connects China to the West through Iran, has been a link to develop economic, cultural and artistic relations between the two nations, Khomeini added.

# Edible food wrapper made from milk the answer to plastic pollution?

Ever imagine eating your food wrapper? Now, it's possible, as a team of scientists discovered a revolutionary biodegradable film made of milk protein, which can replace plastic wraps.

According to researchers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, led by Peggy Tomasula and Laetitia Bonnaille, the material uses a specific milk protein called casein. The said protein is mixed with citrus pectin and salts.

The result is a strong, moist-resistant material that looks like plastic cling wrap, the only difference is that you can eat it.

Bonnaillie said that even though the edible food wrap is similar in appearance with plastic cling wrap, it does not stretch as much as the latter but is strong enough to package food, CBC reports.

Meanwhile, when it comes to possibility of contamination and food leaching, Science Daily notes that the casein-based films are "500 times better than plastics at keeping oxygen away from food."

## Biodegradable materials

There are currently other edible biodegradable materials available in the



market that are made of starch, but this new packaging from milk protein contains smaller pores to not let oxygen escape.

Aiming to produce a packaging with zero waste, the edible food wrap was

**There are currently other edible biodegradable materials available in the market that are made of starch, but this new packaging from milk protein contains smaller pores to not let oxygen escape.**

originally a solution to the excessive milk powder production by U.S. dairy farmer. And because it turned out successful, the researchers are also looking forward to using the casein material in single-serve packages of food such as cheese slices, snacks and meats.

"Applications we are thinking of now are those little single-serve packages that use so much plastic. If you have children, they love them. It kind of hurts to use them but it's so practical. One possibility is to wrap those tiny snacks with our film," Bonnaille said.

The researchers are also thinking beyond small packages, experimenting other ways to use the casein coating such as spraying it onto food like cereal to prevent sogginess or lining pizza boxes to avoid staining.

The current widely-used packaging products hurts the environment as they are mostly petroleum-based and non-biodegradable, filling up landfills. However, this new discovery could open solutions to waste and pollution.

(Source: Nature World News)

## Bags don't fly free: Charges have boosted airlines' departure performances, study finds

When most major airlines began charging flyers for checked bags in 2008, travelers grumbled. Southwest Airlines -- one of the most successfully run airlines in history -- even resisted and seized a new marketing slogan "bags fly free."

However, a new study that includes a University of Kansas researcher has found checked baggage fees have actually improved the departure performance of U.S. airlines in addition to boosting revenue.

"Because passengers changed their behavior, less weight went into the plane below the cabin," said Mazhar Arikian, a KU assistant professor of supply chain management in the School of Business. "This offset any changes in carryon luggage, and it helped airlines improve their on-time departure performance. The below-the-cabin effect dominates the above-the-cabin effect."

The research team's findings appeared online recently in the journal Management Science, in which they found airlines improved their median departure time between 3.3 to 4.2 minutes and reduced their average departure delays between 1.3 to 2 minutes, depending on whether they charged for the first or second checked bag.

### Actual departure times

The study examined planned and actual departure times on all publicly recorded U.S. flights from May 1, 2007, to May 1, 2009, which covered the period immediately before and after most airlines began using checked-bag fees.

While most research has solely focused on the amount of revenue checked baggage fees generated, the study is the first to examine how the change influenced airlines' operations. Arikian said the reductions are significant because departure times and mitigating delays are crucial because they are key to so many other facets of the business, such as the number of flights airlines can offer and their image among potential customers.

Other key findings from the study:

Charging for the first or second checked bag improved on-time departure performance for all major airlines



-- including Southwest, which does not charge for the first two bags -- because it created savings due to a cultural shift among U.S. passengers to travel with less baggage. Arikian said this shift resulted in a lower demand for airport labor intensive back-end operations such as baggage handling and security checks, which are shared resources across airlines. So, a drop in total baggage volume benefits not only the airlines that charge baggage fees but also those that do not.

Southwest's improved departure time performance was not as significant as its rival airlines, which did charge for checked bags, and it appears to have hurt one of Southwest's historical competitive advantages in customer service, Arikian said.

Southwest's "bags fly free" policy is likely not free based on lost opportunity cost, Arikian said, mostly because it could be offering more flights per day with increased boarding times due to charging for checked bags. The study estimates Southwest loses approximately \$24 million for not charging for the first checked bag and \$35 million for not charging for the second one per year. "It's not free in an operational sense," Arikian said.

The most positive changes in on-time departures occurred at major hub airports because less checked bags had to be moved through massive systems once passengers change planes.

The number of baggage-related complaints per 1,000 passengers dropped as airlines' departure delay performance improved once most charged for checked bags.

(Source: EurekAlert)

## How you can help the monarch butterfly on its migration

Majestic monarch butterflies are key pollinators for crops across North America. But over the past 20 years, their population has declined by 80 percent.

Two environmental groups are pushing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect these butterflies under the Endangered Species Act, but it doesn't have to come down to just policy.

As North America slides into fall, the majestic monarch butterflies will be striking out toward warmer weather. These delicate fliers can migrate some 3,400 miles from the United States and Canada to their wintering grounds in Mexico, and homeowners across their path can lend a helping hand along this challenging trek.

The butterflies will be migrating south starting in the end of August and through the middle of September. Some stragglers will still be passing through the United States into November.

### Traveling butterflies

Along the way, the monarchs will need something to snack on. So Rob Zimmer, a nature and garden writer, suggests tailoring your fall garden to provide nectar for the traveling butterflies.

Some of the best nectar plants for monarchs during late summer and fall are annuals such as zinnias, verbena, dahlia, cosmos, heliotrope, sunflower, lantana and others.

Perennials that are excellent choices for late summer and fall are purple coneflower, ironweed, goldenrod, black-eyed Susan, cup plant, cardinal flower, joe-pye weed, turtlehead, asters, rattlesnake master and more.

He also suggests putting scraps of fruit out in a garden or yard to give the butterflies an easy, tasty snack.

The Obama administration has also lent a hand to the migrating monarchs by designating a 1,500-mile butterfly corridor along U.S. Interstate 35 from Minnesota to Texas. That plan cuts down on mow-



ing and herbicide use in critical areas containing milkweed and other favored monarch munchies, and includes planting those flowering plants and milkweed too.

Citizen gardeners can follow suit, leaving parts of their lawns containing milkweed and other flowers flourishing during the monarch migration.

### Monarch-friendly actions

Listing the monarch as endangered would enforce these monarch-friendly actions with restrictions on private landowners as well as public.

That could lead to a lot of lawsuits, Marci Lininger, transportation liaison for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and coordinator of the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI), told Ohio's Country Journal.

But the Center for Biological Diversity and Center for Food Safety think it should come to that. The two organizations petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the monarch in 2014, and are putting the pressure on the department to decide whether or not to list the butterflies with a notice of intent to sue filed in early 2016.

Ms. Lininger called the petition a "wake-up call," saying, "That tells us we have work to do. We need to establish more things in our landscape to provide pollen and nectar and host plants for pollinators."

"Pollinators do a lot of work for farmers. Whether it is a bumblebee, butterfly, sweat bee or beetle, they are helping produce food.

(Source: The CSM)

## Newly identified species of extinct 'micro lion' named after Sir David Attenborough

Scientists in Australia name a newly identified species of extinct marsupial lions in honor of famous British naturalist Sir David Attenborough. The species are particularly interesting due to their size and the structure of their teeth.

Around 18 million years ago, a feisty squirrel-sized marsupial roamed around the dense jungle of ancient Australia but has since gone extinct.

In a new study, scientists from the University of New South Wales describe how they identified this ancient marsupial lion for the first time. They named the new

species in honor of prominent British naturalist Sir David Attenborough.

Designated *Microleo attenboroughi*, the tiny marsupial is a member of the family Thylacoleonidae. Its name alludes to its size -- micro means small in Greek -- and status -- leo means lion in Latin.

The last name of the creature -- attenboroughi -- recognizes Sir Attenborough's work in the field of natural history, particularly in uncovering paleontological treasures in the Riversleigh World Heritage Area in Queensland, Australia.

### Tiny creatures

When it was alive, the *M. attenboroughi* weighed just about 1.3 pounds (0.58 kilograms), lived in trees and possessed molars that were strong enough to rip apart other tiny creatures, scientists say.

Anna Gillespie, one of the study researchers, says *M. attenboroughi* would have been the "feisty kitten" of the Thylacoleonidae family.

"It was not lion-size or even bob-cat-size," says Gillespie.

(Source: Tech Times)

## SINA Bank's Public Relations Dept. Awarded with Top National Badge in Banking Industry

**ECONOMY** Thanks to its best performance and knowledge-based activity in banking industry, SINA Bank's Public Relations Department was awarded with the top and exemplary badge.

