

TEHRAN TIMES

Spain to invest in Iran's insurance, petchem, tourism sectors **4**



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First S300 defense system becomes operational in Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan said Khatam-ol-Anbia Air Defense Base has received the first delivery of S300.

Dehqan let slip the news on the sidelines of an exhibition showcasing the latest advances of Khatam-ol-Anbia Air Defense Base, Tasnim reported on Tuesday.

Khatam-ol-Anbia Air Defense Base which controls Iran's air-based defense, is the fourth branch of the Iranian Army, which until recently had ground, air, and navy divisions.

Iran showed off parts of the defense system during National Army Day on April 17.

The Russian predator will boost Tehran's air defense capability dramatically as it is one of the most advanced systems of its kind that can engage multiple aircraft and ballistic missiles around 150 km away.

Dehqan also noted that a home-grown air defense system named Bavar 373 (Belief) will be unveiled this year with capabilities similar to those of S300.

The sale of the S-300, originally concluded in 2007, was repeatedly delayed due to the West's pressure on Russia. **→2**

Rouhani: Iran will take \$2 billion case to international court

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday that Iran will take the issue of the \$2 billion Iranian assets appropriated by the United States

to international court, vowing Iran will spare no efforts in upholding the people's rights.

Iran will not let the U.S. take the money which belongs to the central bank, he said in a

speech to well-wishers in Kerman.

He added, "This government has to carry the burden of negligence and mistakes of the past years." **→2**

Singapore to finance Iran's maritime projects up to €400m

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Singapore's Kim Heng Offshore & Marine Holdings Limited signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Iran Marine Fund (IMF) to cooperate in Iran's marine projects, IRNA reported on Monday.

Based on the MOU, which was signed by Mehrdad Mozaffari, the IMF managing director, and Tan Keng Hoe Melvin, the general manager for supply chain management in Kim Heng, on Monday, the Singaporean company agreed to provide a €400 million finance to develop Iran's marine industries in several phases.

"The parties agreed to cooperate in various spheres including manufacturing of platform supply vessels, offshore cranes, chemical tankers, and also aluminum and fiberglass vessels," Melvin announced.

"In the MOU between Kim Heng and IMF, maximum domestic production in Iran has been emphasized," he added. The Singaporean company also offered a comprehensive package of applicable services in the field of maritime industries to IMF.

Iran Marine Fund is a specialized, state-owned enterprise of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade. Kim Heng Offshore & Marine Holdings Limited is an integrated offshore and marine value chain services provider located in Singapore.

Zarif says Tehran wants more trade with Germany



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Iranian centers commemorating Ferdowsi

CULTURE TEHRAN — Some Iranian cultural centers in Tehran and Mashhad are commemorating Abulqasem Ferdowsi, the poet of the Persian epic masterpiece Shahnameh, during a six-day celebration, which began on Monday.

Khorasan Razavi Farhangian University hosted the Seminar of Hakim Ferdowsi on Monday, during which Ferdowsi expert Nasser Kanaani delivered a speech. The university also hosted a meeting entitled "Ferdowsi and Shahnameh through the Eyes of the Orient" on Tuesday.

Tehran will continue the celebration on Wednesday by a pardekhani (curtain-reading) performance by Shahu Salehi and a lecture by director of Ferdowsi Foundation Yaser Movahedfar at the Rostamabad Cultural Center in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

In addition, some Shahnameh experts, including Mir Jalaleddin Kazzazi, Qadamali Sarami and Mahmud Sadeqizadeh, will speak during a session at the Tehran International Book Fair on Friday.

Tehran's City Theater Complex will also contribute to the Ferdowsi celebration on Friday with "The Path of Affection, Mystery of the Heavens", a performance by director Shokrehoda Gudarzi.

The celebration will end on Ferdowsi National Day on May 14 with a speech by ECO Cultural Institute President Iftikhar Husain Arif, and a performance of naqqali, a style of storytelling dedicated to epic stories from the Shahnameh.

Iran, Japan discuss promoting medical co-op

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran and Japan explored ways to boost medical cooperation, Mehr news agency reported.

Equipping and constructing hospitals, initiating postgraduate exchange programs, and boosting pharmaceutical cooperation are of the most important fields the two countries can focus on, Iran's Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi said.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of a meeting with the chairperson of the Nippon Foun-



dation Yohei Sasakawa in Tehran on Monday.

Qazizadeh-Hashemi also hailed the Iranian NGOs who just impartially keep on their humanitarian efforts for altruistic reasons.

He went on to say that "not only don't we need to send patients abroad to get treatment but also we managed to provide patients from Azerbaijan, Iraq and Kuwait with healthcare services in Iran."

"In case the Japanese side is interested we are also willing to cooperate with them in constructing healthcare centers in bordering areas with Iraq and Afghanistan."

He further noted that "currently our primary pharmaceutical partner is France, but we can have active cooperation with Japan, too."

S. Korean banks gearing up to enter Iran

A growing numbers of commercial banks here are accelerating their efforts to tap into markets in Iran, which is emerging as an attractive trade partner for Korea.

Iran is one of the most promising markets after trade sanctions on the country were lifted. According to data from the World Bank, Iran's economy is expected to grow 5.8 percent this year.

The country is emerging as an attractive partner for Korea as well, following President Park Geun-hye's landmark visit to Tehran earlier this month. Park and her counterpart Hassan Rouhani oversaw the signing of a number of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) aimed at boosting economic cooperation.

KEB Hana Bank is swift in coming up with plans for when Iran-bound transactions in euros become possible.

CEO Ham Young-joo visited the Central

Bank of Iran (CBI) and Bank Melli Iran early this month to discuss a euro-based settlement system linking Iranian banks, KEB Hana Bank and European institutes.

The euro-based settlement system is an assignment Korea's banks and government have been grappling with, because the U.S. dollar is still banned in trading with Iran, while Korea's business leaders prefer the euro in making settlements.

"The euro-based settlement system is a government decision," said an official at the bank. "However, Ham has visited the Iranian banks to come up with swifter measures for when this becomes possible."

