

# TEHRAN TIMES



IIDO director hails  
new venue for  
Tehran book fair

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## Akie Abe: Mindset change needed on role of women

### EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Parvin Telli

**TEHRAN** — Akie Abe, wife of the Japanese prime minister, believes that a change of mindset is needed so that women can play their role in society.

"From a mindset perspective, men and women should share the same view so that women-engaging society can be built," Akie Abe tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

This is the text of the interview:

■ **As a high profile woman, how do you see females' role in the current Japanese society as well as in their household relations?**

A: It is a matter of course that women performing as the labor force in Japan since we are facing less birth rate, with increased ageing population. I expect that the new viewpoint can be brought to the society if women become more actively involved.

The society in Japan is structured in a way that men perform the central role in a vertical pyramid organization, thus the structure prioritized the profit making that often led to conflict within the society which did not lead to building a peaceful society.

The nature of women is to give birth to new life so they are good in helping each other than seeking for vertical society building. I wish that women could expand their role in a horizontal manner than vertical, thus less conflict in the society.



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## Hajj still unclear for Iranians

By Marjan Golpira

**TEHRAN** - Iranians won't be able to make the hajj pilgrimage this year as Saudi Arabia continues to sabotage the ritual, the Foreign Ministry spokesman announced on Monday.

Making the remark at his weekly press briefing, Hossein Jaber Ansari said the Supreme Council on Hajj held a meeting on Sunday to discuss the latest relevant developments concerning the hajj ritual, hoping that Saudi Arabia change policy and fulfill its commitments as the host of the holy ceremony.

Iran and Saudi Arabia has been at loggerheads over a number of issues, including the Hajj stampede, inter alia, in September 2015 in which more than four hundred Iranians lost their lives.

■ **Iran won't hold missile talks with U.S.**

On U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's call for missile negotiations with Tehran, the spokesman said Iran's position on missile talks is "very clear" and "consistent".

"We won't accept it (talks on missile program)."

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## Europeans see huge potential, opportunities for post-sanctions Iran

By Mahnaz Abdi

European companies participating in the 21st International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition of Iran (Iran Oil Show 2016) believe that the Iranian market enjoys huge potentials and offers many opportunities in the post-sanctions time.

The event, which was the country's first oil show in post-sanctions era, was attended by more than 900 Iranian exhibitors and above 800 renowned international companies from 38 countries across the globe. It was held from May 5 to 8 at Tehran Permanent International Fairground.

■ **'Sanctions removal, a big opportunity for Iran to grow faster'**

"Sanctions removal is a big opportunity for Iran to grow faster with a lot of resources it has inside the country on one hand, and on the other hand it is a big opportunity for us, because there is a lot of needs in goods and equipments in Iran, so we can do now what we could do before we had all these restrictions," Rudolf Oplitzer, the managing director of Germany's UIC GmbH, a leading global supplier of systems and components for the gentle distillation of liquid mixtures, told the Tehran Times.

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### PERSPECTIVE

By Assadollah Athari

political expert

## Post-modern coup II

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has announced that he would not seek to take the helm of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) at the extraordinary meeting of party leaders, slated for May 22.

The announcement means Davutoglu, currently the president of AK Party, will also step down from his prime minister post. In other words the news actually means he has resigned after all his power and authority was revoked after a gathering of the party's central executive committee.

The question is why Davutoglu will not nominate as the AKP leader? In many issues Davutoglu has proven he does not share the opinion of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Among many differences we can refer to Erdogan's push to replace the current parliamentary system of government with a presidential one, and thus, change his ceremonial role into an executive chief. Erdogan has long been seeking to increase presidential authority leading to tensions with his Prime Minister Davutoglu. It seems that Davutoglu does not support the presidential system envisaged by Erdogan, fearing he is pushing Turkey to the verge of authoritarianism.

The development follows as AKP's executive committee has recently revoked its Leader, Davutoglu's regional authority.

The move reveals that Erdogan, standing as Turkish president, cannot lead the party he has established and is still the most influential figure of the Justice and Development Party. → 9

## Moscow book fair CEO admires Iran cultural attitude toward publications

### INTERVIEW

By Manijeh Rezapoor

**TEHRAN** — The general director of the Moscow International Book Fair, Sergey V. Kaykin, has admired Iran's cultural attitude toward publications at the Tehran International Book Fair.

In an interview with the Tehran Times on Sunday, Kaykin said that after he returns to his country, he plans to convince Russian cultural officials to follow the same policy.

"The Tehran book fair has a good policy to attract more visitors, it gives more service, free entry, and good discount to students, with better service to the visitors," Kaykin stated.

Russia is the guest of honor at the 29th Tehran International Book Fair, which is currently underway at Shahre Aftab, a newly-constructed fairground in southern Tehran.



The general director of the Moscow International Book Fair, Sergey V. Kaykin, poses at the pavilion of Russia during the 29th Tehran International Book Fair on May 8, 2016.

Kaykin presides over a Russian cultural delegation, which is at the Tehran book

fair to promote latest offerings from 50 Russian publishers during the cultural event.

"In Moscow, there is no fair that lasts as long as the Tehran fair. However, it is a good point that the book fair has this much respect among you. We are also planning to talk with government officials to hold a longer fair in our country. The government needs to consider the fair as a cultural event and not a business. Perhaps after several years we will manage to expand our fair," he added.

He continued, "The fair has a good policy to attract more visitors. This is because your fair lasts longer, that is, yours is about two weeks but ours [Moscow fair] lasts only five days. The expense to Moscow would be more if it lasted longer, so we just have more condensed programs." → 12

## Tehran hosts 1st Symposium of Iran-Japan on Women, Peace and Sustainable Development

### WOMEN

**TEHRAN** — The first Symposium of Iran-Japan on Women, Peace and Sustainable Development was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran on Monday.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister Abbas Araqchi, who had also served as Iran's ambassador to Japan, the vice president for women and family affairs Shahindokht Molaverdi, the head of Iran's Department of Environment Ma'soumeh Ebtekar, the chairperson of Foun-



deration for Encouragement of Social Contribution (FESCO) Akie Abe, and the chairperson of the Nippon Foundation Yohei Sasakawa, attended the event, Mehr reported.

Other participants included Kuji Haneda, the Japanese ambassador to Tehran, and Maryam Imanieh, the wife of Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif.

The next edition of the symposium will be hosted by Tokyo's Sasakawa Peace Foundation next year.

## Car parts maker Bosch to open business, hire staff in Iran

German auto parts supplier Robert Bosch is opening an office in Tehran and plans to hire 50 staff by the end of this year because it sees growing potential for Iran's car market following the lifting of international sanctions.

"We are delighted to be back in

Iran. In our quest to pick up speed quickly, we are benefiting first and foremost from re-establishing contact with former local partners and customers," said Uwe Raschke, Bosch's management board member responsible for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"The country's potential is tremendous. We expect to see the Iranian economy grow by just under 5 percent this year. The medium term is also highly promising."

A number of foreign carmakers, including Renault, Daimler, Peugeot

and Citroen and Suzuki Motor Corp have announced plans to re-enter Iran or step up production there since the United States and Europe partially lifted sanctions in January, under a deal with Tehran on its nuclear program.

(Source: Reuters)

## Saudi Arabia equipping terrorists in Syria with WMDs: analyst

A prominent Syrian analyst slammed the Saudi regime for its military support for terrorist groups fighting against Syria's government, saying that Riyadh has been equipping the militants with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Speaking to the Tasnim News Agency, Hassan al-Hassan, an expert of military and

strategic affairs, pointed to the massive rocket attacks by the armed groups on civilians in Syria's northern city of Aleppo, saying it is naive to say such attacks have been made by the terrorists alone and without any foreign support.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister had previously announced that his country will equip what he

called "moderate opposition groups" with advanced missiles and rockets, the analyst noted. Hassan went on to say that the attacks in Aleppo have been made concurrently with the third round of (UN-brokered) peace talks in Geneva as the Saudi-backed groups are attempting to impose some preconditions on the negotiations.

(Source: Tasnim)



### PERSPECTIVE

By Parvin Telli

Tehran Times journalist

## Chinese smarter than Westerners

I have been to Iran's oil and gas show every year over the past 10 years. I love the event as it draws thousands of large and small companies from all around the world to Tehran to seek investment and trade opportunities. Besides, the exhibition reflects Iran's political relations with other countries as well.

Oil giants, like Total, Statoil, Shell and others all in a body turned their back on the oil show in the past few years as Iran was constantly bombarded with sanctions led by the U.S and its European allies. They left the market to the Chinese who took full advantage of the sanctions. The Chinese have had the strongest appearance on the oil shows since 2011 when top oil companies have been absent.

With tireless efforts, finally the Rouhani administration succeeded to broker a landmark nuclear deal with the 5+1 countries in July 2015 to end sanctions on Iran. Since ever, world leaders have taken turn in visiting Iran one after the other, at the head of big delegations, to show their interest in resuming cooperation with the energy-rich country.

Impatient to see the impact of the nuclear deal on oil industry, I hurried to the 21st Iran International Oil, Gas and Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition this week where I was taken by surprise to see those oil companies were absent this year too while their CEOs had been coming and going to the NIOC for negotiations over the last months.

Touring around, I found Chinese still the most dominant country present in the oil show of 2016 just a few months after sanctions have been lifted.

The oil companies might have their own excuses for not participating in the oil show such as a sharp drop in oil prices, the unstable condition in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and its allies' propaganda against a rapprochement between Iran and the European Union, and the U.S presidential elections.

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MEDIA MONITOR



Iraqi Kurdistan chief due in Tehran

**TEHRAN** — The head of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq is scheduled to visit Tehran in the near future.

Massoud Barzani will meet with senior Iranian officials including Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, and Majlis speaker Ali Larijani, Etemad Online news portal reported on Sunday, citing an "informed source".

Fighting Daesh and military operations to retake the country's second-largest city Mosul from the group will be discussed in the meetings, the report added.

Construction of an oil pipeline between Iran and northern Iraq also will be on the agenda of talks, it further said.



Economy minister chairs sanctions removal committee

**TEHRAN** — Economy Minister Ali Tayyebnia has been appointed as the head of the sanctions removal committee that was established recently within the JCPOA implementation workgroup, a top Iranian diplomat said on Monday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi also said the workgroup, which consists of representatives from Iran and the 5+1 group, is holding regular meetings to facilitate the removal of sanctions, the YJC reported on Monday.



Iran summons Kuwaiti charges d'affaires

**TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Monday summoned the Kuwaiti charges d'affaires over an anti-Iran meeting held by that country.

Accordingly, the ministry expressed solemn objection to the meeting, saying for Kuwait to host a number of such meetings goes against neighborliness norms, Mizan reported.



Iranian sanctions affected Turkey as well: ambassador

**TEHRAN** — The Turkish ambassador to Tehran has said that sanctions on Iran affected his country as well.

Countries have the biggest volume of trade with their neighbors, Reza Hakan Tekin pointed out, IRNA reported on Monday. The ambassador added the removal of sanctions as well will lay direct impacts on Turkey's economy.

He added that following the interim nuclear accord between Iran and world powers in November 2013 in Geneva, Turkey attempted to improve ties with Iran by signing numerous agreements including political ones over the Syrian crisis.



Rezaei vows retaliation over losses in Syria

**TEHRAN** — A high-ranking Iranian official has promised retaliation against terrorist groups in Syria for a recent deadly assault on forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

"I promise you there will be serious revenge on the takfiri groups soon," the Secretary of the Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaei wrote on Instagram on Monday.



Majlis presiding board set to study bill on economic corruption

**TEHRAN** — The Majlis presiding board is going to study a bill on fighting economic corruption on Tuesday, deputy Majlis speaker Mohammad Reza Bahonar has said.

He praised the bill as a useful one, but said both MPs and government officials have found some faults with it which will be discussed during the Tuesday session, ICANA reported on Monday.

# Iran ready to boost co-op with Japan for durable development: Araqchi

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday that Iran prioritizes boosting cooperation with Japan to counter "impediments to long lasting development".

Araqchi made the remarks while addressing a joint Iran-Japan conference on "Women, Peace and Sustainable Development".

The seminar was attended by Akie Abe, wife of the Japanese prime minister, Iranian Vice President for Family and Women's Affairs Shahindokht Molaverdi and Masoumeh Ebtekar, head of the Department of Environment, among others.

Araqchi said Iran and Japan, as victims of weapons of mass destruction, have common grounds to expand cooperation



Araqchi calls violence and extremism the "biggest enemy" of sustainable development.

in line with durable development.

"The fact is that long lasting international development is contingent upon permanent peace and there will be no opportunity for development in an atmosphere of war, insecurity, violence, extremism and poverty," explained Araqchi who served as Iranian ambassador to Japan from 2007 to 2011.

Araqchi called violence and extremism the "biggest enemy" of sustainable development and unfortunately violence and extremism have undermined women's role in the Mideast region especially in Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

He also said that the Iranian and Japanese people have many commonalities due to long years of interaction.

## Hajj still unclear for Iranians: Foreign Ministry

**I →** Kerry had said the U.S. and its allies were "prepared to work on a new arrangement to find a peaceful solution" to the dispute over recent Iranian missile tests.

Jaberi-Ansari added, "Iran's missile system is for country's security and is not up for discussion or negotiations."

Iran has been insisting that its missile program is solely for defensive purposes.

"Iran has always been adopting a defense policy," even in cases when the country was attacked by foreign countries, Jaberi-Ansari said.

He went on to say that even during the Iraqi invasion of Iran in the 1980s the Islamic Republic remained committed to its defense policy.

**■ No official visit to Iran by Muqtada al-Sadr**

He also dismissed news that Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sadr had paid a visit to Iran, saying the Iraqi Shia cleric has relatives and acquaintances in some cities in Iran and he may be traveling to Iran at times.