In 7th ITEC Summit, special of managers and heads of large industrial and production companies across the country, Public Relations Department of the bank was awarded with a merit badge in the presence of Minister of Industry, Mine

and Trade Eng. Ne'matzadeh, some of Majlis deputies, exemplary industrialists and concerned managers.

Earlier, Chief Executive of the bank had been granted with excellent management award in banking industry

of the country under the auspices of implementing supportive policies in line with helping to boom industrial and production projects as well as generating more employment opportunities.

## NEWS

### Some turtles see red better than you do

You may see red, but you can't see it like some birds and turtles or the ancient "eagle-lizards" from which they came. According to a study published this month in Proceedings of the Royal Society B, a "red gene" that originated from dinosaurs isn't just responsible for the red patterns on some birds and some turtles. It also gives them special color vision, allowing them to see differences in shades of red that aren't detectable to humans.

Most humans can see scarlet and crimson, but the animals with the gene can pick out the shades in between, so two birds that look the same to us appear different to birds with the gene. Known as CYP2J19, the gene comes from the same group that produces enzymes in humans allowing us to break down drugs and toxins in the body, said Nicholas Mundy, an evolutionary geneticist at the University of Cambridge who led the study.

In birds, he's found that the red gene converts carotenoids, pigments primarily found in plants, from yellow to a red oil that coats the retina like a lens, augmenting color vision.

Researchers traced the gene's evolutionary history back some 250 million years to the archosaur, a dinosaur-ish creature with the skin of an armadillo, head of a bird, snout of a pig, body of a crocodile and belly of a turtle. Dr. Mundy thinks "it's quite likely that the dinosaurs would have been bright red" with specialized red-oil pigments on their eyes.

The scientists think birds and turtles are the only land animals that still have the red gene. Snakes and scaly lizards split from the archosaur before turtles and lack the red oil on their retinas. Dr. Mundy thinks crocodiles, which spent a lot of time as nocturnal animals, lost the gene because seeing red food wasn't as important.

(Source: The NYT)



## This tree started growing during the Viking Age

The tree, dubbed "Adonis" by the scientists who discovered it, is a Bosnian pine (*Pinus heldreichii*) that took root in A.D. 941, high in the Pindus mountains of Greece. (In ancient Greek mythology, Adonis was the god of beauty, youth and desire.)

"It is quite remarkable that this large, complex and impressive organism has survived so long in such an inhospitable environment, in a land that has been civilized for over 3,000 years," Paul J. Krusic, a dendrochronologist at Stockholm University in Sweden, and the leader of the expedition that found the tree, said in a statement.

Researchers first discovered the tree during a research trip run by the Navarino Environmental Observatory (NEO), which was analyzing tree rings for evidence of the region's past climate. Krusic had first heard about this grove of ancient trees while studying for his thesis, but it was only recently that he was able to visit.

To determine Adonis' true age, the team drilled a core from the tree that reached from its heart to the outer bark. Then, they counted the tree rings, which alternate by season. The thickness and color of tree rings can also reveal clues about the historical climate. To officially date the tree, the team also compared Adonis' tree rings to those of its neighbors in the forest.

Because trees occasionally have skipped rings or lay down extra rings because of drought or other environmental conditions, comparing a tree to nearby ones to account for such anomalies is the only way to get an accurate estimate of a tree's age from its rings, Krusic told Live Science.

(Source: Live Science)

## New "smart" plastic could give your whole house transitions lenses

Researchers from the University of Austin have developed a new process for making "smart tinting" plastic that could help save on heating and cooling bills. The material is designed to change its tint when an electric current is applied, and is flexible enough to be applied over windows of any shape and size. Paired with a sun-light sensor, you could easily get Transitions for your whole house. Their findings will be published in the September issue of Nature Materials.

The new material is electrochromic, which means it can change color when electricity is applied to it. Similarly to other "smart" windows, this material can lighten or darken to adapt to changing light conditions and save money on heating or cooling.

Other types of electrochromic plastic do exist, but are very bulky and require high temperatures to manufacture. This new process produces a thin, flexible material without resorting to high temperatures. The new material is also twice as energy-efficient.

The result is a flexible, low-cost plastic sheet that can be applied to any window or any surface, no matter what the shape of the surface is. These sheets can then control the amount of sunlight entering the building, keeping rooms cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

(Source: Popular Mechanics)

NEWS

## Iran's most advanced burn center to get off the ground by 2017

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Iran's most advanced and biggest burn center will open in Tehran by 2017, Iran University of Medical Sciences chancellor said on Wednesday.

The hospital is being set up on a land area of 52,000 square meters of which 45,000 square meters is allocated to the treatment and care services and the rest would be assigned to research facilities, IRNA news agency quoted Javad Haji-Mir-Ismael as saying.

"So far we have spent some 400 billion rials (nearly \$11.5m) on the construction of the 150-bed hospital and we need an additional 860 billion rials (nearly \$24.5m) to complete the project," Haji-Mir-Ismael noted.

Currently the survival rate of the burn patients in Iran is 60 to 65 percent which means one patient out of two, he said, adding, "With the new hospital coming on stream next year we hope to increase the number to 90 percent."



Amir al-Mo'menin burn center in Shiraz, Fars province

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Rebuilding Consumer Trust

Karen: The **scandal** over our new **product line** really damaged our **image**, and we need to **rebuild consumer trust**.

Brandon: This is going to be an **uphill battle**. Losing customers is easy. **Winning them back** will be really hard.

Karen: I agree, but our **stock** is **taking a beating** and we need to do something now.

Brandon: Part of the problem was that the **rumors** about the new product **heightened expectations** and we just **fell short of the mark**. We need to always remember to **under promise and over deliver**.

Karen: Yes, that was a big part of the problem, but we also need to have more **transparency**. We can't make major changes without first getting customer **input** and without **notifying** them **well in advance**. Otherwise, our customers feel **betrayed**.

Brandon: All right, I think we have a place to begin. Should I **call a general meeting** to **talk specifics**?

Karen: Sure, and **while we're at it**, we can work on employee **morale**, too!

(Source: *eslpod.com*)

#### Words & phrases

**scandal**: an action or event regarded as morally or legally wrong and causing general public outrage

**product line**: a group of related products under a single brand sold by the same company

**image**: the opinion people have of a person, organization, product etc., or the way a person, organization etc. seems to be to the public

**rebuild**: to make something strong and successful again

**consumer**: someone who buys and uses products and services

**trust**: a strong belief in the honesty, goodness etc. of someone or something

**uphill battle**: something that is very difficult to do and needs a lot of effort and determination

**win somebody back**: to succeed in getting back something or someone that you had before

**stock**: a share in a company

**take a beating**: to lose very badly in a game or competition

**rumor**: information or a story that is passed from one person to another and which may or may not be true

**heightened**: abnormally increased, especially in intensity

**expectation**: a feeling or belief about the way something should be or how someone should behave

**fall short of the mark**: not good enough

**under promise and over deliver**: make ambitious claims and promises and then fail to live up to them

**transparency**: honesty, clarity

**input**: ideas, advice, money, or effort that you put into a job or activity in order to help it succeed

**notify**: to formally or officially tell someone about something; inform

**in advance**: before something happens or is expected to happen

**betray**: to be disloyal to someone who trusts you so that they are harmed or upset

**call**: to arrange for something to happen at a particular time

**general meeting**: a meeting open to all members of an organization

**talk specifics**: to talk about the details

**while we are at it**: while we are discussing it, at the same time

**morale**: the level of confidence and positive feelings that people have, especially people who work together, who belong to the same team etc.



Without water, everything withers

# LEZ scheme aims to reduce air pollution in Tehran

## SOCIETY TEHRAN

**d e s k** Low-emission zone (LEZ) scheme will be set up in Tehran by September 5, aiming to mitigate air pollution in the metropolis, the secretary for a supreme council coordinating traffic system of Iran has said.

LEZ is a defined area where access by certain polluting vehicles is restricted or deterred with the aim of improving the air quality. This may favor vehicles such as hybrid electric vehicles, or zero-emission vehicles such as all-electric vehicles.

The scheme is replacing the odd-even number plate scheme (where depending on the weekday the cars with only odd or even number plate were allowed to drive) in a zone stretching over 80 kilometers of the central Tehran, Pouriya Mohammadian said, Mehr news agency reported on Tuesday.

To bring LEZ scheme into effect all the vehicles in Tehran are required to get inspection stickers indicating the level of emission they produce which are easy to



track down by the traffic cameras thanks to the newly integrated vehicle inspection system, Mohammadian added.

He went on to say that since the beginning of the Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 22) when the inversion is

more likely to occur the LEZ scheme will be implemented in all the city to limit the air pollution to the least amount possible.