Woori Bank is also expanding its overseas network to enter the Iranian market.

The bank announced, May 2, that it has opened a liaison office in Tehran, a first for Korean banks, after receiving approval from the

CBI, April 12.

Currently, Woori Bank operates a won-based settlement system and a center for supporting trade and investment with Iran. As the dollar-based settlement system was suspended after Iran was slapped with sanctions, the CBI has opened won-based accounts at Woori Bank and the Industrial Bank of Korea for payments between the two countries' companies.

The bank said it will upgrade the office into a branch or a subsidiary so that it can provide financial transaction services.

"We initially planned to turn the liaison office into a branch at the end of this year, but the situation is rapidly changing," said an official. "To confirm the opening date, we are closely watching whether sanctions on Iran can be lifted further and how many Korean companies will make an entrance into the market."

(Source: Korea Times)

White House says critics of Iran deal proved wrong

The United States has said the critics of the Iran nuclear agreement were wrong as the UN nuclear watchdog has confirmed that Tehran has fully complied with the terms of the agreement officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Our critics often suggested that there would never be a way to verify Iran's claims that they had gone along with the agreement. They were wrong about that, too," White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said on Monday.

On July 14, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action announced a comprehensive nuclear agreement between Iran and the 5+1



countries (the U.S., Britain, Russia, China and Germany) and the EU.

Immediately after the inching of the nuclear deal Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called it a "historic mistake".

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has also said the nuclear agreement with Iran is "disastrous". Trump claimed President Barack Obama "negotiated a disastrous deal with Iran and then we watched them ignore its terms even before the ink was dry."

Earnest said, "The international inspectors at the IAEA have gotten the access that they have needed to verify Iran's compliance with the agreement."

→2

ARTICLE

By: Jose Graziano da Silva
FAO Director General

Hunger and conflicts walk hand in hand

This week, FAO is convening, in Rome, the Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa, a forum where 30 countries from Mauritania to Iran, and from Turkey to Somalia, meet every two years to review the achievements, challenges and priorities in food security and sustainable agriculture development.

These are turbulent times for the region, where conflicts and protracted crises have almost become endemic and are inflicting immense suffering on the populations of the region.

Despite the progress made by individual countries in reaching the Millennium Development Goals, the number of undernourished has doubled between 1990 and 2015, and the prevalence of undernourishment has increased by 30%.

In fact, conflicts and hunger are strongly connected.

Evidence shows that countries with the highest levels of food insecurity are also those most affected by conflicts. And violence and hunger are often locked in vicious cycles in which one feeds on the other.

In Syria alone, 6.5 million people have been internally displaced, while more than 4.8 million have fled to the neighbouring countries as refugees, with increasing numbers fleeing to Europe. Half of the population that has remained in the country is in need of food assistance.

The damage to the capital stock in Syria has been estimated at 70 billion dollars. The effect of the conflict has been devastating as the country has lost half of its livestock and the agriculture production now barely reaches 40% of its pre-crisis level.

The Syrian crisis is also creating huge costs for its neighbouring countries. For Lebanon alone, this has reached 1.5% of its GDP per year, due to loss in trade and the adverse effects on tourism and infrastructure. **→10**

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MEDIA MONITOR



Technical problems
afflicting sanctions
removal: Seif

TEHRAN — The president of the Central Bank of Iran has said there are “certain problems in the technical sphere for removing sanctions which should be resolved.”

Valiollah Seif made the remarks in a meeting with the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Monday, the committee’s spokesman said on Tuesday.

Nozar Shafi’i quoted Seif as having said that Iranian banks have not been able to connect to foreign banks due to software and hardware shortcomings, ICANA reported.



‘Fighting \$20b
annual smuggling
worth it’: Larijani

TEHRAN — The Majlis speaker on Monday warned that Iran is facing the smuggling of \$20 billion of goods to the country each year.

Spending money to fight the smuggling is worth it because with that volume of smuggling no investment is possible, Ali Larijani told a conference of police officials, the Iran daily reported.

Also speaking in the same meeting, MP Ahmad Tavakoli said what threatens the country is corruption rather than military attack or sanctions.



We returned 1,600
disqualified
candidates, interior
minister says

TEHRAN — The Interior Ministry returned 1,600 candidates of the parliamentary elections after they had been disqualified, the interior minister has said.

“I will not have a single right of people be violated,” Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli told the Arman daily in an interview published on Tuesday.

Commenting on the election results, he said the victory of the List of Hope points to the supremacy of the moderation discourse.

On controversial lawmaker-elect Minoo Khaleghi, he said the solution lies in the Majlis rather than in the ministry or the Guardian Council.



Iran to launch
homegrown
‘Mesbah’ satellite
into orbit

TEHRAN — Iranian Space Organization director Mohsen Bahrami announced on Tuesday that the organization will launch the indigenous “Mesbah” satellite into orbit in the near future, saying that a new version of the satellite is also under construction.

Addressing a specialized meeting of high-ranking officials of the organization, Bahrami said the Mesbah 2 (Lantern) and “Nahid” satellites are under construction, Tasnim reported.

Referring to achievements in the fields of satellite and satellite carrier, Bahrami announced that Amir Kabir, Zafar (Victory) and Doosti (Friendship) are three other satellites which are also under construction and will be soon sent to the space.



Next Assembly of
Experts to kick off
May 24

TEHRAN — A member of the board of directors of the current Assembly of Experts has said the assembly’s next term will start on May 24.

The inauguration will start with a message from the Supreme Leader and the members of the board of directors and expert committees will be selected that day and the day after, Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami told IRNA on Tuesday.



Iraqi ambassador:
Iran brought dignity
to Muslim world

TEHRAN — The Iraqi Ambassador to Tehran, Rajeh Saber Abboud al-Mousavi, said on Tuesday that brave resistance of the Iranian nation brought dignity to the Muslim world.

Speaking in a meeting with members of the Mashhad city council, he said the Islamic Republic of Iran has turned to a reliable power for oppressed nations, ILNA reported.