**■ U.S. returns Iranian antiques**

The official also said some Persian antiques, which had been confiscated by the U.S. in the past, were released to the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Sunday and in a special ceremony, the pieces were handed over to the head of the National Museum of Iran.

He added Iran continues to follow up on having other remained assets returned to the country.

**■ Japanese prime minister to visit Iran**

He also confirmed reports that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans to visit Iran, saying the trip is on the agenda. He said the exact date of the travel will be made public later.

The wife of Shinzo Abe, Akie Abe, was in Tehran on Monday to participate at a joint Iran-Japan conference on "women, peace and sustainable development".

Abe will be the first Japanese prime minister to visit the Islamic Republic in 38 years since Takeo Fukuda traveled to Iran in September 1978.

**■ Report on legal review of Iran's frozen assets submitted to SNSC**

On the \$2 billion of Iran's assets confiscated by the U.S., the spokesman said the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has received a report on the performance of the taskforce authorized by President Rouhani to look into the case.

Rouhani has already reviewed the report and the result of which has been presented to the SNSC, he added.

**■ Iran, Russia in constant consultation on Syria**

The Foreign Minister official also said Iran is in contacts with Russia over Syria as foreign-backed militants are not abiding by the truce in the war-torn country.

"Naturally, constant consultations are underway between Iran and Russia on issues of mutual concern as well as the latest regional and international developments."

Jaberi-Ansari said that during their recent round of talks, Iranian and Russian officials reviewed the latest developments in Syria, including the recently U.S.-Russia brokered ceasefire in the country.

The official stated that the most recent developments in Syria show that militants fighting the government are not committed to the ceasefire deal.

A truce, forged by the U.S. and Russia, took effect across Syria on February 27. However, it has been violated times and times.

"The developments that have been unfolding since the announcement of the truce prove that the armed groups who are taking actions against the Syrian government show no commitment to the ceasefire."

"This is one of the basic problems in the peace process," he said.

He further noted that terrorist groups aim to destabilize the region while getting more powerful which is neither in the interest of the region nor in the world.

Jaberi-Ansari expressed hope that the regional countries would develop a "common understanding" on terrorism in order to counter the threats.

## 103 MPs petition Rouhani to stop JCPOA if U.S. shows more malice

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — More than one third of the outgoing Iranian parliament petitioned President Rouhani on Monday to set a deadline for stopping implementation of the nuclear deal, citing the U.S. malice, IRNA reported.

The petition, having signs of 103 MPs on it, asks for "reconsideration of voluntary measures and resumption of all ac-

tivities within the NPT" if the U.S. takes no steps to change tack on Iran.

This note delivered and read by Ibrahim Karkhaneh, a member of the parliament presiding board, warns Rouhani to give the JCPOA implementation a second thought if the U.S. "fails to send back Iran's stolen assets, continues to show malice on Iran and lack of commitment to remove sanctions and create intoxicated

atmosphere in implementing the JCPOA."

After the signing of the JCPOA, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in July 2015, Iranian officials have objected to the U.S. getting in the way of foreign partners doing business with Iran.

Although the nuclear deal ended economic sanctions against Iran, including banking limitations, many foreign banks have shown reluctance to resume ties with

Tehran, fearing falling foul to the U.S. fines.

In one more recent development in already turbulent ties between Tehran and Washington, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that almost \$2 billion in frozen Iranian assets must be turned over to American families of people killed in the 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Beirut and other attacks allegedly blamed on Iran.

## Armed forces budget increased to counter terrorists: Larijani



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Monday that budget for the armed forces has been increased to counter "criminals" and "terrorist movements" that threaten the country's security.

During a meeting with senior police officials, Larijani said accordingly the budget for police forces has been increased to strengthen their efficiency.

He also called on the police forces to counter trafficking of goods in order to help implement the resistance economy.

Last week, Iranian lawmakers approved a bill that obliges the administration to allocate five percent of the annual budget to the defense sector, Tasnim news agency reported.

The Iranian fiscal year started on March 20.

## Any step against Muslims' dignity is contrary to Islam, Iran says



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeg Amoli Larijani said on Monday that any step against the Muslims' dignity is contrary to Islam.

During a meeting with senior Judiciary officials, he urged the officials to keep a watchful eye on ways that the Supreme Leader has warned the enemies seek to use to infiltrate the

country.

"It is essential for all the officials to reach a common understanding and action to counter the enemy's efforts to infiltrate (the country)," he said.

Elsewhere, he said that those who created the militants of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and provides the group with weapons seek to spread Islamophobia.

## Defense chief denies Iran tested missile with 2000-km range

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iran test-fired a precision-guided ballistic missile two weeks ago, the armed forces deputy chief of staff announced on Monday, Fars news agency reported.

"Two weeks ago, we tested a missile with a range of 2,000 kilometers and an error margin of eight meters," Brigadier General Ali Abdollahi was quoted as saying.

This is while Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan denied on the same day test-firing a missile with such a range.

Abdollahi made the statement at seminar held at Baghiatollah Hospital, an affiliate of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Iran test-fires missiles of different ranges and capabilities year round during regular military drills to keep its armed forces on their toes and has developed home-



grown missile families.

It is not yet clear of which family the missile has been. While Tehran insists that the capability is merely defensive, some Western countries including the U.S. have said it is in breach of the UN 2231 resolution that prohibits Iran from firing any missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.

Iranian officials have deemed the concerns unwarranted as none of the missiles test-fired by Iran were designed to carry nuclear warheads.

Commenting on an earlier missile test-firing by Iran, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry had said the U.S. and its partners were "prepared to work on a new arrangement to find a peaceful solution to these issues."

However, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif replied that the country's missile program was not up for negotiation with the U.S.

JUMP

## Chinese smarter than Westerners

**I →** But, whatever their reasons might be, working with the Chinese since 2002, I can tell that they have been the sole winner of the sanctions strategy that the U.S. had always been so proud of.

I think this way; Americans have cut their nose to spite Iran's face, handing over a great market to their Asian rivals whose recent history has shown how quick and smart they are in turning any mayhem to their advantage.



# Hezbollah, allies win wide areas in east Lebanon vote

Lebanon's resistance Hezbollah group and its allies won a vast majority of seats in areas where they ran in local elections in eastern Lebanon, the group's deputy leader said Monday, a day after the vote took place.

Meanwhile, the head of a local coalition of different political groups said they will most likely win the Beirut municipality.

The municipal elections held Sunday in only two areas of the country - the capital, Beirut, and the eastern Bekaa Valley region - were the first vote in Lebanon since 2010 and a key test of grass-roots support in the two regions.

That importance of the vote was underscored by the fact that the government has postponed Lebanon's parliamentary elections, citing security concerns linked to the conflict in neighboring Syria. Also, Lebanon's parliament has failed to elect a president since May 2014 because of lack of quorum amid political disagreements.

Perhaps reflecting wide urban disillusionment with the political limbo, the turnout was low in Beirut - only 20 percent, just slightly higher than the 18 percent who voted in 2010.

However, the Lebanese capital is



known for usually low turnout, with many of its eligible voters living outside both Beirut and Lebanon, and some residents expressing disinterest in politics. Many in Beirut also did not expect the elections to be held, thinking the vote would be delayed like other elections.

Hezbollah's deputy chief sheikh Naim Kassem said Monday that the group and

its allies ran in 80 municipalities out of 143 in the Bekaa Valley and won almost all the seats. That included all municipal seats in the historic city of Baalbek and the major town of Brital along the Syria border, where Hezbollah competed against a list backed by prominent families.

"It was a complete victory," Kassem

said of the Baalbek and Brital vote. He added that Hezbollah's opponents secured some seats in six towns in the area.

Turnout was higher in the Hezbollah-popular east, with the figure reaching 48 percent in Baalbek.

In Beirut, a coalition known as "Beirutis" said early results show it won all of the capital's 24-seat municipal council, the state-run National News Agency reported. The coalition is headed by Jamal Itani and is backed by several political groups, including the powerful predominantly Sunni Future Movement of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, the Shia Muslim Amal group and the country's three main Christian groups.

Beirutis ran against several other lists, mainly the Beirut Madinati, Arabic for "Beirut, My City" that has vowed to clean up both the city's streets following a major trash crisis and its politics. Beirut Madinati said on its official Facebook page that it would not make any statements until official results are known.

In the coming weeks, municipal elections will also be held in other parts of Lebanon.

(Source: AP)

## Putin calls for non-aligned international security system in face of global terror threat

Vladimir Putin said Russia is all for creating a non-aligned system of international security to counter global terror. The president, speaking at the V-Day parade in Moscow, called on all nations to learn the lessons of WWII.

"Today our civilization has faced brutality and violence - terrorism has become a global threat," the Russian president said, addressing the crowds on Moscow's Red Square ahead of a parade dedicated to the 71st anniversary of victory in WWII. "We must defeat this evil, and Russia is open to join forces with all countries and is ready to work on the creation of a modern, non-aligned system of international security."

According to the Russian leader, the lessons of the World War II showed that "double standards" and "short-sighted indulgence to those who are nurturing new criminal plans" are unacceptable.

"The lessons of history show that peace on our planet doesn't establish itself, that you need to be on high alert," he said.

The Great Patriotic War (the term used in Russia and former Soviet republics to describe the conflict on the Eastern Front from 1941-45) will always remain "an outstanding, sacred heroic deed of our people, a call to live according to conscience, to keep the height of the truth and justice, to transfer these values from generation to generation," the president added.

"Our fathers and grandfathers defeated the powerful, merciless enemy, in front of whom many countries folded," Putin said.

"It was our servicemen who gave the



Nazis and their accomplices full retaliation for millions of victims, for all the barbarities and excesses on our land."

Putin added that Russian soldiers have proven that they are "worthy successors to the heroes of the Great Patriotic War who are defending the country's interests with honor."

"I'm sure the veterans today are proud of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren - they are not letting [the veterans] down and will always remember the great victory, the heroic deeds of the glorious generation of victors," he said.

Seventy-one years ago, Nazi Germany was defeated. Almost 80 percent of the world's population was caught up in the war, including all of the great powers, and a total of 55 million people were killed in the conflict.

The Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. The following four years of fighting saw 27 million Soviet people killed.

In Europe, V-Day commemorations started on Sunday, as the Nazi Germany's Instrument of Surrender came into force at 22:43 CET on May 8, 1945. In Moscow it was already 00:43, on May 9.

(Source: RT)

## Greece approves tax overhaul amid austerity protests

Greece's parliament has approved a controversial overhaul of taxes and pensions despite mass rallies against the measures.

Police said almost 18,000 people turned up in Athens and about 8,000 in Thessaloniki on Sunday against the changes demanded by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund that the government approved in the lead-up to a crucial meeting of eurozone creditors in Brussels.

Security forces fired tear gas to disperse protesters throwing petrol-bombs in Athens.

The reform aims to reduce Greece's highest pension payouts, merge several pension funds, increase contributions and raise taxes for those on medium and high incomes.

Central Athens was largely closed to traffic, with a significant police presence in the city, although numbers were significantly down on February's protests when 40,000 people marched in Athens alone.

Al Jazeera's John Psaropoulos, reporting from Athens, said some self-employed and salaried professionals would end up paying up to 55 percent of income tax if the measures were to be applied.

"People here feel that this bill coming at the end of a whole series of austerity bills over the last eight years simply adds too much to the burden of the average Greek household," he said. The austerity measures are part of a package demanded by the EU and IMF in exchange for a \$95bn bailout approved last July, the third for Greece since 2010.

■ **'Failed state' warning**

Alexis Tsipras, Greek prime minis-



ter, defended the tax and pensions overhaul on Friday, telling legislators from his Syriza party - which holds a slim majority with 153 seats in the 300-seat parliament - that they would spare the poorest.

Shrinking Greece's pension system is crucial for preventing "the system collapsing in a few years", Tsipras said.

Euclid Tsakalotos, Greece's finance minister, has called on the eurozone to back the changes, warning of a "failed state" if the Brussels talks run aground.

"The elements for closing the first review and providing debt relief are, I firmly believe, all there," according to a letter from Tsakalotos to the eurozone's finance chiefs seen by the AFP news agency.

"Nobody should believe that another Greek crisis, leading perhaps to another failed state in the region, could be beneficial to anyone."

Greece's budget deficit has expanded as it struggles to keep up with its debt payments, which the IMF believes is unsustainable.

In its official agenda for Monday's meeting, the Eurogroup said it would review the "progress achieved" by Greece as well as discuss "possible debt-relief measures".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## N. Korea says to push nuclear program, defying UN sanctions

Secretive North Korea said it will strengthen self-defensive nuclear weapons capability, its KCNA news agency reported on Monday, a decision adopted in defiance of U.N. resolutions at a rare congress of its ruling Workers' Party.

The congress is the first in 36 years and North Korea granted visas to scores of foreign journalists to coincide with the gathering.

Their movements have been closely monitored and one BBC journalist, not reporting directly on the congress, was expelled along with two colleagues, after a top official said he had "distorted facts and realities" in his coverage.

Young leader Kim Jong Un, who assumed power in 2011 after his father's sudden death, took on the new title of party chairman on the fourth day of the congress on Monday, media reported.

The promotion - his previous party title was first secretary - had been predicted by analysts who had expected Kim would use the congress to consolidate his power.

North Korea has come under tightening international pressure over its nuclear weapons program, including tougher U.N. sanctions adopted in March backed by lone major ally China, following its most recent nuclear test in January.

The congress's decision on strengthening the capability of its nuclear weapons formalizes North Korea's position.

It had already declared itself "a responsible nuclear weapons state" and disavowed the use of nuclear weapons unless its sovereignty is first infringed by others with nuclear arms.