Currently all the vehicles that display an up-to-date sticker are allowed to enter the zone but the rules might get more stringent next year, he stated.

For the first 15 days of the scheme the drivers would only receive messages which only ask them not to enter the zone anymore, Mohammadian said, adding, since September 22 those violating the newly adopted rule would get a ticket, he explained.

It's been some years Tehran and some other metropolises of Iran are struggling with air pollution all year round more specifically in autumn and winter when the temperature inversion occur.

An inversion can lead to pollution, usually resulted from the emission generated by cars particularly high-emission clunkers, being trapped close to the ground, with possible adverse effects on health.

## Scared seal hides on boat from killer whales

A seal narrowly escaped being eaten by some hungry killer whales on Monday.

The mammal jumped onto the back of a tour boat to escape the swarming pod of orcas.

Nick Templeman, who runs Campbell River Whale and Bear Excursions, captured the moments after the seal took refuge on the boat.

"Once he got a look at the boat, he made a straight beeline for us," Templeman said.

As if a seal jumping on your tour boat wasn't exciting enough, things got even more interesting for this sight-

seeing group. About a dozen orcas started circling the boat trying to find their prey.

"We had four or five orcas all at once sitting at the back of the boat straight up and down sort of looking at the seal," said Templeman. "They would dive and they would all disappear -- about 12 of them -- and you can see shape after shape trying to come up from under the boat."

The tour group was boating off the coast of Vancouver Island, which is off Canada's Pacific Coast. This area is known for its vast whale watching adventures.

"The seal did get scared during the encounter," said

Templeman. "He would get in the water, swim back up and get back on the boat."

Templeman, who has been whale watching for 20 years, said he hasn't seen an orca hunt this extreme.

"This was not one family group but three or four family groups."

After about 30 minutes, the whales gave up and moved on.

"The seal took a few minutes, went into the water, hesitated around the engines and then left," said Templeman.

(Source: *CNN*)

## Cops: Man jailed for cutting sappy tree that hit apartments

**PITTSSTON, Pa. (AP)** — Police say a Pennsylvania man who believed sap from a tree next door was ruining his car, chopped it down, causing the tree to crash into an apartment building he owns, damaging it so badly it had to be condemned.

Five others who lived in the building are now homeless.

Fifty-one-year-old Raymond Mazzarella has been in the Luzerne County jail on reckless endangerment and oth-

er charges since Monday following the Saturday incident in Pittston Township. WNEP-TV says he's also charged with aggravated assault after allegedly getting into a fight with a neighbor.

A township code official says the tree wasn't on Mazzarella's property, but its branches were hanging over his parking place.

Mazzarella doesn't have an attorney and faces a preliminary hearing Aug. 31.

## Florida man returns lost wallet with \$3,400 inside

A 27-year-old central Florida man is being recognized for honesty after finding a wallet with \$3,400 inside and turning it over to sheriff's deputies.

Turns out an Orlando woman lost the wallet earlier this month while visiting the beach near Palm Coast with her children.

Kevin Miller tells the Daytona Beach News-Journal he knew someone was depending on that money and he's glad it's been returned to

her. The woman's name hasn't been released.

He says he spotted the wallet Aug. 5 in a shopping center parking lot. He says he decided to pick it up after seeing two nearby teens eyeing it. He immediately called the Flagler County Sheriff's Office.

Miller says he really could have used the money but felt it was important to do the right thing.

(Source: *Digital Journal*)

IN FOCUS Tehran Times/ Amin Berenjkar



More than 33 million smuggled cigarettes, worth 40 billion rials (nearly \$1.15m), were set on fire and destroyed in Shiraz, Fars province, on Thursday.



## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

#### Firuzkuh suffers \$430,000 loss due to flood

Firuzkuh, located in eastern Tehran, bore some 15 billion rials (nearly \$430,000) loss due to the flood, the city governor has said.

Mentioning the persistent rain leading to the flood in the area, Nouroollah Taheri told Fars news agency on Wednesday that thankfully no one died in the flood. But unfortunately the flood resulted in Kangarkhani river overflow and caused loss to a transport company and the farming lands adjacent to the river, Taheri regretted.

#### خسارت ۱,۵ میلیارد تومانی سیل در فیروزکوه

فرماندار شهرستان فیروزکوه از خسارت ۱,۵ میلیارد تومانی سیل در فیروزکوه خبر داد. نورالله طاهری روز چهارشنبه در گفتگو با فارس با اشاره به بارش‌های مداوم و جاری شدن سیلاب در این شهرستان اظهار داشت: خوشبختانه سیل خسارت جانی نداشته است.

وی همچنین گفت: متأسفانه سیل باعث طغیان رودخانه کنگرکخانه به یک شرکت حمل‌ونقل و مزارع و زمین‌های اطراف خساراتی وارد کرده است.

## ENGLISH PROVERB

### Lightning never strikes in the same place twice

■ **Explanation**: an unusual event is not likely to occur again in exactly the same circumstances

■ **For example**: Jill: I'm scared to drive ever since that truck hit my car. Alan: Don't worry. Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Bail somebody out

■ **Meaning**: to leave a large sum of money with a court so that someone can be let out of prison while waiting for their trial

■ **For example**: Clarke's family paid £500 to bail him out.

## ENGLISH IDIOM

### All ears

■ **Explanation**: to say that you are all ears means that you are listening very attentively

■ **For example**: Of course I want to know - I'm all ears!

Turkish Special Forces had crossed the border and entered Jarablus earlier on Wednesday's morning, officials said.

Turkish media said the operation involved artillery and rocket shelling as well as warplanes early in the morning, before the ground forces, including heavy armored vehicles, entered Syria towards noon.

**■ Damascus slams Turkey's military 'aggression' into Syrian soil**

Meantime, Syria has denounced Turkey's recent military incursion into the Syrian territory, backed by the U.S.-led coalition, saying the offensive violates the country's sovereignty.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry condemned Turkey's military operation in a statement released on Wednesday, Syrian media reported.

The ministry called for an immediate end to the Turkish "aggression," adding that the operation is being carried out under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

"Any party conducting a battle against terrorism on Syrian soil must do so in coordination with the Syrian government and the Syrian army," the statement read, adding, "Chasing out Daesh and replacing them with terrorist groups backed by Turkey is not fighting terrorism."

The reaction came hours after Turkish Special Forces, tanks and jets backed by planes from the U.S.-led coalition launched their first coordinated offensive in Syria.

**■ 'Road to solving terror'**

The operation is targeting ISIL and Syrian Kurdish fighters in northern Syria to end attacks on Turkey's border, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a speech in the capital Ankara on Wednesday.

"At 4:00 this morning, operations started in the north of Syria against terror groups which constantly threaten our country, like Daesh and the PYD (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat/ Democratic Union Party)," he said in a speech in Ankara.

Democratic Union Party (PYD) is a U.S.-backed Kurdish group based in Syria.

Erdogan said, "the road to solving the terror problem passes through a solution to problems in Syria and in Iraq... Turkey will overcome threats originating from Syria."

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also defended the operation, claiming that it would be a turning point in the fight against ISIL and would accel-

## Turkish tanks enter Syria, claim to clear Daesh from Jarablus

### Damascus slams Turkey's military 'aggression' into Syrian soil



erate the removal of the terrorists from Syria's northern Aleppo region.

**■ Turkey, concerned about growing influence of Syrian Kurdish groups**

Turkey had pledged on Monday to "completely cleanse" ISIL fighters from its border region after a suicide bomber suspected of links to the group killed 54 people at a Kurdish wedding in the southeastern city of Gaziantep.

Turkey is also concerned about the growing influence of Syrian Kurdish groups along its border, where they have captured large expanses of territory since the start of the Syrian war in 2011.

Turkey sees them as tied to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê), which has been waging an armed campaign mainly in the country's

southeast.

The military operation against ISIL comes as Syrian rebels, backed by Turkey, also say they are in the final stages of preparing an assault from Turkish territory on Jarablus, aiming to pre-empt a potential attempt by Syrian Kurdish forces of PYD to take it.

The PYD, a critical part of the U.S.-backed campaign against ISIL, took near-complete control of Hasaka city on Tuesday.

The group already controls chunks of northern Syria where Kurdish groups have established de facto autonomy since the start of the Syria war - a development that has alarmed Turkey.

**■ Turkish forces advance in Syria**

The development follows as Tur-

key's Anadolu news agency reported that the Turkish-backed Syria militants captured the village of Keklijah, five kilometers (three miles) west of Jarablus and three kilometers (two miles) from the border.

The so-called Free Syrian Army militants further took the village of Keklice, the report added.

Meanwhile, the Dogan news agency cited military sources as saying that Turkey-backed Syrian militants had seized control of four villages in northern Syria.