The nuclear success of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a significant achievement for Muslims, making a global victory, he remarked.

Rouhani: Iran will take \$2 billion case to international court

1→ The former government had about ten-month time between the years 2007 to 2008 to withdraw this money from the “hands of America” but why it did not happen is a matter of question, the president noted.

He added a committee is investigating the issue about missteps by former officials in regard to this money which its results will be released to the public soon.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on April 20 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.

Tehran has strongly objected to the ruling.

■ Rouhani praises Rafsanjani and General Soleimani as sons of Kerman province

Rouhani also praised Expediency Council chief Akbar Hashmei Rafsanjani and Qods Force commander General Qasem Soleimani who both are from the



province of Kerman.

He said Rafsanjani is a leading figure in the history of the Islamic Revolution and he is “an old friend of Imam (Khomeini) and Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution.”

The president also said, “My acquaintance and friendship with General Soleimani dates back to years of imposed war”

Rouhani also said that competition among the political factions should be stopped after the elections and the unity in the country should be maintained.

The people expect the government and the parliament to stand beside each other and solve the problems in the country, he said.

Commenting on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Rouhani said that the deal allows Iran to promote economic investment.

Iran and the 5+1 group - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany – reached nuclear deal in July 2015. The JCPOA went into effect in January 2016.

Regional states should never be disintegrated, Iran insists

IT POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian politician reiterated Tehran’s position on Tuesday that countries in the Mideast region, especially Syria and Iraq, must not be disintegrated under any circumstances.

Dividing up the region does not serve the interests of the regional people, Ali Akbar Velayati said in a joint press conference with State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany Markus Ederer in Tehran.

Velayati, a foreign policy adviser to the Supreme Leader, also said Iran and Germany seek a solution to regional crises through “fair” and “peaceful” ways.

He also said that dividing terrorists into “extremist” and “moderate” is “farfetched” and a “historic mistake” by the West.

Elsewhere, he said that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government is Iran’s redline, calling his



government “legal”.

He added no country has the right to decide for the Syrians.

Velayati also said that Russia’s role in supporting the Syrian government and fighting terrorism has not faded.

Commenting on Iran-Germany relations, he said that the two countries have “positive” and “historic” relations and have the potential to expand ties.

He added that Iran and Germany can have “positive” cooperation on helping to resolve regional issues.

For his part, the German official highlighted the importance of the Syrian talks and said the Syrian conflict should be settled peacefully and not militarily.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held a separate meeting with Ederer on Tuesday during which bilateral and regional issues were discussed.

Zarif says Tehran wants more trade with Germany

IT POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called for stronger economic and trade ties between Tehran and Berlin.

Zarif made the remarks on Tuesday in a meeting with Markus Ederer, state secretary of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, IRNA reported.

Pointing to continuous political, economic, cultural, and parliamentary consultations between senior officials of the two countries, Zarif called for expansion of trade with Germany.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif hailed Germany’s international policies, saying, “Unlike some European countries, Ger-

many does not look at realities of the region negatively, a critical feature of outside players seeking peaceful solutions for ending the region’s crises.”

Calling Germany a major international player, Zarif said Berlin played an important role in brokering the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

After the deal, a number of high-ranking delegations have visited Tehran in hope of winning business opportunities in the enticing market.

Iranian partners have also shown interest in launching ventures with German counterparts.

Unfair to blame U.S. for not doing business with Iran: Kerry

Foreign companies should not use the United States as an excuse for not doing business in Iran following last year’s deal on Tehran’s nuclear program, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Tuesday.

Kerry is due to meet representatives of British and European banks in London on Thursday to discuss the issue of dealing with Iran under the terms of its deal with world powers.

“Businesses should not use the United States as an excuse if they don’t want to do business, or if they don’t see a good business deal ...

that’s just not fair, that’s not accurate,” Kerry told reporters in London.

“We sometimes get used as an excuse in this process,” he said.

Tehran has accused Washington of dragging its feet in the implementation of the nuclear deal and has blamed remaining U.S. sanctions, which include a ban on Iran-linked transactions in U.S. dollars being processed through the U.S. financial system, for the reluctance of European banks to do business with it.

(Source: Reuters)

Salehi: Iran learns from U.S. asset seizure to proceed with care in heavy water deal

IT POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian nuclear chief has said Tehran will proceed with caution in the heavy water deal with Washington, citing the ruling by U.S. High Court 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 allegedly blamed on Iran.

Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), made the remarks on Tuesday on the sidelines of an annual clinical seminar of Iranian surgeons, IRNA reported.

“The process is in progress, the heavy water was to be shipped, but after the \$2 billion issue, we exercised care. We are in talks to fully make sure of the payment method,” Salehi said.

In April, the U.S. announced it purchases from Iran 32 metric tons of heavy water worth nearly \$8.6 million.

The deal was under the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which com-

pels Tehran to ship its supply of heavy water to international markets, including the U.S.

Tehran has also announced it is mulling over selling heavy water to Russia.

The news is a clear reference to the U.S. Supreme Court which 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.

Angry by Moscow’s lack of commitment to the pact, Iran sued Russia in

Government preparing lawsuit against U.S.: Iranian official

IT POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — An Iranian official at the presidential center for international legal affairs has said that the government is preparing a lawsuit against the U.S. over the seizure of \$2 billion of Iran’s assets.

“The government of prudence and hope is preparing a lawsuit at the international court due to the seizure of \$2 billion of central bank by the U.S.,” Mohammad Jafar Ghanbari Jahromi

told IRNA in an exclusive interview published on Tuesday.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on April 20 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.

Tehran has strongly objected to the ruling.

First S300 defense system becomes operational in Iran

1→ In 2010, Dmitry Medvedev, then the Russian president, canceled the deal, citing UN sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program.

In addition to the UN arm embargo, the U.S. and Israel heavily lobbied Russia to block delivering the system to Iran, saying it could be used to shield Iran’s nuclear facilities from possible future air strikes.