"We will consistently take hold on the strategic line of simultaneously pushing forward the economic construction and the building of nuclear force and boost self-defensive nuclear force both in quality and quantity

as long as the imperialists persist in their nuclear threat and arbitrary practices," KCNA said, citing the congress.

The two Koreas remain in a technical state of war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. North Korea regularly threatens the South and its major ally, the United States, which it accuses of planning a nuclear attack.

Since the latest round of U.N. resolutions, North Korea has pressed ahead with its nuclear and missile development, and said it had succeeded in miniaturizing a nuclear warhead and launching a submarine-based ballistic missile.

■ **Rival Koreas**

South Korea condemned the North's claim to be a nuclear weapons state, saying it would continue to exert pressure on Pyongyang until it abandons its nuclear ambitions.

North Korea is believed by western experts to have about 40 kg of plutonium, enough to build eight to 12 nuclear weapons.

On the weekend, Kim took a conciliatory position on ties with the South, saying military talks were needed to discuss ways to ease tension.

South Korea rejected the proposal as meaningless.

"We have not given up on dialogue," South Korean Unification Ministry spokesman Cheong Joon-hee told a briefing. "But it is only when the North shows sincerity about decentralization that genuine dialogue is possible."

The unusually large group of 128 foreign media members in Pyongyang for the congress, which opened on Friday, had not been given any access to the proceedings until Monday afternoon, when a group of about 30 of them were let in to the April 25 House of Culture for several minutes after nearly three hours of



security checks.

There, Kim entered and was received by a wildly cheering audience of delegates, according to reporters who got in.

A closing date has not been made public but South Korea officials said earlier they expected the congress to last four or five days.

The expulsion of BBC journalist Rupert Wingfield-Hayes grabbed headlines in foreign media on Monday. He had been in the country ahead of the congress to cover the visit of a group of Nobel laureates.

Earlier on Monday, visiting media were taken to a textile factory named after Kim Jong Suk, the wife of state founder Kim Il Sung and the grandmother of the current leader. They have been taken to a string of show-case sites including a maternity hospital, electric cable factory and children's centre.

(Source: Reuters)

## NEWS

### Yemen peace in tatters as Saudi jets kill 13

At least 13 people, including five paramedics, are killed in a fresh Saudi airstrike in Yemen despite peace talks which a Ansarullah (Houthi) official says have little chance of success.

Mohammad Abdulsalam, who heads the Ansarullah delegation, said Saudi Arabia and its side in the peace talks underway in Kuwait are unwilling to make any concessions in order to form a new government.

The Houthis and their allies have demanded the formation of a consensus transitional government before forging ahead with other issues.

They have also demanded the withdrawal of a U.S. force operating in the south of the country along with UAE troops.

On Friday, the U.S. military for the first time publicly acknowledged that American troops are operating inside Yemen to help pro-Hadi forces and a Saudi offensive.

Abdulsalam accused Saudi Arabia and its mercenaries on the ground of forced deportation of Yemeni people from some southern provinces.

His remarks came after forces loyal to Yemen's former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi were said to have been arresting and evicting hundreds of civilians from the southern port city of Aden to the north.

Local officials said pro-Hadi secessionists were raiding shops, restaurants and homes, detaining more than 2,000 people whom they said posed a security threat.

Aden fell to pro-Hadi forces who were backed by Saudi air cover after fierce fighting with Houthi fighters in July 2015.

On Monday, UN envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed called on the warring parties in Yemen to "make concessions in order to strike a comprehensive peaceful solution" to the conflict.

All direct negotiations scheduled for Sunday were cancelled as Hadi's representatives pulled out of the talks.

"The participants in the Kuwait negotiations must reflect the aspirations of the Yemeni people. I am confident that Yemenis want an end to the conflict," Ould Cheikh Ahmed said in a statement after separate meetings with delegations.

He said new talks were slated to take place on Monday, urging the two parties to cooperate further.

With pro-Hadi forces evicting people in Aden, Saudi warplanes targeted the al-Amaleqa camp in the Harf Sufyan district of Amran Province on Monday.

The air raid killed at least 13 people and left 15 others injured, Yemen's al-Masirah television reported.

The attack came a day after seven people were killed and 13 others injured after Saudi jets attacked the capital Sana'a, prompting Houthis to issue a strong protest to the UN envoy, according to a source close to the negotiations.

Yemeni delegates at the peace talks in Kuwait told Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled al-Sabah that repeated violations of the truce threaten the negotiations.

There has been mounting international pressure to end the Yemen conflict that has killed more than 9,400 people and displaced 2.8 million since March last year.

(Source: Press TV)

## Cameron says leaving EU would increase risk of war

Raising the stakes in Britain's European Union membership debate, Prime Minister David Cameron said Monday that leaving the bloc would increase the risk of war in Europe.

Cameron's speech on national security came as campaigning ahead of a June 23 vote on the country's EU membership moved into its final weeks.

Cameron said it would be rash to assume that "peace and stability on our continent are assured beyond any shadow of doubt." He said the EU "has helped reconcile countries which were at each other's throats for decades."

"Britain has a fundamental national interest in maintaining common purpose in Europe to avoid future conflict between European countries," he said.

"And that requires British leadership, and for Britain to remain a member."

Cameron argued that "isolationism has never served this country well. Whenever we turn our back on Europe, sooner or later we come to regret it."

Whether leaving the 28-nation union would make Britain more or less secure is a key referendum battleground. Two former U.K. intelligence chiefs said in an interview published Sunday that the EU gives Britain an edge in gathering anti-terror intelligence and underpins continental peace.

Cameron said that, with the fight against the Islamic State group raging and an assertive Russia flexing its muscles, "now is a time for strength in numbers."

The anti-EU campaign group Vote Leave called Cameron's claims "historically illiterate," arguing that NATO contributes far more to European peace and security than the EU.

"The notion that the peace of Europe was guaranteed by the institutions of the European Union was always utter nonsense," said Robert Cowcroft of the University of Edinburgh, a member of Historians for Britain, an anti-EU group.

(Source: AP)





## JUMP

### Europeans see huge potential, opportunities for post-sanctions Iran



"It's a great exhibition. I really enjoyed it," the German exhibitor said about Iran Oil Show.

#### 'Iran looks promising after sanctions'

Daniel Sparr, the product manager in Bertsch Energy, an Austrian service supplier to the power plants and processing industries, believes that now that the sanctions are being removed, the status of Iran looks very good and promising. "We have an agent here and they tell us about a lot of projects which are going on, so we are very hopeful and we think that Iran is on the right way"

"While financing is a little complicated in Iran, there are a lot of refineries here and it is promising for us," he noted.

#### 'Iran's biz opportunities not gone during sanctions'

Jan Willem Hendriks, the managing director of the Netherlands' TSS Company, which designs, engineers and supplies solar power systems for the oil and gas industries, asserted, "Even before the sanctions there were of course a lot of opportunities in Iran. There were only barriers to do business. So, the opportunities haven't gone. They have become only inaccessible. So, now we can only start to work on it again. For us, there is a lot to do in Iran."

Hendriks, who participated in Iran Oil Show for the third time, said this edition is much bigger. "This year there is a big variety of companies, not only Iranians, as obvious, but also foreign companies."

"Iranian oil and gas sector offers us a lot of possibilities," he said, explaining that his company intends to train people in Iran on their systems, so their investment will be on the people first, and then they will see what they can use on local facilities for their systems.

#### 'Iran starts to be an intl. player in oil, gas fields'

Roberto Camporesi, the technical-sales manager of Tecnivell, an Italian manufacturer of pumps for civil engineering and oil fields, said that by sanctions removal Iran has started to be an international player in the oil and gas fields.

He believes that in the next few years, there will be many opportunities to do something good together with Iranian people.

The Italian manager described the oil show as very interesting with many exhibitors and said they will come again for sure.

#### 'There is huge potential in Iranian market'

Benoit de Bouvet, the South East Asia and Middle East manager of CATU, a French manufacturer of electrical safety equipment founded in 1919, who was participating for the first time in Iran Oil Show, described the event as very good and said they have got very good response from national oil and gas companies as well as cement companies and they are happy with the feedbacks.

"The potential in Iranian market is huge, so we are very interested in coming to Iran. The only problem at the moment is with the banks," the French exhibitor commented.

#### 'World to see more imports from Iran in post-sanctions time'

Michael M. Hartung, the head of sales, marketing and commercial project management of RENK MAAG, a Swiss manufacturer of high-speed gearboxes and couplings for the oil and gas and power industries, stated, "I see a great potential in Iran, there is 80 million people, you have lots of good products and with the sanctions being lifted I can foresee that the world will be able to import more from Iran, being oil and gas or petrochemical products, being cars produced in Iran or IT technology, I can foresee that"

#### 'Iran Oil Show 2016, best ever edition of event'

José Maria Asin, a Spanish exhibitor who has participated in 15 editions of Iran Oil Show, said, "I think it is probably the best edition with more exhibitors and more interest specially from European companies in exploring the big amount of opportunities the country is offering now"

"With so many projects to be implemented in the coming years, every body's interested, so we are all coming to Iran and would like to get more cooperation with the Iranian companies," he mentioned.

Asin, who is the managing director of Spain's Babcock Valves, a leading European manufacturer of valves with 27 years of presence in Iran, referred to the problems related to the banking system as the main obstacle for business in Iran; although he noted that the private sector has been able to overcome the difficulty, as it has done already during the sanctions period.

"Public companies still need some measures to activate the banking systems. I think there are some limitations, but I think they will be resolved and everything will come to the normal condition soon, especially by the end of this year. November and December will be critical months, so that everything will be stable and normalized in my opinion," he commented.

"Iran will play a prominent role in the world in the next decades. I think Iran will change a lot in a positive way and we have to be present here," the Spanish director highlighted.

## NEWS

### Korea-Iran maritime deals important in facilitating bilateral trade: maritime minister

The details of deals made between South Korea and Iran are starting to emerge following President Park Geun-hye's state visit to Tehran earlier this month.

In an interview with local news agency YTN, Seoul's maritime minister, Kim Young-seok, outlined a number of new shipping and port agreements that were reached, including the development of ports, fishery deals and joint ventures in offshore plants.

He stressed these deals would help facilitate trade between the two countries, and help reestablish shipping routes that were cut off after international sanctions were placed on Iran.

A total of 66 MOUs were signed during President Park's visit, including a series of construction projects worth 37-billion U.S. dollars.

(Source: arirang.co.kr)

# IMF delegation due in Tehran soon

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — First Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) David Lipton, leading a delegation, will pay a visit to Tehran in near future to conduct negotiations with Iranian senior officials.

The delegation will include five senior directors of the IMF, Shana news agency reported on Monday.

IMF has projected a four-percent economic growth rate for Iran in 2016. Iran's economy, which was flat last year, is set to grow by 4.0 percent this year and by 3.7 percent the next, said the IMF in its latest global forecast.



## Malaysia to sign preferential trade agreement with Iran

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — A Malaysian high-ranking trade delegation arrived in Tehran on Monday for holding talks with Iranian counterparts to begin or expand bilateral relationships and also signing a preferential trade agreement with Iran.

Dzulkifli Mahmud, the chief executive officer of Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation known as MATRADE, leads the 36-member delegation, Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported on Monday.

The delegation includes senior managers and envoys of companies from the private sector which are active in various spheres including offshore oil and gas equipment, air pumps, control and maintenance systems, spare parts, machinery, chemicals, medical equipment, constructional materials, etc.

The CEO of MATRADE said that a preferential trade agreement will be signed for the expansion of relations between the two countries.

Malaysian trade delegation is sched-

uled to attend a conference to be held at Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Tuesday to hold talks with Iranian entrepreneurs.

The visit of Malaysian delegation comes a week after Malaysian foreign Minister Anifah Aman's journey to Tehran last Tuesday where he met President Hassan Rouhani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh.

In his meeting with Zarif, Aman called

IMF is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.

Its primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system, the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other.

The Fund's mandate was updated in 2012 to include all macroeconomic and financial sector issues that bear on global stability.

## Iran hosting major LPG companies for 1st time

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — World prominent Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) companies are getting together in Tehran for the first time ever, in a two-day conference to present their latest achievements, Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported.

According to this report, representatives of companies supplying logistic and shipping services will attend the seminar which will run for two days on Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th May 2016.

"Every year the conference is held in a different



country and this year Iranian Commercial Gas Company managed to provide the condition for the event to be held in Iran for the first time", IRNA quoted Mohammad-Ali Barati, managing director of the company, as saying.

"On the sidelines of this conference there would be negotiations with the prominent LPG companies", Barati told IRNA.

Having abundant gas reserves Iran has a special place in the field of LPG products and in the post-sanctions opportunity it can have a more active presence in this sphere.

## British banks to hold Iran talks with Kerry this week

Some of Britain's biggest banks will hold talks this week with John Kerry, the U.S. Secretary of State, as they wrestle with the implications of last year's move to lift economic sanctions against Iran.

Sky News has learnt that the British Bankers' Association (BBA) has circulated a note to its members inviting them to send senior representatives to a meeting with Mr. Kerry, who will be in London to attend an anti-corruption summit.

The discussions will be held against an uncertain backdrop for UK banks, some of which are keen to do more business with Tehran but remain nervous about the consequences of deals which may be frowned upon by Washington.

Mr. Kerry has sought to allay concerns among foreign banks about forging new ties in Iran, saying last month that the U.S. "is not standing in the way, and will not stand in the way, of business that is permitted in Iran

since the [nuclear deal] took effect".

"There are now opportunities for foreign banks to do business with Iran.

"Unfortunately there seems to be some confusion among some foreign banks and we want to try and clarify that."