A total of 46 ISIL elements have so far been killed in the Jarablus operation so far, the agency added.

According to Turkish media reports, there were now some 1,500 pro-Ankara Syria militants in Jarablus.

**■ Kurds: Turkey entering a 'quagmire' in Syria**

Meantime, PYD head Saleh Muslim wrote in a tweet on Wednesday that Turkey was entering a "quagmire" in Syria and faced defeat there like ISIL.

Redur Xelil, a spokesman for the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/ Yekîneyên Parastina Gel), a militia affiliated to the PYD, also said the intervention was a "blatant aggression in Syrian internal affairs."

**■ U.S. provides air cover for Turkey's operation against Daesh**

However, the United States said it will provide air cover for what Turkey calls operation against ISIL in Syria, according to Reuters.

A senior U.S. official announced the decision on Wednesday, adding that Washington was "in synch" with its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) partners on the plan.

The U.S. official made the remarks in a briefing to reporters who were traveling on Vice President Joe Biden's plane en route to Turkey.

Biden arrived in Turkey on Wednesday to hold talks with the country's officials. His travel is the highest-ranking visit by a Western official since Turkey's July 15 failed coup.

Syria has been the scene of a foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. Turkey is said to be among the main supporters of the militant groups active in Syria, with reports saying that Ankara actively trains and arms the Takfiri elements there and facilitates their safe passage into the violence-racked state.

**JUMP**

## "Washington unlikely to extradite Fethullah Gulen to Turkey"

➔ The U.S. does not want to see Turkey leave NATO, but would be unable to stop it. Russia, of course, would be quite happy to see any country withdraw from NATO. Still, a Turkey led by Erdogan that is outside of NATO may not pursue a quiet foreign policy, but attempt to assert itself as a regional great power instead. Turkey's neighbors (including Iran) may find Ankara much more difficult to deal with if its policies are not constrained by being a member of NATO.

**■ After the coup, President Erdogan announced it would reconsider its foreign policy. Do you believe that Turkey's foreign policy will change?**

A: President Erdogan seemed to be in the process of changing Turkish foreign policy before the coup attempt anyway, but he has accelerated this change since then. The main outlines of this policy seem to be a move away from America and Europe and toward Russia and, to a certain extent, toward Iran. Although Erdogan is still calling for the departure of Bashar Assad from Damascus, he is clearly de-emphasizing this goal and prioritizing the weakening of the Syrian Kurds instead. Still, a Turkish "move toward Russia" does not mean an alliance with Russia—with which Turkey has long had many differences, including over the Armenia-Azerbaijan dispute. These differences will not disappear.

**■ Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said Russia can, if necessary, the use of Incirlik base. Will these statements damage Turkey's relations with NATO?**

A: Such statements will indeed damage Turkey's relations with NATO. I think that it would be very difficult for NATO and Russian forces to share the same air base. This statement may be more intended to motivate America and Europe to adopt policies that please Ankara rather than to signal an actual invitation to Russia. Even if there is a wider breakdown in Turkey's relations with the West and U.S. forces end up leaving Incirlik, it is not clear that Turkey would really want forces from Russia to replace them.

**■ Relations between Tehran and Turkey have improved since the July coup. How do you think this will influence the Syrian crisis?**

A: Turkish-Iranian relations have generally been good, except with regard to Syria. To the extent that Erdogan is no longer actively seeking the departure of Assad from Syria, the prospects for Iranian-Turkish cooperation will increase. They appear to have common interests with regard to the Kurds, as well. And to the extent that Erdogan now realizes that Sunni jihadists such as ISIS are actually a threat to Turkey, this may provide an additional common interest for Turkey to cooperate with Iran as well as Russia on. Yet even if Turkish policy on Syria is moving closer to Iran's and Russia's, it is not clear that this will help resolve the Syrian crisis. There are, after all, real differences between the Assad regime and its domestic opponents. Further, these opponents seem quite likely to continue fighting—especially since there are other countries that continue to support them.

## NYPD's Muslim surveillance violated regulations as recently as 2015: report

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has violated several regulations in its surveillance of predominantly Muslim communities as recently as 2015, a report released on Thursday found.

The 67-page report was completed by the NYPD's inspector general, and examined the police department's intelligence unit.

The report found that, when examining political groups, investigators consistently failed to get proper authorization or timely extensions for investigations or the use of informants and undercover cops.

"This investigation demonstrates a failure by NYPD to follow rules governing the timing and authorizations of surveillance of political activity," said Mark G Peters, commissioner of the department of investigations (DOI), a city-wide watchdog. NYPD's inspector general office is a part of the DOI and was only created two years ago following a law passed in the city council.

NYPD's guidelines for investigating are dictated by the Handschu agreement, established 32 years ago following a class-action lawsuit filed by several political organizations that accused the NYPD of unconstitutional surveillance.

"The Guidelines were designed to establish certain baseline controls on NYPD's considerable investigative power," the report explained.

The office of the inspector general examined investigations that were closed between 2011 and 2015, some of which started as early as 2004.



The number of reports the inspector general examined was redacted but in a footnote on the first page, the authors note that more than 95% of the individuals under investigation were Muslim and/or engaged in activity associated with Islam.

The findings troubled many activists in New York's Muslim community due to the NYPD's tumultuous history with Muslim American New Yorkers. In 2011, the department was revealed to have unconstitutionally infiltrated Muslim student groups, mosques, religious bookstores, hookah bars and other predominantly Muslim areas to spy on people.

The demographics unit, which was responsible for the program, was dismantled in 2014.

The original surveillance program sparked a series of lawsuits, one of which concluded earlier this year. In the settlement of the case of Raza v The City of New

York - which is still subject to court approval - the NYPD agreed to several reforms including: requiring facts before an investigations is launched, limiting the use of informants and undercover, and prohibiting investigations in which race, religion or ethnicity is a substantial motivating factor.

Naz Ahmed, a staff attorney for Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility (Clear) Project, which represented the plaintiffs in the case, welcomed the inspector general's findings.

The use of informants and undercover police, known as human sources, came under scrutiny in the report. Of the requests for human sources reviewed, none contained any details about the anticipated role of that source. It also criticized the use of "boilerplate" language when providing reasons for extending the use of informants.

Preliminary inquiries, which allow the police to gather information even when no law has been broken, were allowed to continue indefinitely, and 100% of the extensions reviewed by the office of the inspector general contained no reason for the extension.

The report found the NYPD's intelligence unit would also routinely continue investigations even after legal authority had expired, which amounted to months of time over the course of investigations.

The NYPD did not have any qualms with the findings of the report.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Blasts hit southern Thailand's Pattani, killing one

One person has been killed and 30 others injured after two bombs exploded in a busy nightlife district in Thailand's troubled southern province of Pattani.

The first bomb targeted a pub and karaoke bar late on Tuesday causing no casualties, before a second blast struck the same area 20 minutes later in an apparent "double - tap attack", the Bangkok Post newspaper said.

Al Jazeera's Scott Heidler, reporting from Bangkok, said the second attack killed a woman and injured those who were responding to the first blast.

Most embassies warned nationals against all travel to Pattani - an area bordering Malaysia - that Thailand annexed over a century ago.

A series of bombings across central and southern Thailand on August 11 and 12 left four people dead and more than 30 injured.

No group has claimed responsibility

for the attacks but some security experts have blamed southern secessionist groups.

In remarks after the blasts in Pattani, Prawit Wongsuwan, Thailand's deputy military leader, dismissed any link between the August 11-12 bombings and the unrest in the south.

Earlier on Tuesday, two Chinese nationals went on trial for their alleged roles in a deadly bombing in a Hindu shrine in Bangkok one year ago.

Since 2004, more than 6,200 have been killed and 11,000 injured as armed groups fight for the creation of an independent state combining Thailand's three southern Muslim-majority provinces: Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.

The three provinces soundly rejected a referendum earlier this month on a new military-backed constitution, which passed convincingly in most of the rest of Thailand. (Source: agencies)

## Ukraine: Moscow failed to bring Kiev to its knees

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has struck a defiant tone towards Russia, accusing his country's larger neighbor of vain attempts at invasion as Ukraine celebrated 25 years of independence.

"Looking back over more than two years of war, it is possible to confidently say that the enemy has not been able to bring Ukraine to its knees," Poroshenko said at a war memorial in Kiev on Wednesday.

"For this, 2,504 of our soldiers have died," he continued.

The celebration, which featured a military parade in Kiev, came amid escalating tensions with Russia as Moscow boosts its military presence near the countries' shared border.

Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union until 1991 and, as such, under Moscow's de facto control.

On August 24, 1991, Ukraine's par-

liament adopted its Declaration of Independence, establishing the republic as separate from the disintegrating Soviet Union.