Angry by Moscow’s lack of commitment to the pact, Iran sued Russia in

the International Court of Arbitration, asking for \$950 million of compensation for the contract cancelled by Russia arms export agency Rosoboronexport.

Later on, the two sides buried the hatchet in 2015 as Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree lifting a ban on the delivery of the S-300 systems to Iran.

Since that time, there were conflicting reports as to when Iran would actually receive the system.

White House says critics of Iran deal proved wrong

1→ Iran has taken “significant steps” to limit its nuclear program under which it has eliminated 98 percent of its highly enriched uranium stockpile and disconnected thousands of centrifuges, he added.

“We have verified that Iran has taken significant steps to actually roll back their nuclear program,” Earnest said,

Business Standard reported.

“The worst-case, dire predictions of the deal’s critics did not at all come to pass. What did come to pass is exactly what this administration indicated our objectives were, which were to curtail Iran’s nuclear program, guarantee access for international inspectors who could verify that Iran’s nuclear program

only exist for peaceful purposes.”

He added, “Iran has essentially rendered harmless its heavy-water plutonium reactor. And Iran has complied with its commitment to give international inspectors widespread access to the country to verify its compliance with the agreement.”

Senior ISIL commander killed in Iraq's Anbar province: Pentagon

A top commander of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group has reportedly been killed in Iraq as government forces are pushing ahead with their battle against the Takfiris, retaking more areas from them.

Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said on Monday that Abu Wahib, also known as Shakir Wahib, and three other ISIL elements were killed when their vehicle was struck in a United States airstrike in Iraq's Anbar province on May 6.

A former member of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Wahib had appeared in ISIL execution videos, Cook said, adding that he was killed near the town of Rutbah.

Abu Wahib was captured by U.S. forces in Iraq in 2006 and sentenced to death but escaped prison in 2012. He gained notoriety the following year for killing a number of Syrian truck drivers travelling in Iraq.

The U.S. and some of its allies have allegedly been conducting airstrikes against ISIL extremists in Iraq since August 2014.

■ Iraqi gains

In another development on Monday, Iraqi forces and volunteer fighters liberated the northern village of Kabrouk in Nineveh province from ISIL, as they try to close in on the terrorist-held city of Mosul.

"In a swift operation, our units took the groups of the terrorist organization Daesh (ISIL) by surprise and entered the village," the Nineveh Operations Command said in a statement.



The advance brings Iraqi troops slightly closer to Mosul, which fell into the Daesh control in the summer of 2014.

In recent months, ISIL has been pushed out of much of the land it previously captured in Iraq in 2014. The terrorist group has suffered heavy losses in numerous offensives by the Iraqi army and popular forces.

■ New Italian forces

Meanwhile, Italian Defense Minister Roberta Pinotti made a surprise visit to Iraq on Monday to discuss the deployment of 450 additional Italian forces near the frontline with ISIL to protect workers carrying out repairs to the country's largest dam.

Experts say the Mosul dam has been in danger of collapse for a long time, warning that if the huge structure broke down, it could send a huge

wave crashing into the city of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, which is located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the dam.

Pinotti held a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in the capital Baghdad. She then traveled to the northern city of Erbil, the capital of Iraq's Kurdistan region, which is located 115 kilometers (70 miles) east of the Mosul dam.

There are currently some 750 Italian soldiers in Iraq, mainly training Iraqi army and police in Baghdad and Erbil, but the new forces will be stationed less than 20 kilometers away from the dam, close to ISIL-held territories.

The Iraqi government signed a USD 296-million contract in February with Italy's Trevi Group to repair and maintain the Mosul dam, which has

suffered from structural flaws since it was built in the 1980s.

■ ISIL buries 35 members alive in northern Iraq: TV

Elsewhere, ISIL terrorist group has reportedly killed nearly three dozen of its own members in Iraq's conflict-ridden northern province of Nineveh on charges of fleeing the battlefield.

A provincial source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Sumaria satellite television on Tuesday that the terrorists buried 35 fellow extremists alive on the outskirts of Qayyarah.

The town is located about 35 miles (60 kilometers) south of the militant-held city of Mosul.

The source said the slain militants were accused of fleeing clashes with pro-government Iraqi forces in the village of Bashir, situated some 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.

Fighters from Popular Mobilization units recaptured Bashir from ISIL terrorists on May 1.

ISIL killed 35 of its fellow terrorists by firing squad at the Ghazlani military camp south of Mosul on February 28 after accusing them of conspiracy against the Takfiri outfit.

A day earlier, the terrorists had shot and killed a dozen members of the terrorist group in the village of al-Hadar south of Mosul.

The slain militants had reportedly been accused of escaping clashes with Iraqi government forces in Iraq's embattled western province of Anbar.

(Source: agencies)

Turkey frees suspect in killing of Russian pilot

Turkish authorities say they have dropped all charges against a militant suspected of killing a Russian pilot whose fighter jet was shot down on the Syrian border last November.

Security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a public prosecutor in the Aegean coastal city of Izmir decided to withdraw charges against the man, identified as Alparslan Celik, on Monday.

The prosecutor reportedly made the decision after examining "video evidence" in which Celik can purportedly be seen telling armed men shooting at the Russian pilot not to do so.

On November 24, 2015, Turkish fighter jets shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 attack aircraft on the Syrian border. Turkish officials claimed that the bomber had violated the country's airspace. Russia categorically denied the Turkish claim.

The crew of the plane ejected and one of the pilots was killed by fire from the ground as he was parachuting down. The other pilot was rescued.

Celik was arrested along with 13 other men at a restaurant in the Karabaglar district of the southern Turkish province of Hatay on March 31. The ultra-nationalist and his comrades were detained after an unidentified person called the police and said there were men with guns in the restaurant.

Celik, the second-in-command of the so-called Turkmen Coastal Division, had previously said his group killed the Russian pilot, identified as Lieutenant Colonel Oleg Peshkov.

Peshkov was posthumously awarded with a Gold Star medal, which serves as Russia's highest honorary title.