This week's meeting will take place just weeks after the banking industry's main lobbying group moved to establish a high-level panel to navigate the removal of western sanctions against Iran.

The BBA declined to comment on the invitation to its members to the meeting with Mr. Kerry, but has previously confirmed to Sky News that its Iran working group was in the process of being set up.

British banks have come under pressure from the Government to expand links with Tehran ahead of a trade visit to Iran led by Sajid Javid, the Business Secretary, which is due to take place later this month.

Sources said that many BBA mem-

bers, which include UK-headquartered and international banks with operations in Britain, had expressed unease about forging closer ties with Iran.

Jes Staley, the Barclays chief executive, responded to a letter from David Cameron earlier this year on the issue in which he referred to "the considerable divergence in both approach and intention between the EU, which is taking a positive approach towards Iran, and the U.S., where primary sanctions remain in place, thereby prohibiting U.S. individuals or entities from engaging directly or indirectly in business related to Iran".

The Prime Minister had accused Barclays of operating "in opposition to the policy of the UK Government" by declining to process customers' payments from Iranian entities.

UK-based exporters have complained that they have already slipped behind their competitors from France, Germany and Italy because of a lack

of support from the British Embassy in Tehran, which reopened last year, having been closed since 2011

Lord Lamont, who has been appointed as the Prime Minister's trade envoy to Iran, acknowledged that the UK was trailing its European rivals.

"Britain suffered a bit because the Government not only enforced sanctions but actively discouraged even legal trade while sanctions were in place, the result was that British trade collapsed by much more than that of Germany, France, Italy," he told Sky News in an interview in February.

"Even America has exported more to Iran recently than we have."

The anxiety among some London-based bankers stems both from U.S. lenders and American executives who work for British and other international banks.

Banks including Standard Chartered have been fined heavily for breaching sanctions against Iran in recent years.

(Source: Sky News)

## Iran, Oman eye new firm to market LNG

Top officials from Iran and Oman recently discussed options to form a company which will be registered in Oman with the sole responsibility of market natural gas to other parts of the world, a report said.

During the meeting, the officials also discussed ways implement the pipeline project via which Iran will export

28 million cubic meters of gas to Oman, reported Oman Observer.

"Oman and Iran will cooperate on the issue of oil prices," Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al Rumhy, Oman's Minister of Oil and Gas was quoted as saying in the report.

He added that his visit to Tehran was aimed at discussing issues hindering the implementation of the gas pipeline project.

Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, Iran's Oil Minister, said that South Korea has pledged to finance the project and purchase the gas.

(Source: Trade Arabia)

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### TAAX mulls expansion to Tehran, Muscat

Tehran and Muscat are looming large on the radar screen of Thai AirAsia X (TAAX) for its first foray into new markets.

The inauguration of regular services to the two cities by Thailand's first long-haul low-cost carrier could take place in August, following a planned launch announcement later this month.

Industry executives familiar with the issue said TAAX planned to offer four flights a week from its base in Bangkok's Don Mueang airport to the Iranian capital.

The airline would also operate three flights a week from Bangkok to the Omani capital.

Tehran and Muscat have been of interest to TAAX since Oct 1 last year when its Bangkok-Shanghai service got off the ground.



### Honda to recall 20 million more Takata airbags: Nikkei

Honda Motor Co on Monday said it had not made any announcements on additional air bags recalls after the Nikkei newspaper reported it would recall at least 20 million more of the safety devices made by Takata Corp.

Citing unnamed sources, the Japanese newspaper on Sunday reported that regions affected by the automaker's additional recall would include the United States, Europe, Asia, Oceania and Latin America.

U.S. safety regulators last week ordered automakers to further expand a massive global recall of potentially deadly airbags.

Honda, whose vehicles have been affected by roughly half of the air bag recalls announced so far, said however that no additional recalls had been announced.



### Google goes back to court over Android code

Oracle and Google will go back to court on Monday to determine whether Google unfairly used Oracle's property in the software it used to make the Android operating system for smart phones. Oracle wants \$8.8 billion for the use of about 7,000 lines of code, out of a total of 15 million lines in Android. If those lines are found to be critical and unfairly used, Google is likely to appeal. Failing all else, the company will have to dip into its cash — totaling over \$75 billion at the end of the first quarter.

At issue in Oracle v. Google is whether Oracle can claim a copyright on Java APIs and, if so, whether Google infringes these copyrights. When it implemented the Android OS, Google wrote its own version of Java.



## NEWS

## South Africa is trying to recover its tourism mojo

A weak rand and a government U-turn on restrictive visa rules are helping South Africa's tourism sector to stage a strong recovery after a shaky 2015.

But a ban affecting the country's international sports teams over their failure to field more black players risks setting the industry — an increasingly vital cog in a struggling economy — back again.

Foreign visitors dropped nearly 7 percent last year, partly due to new visa regulations requiring children to travel with full birth certificates and visitors from some countries, including China, to appear in person at a South African embassy, often requiring lengthy journeys.

The government relaxed those rules in October, and Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom said on Tuesday that the industry, which was also hit by health fears sparked by an Ebola outbreak in West Africa last spring, was on the mend.

"More than ever before, governments around the world are looking to tourism for economic growth. South Africa is no different," Hanekom told parliament.

"Tourism is recovering rapidly from last year's decline (and) 2016 promises to be a year of strong growth."

Over 1 million tourists arrived in South Africa in January, up 15 percent year on year, and the increase was 18 percent in February. Arrivals from China, where authorities now let agencies apply for visas on behalf of travelers, doubled over the period.

In 2013, tourism's direct contribution to South Africa's now ailing economy was 104 billion rand, about 2.9 percent of GDP.

The sector now accounts for more than 9 percent of economic output and supports over 1.5 million jobs, and the World Travel and Tourism Council estimates it will contribute more than 380 billion rand this year.

A 25 percent fall in the rand in 2015 has also helped this process.

South Africa's tourism capital Cape Town is the lowest-priced of 32 long haul destinations surveyed in this year's UK Post Office Holiday Money Report, and the third cheapest overall for British tourists.

(Source: Skift)



Visitors pose for pictures against Table Mountain at a viewing site in Cape Town, South Africa

# Iran's wonders: The world records in tourism attractions

"The most..." has been always an enticing description to human beings. This description is the main reason which has made a lot of tourists and travelers put Iran on their itinerary. Being described by "the most" is so attractive that many people are trying to make their country be known by it in various ways. For example, a tower is built at a point in the world to be the tallest tower in the world in order to become renowned as such and attract many tourists.

Iran, however, is a place for many record figures, but a lot of people know nothing about this. The following list encompasses 16 instances of "the most" remarkable records that Iran holds among all countries. It would be certainly a pleasure to read about them.

## ■ The world's biggest stone structure

The construction of Persepolis, or as has been recorded in some tablets "The City of the Persian People," started on the order of King Darius I in 518 B.C., some 55 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz on the opposite of Marvdasht Plain. The building took 120 years to become complete.

The huge stone complex with an overall area of 135,000 square meters is the biggest Achaemenid building which is totally made of stone. The interesting point is that no mortar has been used to keep the stones together and big pieces of stone have been joined together without the use of mortar.

Of course, in some cases, iron fittings known as swallowtail have been also used. The Persepolis complex consists of seven halls, bas-relief carvings, staircases, columns and two stone mausoleums.

## ■ The hottest point on earth

In the Lut Desert, just 80 km north of the city of Shahdad, there is a hill made up of volcanic lava with a total area of 480 square kilometers which is known as "Gandom-e Beryan (roasted wheat)" and also "Rig-e Soukhteh (burned sand)" which is the hottest point on earth with a temperature of 67 degrees centigrade in the shade! There is no form of life recognized at Gandom-e Beryan, which covers a space which measures 200 km long and 150 km wide.

The environmental conditions are so harsh that not only prevent the survival of all forms of fauna and flora, but even the bacteria cannot remain alive. As a result, dead bodies are not decomposed, but are dried under intense heat of the Sun.

Before this place was discovered by Professor Parviz Kordavani, the Libyan Desert in North Africa, where temperature goes as high up as 57.7 degrees Centigrade, was considered the hottest place on earth. That record has been now given to Gandom-e Beryan. If you actually want to visit the hottest point on the planet, you should plan your trip between November and April.

## ■ The tallest brick tower in the world

Gonbad-e Qabus Tower was built in 996 AD on the order of Qabus ibn Voshmgir, a king of Al-e Ziyar dynasty, in Gorgan (the present-day city of Gonbad-e Qabus), which was the capital city of their government. The tower stands on the top of Qabus ibn Voshmgir's tomb.

The building has been constructed using bricks and mortar and has been shaped like a multifaceted cylinder, which consist of the foundation, a water reservoir, the body, and a conical dome. Qabus Tower is located on the top of an earthen hill which stands about



From right above Narin Castle in Yazd, Tabriz Historic Bazaar, Namakdan Cave in Qeshm Island and Ghaboos tower in Gonbad, Golestan province

15 meters above the ground. The tower is 55 meters high which when added to the height of the hill, increases overall height of the tower from the ground to 70 meters.

## ■ The world's longest salt cave

Namakdan (salt shaker) Cave in Iran's southern Qeshm Island is about 6,580 meters long. Before the cave was discovered, Sodom Salt Cave in Palestine was considered the world's longest salt cave with an overall length of 5,685 meters. The flow of salty water on the floor of the cave is a pleasant view. The humidity of the island and penetration of water into the cave has led to downpour of saturated salty water over the body of stalagmites continuously changing their outline.

Namakdan Cave includes a salty lake with a depth of one meter, which is located 160 meters from the mouth of the cave. There is an underground river which gushes out of the depths of Namakdan Mountain, finds its way out and after solving salt on its way, comes out on the slopes of the mountain. The water flow has created a natural pool in the pit which is located opposite to it whose color is white.

## ■ The biggest urban adobe fabric in the world

The central Iranian city of Yazd is one of the most important historical cities in the country which is also home to a complete collection of buildings related to various periods of time including traditional bazaars, mosques, gardens, buildings, fire temples and so forth.

In addition, the city contains the world's biggest urban adobe fabric with an area of 743 hectares and a perimeter of 5,000 hectares, which is also the most pristine historical fabric in the entire country.

## ■ The biggest non-independent island in the world

Qeshm is the world's biggest non-independent island which is located in the most strategic location in the Persian Gulf; that is, at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. The island is about 120 km long with varying width at various points. The widest part of the island is located between the town of Laft and the Long Slope. The average width of the island is about 14 kilometers.

A large part of the northern coasts of the island is covered with mangrove forests over an area of 150 square kilometers. Qeshm Island has an area of 1,491 square kilometers and is thus bigger than 23 countries in the

world. For example, its area is 2.5 times that of Singapore, Bahrain and San Marino; 1.5 times that of Hong Kong, 5 times that of Maldives, and 70 times that of Macao.

## ■ The hottest spring in the world

Qinarjeh hot-water spring in south of the city of Meshkin Shahr, East Azarbaijan Province, is located at a height of 1,240 meters from the sea level on the northern slope of Sabalan Mountain close to four other mineral springs. This spa, whose temperature stands at 86 degrees Centigrade, is the world's hottest chloride mineral spring and has three mouths.

Due to therapeutic effects of minerals present in its water, especially high sulfur, the water of the spring is effective in treating such diseases as rickets and chronic forms of rheumatism. The high temperature of the spring also allays various kinds of pain and inflammation. There is a waterfall close to the spring which has added to the natural beauty and tourism attraction of Qinarjeh spring.

## ■ World's oldest cedar tree

A cedar tree near the city of Abarkuh is believed to be the oldest of its kind in the world as its age has been estimated at about 4,000-4,500 years. The girth of the tree is 11.4 meters on the ground and its height has been estimated at 25-28 meters. According to some local myths, the tree has been planted by the ancient Iranian prophet, Zoroaster.

## ■ The most ancient useable bridge in the world

This bridge is located at the center of the southwestern Iranian city of Dezful, in Khuzestan Province, and connects the eastern and western parts of the city. It has been a crossroads connecting the cities of Shushtar, Andimeshk and Dezful since very old times. According to historical accounts, the Dezful Bridge was built in 260 AD when Shapour I, the powerful Sassanid king, made 70,000 Roman captives to build the strong bridge.

The bridge has 14 mouths and the Dez River flows underneath. The structure had been first repaired by the Iranian king, Azed-od-Dowleh Deylami, followed by further reconstructions under Safavid and Pahlavi dynasties. The pillars of the bridge, however, have remained unchanged as they were built by the Sassanid king.

## ■ The oldest adobe structure in the world

The beautiful and ancient castle of Narin Qaleh in Meibod, Yazd Province, which is also known by local people as Narenj Qaleh, is the most prominent remaining relic of an-

cient urban architecture in that part of the country. Narin Qaleh is of high significance from various historical, geographical, architectural, urban, political, military, religious, and mythological viewpoints.

The structure has been built on top of a hill which overlooks its surroundings and, therefore, can be seen from a long distance afar. According to some local myths, the castle has been built at the time of the prophet Solomon.

## ■ The highest ventilator in the world

The octagonal ventilator built at Dowlatabad Garden in Yazd, central Iran, is the tallest ventilator in the world at a height of 33 meters from the ground.

## ■ The most ancient living animal in the world

Triops is a species of water creatures that is considered a living fossil because it has been around for the past 220 million years and is, thus, the most ancient animal species known to man. This creature lives in seasonal ponds in Iran's West Azarbaijan Province.

## ■ The world's highest natural arch

The mouth of Espahbod -e- Khorshid Cave (also a mythological fortress) is located on the side of the Firouzkouh road close to Doab bottleneck in Mazandaran Province. It is 19.75 meters long and 14.25 meters wide, which makes it the highest natural arch in the world. It stands about 15 meters above the ground and was discovered by speleologists in 1956.