Efforts in recent years to tilt Ukraine towards the West have prompted divisions in the country, which Ukraine and most of the West have blamed on Russia.

Ukraine has fought against pro-Russian separatists backed by Moscow since early 2014, when Kiev deposed its pro-Russian president amid mass protests calling for closer ties with the West.

More than 9,500 people have died and two million forced from their homes in the fighting in two major industrial regions in the east.

Kiev also lost its strategic Black Sea peninsula of Crimea when it was seized by Russian soldiers on Putin's orders and annexed in March 2014. (Source: agencies)

## Britain: Muslims ordered off plane after ISIL accusation

Three British Muslim siblings were left traumatized after being escorted off a plane in London and interrogated on the tarmac as armed police kept watch, after fellow passengers accused them of being members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.



Sakina Dharas, 24, her sister Maryam, 19, and their brother Ali, 21, were on board EasyJet flight EZY3249 from London's Stansted Airport to the Italian city of Naples on August 17.

Sakina told Al Jazeera on Tuesday that as the plane was about to take off, a crew member ordered the siblings off the aircraft and escorted them down the staircase to the tarmac, where they were met by armed police and an MI5 agent who questioned them for one hour.

Earlier, two passengers - also travelling to Naples - had told authorities that the siblings had been looking at a mobile phone screen that showed either Arabic text or the words "praise be to Allah", Sakina said.

During their one-hour interrogation on the tarmac, Sakina said she was asked to explain - page by page - the details of various entry stamps on her passport. She also showed the MI5 agent recent WhatsApp messages. The siblings provided answers relating to their personal lives and were questioned on their home addresses, workplaces, social media history and parents' professions.

Sakina said the agent told them that he had already performed checks on the family and was simply verifying the information, before warning her that he would be "doing more research on you, and if anything comes back, I'll be here waiting on your return".

The siblings, who are from northwest London were then allowed back on the plane, which had been delayed.

EasyJet confirmed the incident to Al Jazeera.

Sakina said she and her siblings were victims of "racial profiling". The incident comes at a time of rising Islamophobia in Britain.

Sakina said before the plane experience, that she had received "the odd racist remark about my headscarf".

Muslims around the world are increasingly subject to discrimination as Islam is conflated with "terrorism". Rights groups said that while security was important, efforts should be made to protect innocent people. (Source: Al Jazeera News)

FOOTBALL

**Hillsborough detectives release images of 19 potential witnesses**

Police leading criminal investigation into stadium disaster appeal for people seen in new CCTV footage to come forward

Detectives leading a criminal investigation into the Hillsborough disaster have appealed for 19 people seen in CCTV footage at the stadium to come forward.

New images showing the potential witnesses at the Leppings Lane end of the football ground in Sheffield have been released by Operation Resolve as part of its inquiry into the disaster and the events that led to the deaths of 96 Liverpool fans.

Operation Resolve is one of two criminal investigations launched after the publication of the Hillsborough Independent Panel's report in 2012.

The investigating team has released footage and still images of 19 people they want to speak to who can be seen in the area of gate C when it was opened at 2.52pm on 15 April 1989.

The footage includes computer-generated images of the Leppings Lane end of Hillsborough stadium as it would have looked 27 years ago, and specialists have used recognition techniques to find different images of some of the potential witnesses.

DCS Neil Malkin, the senior investigating officer, said he hoped the people identified in the footage would be able to help.

Speaking outside Hillsborough, he said: "The appeal today is for 19 individuals seen outside gate C at 2.52pm on the 15 April 1989.

"These people were in close proximity to the gate at the time that it opened and I would like to hear from these people because they might be able to provide me with information that could assist me in my inquiry."

Malkin said the 19 people were in the "right place at the right time" and may be able to identify others.

He said: "They might know people they were with or may be able to shed some light on others that were present at the time.

"It's important because we need to understand the full facts around the opening of gate C at 2.52.

"It's a significant piece of work that I am undertaking at the moment and these people would be helpful to add value to what I have already undertaken."

He added: "It's their experience. Who they were with, their entry and how they came to be at gate C at that time and really their experience of entering through gate C and what they did, what they saw, what they heard."

The detective said anyone who contacts the investigating team will be treated with sensitivity.

He said: "We will try and understand their concerns. It's very difficult after 27 years to understand the difficulties people face. Some may face not looking at images or may not want to recount their experience but nevertheless we've got people who can help to overcome that."

In April, an inquest jury concluded the 96 victims were unlawfully killed and that blunders by South Yorkshire police "caused or contributed to" the disaster.

Malkin said Operation Resolve, which has already interviewed more than 1,200 people who entered the stadium through gate C when it opened, was on target to submit full files of evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service by the turn of the year.

(Source: Guardian)

**Pique expects Barcelona to benefit from Neymar's Olympic glow**

Neymar should return to Spain with renewed enthusiasm after leading Brazil to their first soccer gold medal at an Olympic Games, Barcelona defender Gerard Pique said.

Neymar, who has scored 85 goals in 141 games in his three seasons at Barcelona, was given permission to stay in Brazil until after international games early next month.

"I think it's a good decision to grant him (Neymar) that," Pique told El Mundo Deportivo. "He has earned it."

"I'm sure he is very happy and will come with a lot of enthusiasm to Barcelona."

Neymar scored the winning penalty in a shootout against Germany in Saturday's gold medal game at the Maracana stadium in Rio and then stepped down as Brazil captain, a position he had held since September 2014.

"It has been a difficult tournament for him," Pique said. "To play at home means you have the pressure to win but Ney (Neymar) is accustomed to that. He has proved why he is one of the best in the world by scoring that penalty in the final." Neymar has been away since May 23 after helping his club to win a La Liga and King's Cup double last season.

He is set to play for Brazil in 2018 World Cup qualifiers after being named in new coach Tite's squad.

Brazil take on Ecuador in Quito on Sept. 1 and five days later host Colombia in Manaus with the national team currently sixth in their South American group, outside the qualifying positions.

Barcelona decided against recalling Neymar for this Sunday's La Liga game at Athletic Bilbao to cut down on his flights. He is expected to be available for his club in their next game at home to Alaves in La Liga on September 10.

Barcelona kicked off the league season by hammering Real Betis 6-2 last Saturday.

(Source: Reuters)



**Ronaldo on a season to cherish**

Cristiano Ronaldo reflects on a remarkable 12 months for club and country – "possibly the best of my career" – and explains why Zinedine Zidane and Pepe deserve special praise.

**■ How does last season rate in the context of your career?**

In terms of trophies it was possibly the best of my career. After winning the Champions League, winning the European Championship with my country capped an extraordinary year. The same goes both collectively and individually, because I was top scorer in the Champions League and had a good European Championship. It really was a top-drawer, excellent season for me.

**■ Looking back at last term's UEFA Champions League. What kind of emotions come to mind when you think about the final?**

It was an amazing experience. Once again [as in 2014] against Atlético Madrid, who are an excellent side and also deserved to win the Champions League ... but Real Madrid were better. We had a bit of luck in the shoot-out because penalties are always a lottery. It was the pinnacle of a difficult season for Real Madrid in which we were ultimately able to win the biggest trophy in club football.

**■ What impact did Zinedine Zidane have on the squad after his appointment in January?**

Zidane was key. He's a great professional, a great person and, in my opinion, his biggest quality is his ability to give his players a sense of calm. That's what we needed and after he arrived the team went from 0 to 100. We were 12 points behind Barcelona and we ended up just one point adrift. In the Champions League we did what we had to do – and went on to win it. What more could you ask? Zidane deserves a lot of credit.



**■ Then there was the EURO, when Portugal made history by winning the competition in what was an epic final. What was that experience like?**

Before the EURO we expected Portugal to have a good European Championship, get through the group stage, get through the quarter-finals and from there we saw everything as a bonus. To be honest I didn't think Portugal could win the EURO. But match by match I started believing it was possible. In the end we deserved it, we played as a team and our players are to be congratulated.

**■ And what about your [club and international] team-mate Pepe, whom you've known for a long time. What qualities does he have and what does he bring to the dressing room?**

I'm happy you asked me this question so that I can say that, in my book, Pepe was extraordinary this year. It was possibly his best season. He was undoubtedly Portugal's best player and one of Real Madrid's best players in the Champions League. I'm delighted he was selected in the Team of the Tournament at the

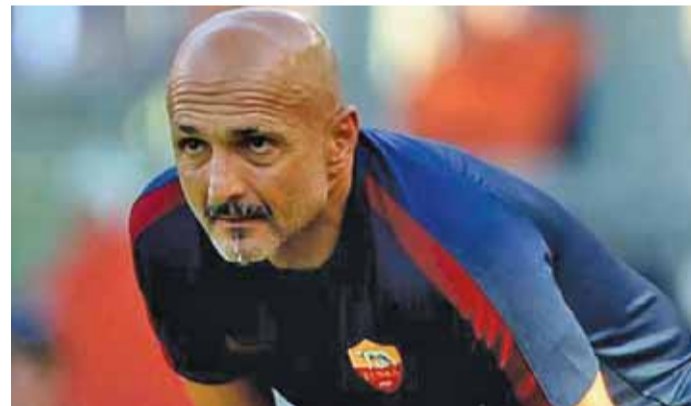
EURO – in my opinion Pepe was the best player at the EURO.