In an interview with Hurriyet newspaper published on December 27, 2015, Celik had said the killing was in retaliation for Russia's aerial campaign against foreign-backed militant groups in Syria.

The Turkmen militant of the Turkish origin is the son of a former district mayor elected from Turkey's Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

Relations between Moscow and Ankara soured following the downing incident, with the Kremlin imposing a raft of economic sanctions against Turkey.

Moscow has on occasions demanded that Ankara arrest Celik and try him for the killing of the Russian pilot and for membership in a militant group.

Ankara initially ignored the demand, and Celik freely gave interviews and traveled in Turkey and across the border into crisis-hit Syria before being arrested in Izmir. With the decision on Monday, he has once again been freed.

(Source: agencies)

Yemen launches retaliatory missile attack on Saudi Arabia

The Yemeni army and their allies have fired a ballistic missile at a Saudi military base in a "simple response" to Saudi airstrikes that continue despite a ceasefire.

Yemen's army spokesman Brigadier General Sharaf Luqman told the official Saba Net agency on Monday that the missile targeted a military base in the southwestern Saudi city of Khamis Mushait.

The House of Saud regime claimed it intercepted the missile before it could cause any damage.

The attack came after Saudi regime warplanes targeted al-Amaleqa camp in the Harf Sufyan district of Amran Province on Monday, killing 13 people, including five paramedics, and injuring at least 15 others.

The attack jolted peace talks being held in Kuwait between Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement and representatives of fugitive former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

Luqman said while Yemen is still committed to the truce, it reserves "the right to respond" to Saudi attacks.

The army spokesman said the House of Saud regime has launched more than 94 air raids since the ceasefire began on April 11, killing or injuring dozens of people.

Each side accuses the other of not

respecting the truce.

■ Peace talks

On Monday, Mohammad Abdulsalam, who heads the Ansarullah delegation, said the peace talks have little chance of success as Saudi Arabia and its side in the peace talks are unwilling to make any concessions.

The Ansarullah 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 United States force operating in the south of the country along with United Arab Emirates troops.

Direct negotiations scheduled for Sunday were cancelled after Hadi's representatives pulled out of the talks.

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

"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," he said in a statement after separate meetings with delegations.

There has been mounting international pressure to bring an end to the Saudi war in Yemen, which has killed more than 9,400 people and displaced 2.8 million since March last year. (Source: Press TV)

Afghan Taliban tighten squeeze on Helmand capital

Taliban insurgents killed at least 15 Afghan policemen when they overran two checkpoints in Helmand province in an attack on Tuesday that sharply increased pressure on the beleaguered provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, officials said.

The attack on checkpoints in Gereshek, on the main highway through Helmand, a few kilometers to the north of the governor's compound in Lashkar Gah, and Nad Ali, to the west of the town, underlined the growing pressure on security forces clinging on in the southern province.

"The situation is very critical near Lashkar Gah," said a senior provincial security official, adding that 15 policemen had been killed.

"If the government does not act soon, there will be a disaster," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Helmand, a Taliban heartland and the biggest source of Afghanistan's opium, has been under pressure for months, with government forces pull-



ing out of several districts to regroup around Lashkar Gah.

The province is one of the key battlegrounds for the Taliban, who launched a spring offensive last month, vowing to drive out the Western-backed government in Kabul and restore strict rule.

After briefly capturing the northern city of Kunduz last year, the insurgents, who control more territory than at any time since 2001, appear determined to

gain control of a province to use as a base for their campaign.

Hundreds of American troops were sent to Helmand this year to bolster its defense with a beefed up training and advisory mission but a promised offensive by Afghan forces has not materialized.

After a few weeks of relative calm during the opium harvest, expected to be a bumper crop, fighting has picked

up, underlining the fragile hold government forces have on the province.

"Over the past few days, the Taliban have been attacking security belts near Lashkar Gah," said Bashir Shaker, a member of the provincial council.

He said 17 policemen had been killed in the latest fighting.

"The threat is becoming bigger minute by minute. If the government does not take action soon, we will witness the collapse of Lashkar Gah."

British and United States forces struggled for years to control Helmand and many of the more than 450 British servicemen and women killed in Afghanistan lost their lives there.

In a statement, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi said the insurgents had overrun two checkpoints in Gereshek.

There has been heavy fighting in several other areas of Afghanistan, in provinces ranging from Kunduz, to Kunar in the east and Uruzgan and Ghazni in the center.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS

Putin hopes cooperation with U.S. will fundamentally change situation in Syria

U.S.: Nationwide Syria truce to replace piecemeal approach

By staff & agencies

The situation in Syria remains complicated, but Russia hopes that its cooperation with the United States will lead to fundamental changes in this country, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday.

Putin, meeting his top generals in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, said Russian air forces had made more than 10,000 sorties since the start of Moscow's military campaign in Syria last year, Reuters reported.

Strategic bombers have flown on 178 sorties to Syria, and a total of 115 cruise missiles have been launched to hit targets in the country from Russian warships, submarines and strategic bombers, Putin said.

■ Nationwide truce to replace piecemeal approach

Meanwhile, the United States tried to move past localized, short-term cease-fires in Syria by announcing that an enduring, nationwide truce would be restored.

Yet that new approach was immediately called into doubt as Syria's military extended only a local cease-fire, in the hard-hit area of Aleppo, by 48 hours.

The chaos surrounding the latest bout of diplomacy, with the U.S. and Syria offering what seemed like conflicting versions of events, underscored the profound difficulty in getting the warring parties to even agree on what they've agreed on, much less lay down arms for good. The announcements came as world leaders meeting in Paris struggled to get faltering Syria peace talks back on track.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, announcing a new U.S.-Russia agreement, said it would "reinstate a nationwide cessation of hostilities," diplomatic-speak for the collapsed cease-fire the U.S. and Russia brokered in February. He said Russia had also committed to limiting the Syrian government's ability to fly over civilian areas where President Bashar Assad's military has been accused of violating the cease-fire.