## ■ The most ancient dam in the world

Kebar Dam is located at the 25th km of the old Qom - Kashan road and is considered to belong to Sassanid era. Despite the lapse of over 1,000 years and many quakes in that region, the dam still stands upright.

## ■ The strangest aqueduct in the world

The two-story Mon aqueduct near the city of Ardestan in central Iran is one of the scientific and engineering feats of ancient times. The water flow in each level of the aqueduct which is 800 years old is quite independent and no water from one level penetrates into the other. The aqueduct is two kilometers long and has an output of 60 liters of water per second.

(Source: Dream of Iran)

## PICTURE OF THE DAY

ISNA/Maziar Mohammadiyoun



Seagulls fly over the Caspian Sea on the coasts of Anzali port, northern Iran

فردا  
برای خواندن  
دیر است

۲۹

**TOMORROW IS TOO LATE TO READ**

بیست و نهمین  
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**کتاب  
تهران**

۱۵ تا ۲۵  
اردیبهشت ۹۵  
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ساعت نمایشگاه: ۱۰ تا ۲۰

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# Technicians from SWIFT left Bangladesh Bank exposed to hackers: police

Bangladesh's central bank became more vulnerable to hackers when technicians from SWIFT, the global financial network, connected a new bank transaction system to SWIFT messaging three months before an \$81 million cyber heist, Bangladesh police and a bank official alleged.

The technicians introduced the vulnerabilities when they connected SWIFT to Bangladesh's first real-time gross settlement (RTGS) system, said Mohammad Shah Alam, the head of the criminal investigation department of the Bangladesh police who is leading the probe into one of the biggest cyber-heists in the world.

He and a senior central bank official said the SWIFT employees made missteps in connecting the RTGS to the central bank's messaging platform.

The technicians did not appear to have followed their own procedures to ensure the system was secure, according to the Bangladesh Bank official, who said he was not authorized to publicly comment because of the ongoing investigation.

Because of this, SWIFT messaging at the central bank was widely accessible, including remote access with only a simple password, police said. It had no firewalls and only a rudimentary switch.

"It was the responsibility of SWIFT to check for weaknesses once they had set up the system. But it does not appear to have been done," said the bank official.

SWIFT's chief spokeswoman Natasha de Teran said she had no comment on the allegations by authorities in Bangladesh. She also declined comment on any aspect of the Bangladesh project, including whether the firm had deployed any employees or outside contractors to Bangladesh Bank.

The officials in Dhaka discussed their findings with Reuters ahead of a meeting this week in Basel, Switzerland where



Bangladesh Bank officials have said their governor and a lawyer appointed by the bank will discuss recovery of about \$81 million stolen by the hackers with the head of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and a senior executive from SWIFT.

Bangladesh Bank officials have said they believed SWIFT, and the New York Fed, bear some responsibility for the February cyber heist. SWIFT has declined comment on that claim.

## ■ No inherent risk

The RTGS, which enables domestic banks and the central bank to settle large transfers between themselves, was installed at Bangladesh Bank in October last year and then connected to SWIFT. In February, hackers sent fraudulent mes-

sages, ostensibly from the central bank in Dhaka, on the SWIFT system to the New York Fed seeking to transfer nearly \$1 billion from Bangladesh Bank's account there.

According to the Bangladeshi police, the technicians linked the RTGS to SWIFT computers on the same network as about 5,000 central bank computers that are accessible from the open Internet.

Instead, they should have set up a separate local area network, or LAN, that could not connect to the rest of the bank or the Internet, police said.

The technicians also failed to install a firewall between the RTGS and the SWIFT room so that the bank could block mali-

cious traffic from coming into the facility.

## ■ Remote access

During the job, the technicians set up a wireless connection so they could access computers in the locked SWIFT room from other offices inside the bank. When they finished, they failed to disconnect the remote access, which was only secured with a simple password, police and the bank official said.

They also failed to disable a USB port on the computer attached to the SWIFT system, as is usual for critical networks to prevent malicious software from being installed through a tainted thumb drive, police said.

But another central bank official familiar with the SWIFT room operations confirmed that the port was "active" until the heist came to light. He had no explanation.

The hackers used malicious software to modify the SWIFT messaging software to help hide their tracks.

Bangladeshi police said they have asked SWIFT to facilitate interviews with the SWIFT technicians. "Whether it is intentional or negligence, we are trying to find out," said Alam.

SWIFT, or the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication, is used by about 8,000 banks around the world to order funds transfers and other communications. It is connected to RTGS systems installed at scores of banks worldwide, and there have been no reports of problems elsewhere with connections between those two systems.

Former central bank governor Mohammed Farashuddin, who is heading an internal probe by Bangladesh Bank into the heist, said SWIFT needed to review its technology in the wake of the heist.

"It seems to be a case of extreme carelessness," he told Reuters. He declined to provide more details saying a final report was due in the next few weeks.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Oil Rises as Canadian Fires Eclipse Saudi Oil Minister Reshuffle

Crude rose as expanding wildfires in Canada knocked out about 1 million barrels a day of output, and after Saudi Arabia replaced Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi with a close ally of the deputy crown prince.

Futures increased as much as 2.9 percent in New York and 2.5 percent in London. The blaze has led to cuts equivalent to about 40 percent of Canada's oil-sands production, based on IHS Energy estimates.

Oil has rebounded after slumping to the lowest level since 2003 earlier this year amid signs the global oversupply will ease as U.S. output declines. While American production has dropped, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has boosted supply to more than 33 million barrels a day, underpinned by gains from Iran and Iraq.

"The market is taking a cautious approach to the Canadian fires and keeping the price a little higher given it's in the vicinity of the main producing region," said David Lennox, an analyst at Fat Prophets in Sydney.

(Source: Bloomberg)

### Negative rates hit global shipping market

The owner of the world's biggest shipping line says negative interest rates are hurting the industry by delaying the consolidation wave so badly needed.

The monetary policy environment "means that consolidation will be much slower because it's easy for banks to keep weak shipping companies above water," Nils Smedegaard Andersen, chief executive officer of A.P. Moeller-Maersk A/S, said in an interview.

It's the latest example of how negative interest rates are distorting markets and potentially even slowing growth. The policy has so far had limited success in reviving inflation while money managers in countries with negative rates are warning of the risk of asset price bubbles. With the unintended consequences potentially including a slower global shipping recovery, questions as to the policy's efficacy are bound to persist.

"Politicians aren't making the reforms that are needed and are leaving it to the monetary policy makers to solve the economic problems that many countries face with low competitiveness and low investment levels," Andersen said. A reliance on cheap finance in container shipping has led to "many negative effects," he said.

(Source: Bloomberg)



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## Complementary reconstructive surgery for acid attack victims

**MEDICAL** TEHRAN — Acid attack victims can enjoy **d e s k** free of cost cosmetic surgery by 300 cosmetic surgeon specialists across the country, in private and state-run hospitals, the head of Iranian Society of Plastic Surgeons reported on Saturday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 40th Iranian Society of Plastic Surgeons, Abolhassan Imami said 300 plastic surgery specialists have agreed to waive the cost of surgery as a humanitarian act, according to IRNA.

Although bouncing back to normal pre-body shaped features is not possible, though our surgeons endeavor to bring back the physical generally performed to improve functions, but may also be done to approximate a normal appearance.

In acid burns, Imami explained, although plastic surgery is intended to correct dysfunctional areas of the body and improve their functions, reverting back to normal body features is impossible.

## Tram collision avoidance system ready for trials

The technical supervisory authority in the German state of Hessen has approved a new tram collision avoidance system with automatic emergency braking developed by Bosch Engineering, clearing the way for trials on the tram network in Frankfurt-am-Main.

Based on technology developed by Bosch for the automotive industry, the system warns the driver of an impending collision and applies the brakes independently if the driver's reaction is too slow to avoid an accident.

Bosch launched its first tram driver advisory system in 2014, but the latest version is the first to offer an automatic braking function. The manufacturer says the technology could ultimately provide a basis for the full automation of light rail vehicles.

The system comprises three pieces of hardware: a video sensor, radar sensor, and a rail control unit. With an aperture of up to 70m, the radar sensor can monitor up to 160m of track ahead of the tram, measuring the speed and distance of any road vehicles or other trams. The sensor can also detect static objects such as buffer stops.

The video sensor works with the radar sensor to provide accurate and rapid monitoring of the line ahead. Data from both sensors is processed by the control unit, which also takes into account other factors such as the speed of the vehicle to provide a detailed image of the environment.

If the system detects an object endangering the tram, the driver receives a visual and acoustic warning in the cab. If the driver fails to react within two seconds, the system automatically makes an emergency brake application. However, the system will still enable the driver to deactivate the brake or increase the braking power at any time.

(Source: railjournal.com)

## Airbus sets sights on the stratosphere with glider flight

Airbus completed a test flight of a glider set to eventually travel to the edge of space, in a pioneering step into the stratosphere.

The Perlan 2's flight, from an airstrip in the western U.S. state of Nevada, took place two hours after the planned 01:45 (2045 GMT) start time due to heavy rain.



It lasted just a few minutes -- instead of 30 minutes to two hours as scheduled -- because the aircraft is considered more efficient in dry weather, according to chief pilot Jim Payne.

"It was short," said chief executive Tom Enders, who served as co-pilot, said after exiting the plane. "Because of the clouds, we couldn't see any more otherwise we would still be up there."

The flight, part of a series in recent months from the mountainous area just east of the Lake Tahoe resort, aims to test how well an aircraft and its crew can fare in conditions similar to those on Mars, with extremely thin atmosphere and bitterly cold temperatures.

Airbus, supporting the Mission Perlan 2 group that launched the ambitious project, aims to test every aspect of the unpowered aircraft, flying it at various speeds and altitudes and subjecting it to different scenarios of stress and vibration.

Its designers hope to show that the lightweight aircraft, with its extremely long, thin wings, is strong enough to resist intense stresses that could destroy a less solid plane.

In the end, only stability, speed and efficiency were tested, as the plane flew at just 7,000 feet (2,130 meters) for its brief journey.

The "airplane is very stable. We got what we called dead beat response, so the way we like it," said Payne.

(Source: AFP)

# Iran through the eyes of a teenage amateur astronomer

By Salman Hameed

"Every day, every night, I dream of floating in space." These are the words of Sepideh, an Iranian teenage girl who is in love with astronomy and wants to be an astronaut.

Sepideh lives in a small town in the southwestern Iranian province of Fars. A physics teacher leads the local astronomy club, and girls and boys take out telescopes at night to watch the sky. The sighting of a bright shooting star leads to screams of joy and laughter amongst the teenagers.

These are not the Iranian images we usually see in the media. But these are presented in a beautiful documentary, Sepideh: Reaching for the Stars, released abroad in 2013 and available on iTunes in the U.S.

Directed by Danish filmmaker, Berit Madsen, the film documents three years in the life of an Iranian teenager named Sepideh Hooshyar. It is through her eyes that we get a glimpse of Iran that we rarely see.

We first meet Sepideh when she is 16 years old. A few years previous to this, her father had died, suddenly. As an outlet to deal with this tragic loss, she buys a telescope and becomes enamored with astronomy. Instead of posters of teenage pop stars, Albert Einstein's image looms large in her bedroom. In fact, she is in a constant conversation with Einstein in the form of letters that she writes to him in Farsi. She has read his biography and connects both with his solitude and his fierce determination.

In some ways, Einstein becomes, for her, a father figure. She recites some of her letters in the film, a device that allows the audience an intimate look into her innermost thoughts.

These reflections on loss and the meaning of life make sense when juxtaposed with striking images of her carrying a telescope almost as big as herself in the desolate hills of her hometown. Her telescope,



## Sepideh's desire to be an astronaut draws from the first Iranian in space, tech entrepreneur Anousheh Ansari.

after all, would have been able to detect galaxies like our own in the night sky, and she would have known that the photons from these galaxies hitting the retina of her eyes started their journeys long before the existence of humans on our planet.

### ■ Sepideh's desire

But Sepideh's desire to be an astronaut draws from the first Iranian in space, tech entrepreneur Anousheh Ansari. Like most Iranians, Sepideh closely followed Ansari's trip to the International Space Station in 2006, and now she repeatedly watches the footage of Ansari floating in space. This is what she wants to do one day!

We also meet Sepideh's mother in the film. She is caring but also has other concerns. A drought in the region has caused economic hardship on the family. She is unsure if she can support Sepideh's university education, let alone the study of astrono-

my. Her maternal uncle is also concerned about the in-town gossip about her leaving the house at night to see the stars. However, amongst all this, she has the support of a local physics teacher. He has been promoting astronomy in the area for decades and wants to finish an observatory that can house a telescope.

I do not want to give away the twists and turns in the story, as there are plenty (though, rest assured, no scenes were recreated in the film). But I should mention that more than any well-meaning political film, this documentary allows us to see the human side of Iran. We get a glimpse of life inside Iranian homes, mannerisms of family interactions, we see kids learning English in classrooms, Friday prayer at a mosque, the tomb of Cyrus, and the bureaucracy of a small town.

It would be too easy to say that there are no differences between Iran and the

U.S. of course, there are cultural differences. But these differences enliven and enrich the understanding of our world.

### ■ Faraway place

A monoculture planet would be a boring place. Underneath the differences, however, we can also see a common humanity and we can recognize familiar fears, desires and hopes in this faraway place.

The love of the night sky is also universal. Sepideh finds solace in thinking about the vastness of space. Shot by award-winning astrophotographer Babak Tafreshi, the movie has beautiful time-lapse photography of the night sky, including the passing of the Milky Way over the Fars Province of Iran. Indeed, our knowledge of the scale of the universe gives us an appropriate lesson in humility, and makes a mockery of our political rivalries on this rocky planet located 30,000 light years from the center of our own galaxy.