**■ This will be your 14th season in the UEFA Champions League. What does this competition mean to you?**

It's an honour to play in the Champions League, the most important competition. And being the leading scorer in the competition's history makes it even more special for me. This tournament is special for me, it's special for Real Madrid, so we will try to win it again this season.

(Source: UEFA)

**Spalletti: Roma have no discipline**



The Italian coach urged his side to remain calm after they received two red cards against Porto and missed out on the chance of playing in the Champions League

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti was at a loss to explain his side's lack of discipline as they crashed out of the Champions League on Tuesday.

After drawing 1-1 away to Porto, Roma crashed to a 3-0 defeat at home to suffer a 4-1 aggregate loss against the Portuguese outfit in their play-off.

Roma finished Tuesday's contest with nine men after Daniele De Rossi and Emerson were shown straight red cards, adding to Thomas Vermaelen's sending off in the first leg.

Spalletti was disappointed that his side could not remain calm but conceded there was "no warning" for that type of behaviour from his players.

"What happened is we lost a very important match that will change the season going forward and we are going to have to deal with that," the 57-year-old told Mediaset Premium.

"We didn't control the ball well, which was what I had been planning and why I made certain choices. We didn't manage it, just as we were re-organising ourselves after the goal, we went down to 10 and it all became more difficult.

"The red cards were naive, because

finishing the games with 11 men was our characteristic last season. We never gave the referee the chance to send us off. Now it's happening a lot and I can't understand why, as we could've been a lot calmer.

"We lost the ball too often with silly errors, which were unforced, and that made Porto feel more comfortable to play their game. We got irritated, as we were unable to move the ball around well, then after the goal and red card it all fell apart.

"It's not possible in two legs of a play-off to be down to 10 men after 40 minutes."

He added: "We can list the 15-16 games from last season where we didn't get any red cards. This is new to me. And the first to get red cards were experienced players with quality, as Vermaelen was the first to go and he had been with us for three days.

"It's a new thing for me, but the team until this moment had never interpreted the game this way. We have our own rules and commandments, which includes no tolerance for those who leave their teammates down to 10 men.

"We are accustomed to behaving very differently. The last week represented a strange and different epilogue. We had no warning this was going to happen, so we couldn't prevent it."

(Source: Goal)

**Antoine Griezmann: Maybe I deserve to beat Ronaldo, Bale to UEFA award**



Atletico Madrid and France striker Antoine Griezmann has said he believes he should win the Best Player in Europe award ahead of Real Madrid's Gareth Bale and Cristiano Ronaldo.

Griezmann, 25, had an outstanding season for Atletico, scoring 22 league goals and helping them reach the Champions League final, before going on to win the Golden Boot as France finished runners-up at Euro 2016.

He has been nominated as a finalist for the award alongside Bale and Ronaldo and said he felt he would be a deserving winner.

"I was very happy and very proud [to be nominated]," he told World Soccer.

"It means that I'm on the right track to be among the best. I have to keep going that way, keep working hard and giving joy to people when I play.

"Without being big-headed, I think I deserve it because I had a great season with my club and with the national team. Maybe I deserve to win the award.

"I think all of the games we [Atletico] won, but especially the Champions League quarterfinal and semifinal.

"And then the whole of the Euros, because it took place in France -- it was wonderful, and unfortunately for us we will never experience that again."

Ronaldo said he saw it as "a privilege" to be nominated for the award

after a stunning season in which he lifted the Champions League trophy and then captained Portugal to glory at Euro 2016.

"I think there have been four editions of the prize and I've been nominated for three, if I remember correctly, so it's an honour," he added.

"In terms of trophies, it was possibly the best year of my career. After winning the Champions League, winning the European Championship with my country capped an extraordinary year for me."

Like Griezmann, Welshman Bale played a starring role in helping his country reach the Euro 2016 semifinals.

He told World Soccer: "It is a big honour to be a finalist. You cannot win these kinds of awards by yourself, but by playing for the team.

I have to give a big thanks to all my teammates at international level and club level."

Bale said winning the Champions League, in which his side beat Griezmann's Atletico on penalties, "was the biggest thing for me last season."

He added: "If individual awards come my way then obviously it's very nice, but it's not the top of my list. Obviously I want to win trophies with my team, with my country and when you do that you get up for awards like this."

(Source: ESPN)

**Manchester City to install glass tunnel as part of Etihad Stadium renovation**

Manchester City fans will be able to watch their players prepare for games next season when a new glass tunnel is installed at the Etihad Stadium, sources have told ESPN FC.

The club is set to revamp the ground, which was built for the Commonwealth Games in 2002, moving the changing rooms to the first level of the main Colin Bell Stand.

And as part of the renovations, a new executive lounge will give a view of the City and away team players as they emerge from their dressing rooms before descending a flight of stairs to the pitch in full view.

Work has already begun on the construction, which is set to be open in time for next season.

The tunnel will be the first of its kind in the Premier League although there is a transparent entrance at the AT&T Stadium in the United States -- home to the NFL's Dallas Cowboys.

City fans will get the chance to grab a view of the players, which is normally only available to the TV cameras.

And it could be priceless if the Etihad gets its own tunnel bust-up such as the infamous 'Battle of the Buffet' at Old Trafford in 2004 when Arsenal and Manchester United players allegedly threw food at each other follow-

ing an ill-tempered match.

At the end of last season there was an incident at the Etihad when Pablo Zabaleta and West Brom's James McClean clashed in the tunnel after the Republic of Ireland winger claimed he should have had a penalty.

As part of the renovations, supporters can dine in the new executive lounge before moving to padded seats close to Pep Guardiola's dug-out.

The Etihad is constantly being upgraded and last season the club added a 6,000-capacity third tier to the South Stand taking the overall capacity to 55,000.

(Source: Soccernet)

# Iran's Arzpeyma chosen to officiate at FIFA Futsal World Cup

**SPORTS** Iranian referee Vahid Arzpeyma has been chosen to officiate at next month's FIFA Futsal World Cup in Colombia.

Asian Football Confederation Member Associations will provide eight of the 40 referees at the competition, after the full list of officials was revealed overnight.

Futsal's elite global tournament, which begins on September 10, will feature whistleblowers from across the Asian continent, with representatives from East, West and Central Asia, as well as the ASEAN region set to take charge of matches.

Asia's contribution of eight referees is bettered only by UEFA, who will provide ten, and CONMEBOL, who will contribute nine.

All eight AFC referees selected for World Cup duty were present at the 2016 AFC Futsal Championship, including Japan's Tomohiro Kozaki, Australia's Chris Colley and Kyrgyzstan's Nurdin Bukuev - who took charge of the final and two semi-finals, respectively.

Bukuev is the only AFC referee on this year's list with FIFA Futsal World Cup experience, having taken charge of matches in 2008 and 2012.

All matches at the 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup will be refereed by four-man teams comprising a main referee, a second referee and two assistants.

Asia's FIFA Futsal World Cup Referees

Vahid Arzpeyma Mohammreh (IRN)

Khamis Hassan Al Shamsi (UAE)

Nurdin Bukuev (KGZ)

Chris Colley (AUS)

Tomohiro Kozaki (JPN)

Liu Jianqiao (CHN)

Rey Ritaga Martinez (PHI)

Truong Quoc Dung (VIE)



## Iran 7-a-side football team awarded Rio 2016 Paralympics berth



The Iranian men's national 7-a-side football team will be participating at the forthcoming 2016 Summer Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, after a ban on Russian athletes competing in the prestigious sports event was held, giving the Persians a belated berth.

"Following the exclusion of Russia's 7-a-side football team from the Rio Paralympic games, Iran substituted the [European] side," Aminollah Mani, the head of the Football 7-a-side Association at the Islamic Republic of Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled, said on Wednesday.

He added, "The two criteria of world ranking and position in the respective continent were taken into consideration as authorities found a replacement for Russia. The Iranian team is named Asia's best. Additionally, it delivered an outstanding performance at the 2016 International Federation of CP Football (IFCPF) World Championships Qualification Tournament in Denmark, and was crowned champion."

"We have been in contact with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) over the past few months. Our players, who initially underwent an emotional breakdown after failing to take part in World Championships and secure a Paralympic spot due to the British officials' non-cooperation, have now qualified for the Paralympics," Mani noted.