But Kerry cautioned that the agreement itself meant little if it was not backed up by the parties on the ground.

"These are words on a piece of paper. They are not actions," Kerry said after a meeting that included the head of the High Negotiations Committee, an umbrella group of Assad's Western-backed opponents. "It is going to be up to the commanders in the field and the interested parties — which includes us."

In Damascus, Syria's military said a five-day cease-fire in Aleppo and its rural areas, set to expire for midnight, would instead be extended two more days, raising the prospect that additional, piecemeal cease-fires would continue to be announced. Brutal violence in Aleppo has killed nearly 300 civilians in recent days.

The U.S. and Russia have been working to put the broader truce back together through a series of short-term cease-fires in cities where heavy violence has broken out, including Aleppo, Syria's largest city. The hope is that quelling the fighting, along with a renewed show of global support, will clear the way for the parties to resume the indirect, United Nations-led talks.

Yet enforcing any cease-fire has been made nearly impossible by an exception built into the original cease-fire: Attacks are still allowed against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group and the al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra). Those groups are common enemies of the U.S., many of the opposition groups and Assad, but they are fighting in the same areas, making it difficult to distinguish which strikes violate the cease-fire and which ones don't.

In their statement, the U.S. and Russia committed to developing a "shared understanding" of where the ISIL and the al-Nusra Front hold territory. Clarifying which areas are fair game and which are off limits is seen as a key step toward eventually reviving the peace talks.

The next round of talks "should take place next week," French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said as he emerged from a meeting with Kerry, the head of the opposition coalition and leaders from other nations backing the opposition. Diplomats have floated May 17 as a possible start date.

Ayrault added that Iran, should be involved. In a nod to past commitments made and broken, he said he hoped the new U.S.-Russia agreement was "not just yet another declaration."

"It must be respected," Ayrault said.

There are still no indications the parties are any closer to agreement about whether Assad can be part of the future government, long the chief sticking point in Syria's civil war.

While in Paris, Kerry also met with the House of Saud young Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, a U.S. ally eager to help Syria's opposition by bolstering their military capability. The State Department said Kerry and al-Jubeir "stressed the importance of all sides fully respecting the cessation of hostilities" and also consulted on the U.S.-led fight against ISIL.



FEATURE

Six issues for Narendra Modi's Iran visit

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is going to make one of his more important foreign sojourns this month, as he prepares to visit Iran for a two-day official visit beginning on May 22. Post-sanctions Iran has been diplomatically hectic for not just Tehran and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, but for anyone else looking at Iran as the next big economic story.

Modi's visit has been set up via critical stops in Tehran by his team over the past few months. Nitin Gadkari, minister for Road Transport and Highways and Shipping, Dharemndra Pradhan, minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Sushma Swaraj, minister for External Affairs, have also paved the way for Modi's trip.

There is at least scope for India to lay the groundwork for improved communications and relations with Iran. But what are the immediate points that Modi should consider in order to achieve real progress with Iran? Here are six that should be near the top of Modi's list:

■ Chabahar Port:
The long planned, and even longer delayed Chabahar Port project is perhaps the single most important pending deal between the two countries. India is now looking to attain two berthing docks at the port, to give the country an edge not only in trade with Iran but access to Central Asia and beyond as well. Chabahar is also a direct strategic competition to Gwadar in Pakistan, a port now fully operated by China.

With the success of the P5+1 agreement, the time is right to conclude the negotiations. India last week announced a \$20 billion commitment to the development of Chabahar, looking to make it a fully compliant deep-sea port.

■ Investments in Farzad B:
India was awarded the development of the Farzad B block in the Farsi gas field, and had committed \$1 billion to the project. However, like other aspects of India's economic relations with Iran, development was stalled due to the sanctions. During this period Iran exerted tremendous pressure on Delhi to fulfill its commitments. At the peak of the sanctions, as Iran's economy suffered, Tehran looked to arm-twist India into the project by first sending a team unannounced to Delhi to deliver an ultimatum, and second, threatening to give the project away to "other friends," referring to China. As an outcome of Pradhan's visit to Iran, both countries are now aiming to conclude the development, financial and commercial terms by October. A concrete, designed yet cautious push by Modi at the top level could make sure of a problem-free negotiations in the coming months.

■ International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

The INSTC is a multi-modal idea to connect Indian trade with Central Asia, Eurasia and Russia. Iran plays a critical part in it, and initial discussions on the project's feasibility and technicalities were held in Iran in 2012 with other potential players such as Azerbaijan, Turkey and Russia also taking part. Access to Central Asia via Iran is a core strategic idea in India that has so far gained little momentum. The INSTC could also be seen as a potential future counter for China's OBOR initiative. However the keyword is "potential," as the program is currently more appealing on paper than in practice, and is hostage to India's economic limitations.

■ India-Iran gas pipeline:
The India-Iran gas pipeline is a chimera, a project that makes complete sense yet is fraught with immense geopolitical and economic risks. Nonetheless, it is an idea that should get the push from New Delhi. A pipeline connecting Chabahar port via Oman and then taking the subsea route to India, while expensive, could pay major dividends to India if the right economic and political regulations and mechanisms are in place. It will also help Indian companies develop their own trans-national and inter-continental pipeline expertise, a critical component in future energy security.

■ Shipping lane security in the Persian Gulf:
India relies heavily on imports to meet its oil and gas needs. The country gets 80 percent of its oil and nearly 55 percent of its natural gas from abroad, and a lot of that comes from West Asia. According to some accounts, South Korean President Park Geun-hye also brought up this issue as she arrived in Tehran this week. South Korea has similar concerns as an oil importer. In 2013 Iranian Navy ships berthed in Mumbai, showcasing the mutually cordial ties between the two countries. Modi needs to strengthen this aspect further.