On the ground, challenges for Sepideh are real. She is trying to defy gender stereotypes and career expectations.

A choice of a career in astronomy can be tough anywhere. I did not have to face the same barriers as Sepideh. And yet, when I decided to pursue astronomy for my own undergraduate studies (and again with graduate studies), I was met with resistance from my family in Pakistan with the refrain: "How are you going to feed your family in the future?"

Sepideh's determination to pursue her dreams is inspirational and transcends cultural boundaries. Sepideh: Reaching for the Stars is not only a hopeful film, but it is also a telescope that provides us with a view of a culture halfway across the globe from us.

(Source: npr.org)

Salman Hameed is Charles Taylor Chair and Associate Professor of Integrated Science and Humanities at Hampshire College. He is also the director of Center for the Study of Science in Muslim Societies (SSiMS).

## Take a daily aspirin to prevent heart attack, stroke

Adults ages 50 to 69 who are at high risk for heart attack or stroke should take a daily low-dose aspirin to prevent both heart attacks and strokes as well colorectal cancer. That's the latest advice from the United States Preventive Services Task Force, an influential expert panel that published a final recommendation last month in Annals of Internal Medicine.

It was the first time a major medical organization took this "new approach" of endorsing the broad use of aspirin to prevent cancer, "which makes a great deal of sense," said Eric Jacobs, a researcher at the American Cancer Society. The recommended dose is a low-dose or "baby" aspirin, typically sold in doses of 81 milligrams.

Low-dose aspirin has long been recommended for some people who have had a heart attack or some forms of stroke, and for certain people at high risk for heart disease. Several of the factors that put one at risk for heart disease — such as obesity and being physically inactive — also play a role in colon cancer.

### ■ Aspirin too risky

Some experts think aspirin is too risky for people who have never suffered a heart attack, since aspirin increases the risks of potentially dangerous internal bleeding.

But the task force's review of the evidence concluded that people in their 50s and 60s who have at least a



10 percent chance of having a heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years could benefit from a daily low-dose aspirin.

If you've ever had a gastrointestinal bleed or ulcer, you probably should not take aspirin. Blood thinners, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, omega-3 supplements and uncontrolled high blood pressure also increase your risk of bleeding, and the risk of a bleed is higher for men than for women. Daily aspirin therapy should continue for at least 10 years.

Aspirin may also lower the risk of other types of cancer, including esophageal and stomach cancers, as well as cancers of the breast, prostate and lung, though the level of evidence for these "is too weak to draw strong conclusions" Dr. Jacobs said.

(Source: The NYT)

## Scientists watch bacterial sensor respond to light in real time

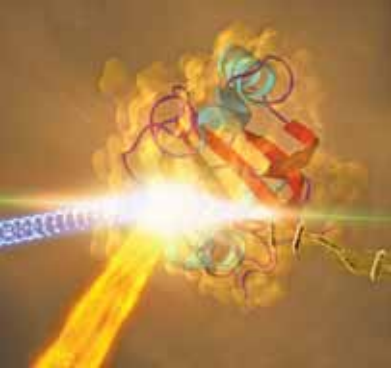
A number of important biological processes, such as photosynthesis and vision, depend on light. But it's hard to capture responses of biomolecules to light because they happen almost instantaneously.

Now, researchers have made a giant leap forward in taking snapshots of these ultrafast reactions in a bacterial light sensor. Using the world's most powerful X-ray laser at the Department of Energy's SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, they were able to see atomic motions as fast as 100 quadrillionths of a second -- 1,000 times faster than ever before.

Further, "We're the first to succeed in taking real-time snapshots of an ultrafast structure transition in a protein, in which a molecule excited by light relaxes by rearranging its structure in what is known as trans-to-cis isomerization," says the study's principal investigator, Marius Schmidt from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

The technique could widely benefit studies of light-driven, ultrafast atomic motions. For example, it could reveal:

- How visual pigments in the human eye respond to light, and how absorbing too much of it damages them.
- How photosynthetic organisms turn light into chemical energy -- a process that could serve as a model for the development of new energy technologies.
- How atomic structures respond to light pulses of different shape and duration -- an important first step toward



controlling chemical reactions with light.

The "new data show for the first time how the bacterial sensor reacts immediately after it absorbs light," says Andy Aquila, a researcher at SLAC's Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS), a DOE Office of Science User Facility. The "initial response, which is almost instantaneous, is absolutely crucial because it creates a ripple effect in the protein, setting the stage for its biological function. Only LCLS's X-ray pulses are bright enough and short enough to capture biological processes on this ultrafast timescale." The results were published in Science.

The team looked at the light-sensitive part of a protein called "photoactive yellow protein," or PYP. It functions as an "eye" in purple bacteria, helping them sense blue light and stay away from light that is too energetic and potentially harmful.

(Source: Science Daily)

## Could this massive, wind-powered skyscraper solve global warming?

To help solve the ongoing (and growing) crisis of global warming, there are constructive ideas and then there are downright insane concepts. Given this inherent threshold, it's not the least bit of a stretch to say that a project dubbed the Global Cooling Skyscraper conceived by the Rome-based firm Paolo Venturella Architecture falls squarely within the confines of the latter group. Why do we say this? Because the firm wants to construct an incredibly large (and we mean large) greenhouse to install between Earth and the sun. Seriously.

By claiming the only way to solve the riddle of global rising temperatures is by adopting a "global strategy," Paolo Venturella says its Global Cooling Skyscraper is among a small crowd of innovative ideas that actually provide a solution. Equating it to functioning in a similar manner as a solar tower, the skyscraper would effectively cool the entire planet by facilitating the natural rapid flow of air from hot to cold.

In essence, the continued strong flow of air would send



hot air away from Earth, thus decreasing the overall temperature experienced across the globe.

The "air flows restore better climate conditions and moreover, generate renewable energies by wind turbines placed inside the structures," reads the Paolo Venturella project page.

### ■ Amazing and surprising effect

"Furthermore, this structure creates an amazing and surprising effect. Since it has to solve a problem for the entire planet, its dimension is over scaled. It has to be a unique and continuous structure, placed in a single point, and cantilever on both sides."

Aside from its efforts to lower the planet's temperatures, the Global Cooling Skyscraper also figures to look rather futuristic — or Borg-like, if we're being honest.

Furthermore, the structure itself would look wildly different depending on where an onlooker was located around Earth. For instance, those residing near either the North or South Pole see a vertical building while anyone situated near the equator sees a horizontal structure.

Is this the revolutionary answer to solving climate change? Likely not, as most concepts as wildly off-the-charts as the Global Cooling Skyscraper tend to never see the light of day. Though you can't deny the sheer amount of remarkable imagination required to devise such an unconventional solution.

(Source: Digital Trends)



Amid fierce fighting after the Taliban captured the northern Afghan city of Kunduz last year, U.S. special forces advisers repeatedly asked their commanders how far they were allowed to go to help local troops retake the city.

They got no answer, according to witnesses interviewed in a recently declassified, heavily redacted Pentagon report that lays bare the confusion over rules of engagement governing the mission in Afghanistan.

As the Taliban insurgency gathers strength, avoiding enemy fire has become increasingly difficult for advisers, who have been acting as consultants rather than combatants since NATO forces formally ceased fighting at the end of 2014.

In the heat of the battle, lines can be blurred, and the problem is not exclusive to Afghanistan: questions have arisen over the role of U.S. troops in Iraq after a U.S. Navy SEAL was killed by ISIL terrorist group this month.

"How far do you want to go?" is not a proper response to "How far do you want us to go?" one special forces member told investigators in a report into the U.S. air strikes on a hospital in Kunduz that killed 42 medical staff, patients and caretakers.

That incident was the biggest single tragedy of the brief capitulation of Kunduz to Taliban militants, and there is no suggestion that the mistake was the result of a lack of clarity over the rules of engagement.

But the 700-page report, much of it blacked out for security reasons, sheds light on how the rules are not fully understood, even by some troops on the ground, compromising the mission to stabilize the nation and defeat a worsening insurgency.

The issues exposed in the report are likely to be considered by the new U.S. commander in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson, as he prepares to make recommendations in the coming weeks that may clarify or expand the level of combat support the U.S.-led training mission can provide.

"It's not a strategy and, in fact, it's a recipe for disaster in that kind of kinetic environment," said the soldier, who, like others in the report, was not identified.

He added that his unit, whose role was to advise and assist Afghan forces

## Pentagon report reveals confusion among U.S. troops over Afghan mission



without engaging in combat, asked three times for commanders to clarify the rules governing their mission.

"Sadly, the only sounds audible were the sounds of crickets ... though those were hard to hear over the gunfire."

### ■ U.S. mission under review

While acknowledging a lingering "lack of understanding in the West" about the U.S. and NATO role in Afghanistan, U.S. military spokesman Brigadier General Charles Cleveland denied there was confusion among troops over the broader mission.

More than 9,000 U.S. soldiers were "re-trained" on the rules of engagement following missteps in Kunduz, in an effort to reduce future misunderstandings, he said.

Critics say the confusion comes from political expediency, because U.S. leaders are keen to portray the Afghan operation as designed mainly to help local forces fight for themselves.

"The rules of engagement are trapped in the jaws of political confusion about the mission," a senior Western official told Reuters.

"Nobody in Western capitals seems willing to admit that Afghanistan is a worsening war zone and ... that their troops are still battling out a combat mission on a daily basis," added the official, who declined to be named.

Until the end of 2014, when their

combat role officially ended, NATO forces in Afghanistan peaked at more than 130,000 troops, most of them American. NATO's presence today is a fraction of the size.

### ■ Different operations can merge

Around 10,000 U.S. troops are divided between the NATO train-and-assist mission called Resolute Support and a U.S.-only counter-terrorism operation against militant groups that include al Qaeda and ISIL but not the Taliban.

Under publicly declared rules of engagement, U.S. advisers in Resolute Support generally cannot attack Taliban targets except in self defense.

As government forces have struggled, however, the definition of "self defense" has appeared less sharply defined, with some U.S. air strikes conducted to defend partnered Afghan units.

The Kunduz report indicates at least some U.S. troops have been sent into battle with questions unanswered.

The Green Beret complained that failure to provide clear guidance represented "moral cowardice", and that political leaders intentionally keep the mission vague.

That allows them to "reap the rewards of success without facing the responsibility of failure," he added.

Soldiers pleaded for "clearer guidance" and more clarification of overly

complicated rules, according to investigators.

The Pentagon has not fully publicized rules governing the use of force by U.S. troops, who may be called upon to act under either type of mission, sometimes in the same battle.

In the four days leading up to the hospital attack, U.S. special forces called in nine close air support strikes under the authority of counter-terrorism, and 13 under Resolute Support, according to the report.

As part of self-defense, coalition troops have "some latitude" in calling air strikes on militant targets that may not be directly attacking them, but could soon pose a threat, Cleveland said.

Last year the Pentagon announced that Afghan forces could be helped under extreme conditions.

Additionally, under a "Person with Designated Special Status" classification, Afghan units operating closely with international advisers can be protected by air strikes as if they were coalition forces, according to Cleveland.

### ■ Who is the enemy?

Further complicating matters are counter-terrorism rules that allow strikes against al-Qaeda, as well as militants linked to ISIL which did not exist when the U.S. military intervened in Afghanistan in 2001, but not the Taliban.

In recent weeks U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have reported that al-Qaeda and the Taliban are working more closely together, signaling that the dominant Taliban group could once again be attacked by more air strikes.

Calling the authorities in Afghanistan "exceptionally complex," previous training had failed to prevent confusion, the Kunduz report found.

Prior to deploying to Afghanistan, commanders made clear that "combat operations was mostly a thing of the past," another special forces soldier said in the report.

On the ground, however, things were more complicated.

The second officer said he went into the Kunduz operation unsure of which authorities his unit would be operating under.

The lack of explicit instructions led the officer to choose his "default" of Resolute Support authorities, which he described as "just the safe bet."

(Source: Reuters)

## Post-modern coup II

➔ The shake-up comes at a critical time as Ankara is engaged in heavy battles with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan) in the southeast as well as Iraqi soil. Turkey is also grappling with an influx of Syrian refugees into its borders.

Turkey's unwise and defeated policies have also played a crucial role in degrading Davutoglu's position.

Cases such as battle with PKK, Syria crisis, Turkey's direct role in interfering in Syria's internal affairs, as well as a call for stripping all Turkish parties of their parliamentary immunity to allow for prosecution in an apparent bid to intensify pressure on pro-Kurdish opposition lawmakers, have turned to be Turkey's domestic and international policy challenges.

In addition, the economic turmoil, devaluation of the country's currency, as well as the sagging stock market have put in danger Davutoglu's stance as a successful leader.

Another thorny issue between Davutoglu and Erdogan is the agreement with the European Union (EU).

Different names have surfaced to succeed Davutoglu. However, in the upcoming coming meeting of

AKP central executive committee, the next prime minister would actually be a sign that the post of prime minister would be dissolved and its authorities will be handed over to the president. Also, the current parliamentary system of the government would be replaced with a presidential one. This means that form Erdogan's point of view, Turkish parliamentary system is in the waiting room.

Even if not successful in changing the Constitution, Erdogan has said he will execute Party Presidential system, which he says is important for the party's integrity and 2019 elections.

Considering all the challenges, will the AKP survive? The fact is that the Justice and Development Party currently does not have any alternative in Turkey's political scene. Economic and social welfare schemes have played a decisive role in the party's election. If the Party manages to survive the crises, it will be successful in holding the power and if nothing unpredicted happens, the AKP will keep on reigning Turkey.