"Our national players are currently training and preparing themselves. They have become more motivated following the news of Paralympics quota reception. We hope to get properly prepared for the Paralympic games in Rio," the Iranian sports official pointed out.

The 7-a-side football is a form of association football for athletes with cerebral palsy and other neurological disorders, namely stroke and traumatic brain injury. Matches consist of two 30-minute halves, with a 15-minute interval, and are played with modified FIFA rules.

On Tuesday, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) dismissed an appeal filed by the Russian Paralympic Committee, excluding Russian athletes from Rio Paralympics competitions over a vast doping program.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev denounced the doping charges, stating that the Paralympic ban constituted a "cynical" attempt by adversaries to eliminate strong and competent contestants from the Paralympics.

(Source: PressTV)

## Iran reaches final at the Continental Beach Soccer Tournament



**SPORTS** Iran defeated Japan 5-1 at the 2016 Continental Beach Soccer Tournament final on Wednesday to reach the final.

Iran will take on Oman in the final on Thursday. Oman defeated Vietnam 7-3 in the semifinals. Japan will meet Vietnam in the third place match.

The three-day tournament is being held in Ordos, China.

The top eight Asian teams namely, Iran, China, Bahrain, Japan, Vietnam, Oman, Thailand and Lebanon are participating in the event. The Iranian team takes part in the competition as part of its preparation for the 2017 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup qualification.

## Iran football team beats B Italia representative



Iranian national football team defeated B Italia representative 4-0 in a friendly match held on Tuesday.

Iran had already earned a 3-0 victory over newly Serie B promoted side Spal on Friday.

The friendly matches were part of preparation for round three of the 2018

World Cup Qualifiers in Coverciano, Italy.

Iran's first game at this stage will take place on September 1st against Qatar in Tehran.

Iran has been drawn in Group A along with Qatar, South Korea, Uzbekistan, China and Syria.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Iranian futsal players defeat Japan 4-2 in Thailand tourney

The Iranian men's national futsal team has defeated Japan at a four-nation tournament in Thailand, which serves as a warm-up tournament for the 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup in Colombia later this month.

On Tuesday evening, the Iranian squad registered a fine win edging past the Japanese team 4-2 in its last match at the sixth-day-long sports event in the Thai capital city of Bangkok, and finished in the third place.

The four-nation tournament in Thailand started on August 18, and wrapped up on August 23.

The 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup will be the 8th edition of the FIFA Futsal World Cup. The tournament will be held



in Colombia between September 10 and October 1.

Iran has been drawn alongside Azerbaijan, Morocco and Spain in Group F of the forthcoming sports event.

The Colombian hosts, Panama, Portugal and Uzbekistan form Group A, while Cuba, Egypt, Russia and Thailand form Group B.

Guatemala, Italy, Paraguay and Vietnam are put in Group C. Group D consists of Australia, Brazil, Mozambique and Ukraine.

Argentina, Costa Rica, Kazakhstan and the Solomon Islands shape Group E.

(Source: PressTV)

## Three Chinese 2008 Olympic champions test positive

Three Chinese Olympic champions in women's weightlifting from the 2008 Beijing Games have failed doping tests conducted eight years later, the sport's governing body (IWF) said on Wednesday.

The trio were among 15 weightlifters who tested positive for a variety of banned

substances after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) re-tested samples using methods which were more advanced than the ones available at the time.

The 15 have all been provisionally suspended, the Budapest-based IWF said. The gold medalists were Chen Xiex-

ia, who won the 48kg category, Liu Chunghong (69) and Cao Lei (75).

Chen lifted 13kg more, Cao 16kg more, and Liu 31kg more than their closest rival -- in a sport where there is often just a single kilogram between gold and silver.

Eleven weightlifters from the Beijing Games had already been suspended in July after testing positive.

One medal, the silver won by Turkey's Sibel Ozkan in the 48kg, has already been stripped and will be reallocated.

(Source: Reuters)

## OLYMPIC Olympic flag arrives in Tokyo, governor calls for unity

Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike brought the Olympic flag to Japan from Brazil on Wednesday and called for all parties to work together to host a successful Summer Games in 2020.

Koike, who was elected last month after two predecessors stepped down over scandals that clouded the city's Games preparations, was given the flag at the Rio Games closing ceremony on Sunday.

"Let's work together with everyone to hold a great Olympics and Paralympics as the Olympic flag, which just arrived, is a symbol of," she told reporters after waving the flag upon stepping off the flight at Haneda airport.

The Tokyo Games have been hit by series of issues including the scrapping of plans for the main stadium, which lead to delays in construction, and plagiarism allegations which forced organizers to ditch the original logo for the Games.

Koike was joined on the flight by Japanese athletes who took part in the Rio de Janeiro Games, where Japan won 12 gold medals - their best tally since 2004 - and a record 41 overall.

Keisuke Ushiro, who took part in the decathlon in Brazil, followed Koike off the plane waving a Japanese Olympic Committee flag.

(Source: Reuters)



## Manchester United will be Schweinsteiger's last European club

Manchester United midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger says he will not play for another club in Europe despite being unable to seal a place in the squad under new manager Jose Mourinho.

Schweinsteiger, who is yet to make a first team appearance for United this season, has been made to train with the club's reserves and would be sold after Mourinho signed French midfielder Paul Pogba from Juventus, according to media reports.

"MUFC will be my last club in Europe. I respect other clubs, but Manchester United was the only one which could make me leave Bayern Munich," Schweinsteiger said on Twitter.

Since moving to Old Trafford from Bayern Munich last year, the German, who announced his retirement from international football last month, was limited to 18 league appearances in his first season due to regular injuries and poor form.

However, the 32-year-old insisted he was ready to compete when called upon.

"I will be ready, if the team needs me. This is all I can say about the current situation. I want to thank the fans for the amazing support over the recent weeks," he added.

Schweinsteiger and Germany forward Lukas Podolski, who also ended his international career earlier this month, will be honoured with a farewell match against Finland in Moenchengladbach on Aug. 31.

Schweinsteiger played 500 matches for Bayern Munich, winning eight Bundesliga titles and the 2013 Champions League. He was also Germany's vice-captain when they edged Argentina in extra-time to win the 2014 World Cup.

(Source: Reuters)

## Bale targets Champions League final in Cardiff with Real Madrid

Real Madrid winger Gareth Bale said on Wednesday he has an extra incentive to reach a third Champions League final in four years because the title game will be played in his hometown of Cardiff.

"This is the reason I came to Madrid - to play in the Champions League, to win the Champions League," the 27-year-old Bale said in an interview with UEFA.com.

"To have the Champions League final in my home town is an even bigger motivation," he said.

The Wales international helped Real beat Atletico Madrid on penalties to march to their 11th European title and his second with the club in the 2015-16 campaign before playing for his country at Euro 2016.

"Two in three years is an amazing achievement," he said. "Now we want to look to the next one."

Injuries limited Bale to 30 appearances in all competitions for Real last season but the former Tottenham star still scored 19 goals and provided 10 assists.

Bale is on a 10-man shortlist for UEFA's Best Player in Europe award. The winner will be announced on Thursday in Monaco during the 2016-17 Champions League draw.

"It was an incredible season, especially topping it off by winning the Champions League and then going on to the Euro and doing an amazing job with Wales," he said. "They were two great moments in my career, in my life."

Wales made it to the semi-finals before falling to eventual champions Portugal in July.

Bale has had a strong start in his fourth season with Real, scoring twice in his team's 3-0 win at Real Sociedad in their La Liga opener on Sunday.

(Source: Reuters)





### Poem of the day

O Thou! to please whose love and wrath as well,  
Allah created heaven and likewise hell;  
Thou hast thy court in heaven, and I have naught,  
Why not admit me in thy courts to dwell?

Khayyam

### Prayer Times

Noon:13:06 Evening: 20:00 Dawn: 5:03 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:32 (tomorrow)

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## NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian filmmaker Yusef Kargar on Italian festival jury

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Yusef Kargar has been selected for the jury of the third edition of the Festival Internazionale del Cinema Povero, which will be held in the Italian city of Ispra from September 23 to 25.

Some other members of the panel are Giancarlo Samaritani and Giancarlo Buzzi from Italy, Fernando Dos Santos from Portugal and Anna Maria Vincis from Switzerland.

Yusef Kargar is the director of acclaimed short film "Elegy", which has been honored in several Iranian and international film festivals.



"Oblivion Season" opens Italian festival

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — Iranian director Abbas Rafei's acclaimed movie "Oblivion Season" will be the opening movie of the Salento International Film Festival, which will be held in Tricase, Italy from September 2 to 10.

Rafei is scheduled to attend the screening, which will be followed by a review session.