■ Regional Security in West Asia:
The Syrian crisis, the war in Yemen, growing instability in Iraq mixed with an oil-linked economic slowdown are all situations that along with West Asia have repercussions for India, which has more than 7 million of its citizens working in the region, mostly as laborers. The recent unrest in Saudi Arabia that erupted when more than 50,000 foreign workers were laid off in the construction industry could be a sign of times to come in the region, and India should be ready for hundreds of thousands of returning laborers if the situation worsens. New Delhi needs to remember that the Middle East is also India's largest trading partner and contributor via remittances.
(Source: thediplomat.com)

NEWS

Adecco says Brexit uncertainty hitting UK finance jobs

Speculation that Britain might vote to leave the European Union in a referendum next month is hitting demand for highly-skilled finance jobs in the country, the world's biggest staffing agency Adecco said on Tuesday.

Uncertainty over the outcome of the June 23 referendum contributed to a 6 percent drop in revenues at Adecco's professional staffing business in the UK and Ireland in the first three months of the year, the Swiss company said.

"We see growing uncertainty having a negative impact mainly in the recruitment of highly skilled people in finance," Chief Executive Alain Dehaze told Reuters.

"In the normal, permanent recruitment, we don't see any material impact."

While Adecco filled fewer IT, finance and legal jobs in Britain last quarter, general staffing was up 12 percent.
(Source: Reuters)

Spain slated to invest in Iran's insurance, petchem, tourism sectors

THE ECONOMY DESK TEHRAN — Spanish Secretary of State for Trade Jaime Garcia Legaz in a meeting with Head of Organization for Investment, Economic, and Technical Assistance of Iran Mohammad Khazaie expressed some Spanish companies' readiness to make investments in various sectors such as insurance, petrochemical, and tourism in Iran.

As IRNA reported, Legaz announced that certain Spanish insurance companies are ready for joint investment and for extending coverage to investments made in Iran without any limit. Required financial preparations will be made as of October, he added.

The Spanish official, elsewhere, noted that his country pays a specific attention to petrochemical sector and its various major companies are active in



countries across the globe including the U.S.

Hoping for a new era of bilateral cooperation with the Islamic Republic, he also referred to Spain's high experience in tourism and expressed tendency towards making joint venture in Iran.

The Iranian official, for his part, referred to mutual economic cooperation, making investments in auto parts, tourism, petrochemicals, oil and gas projects and also financial cooperation, especially insurance coverage, as the topics conferred on during the meeting with the Spanish side.

According to Khazaie, a Spanish banking delegation has started serious talks with Iranian banking system over resumption of ties and ease of money transfer. The delegation will visit Iran soon.

Austria's banks resuming transactions with Iran

THE ECONOMY DESK TEHRAN — Austrian ambassador to Iran Friedrich Stift stated that with the post-sanctions opportunity presented, Austrian banks are resuming banking interaction with Iran, Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported on Monday.

The ambassador made the remarks on Monday during his visit to Iranian

southwestern province of Ilam. "Iranian companies have been cooperating with many renowned and capable Austrian companies in various areas such as heavy industries, energy, food industries and auto sector" he noted.

Stift also expressed hope that the two countries could expand their cooperation in such fields. "We are very

optimistic with the enhancement of the trade relations between the two countries in the upcoming months" he said.

In September 2015, Austrian companies signed a series of deals worth \$89 million with Iranian partners at an economic forum in Tehran, becoming the first Western firms to put down concrete stakes in the Islamic Republic since it reached a landmark nuclear

deal with big powers in July 2015.

It was part of a three-day visit by Austrian President Heinz Fischer to Tehran. "We expect to boost our volume of trade to 300 million euros in the short term, and we then look forward to markedly increasing our economic relations," Fischer said in a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani.

Bangladesh seeking Iranian cars, petrochemicals, LPG

By Mahnaz Abdi

Abdul Matlub Ahmad, the president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, who is leading a 24-strong trade delegation to Iran, mentioned cars, petrochemicals and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as three main products the delegation is negotiating to import from the Islamic Republic.

"The aim of this trip is to see what we can buy from Iran and what we can invest in Iran and what Iran could invest in Bangladesh together with the technology," he told the Tehran Times on Monday.

"As you know Bangladesh has become a strong country under the leadership of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. We have very big export and we are now looking for a faster growth," Ahmad noted.

"Iran has come out of the 12-year sanctions and is now willing to jump start again to become a strong country economically," the Bangladeshi official asserted.

■ 'Iran very strong in oil, petrochemicals'
"We found Iran very strong in oil and petrochemicals, so we brought with us people who want to buy plastics and other petrochemical products. We brought people with us who would like to invest together with Iranian people either in Iran or in Bangladesh," Ahmad stated.

He said, "We have seen your technical development



and our people are very excited and we have seen the huge capabilities that exist now in Iran."

He further explained, "What we have achieved in these three days [of stay in Iran], first of all, in the oil show [Iran Oil Show 2016, running during May 5-8 in Tehran] we could see Iran's capabilities are in the international standards which is good for Bangladesh. Number two: We have talked to individual companies from where we can buy petrochemical products. Then we have talked to companies that can make joint venture and produce LPG cylinders for home, for storage, for large vessels to carry LPG from city to city in the

Oil prices gain as supply disruptions outweigh brimming storage

Oil prices rose on Tuesday as supply disruptions in Canada and elsewhere that have taken some 2.5 million barrels of daily production off the market outweighed worries over brimming inventories and a looming refined products glut.

International Brent crude futures were trading at \$44.10 per barrel at 0702 GMT, up 47 cents, or 1 percent, from their last settlement.

U.S. crude futures were trading at \$43.65 per barrel, up 21 cents, held back more than Brent by record U.S. oil stocks.

Canadian officials got their first glimpse of the oil sands town of Fort McMurray

since a wildfire erupted and knocked out vast amounts of crude production there, and they said almost 90 percent of its build-ups were saved.

Despite the improving conditions, producers expect shutdowns of several weeks as facilities like pipelines that were close to the fires need to be inspected, while evacuees need to leave production plants before staff can return.