Other parties will have the chance to compete with Erdogan. The Republican People's Party (CHP/Cum-

huriyet Halk Partisi) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP/Halklaran Demokratik Partisi) are trying to revive their statues. However, it all depends on the next Turkish government and how successful Davutoglu's successor will be in solving the current crises.

Ahmet Davutoglu, who previously served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs upon taking office as prime minister, vowed to reduce tensions with neighbors, a promise not delivered yet. In fact tensions have grown in his tenure. Turkey's foreign relations with Iran, Syria, Armenia, and Russia have reached to a critical level and problems have expanded.

Despite all the above-mentioned issues, many leaders of Turkey's opposition parties have slammed the ouster of Prime Minister Davutoglu as a "palace coup" aimed at consolidating president Erdogan's power. Many consider the move as the February 28th coup against Necmettin Erbakan, therefore, we can call this change the postmodern coup II.

The issue that seems critical to the people is that if a change is taking place it should be democratic, in a clam atmosphere and without any chaos.

## Philippines election: Rodrigo Duterte tipped to win

Andy Bautista, head of the Philippines presidential election commission, said voter turnout in Monday's election was estimated at 80 percent, which he said was a record in the country.

While authorities described the overall conduct of the elections as peaceful, police said at least 10 people died across the country in election day violence as gunmen attacked polling stations, ambushed vehicles and stole vote-counting machines.

Based on 58 percent of votes counted, Rodrigo

Duterte, whose controversial campaign focused on a pledge to kill criminals, had 10,058,740 votes, GMA, a national news website, said, citing figures from the election commission. He was followed by Grace Poe at 5,713,909 and Manuel Roxas at 5,562,958.

"I ain't there until I am there," Duterte told CNN Philippines after receiving the early results. "If it is my destiny to be there then I accept it"

In the vice-presidential race, former dictator Ferdinand Marcos' son, Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr,

took an early lead, according to the unofficial results.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines National Election Monitoring Center said in a statement that they monitored 22 election-related violent incidents.

In the worst attack, seven people were shot dead in an ambush before dawn in Rosario, a town just outside of Manila known for political violence, Chief Inspector Jonathan del Rosario, spokesman for a national police election monitoring task force, told the AFP news agency.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## City Bank's support made the intl. book fair possible

■ **ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Dr. Amir Masoud Shahramnia, deputy managing director of TIBF said that if it wasn't for the City Bank's support, "Shhr-Aftab" complex couldn't get ready to hold the exhibition, City Bank office of public relations reported.

Referring to the presence of City Bank as agent bank at the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), Dr. Shahramnia noted, "City Bank has always been active in the social and cultural sphere and hence we are glad that once again City Bank fulfilled its duty as the agent bank in the 29th TIBF".

He further added, "Shhr-Aftab complex couldn't get ready to hold the ex-

hibition if it wasn't for the City Bank's support so we must be thankful for all the efforts of City bank's directors in supporting this huge project.

Meanwhile, Ali Larijani, the speaker of Iran's parliament has also praised the efforts of City Bank in support of the publishers.

In this regard, Mehdi Safarinia, head of region 6 Qom administration said, "During a meeting attended by parliament speaker, referring to the bank's activities, Dr. Larijani praised the efforts of City Bank, especially during the New Year and also for providing electronic services across the country.

## NEWS

## Turkish president slams EU 'dictatorship' against refugee crisis

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has accused the EU of "dictatorship" and "cruelty" over a recent wave of refugees fleeing widespread violence in their home countries.



Addressing an audience attending a short film competition titled "Mercy and Justice" in Istanbul, Erdogan said European nations had "no mercy and no justice."

The Turkish president has already thrown into doubt the future of a deal with the EU which would allow Turkish citizens visa-free travel in Europe.

Erdogan has suggested that Turkey wouldn't meet a EU demand for his country to reform its anti-terrorism legislation.

His harsh words against the EU came after Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who negotiated the deal, announced he would step down later this month following a rift with Erdogan.

Europe is facing an unprecedented influx of refugees who are fleeing conflict-ridden zones in Africa and the Middle East, particularly Syria.

Over 183,000 asylum seekers have reached Europe via the Mediterranean so far this year, according to the latest figures by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Over 1,350 refugees perished at sea during the first four months of 2016, mostly along the Central Mediterranean route. The number stood at 1,733 for the same period in 2015, the IOM announced on May 3.

Refugees taking the Libya-Italy route are mostly from West Africa and the Horn of Africa, while refugees landing in Greece and taking the Balkans route are Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis, fleeing from war and persecution.

Many blame the major European powers for the unprecedented exodus, saying their policies have led to a surge in terrorism and war in the violence-hit regions, forcing more people out of their homes.

In his speech, Erdogan also leveled strident criticism against the EU over leaving Turkey alone in what he said is the fight against Daesh terrorists.

"None of those who say they have been fighting against Daesh terrorist network in Syria, neither have they suffered as many casualties as us nor paid a price as much as we did," he said.

"They left us alone in our fight against this network, which has been hurting us through bombers and attacks against Kilis," Erdogan claimed.

"The difference between the reactions to the Ankara and Istanbul bombings and the reactions to the activities in Paris and Brussels, is nothing else but a concrete injustice," he added, referring to terrorist attacks in France and Belgium.

The comments by Erdogan come even as Turkey itself is accused of supporting militant groups operating to topple President Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

(Source: Press TV)

## France to create regional 'de-radicalization' centers: PM

France will create centers in each region of the country to de-radicalize people or prevent them becoming involved in extremist groups, the prime minister said Monday as he laid out new anti-terror measures.

"The fight against radicalism is without doubt the big challenge of our generation," Manuel Valls said, flanked by the interior and justice ministers.

The plan, which will cost an additional 40 million Euros (\$45.5 million) by 2018 on top of the current funding, aims to double existing efforts to try to help people already in jihadist networks or those likely to join such groups.

Valls said the first de-radicalization centre could be set up by this summer.

The measures are a response to the deaths of 147 people in terrorist attacks in France last year.

Extremist gunmen stormed the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo satirical newspaper and a Jewish supermarket in January 2015, killing 17 people, and then 130 people were killed in coordinated attacks on the capital claimed by the ISIL terrorist group last November.

Both sets of attacks were carried out mainly by French citizens who had become radicalized and fought abroad alongside terrorist groups.

The authorities consider nearly 10,000 people in France to be radicalized and capable of violent actions, according to Le Parisien newspaper.

(Source: AFP)

## Bank Pasargad at the peak of international banking

■ **ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Bank Pasargad has expanded the domain of its brokerage relationships in various countries around the globe, the bank's office of public relations reported.

According to this report, having a dedicated and capable team in international affairs directorate and with the constant connection to the SWIFT which has never been interrupted even during sanctions, now in the post-sanctions era Pasargad Bank has expanded the domain of its brokerage relationships in various countries. Exchanging SWIFT code with 42 new banks in Italy, Germany, France, Finland, Denmark, England, Spain, Slovakia,

Poland, Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Ireland, Greece, Japan, South Korea, China, Bangladesh, Oman, Iraq, Bahrain and Turkey, the bank now is related to over 250 banks worldwide by SWIFT. Based on the report, Bank Pasargad currently possesses 96 bank accounts in foreign broker banks in 19 countries with different currencies and using its extensive broker network in these countries, the bank is able to provide different international foreign currency services (opening L/C and related exchanges, registration or orders, receiving bills of exchange, issuing different forex guarantees, forex exchanges, forex treasury, delivering bills and invoices and settling accounts,) to customers.

■ **ECONOMY** TEHRAN —

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"A mother's love is more beautiful than any fresh flower"  
Debasish Mridha

NEWS

## UN spotlights role of midwives in achieving development targets

Every year, some 300,000 women still die during pregnancy and childbirth and almost three million babies do not survive their first four weeks of life, yet a majority of these deaths could be averted by trained midwives, the United Nations said on Thursday as it marked the International Day of the Midwife with a call for strengthened skills and investments in midwifery.

"Midwives are our heroes and the backbone of sexual and reproductive health. Let us support them and the women and newborns at the heart of their care," said Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Saluting the contribution of midwives to saving the lives of women, adolescent girls and newborns, sometimes under very difficult circumstances, the executive director emphasized that midwives are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Well-trained and supported midwives working in communities are uniquely positioned to provide the compassionate, respectful and culturally sensitive care a woman needs during pregnancy and childbirth," Mr. Osotimehin said.

"Midwifery is equally important for newborns during the critical first month of life, and is a significant contribution to sexual and reproductive health in general," he added. The International Day of the Midwife is observed around the world on 5 May. This year's theme is Women and Newborns: The Heart of Midwifery.

The UNFPA executive director noted that while in the past 25 years, the world has almost halved maternal deaths, the vast majority of these largely preventable deaths take place in developing and crisis-affected countries.

"If deployed in larger numbers, trained midwives could avert approximately two thirds of these deaths. Significant investments in midwifery are essential if the world is to achieve its ambitious goals of reducing maternal and newborn deaths," Mr. Osotimehin said.

For its part, UNFPA is helping to train and support thousands of midwives in more than 100 countries. The executive director highlighted a recent survey estimating that in 57 of these countries, the agency has trained 66,000 midwives over the past seven years.

"These critical health-care providers can help more than 11 million women to give birth safely each year, but much more needs to be done," the Executive Director said.

"On this International Day of the Midwife, we at UNFPA renew our commitment to working with global partners and countries to strengthen midwifery skills and capacities. We call on countries to acclaim and reward midwives who are working in challenging and hard-to-reach areas, where their services are most needed. We also urge countries to invest in quality training, good working conditions, decent salaries, adequate workforce policies and possibilities for professional growth," he added.

(Source: UN News Center)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

## Baked omelet pie

"This is a delicious omelet with a little bit of a twist. I promise you will love it as much as my family does."

### Ingredients:



- 1 large baking potato
- 6 eggs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mushrooms
- 1/2 cup chopped beef ham
- 1 tomato, sliced
- 1/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

### Directions:

Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil. Add potato and cook until tender but still firm, about 15 minutes. Drain, cool, peel and slice.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Beat together eggs, salt, pepper and parsley.

In a cast iron skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Saute onion and red pepper until soft, then stir in mushrooms. When mushrooms start to shrink, add the chopped beef ham, potato and tomato slices. Pour in the egg mixture; gently stir to combine.

Sprinkle cheese on top of eggs and place skillet in preheated oven. Bake until eggs are firm, about 10 to 15 minutes. Allow to cool briefly before serving.

# Akie Abe: Mindset change needed on role of women

➔1 ■ How do you evaluate your husband's "womenomics" program" which is aimed to have women occupy 30 percent of management positions by 2020. What obstacles do you see on his way to achieve this goal?

A: I have heard that there is a criticism of women taking a managerial position without any training. However, I think that it is good to have new aspiration towards new objective. In fact, new female management is striving for achievement, and the organization is struggling to support achieving the target.

Having women's view reflected to the management's decision-making will enable working environment more welcoming for women. It seems that the business custom that engages women seems to be absent. For example, full time presence in the office during working hours for women with small children isn't suitable. There are not many changes yet to these customary environments. I hope that the environment will improve in the future as more women become active.

■ Do you think that Japan is ready to have a female prime minister in the near future?

A: Well, I do not know.

■ As wife of the Japanese prime minister how successful do you think you have been in promoting women's role in Japan?

A: I would say that it means a big deal when the head of state presents the direction for its country. Especially for women,



"The society in Japan is structured in a way that men perform the central role in a vertical pyramid organization," the Japanese first lady says.

or for people who support women to take an active role, the prime minister's commitment must have been encouraging. Women will become more aspired and the support given to that will be promoted further.

Such willingness to change at each level will help transform the momentum which leads to successful outcome. I am looking forward for the day to come when people outside of Japan commending on Japanese

## Election of 18 females to parliament proves trust in women: VP

**TTWOMEN d e s k** TEHRAN — The election of eighteen women to the parliament proves that the society trusts in women's eligibility, Shahindokht Molaverdi, the vice president for family and women's affairs, has said.

The fact that a large number of women registered to run for parliament demonstrated their capability, self-confidence, and readiness for taking management posts, Molaverdi told a meeting of incoming MPs from the "faction of hope" on Saturday.

In the parliamentary election on February 26 and the runoff on April 29, women succeeded to capture 18 seats in the 290-seat Majlis.

Molaverdi said the increase in the number of female



## Indian woman 'tortured to death' in Saudi Arabia

In another gruesome case of abuse of domestic help by their employers in Saudi Arabia, a young Indian woman was reportedly tortured to death in Riyadh. The 25-year-old, identified as Asima Khatoon, who hailed from Hyderabad, succumbed to her injuries last week.

Khatoon had travelled to Saudi Arabia in December 2015 to work as a domestic help, according to ANI news agency. She had tele-

phoned her family in March this year and complained that her employer was torturing her, following which they approached the Telangana government for help. The state government had reportedly written to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to intervene.

Khatoon's family was informed last week of her death, after she was been admitted to the King Saud hospital for Chest Diseases in Riyadh.

Last year, reports of brutal torture of an Indian maid by a Saudi employer, who had allegedly chopped off her arm, had led to outrage in India. Kasturi Munirathinam, 50, who was from Tamil Nadu, claimed she was attacked by her Saudi employer when she complained about wages. However, the Saudi police had claimed she was mentally disturbed. Following Kasturi's alleged abuse, India's

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had tweeted that she was "disturbed over the brutal manner in which Indian lady has been treated in Saudi Arabia."

Swaraj had in March also taken up the issue of the reported arrest of an Indian man working in Saudi Arabia after a video of him complaining of ill treatment by his employer went viral.