"Oblivion Season" tells the story of Fariba, an ex-prostitute who starts a new life by marrying her lover, but leaving the shadow of her dark past turns out not to be as easy as it had seemed beforehand.

The Voice of Science" won the award for best film at the Phoenix Film Festival Melbourne, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

## NEWS

### Violinist Stirling says new album "Brave Enough" therapeutic

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — American violinist Lindsey Stirling deals with love and loss in new album "Brave Enough", with overcoming adversity the backdrop for her latest work following a year that included her best friend's death and a cancer diagnosis for her father.

The title track was the first the 29-year-old wrote after her friend Jason Gaviati died in 2015. She also penned "Gavi's Song" to honor their friendship.

"I couldn't write about these things until I dealt with them. My music at first was just really sad and depressing as I started to go back and write again and I was like, this is not helping me at all to write in this way," she told Reuters.

"And so I started dealing with the emotions, I went home, I spent time with my family, I did some therapy and then it became a very therapeutic experience to write about these emotions."

Stirling gained fame after making a name for herself through social media. Her YouTube channel has over 8 million subscribers and more than 1 billion views. The 14-track "Brave Enough" is her third studio album.

### Jennifer Lawrence ranked world's highest paid-actress for second year

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — "Hunger Games" star Jennifer Lawrence on Tuesday topped a Forbes magazine list of the world's highest-paid actress for the second straight year, earning some \$46 million, followed by Melissa McCarthy.

Lawrence, 26, took the top spot largely through a slice of the profits from the final movie in the "Hunger Games" franchise, as well as a big upfront fee for her forthcoming space adventure movie "Passengers", Forbes said.

Yet Lawrence's estimated payday was likely well below that for Hollywood's leading men, Forbes said, despite the actress sparking a debate about the gender pay gap last year. She declared she was "finished being adorable" when it came to negotiating better deals for herself.

Lawrence's 2016 earnings dropped 11.5 percent from her 2015 total of \$52 million. Forbes will release its list of the world's highest-paid actors on Thursday. Last year Robert Downey Jr. topped the list with an estimated \$80 million.

Neither however came close to pop star Taylor Swift, who was named the top earning celebrity of 2016 earlier this year, pulling in an estimated \$170 million from record sales and her world tour.

McCarthy took home \$33 million in earnings, up \$10 million from 2015 in part from her payday for the controversial female reboot of "Ghostbusters."

It was the biggest annual paycheck to date for the star of television comedy "Mike and Molly". McCarthy, 45, also launched a clothing line for sizes 4 to 28 after becoming frustrated at the outfits available for larger women.

Scarlett Johansson of "Captain America: Civil War" was third at \$25 million, down nearly 30 percent from 2015.

# Javad Zolfaqari's puppets on show at Tehran's City Theater Complex

**ART TEHRAN** — An exhibition of puppets by veteran puppet show director Javad Zolfaqari (1952-2011) opened in Tehran's City Theater Complex on Tuesday on the sidelines of the ongoing 16th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival.

The opening ceremony was attended by secretary of the festival Marzieh Borumand, Zolfaqari's widow, Mansureh Azari, puppeteer Donya Fannizadeh and actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya.

In her brief speech, Borumand said that she got to know Zolfaqari in the world of the puppets, which has left her with many good memories.

"These puppets are a great heritage that we possess," she added.

"When I watch these puppets, I remember how much time he spent on making them. Unfortunately, he did not survive to see the end of the performances of his puppet show "Samak Ayyar," his widow said.

Motamed-Arya said that she considers herself a member of the puppet family and lives with the memories, "Javad Zolfaqari forced us to have an ideology that imposed love upon us in order for us to learn to love one another," she remarked.

"Samak Ayyar", "Ali Baba and 40 Thieves of Baghdad", "Siavash" and "Farangis" from his brilliant puppet shows are on display during the festival running until August 28.



An art lover visits an exhibition of puppets by created veteran director Javad Zolfaqari at Tehran's City Theater Complex on August 23, 2016. (Honaronline/Farzan Qasemi)

### Expensive music video on 1988 U.S. attack on Iranian airliner premieres

**ART TEHRAN** — An expensive music video entitled "We Resist to Last Drop of Blood", on the bitter story of the USS Vincennes attack on an Iranian airliner on July 3, 1988, premiered in Tehran early this week.

The 7-minute music video performed by an unknown pop music singer named Hossein was produced by the Art Bureau's Sureh Film Club with a budget

of 12 billion rials (over \$385,000), some Persian news websites have announced.

This production is a sequel to "We Resist", a music video made by a group of young artists at Sureh Film Club in 2014, Art Bureau Director Mohsen Momeni-Sharif said during a ceremony held by the center to premiere "We Resist to Last Drop of Blood".

The decision to produce the sequel

was made following Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayyatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's praise for the first episode, he added.

Iran Air Flight 655 (IR655) was shot down by the USS Vincennes on the Bandar Abbas-Dubai route, resulting in the loss of the lives of 290 innocent civilians from six nations including 66 children.



A poster for "We Resist to Last Drop of Blood"

### PICTURE OF THE DAY

© Mehr/Mohammad Mohsenifar



One festival-goer poses with secretary of the 16th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Marzieh Borumand (R) for a selfie during the opening ceremony of the event in Tehran on August 22, 2016.

### Ammar International Popular Film Festival opens in Tehran

**ART TEHRAN** — The Third Ammar International Popular Film Festival (AIPFF) opened in Tehran on Wednesday.

This year's festival, which will run until August 26, is focusing on anti-coup films.

"State of Siege" and "Missing" directed by world renowned Greek filmmaker Costa-Gavras and "Dawson Isla 10" by Chilean director Miguel Littin are among the movies.

In addition, documentaries, including "Salvador Allende" and "Battle of Chile" by Chilean director Patricio Guzman and "Inheritance" by Iranian director Kambiz Amir-Khosravi, will also be screened.

Scholars and film critics are scheduled to give lectures and hold workshops on the subject matter of the festival, which is "Films Depicting Coups D'état Around the World".

The festival also aims to shed light on the role of the global arrogant powers in leading coups in other countries.

This is the first time the festival will screen films by international filmmakers.

### Beijing fair pulls books by Iranian authors

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — The organizers of the 23rd Beijing International Book Fair removed copies of two books by Iranian authors from the stand of Candle and Fog Publishing House, the London-based Iranian publisher, on Tuesday.

English versions of Ahamd Dehqan's "A Vital Killing" and Seyyed Mehdi Shojaei's "Democracy or DemoCrazy" were removed since the books were dubbed "pro-war" and "harmful to the public", Candle and Fog Managing Director Afshin Shahnetabar told the Persian service of FNA on Wednesday.

The director of the Iranian pavilion met with the managers of the book fair to clarify points about the two books, but they totally disregarded

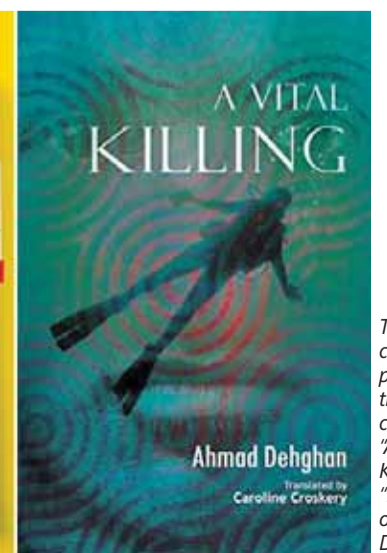
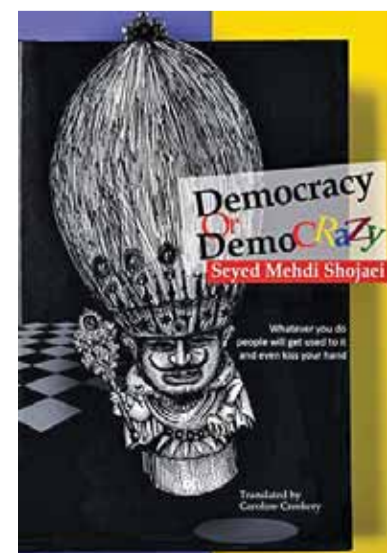
his explanation, he added.

"A Vital Killing" is a highly acclaimed collection of short stories inspired by actual events from the 19080-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The satirical novel "Democracy or DemoCrazy" is a narration by a historical researcher about a nonexistent land in an ancient time, where according to the king's proclamation, each one of his 25 sons will succeed to the throne for two years. However the order of succession is to be according to the people's vote and not their age.

Both of the books have been translated into English by the U.S. Iranologist Caroline Croskery.

The 23rd Beijing International Book Fair will come to an end on August 28.



This combination photo shows the front covers of "A Vital Killing" and "Democracy or DemoCrazy".