(Source: ibtimes.co.in)

## Yazidi women fight Islamic State

played an important role in pushing back Islamic State in northern Iraq.

The killing and enslaving of thousands from Iraq's minority Yazidi community focused international attention on the group's violent campaign to impose its radical ideology and prompted Washington to launch an air offensive.

It also prompted the formation of this unusual 30-woman unit made up of Yazidis as well as Kurds from Iraq and neighboring Syria. For them, only one thing matters: re-

venge for the women raped, beaten and executed by the jihadist militants.

Dahir said she was stunned by the brutality of the militants, some of whom were neighbors and others from outside the area.

"They killed my uncle and took my cousin's wife who had only just married eight days earlier," she said, her piercing eyes clouding over. The bride, like thousands of other Yazidi women, is still being held by the militants.

**IN FOCUS** 📷 Mehr/ Majid Haghdoust



Sistan Baluchestan is the land of sun with patient and kind people. Women of this land are baking bread in a traditional oven.

women's active role in the society.

■ Can you compare Japanese and Iranian women together in terms of social roles each play in their societies?

A: Each country has its own culture and thinking. However, it is common when it comes to the basic women's issues. Thus, it is important that such commonality should be shared to seek for solutions together. I believe such cooperation can be made between Iran and Japan, so that the two nations will be able to build women-engaging society.

■ In general, what should be done to promote women's role?

A: From the systems' perspective there has to be childcare facilities and the different ways of work that would entice women to be actively engaged in the workforce. From a mindset perspective, men and women should share the same view so that women-engaging society can be built. I think that both men and women should change.

■ What steps are needed to be taken to train 'environment-friendly' women or families?

A: The childhood education is important. Children will be able to appreciate the importance of nature and will be able to acclimate to the environment by parents providing opportunities for their children to be able to feel-and-touch the great nature along with the textbook learning in classrooms.

MPs from 9 in the incumbent parliament, which accounts for 3 percent of the total, to 18 in the next one showed that the public has confidence in women's qualification.

"According to a survey conducted among 2,090 women in eight provinces, we came to the conclusion that inequality and discrimination, as well as the issue of economy were their main concerns, so that about 29 percent of the women expected to become more economically empowered and to raise their income," said the vice president.

Voting results published on April 30 showed the new Iranian parliament set a new record for the Islamic Republic, with the previous highest number of female MPs being 14.

During the firefights that raged across Sinjar in 2014, Dahir said she killed 20 Islamic State fighters before being shot in the leg. Reuters could not independently verify the fighters' personal accounts.

Well-worn photographs of children and families tucked into the edge of mirrors or pressed onto walls in the women's spartan barracks are reminders of what they have sacrificed to join the fight.

Haseba Nauzad, the unit's 24-year-old commander, lost her marriage. She was living with her husband in Turkey when Islamic State swept through northern Iraq and announced its so-called caliphate over areas that included traditional Kurdish lands.

"I saw them raping my Kurdish sisters and I couldn't accept this injustice," Nauzad said.

Her husband wanted to pay human smugglers to take them to Europe along with more than a million others fleeing conflict in the region, but she insisted on going home to fight the Islamists.

"I put my personal life aside, and I came to defend my Kurdish sisters and mothers and stand against this enemy," she said. She has lost contact with her husband since he arrived in Germany.

In a conservative society where women are often expected to stay at home, these women say gender does not keep them from entering battle.

"If a man can carry a weapon, a woman can do the same," said Nauzad. "The men are inspired to fight harder when they see women standing in the same battlefield as them."

The women in the unit are convinced Islamic State militants are scared of women fighters "because they think if they are killed by a woman, they will not go to heaven," said Nauzad.

"This story encourages more women to join the fight."

(Source: Reuters)



# Iran in France for pre-Olympic Qualifier warm-ups

Iran headed to France on Saturday for two practice games ahead of the Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Japan later in May.

Iran will face FIVB World League champions France on May 13 and 14. Iran finished joint seventh in last year's World League.

The Olympic Qualification Tournament will be held in Japan from May 28 to June 5. Iran will have to compete with Australia, Canada, China, France, Japan, Poland and Venezuela for a spot in the Olympic Games. The top Asian team and the next three top teams will qualify for the Olympics.

Iran will also compete in Group 1 of the World League in June and July, starting off with a tough first match on June 16 against Brazil in Rio de Janeiro. It won't get much easier for the Iranians as they will face Argentina and the United States in the two following days.

Iran's next three World League matches will take place in Serbia, where they will meet Bulgaria, Brazil for the second time and Serbia. For their last three Group 1 matches, they will be at home in Tehran for games against Serbia, Italy and Argentina. The Finals will take place in Krakow, Poland, from July 13 to 17.

If they qualify for the Olympic Games, the Iranian players will have no time to rest after the World League as they will have to move on to Rio de Janeiro for the Olympic Tournament, which takes place from August 7 to 21.

New Iran coach Raul Lozano from Argentina has picked the following players for warm-ups with France: Saeid Marouf, Mahdi Mahdavi, Shahram Mahmoudi, Amir Ghafour, Farhad Ghaemi, Milad Ebadipour, Mojtaba Mirzajanzpour, Hamzeh Zarrini, Sayyed Mohammad Mousavi, Adel Gholami, Armin Tashakori, Mostafa Sharifat, Farhad Zarif, and Mahdi Marandi.

(Source: FIVB)



## Iranian judokas to compete at Judo Grand Prix

**T****S****P****O****R****T****S** Iran will partake at the Judo Grand Prix in Wall-sall, England, with three representatives.

Omid Jafari in 81kg, Hamed Alizadeh in 100kg and Hamzeh Nadri in +100kg are Iranian participants in the competition.

The tournament will be held from 4-5 June, as part of the athletes' preparations for Rio 2016.

This event will be the final opportunity for judokas across the world to compete in an international competition before September's Paralympic Games.

The Iranian judokas will also take part at a three-day training camp after the competition.



The camp will be held at British Judo's Centre of Excellence, which opened its doors in 2013 after the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

## Iran comes third in Russia's women futsal tourney

**T****S****P****O****R****T****S** Iran finished in third place at the 6th International Futsal Tournament for Women National Teams.

The Iranian team defeated Poland 2-1 in the tournament's third day.

Iran lost to Spain 5-0 in its first match and suffered a 4-0 defeat to Russia in the second match.

In the last day of the competition, the Asian powerhouse beat Poland 2-1 and finished in third place.

Spain is the most decorated team with four titles while Portugal and Ukraine have won the title one time.

International Futsal Tournament for



Women National Teams is held annually in Russia in memory of 9th May that marks the Russian victory against Nazi Germany.

## If we win the title the trophy belongs to Hadi Norouzi, says Branko

**T****S****P****O****R****T****S** Persepolis head coach Branko Ivankovic is satisfied with his players' performance against Gostaresh Foolad and believes there is no successor for his side's former captain Hadi Norouzi who died at the start of the season.

"I would like to congratulate my players as they took a big step towards winning the title. We had a brilliant performance against Gostaresh Foolad and now we have a great motivation to get the three points in our final game against Rah Ahan," Branko told reporters.

"I believe that until the last seconds we cannot predict the title winner. Esteghlal Khuzestan will take on Zob Ahan which is a tough game for them and we need to win against Rah Ahan who is on the verge of relegating to the first division and will definitely fight until the end," he added.

"There is no successor for Hadi Norouzi. He is part of this team and the trophy belongs to him but first we need to win the title," the Croatian coach added.

Esteghlal Khuzestan sits top of the table ahead of Persepolis on goal difference.

## I want Mr. Taj to accept my resignation, says Carlos Queiroz

**T****S****P****O****R****T****S** Iran national football team head coach Carlos Queiroz asked Iran's football federation new president to agree his resignation.

Queiroz has posted a statement on his official facebook account:

Dear friends,

Congratulations to Mr. Taj, Iran's Football Federation new president, after the election in the past Saturday. I wish him all the best in this new challenge leading Iran's Football. In the last few years I had the pleasure to work with Mr. Taj in

regards National League problems and league schedule. Now as a priority matter I expect Mr. Taj a quick agreement from his side regarding my resignation request, taking in consideration Iran National Team interest on deciding and planning a new beginning and future. This urgent and crucial decision it is the unique solution to defend Iran and protect Iran National Team World Cup preparation. And to protect a team that by the way it is in the number one position in Asia FIFA ranking.

With all my respect and love, CQ

Queiroz, who is under contract with Iran Football Federation until after the 2018 World Cup, has recently stated that he is not going to continue his job due to disagreement with the Iranian officials.

The 62-year-old Portuguese coach criticized Iranian sports officials over their lack of support for Iran men's national football team.

Iran has qualified for the third round of World Cup qualifying round in Asia. The team has been drawn in Group A along with South Korea, Uzbekistan, Qatar, China and Syria.



## Iran wins Fajr Open Taekwondo tournament

Iran finished in the first place at the 27th edition of the international Fajr Open Taekwondo tournament.

The two-day tournament kicked off in Tehran on May 7. The Iranian team won the title with 42 points, bagging three gold, two silver, and four bronze medals.

Afghanistan A came second with one silver and two bronze medals, earning 16 points and Russia finished in third place with one gold and 12 points.

The G-1 tournament brought together taekwondokas from Iran, Afghanistan (two teams), Armenia, Azerbaijan,

Brazil, India, Iraq, Libya, Russia and Turkey.

Gold medalists added 10 points to their qualification rankings for the 32nd edition of the Olympic Games scheduled to be staged between August 5 and August 21 in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro, with 789 athletes due to participate in the sporting event.

Silver and bronze medalists at the tournament also added 6 and 3.6 points respectively to their 2016 Summer Olympics qualification rankings.

(Source: Tasnim)

## FOOTBALL

### PSG star Zlatan Ibrahimovic hints at possible AC Milan return

Paris Saint-Germain forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic has dropped a big hint that he could make a return to AC Milan this summer, saying they are the "biggest club" he ever played for and that he never wanted to leave them in 2012.

Ibrahimovic's contract expires at the end of the season and his agent, Mino Raiola, said last week that the 34-year-old is open to a return to the Rossoneri, where he spent two years before joining PSG.

Ibrahimovic has now told La Gazzetta dello Sport: "I want to keep on playing. Wherever it is we'll just have to see. I'll decide soon."

"I have a good relationship with Milan and I care about them. They are the biggest club I played for."

"It wasn't me who wanted to leave when I left Milan, it was other people, but it went the way it went. Now we'll see how the future is. You never know if the future will be the same as the past, but let's see. All will be revealed soon."

The Sweden international added: "This year has been the best year of my career. I still feel I'm getting better and I just need to continue."

"I've worked even harder this season -- more than normal, and my normal work is already a lot. When you work so hard, you always get your reward."

Ibrahimovic has scored 35 goals in Ligue 1 this season, more than in any of his previous three seasons at PSG, and is not ruling out the prospect of a new deal at the Parc des Princes.

Asked why he was leaving by France's RMC, he replied: "I'm not sure I am leaving. The future will be told -- soon. Soon it will be said so let's see what happens."

"You know in a relationship, it depends on two persons, not only one. The other part and your part. So let's see what happens."

The former Malmö, Ajax, Juventus, Inter Milan and Barcelona star also addressed his rant last year, when he described France as a "s--- country".

He had addressed the comments at the time, saying they were "not against France or the French people," and he added to RMC: "I love France."

"I said it before. Paris for me is the best city I ever lived in and I have lived in Amsterdam, Milan, Barcelona, Turin and my home city, Malmö."

"And I say Paris -- you cannot compare with something else."

"When I did my mistake, when I said what I said about France, I was speaking about the football. The football still needs to grow and progress, [but] I see results after four years. It has nothing to do with the country. I am for peace and love."

"And France will always be in my heart and I will never forget France because, what I did here, nobody can take that away from me."

(Source: ESPN)

## Michel Platini: Uefa president to resign after ban appeal fails

Uefa president Michel Platini will resign from European football's governing body after failing to have a six-year ban from football overturned.

A Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas) panel reduced the ban to four years on Monday.

Following the judgement, the 60-year-old said he would be stepping down.

Platini and former Fifa counterpart Sepp Blatter, were last year found guilty of ethics breaches over a 2m Swiss Franc (£1.3m) "disloyal payment".

The pair, who deny wrongdoing, had their original bans reduced from eight to six years by the Fifa appeals committee.

Platini had taken his case to Cas seeking to get the ban overturned, but a three-man panel said it "was not convinced by the legitimacy of the payment".

The two said the payment in 2011 was made for consultancy work Platini had carried out for Blatter between 1998 and 2002, and that they had a "gentleman's agreement" on when the balance was settled.

The matter is also being looked into by Swiss prosecutors.

After Cas returned its judgement, Platini said in a statement: "I am resigning from my duties as Uefa president to pursue my battle in front of the Swiss courts to prove my innocence in this case."

He added that he considered the judgement "a profound injustice".

However, the Cas panel was damning of Platini, saying his "behaviour was not ethical or loyal".

It found his dealings with Blatter had breached the ethics code of world governing body Fifa, and while his six-year ban was "too severe", it decided a four-year punishment should be handed down - the equivalent to a presidential term in office.

It also said an 80,000 Swiss Franc (£57,200) fine should be lowered to 60,000 (£42,900), but stressed: "The Cas panel was of the opinion that a severe sanction could be justified in view of the superior functions carried out by Mr Platini (Fifa vice-president and Uefa president), the absence of any repentance and the impact that this matter has had on Fifa's reputation."

Uefa said it would meet on 18 May "to discuss next steps".

"In the meantime, there will be no Uefa president appointed ad interim," it added.

(Source: BBC)





"We as Persian-language speakers owe Fedowski for his miraculous determination of composing numerous worthy verses during his limited lifetime," he added.