Outages in Canada, which consultancy Energy Aspects said now totaled 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd), have pushed global disruptions to more than 2.5 million bpd since the beginning of the year. This has

at least temporarily wiped out a glut that emerged in mid-2014 and pulled down prices by around 70 percent before a recovery started early this year.

Goldman Sachs said it expected a decline in U.S. oil production by 650,000 bpd this year, while BMI Research said that production in Asia would fall by 4.9 percent in 2016, equivalent to 331,500 bpd. Production in Latin America and Africa is also stalling.

Despite the output reductions, U.S. crude and Brent are down 2.3 percent and 2.8 percent respectively since last week's close due to concerns about more than ample U.S. inventories, which are expected

to hit records even with the disruptions in Canada.

"Despite some significant supply disruptions, most notably in Canada, ongoing bearish fundamentals precipitated a modest retracement in prices," Societe Generale said in a weekly note to clients.

U.S. commercial crude stockpiles have likely risen for a fifth straight week, a Reuters' poll showed, with crude inventories expected to have built by 500,000 barrels to a record above 543 million barrels.

Some traders said a \$40-\$50 per barrel price range may reflect a balanced market with plentiful stocks.
(Source: Reuters)



Philips, Osram lighting spin-offs diverge on LED challenge

Philips' decision to float its lighting business will offer investors a radical alternative to its closest independent competitor in the lucrative illumination market, Osram Licht, itself spun off by Siemens three years ago.

In terms of size, the two are comparable: Philips Lighting had core earnings (adjusted EBITA) in 2015 of 547 million euros (\$624 million), on sales of 7.5 billion euros.

Both seek to profit from steady growth in general lighting for streets, homes and offices - predicted by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to be worth \$105 billion by 2020, up from 87 billion in 2014 - as well as their respective niches in automotive or specialist light systems.



Nokia's network sales miss forecast, ups savings target

Nokia's net sales of telecoms equipment fell more than expected in the first quarter and the Finnish company warned earnings in its mainstay business would decline this year due to weakening demand for mobile gear in key markets.

In its first unified earnings report since taking control of rival Alcatel-Lucent in January, Nokia also nudged up its cost-cutting target for the merger, saying it was now seeking savings of "above" 900 million euros (\$1 billion) in the course of 2018, compared with "approximately" 900 million euros previously.

Net sales at the combined networks business dropped 8 percent in the first quarter from a year ago to 5.18 billion euros, Nokia said on Tuesday, missing analysts' average forecast of 5.51 billion in a Reuter's poll.



GE to buy power plant unit of Korea's Doosan Engineering

General Electric Co. has agreed to buy a unit of South Korea's Doosan Engineering and Construction Co. that produces key components of combined-cycle power plants, the head of the U.S. Company's power division said on Tuesday.

The \$250 million acquisition, which is subject to approval by regulators and Doosan shareholders, builds on GE's \$13.9 billion purchase of Alstom's energy business last year, adding capacity for engineering and manufacturing of heat recovery steam generators used to boost the efficiency of commercial power plants, Steve Bolze, chief executive of GE's power business, said in an interview.

Ancient Persian seals returned by U.S. to go on display

TOURISM TEHRAN – A collection of ancient Persian seals, which had been smuggled to the U.S. in 2002 and returned to Iran recently, will go on display at the National Museum of Iran.

“The museum will display the seals from May 14 to 20,” museum director Jebrail Nokandeh announced.

The artifacts date back to the Sassanid period (224 to 651 AD).

The U.S. government returned the 73-item invaluable antique shipment to Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations in New York last week and then the items were transferred to the country.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered the seals to the National Museum of Iran on Sunday.

These highly valuable pieces of antiquity are the fourth historic shipments that have been returned to the country over the past few years.

Last year, Italy returned to Iran some 30 stolen artifacts that had been smuggled to the European country during the past 10 years.



A collection of ancient Persian seals, which had been smuggled to the U.S. in 2002, will go on display at the National Museum of Iran.

The ancient Iranian artifacts comprised of items belonging to Iran's pre- and post-Islamic era, had been recovered by the Italian art police and were handed over to a representative from the Iranian Embassy in Italy.

Iran's ancient fossils, which had been sent to the U.S. some 40 years ago for studies were returned home after Tehran won a decades-long legal dispute with Washington, were unveiled in the Iranian capital.

Before that, in December 2014, a collection of over 300 artifacts of around 3000 years old which had been kept in Belgium for 50 years, was finally returned to Iran following a verdict by the court of appeals in Belgium.

And the last but not the least, the U.S. returned a 2700-year-old Persian griffin, a so-called mythical creature with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle, during President Hassan Rouhani's visit to New York in October 2103 to attend the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Most incredible bookstores in the world

Are you someone who refuses to believe the theory that “print is dead”? Who always makes room in a suitcase for a paperback? Who finds it easy to spend more time at a charmingly ramshackle bookstore than a crowded tourist attraction? You're not alone.

Here are some of the most storied book shops to celebrate the bookworm in all of us.

■ Shakespeare and Company, Paris

One of the most famous and photographed independent book shops in the world, Shakespeare and Company sits along the Seine River in Paris and was an expat-author watering hole of sorts for some of literature's biggest names—James Baldwin, Allen Ginsberg, Anais Nin, William Burroughs—in the 1960s.

Prior to its reopening at its current location, Shakespeare and Company was a Sylvia Beach-owned shop just a few blocks away that hosted some even more storied names like F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, Earnest Hemingway, and T.S. Eliot.

There's no denying the historical importance of this place, but it's also simply a comforting spot to escape busy Paris and read a heavily used novel free of charge, hear a stranger expertly play piano, or stumble upon a famous writer. New and used titles fill this two-story shop to the brim, and it's the perfect place to pick up a worthy souvenir to read on your flight home. For a peek at its charming art-covered walls, packed shelves, and matted armchairs, watch the second film of Richard Linklater's Sunrise Oscar-nominated romance trilogy, Before Sunset.

■ Livraria Lello & Irmao, Porto

Harry Potter fanatics of all ages should make the pilgrimage to J.K. Rowling's former home away from home, Porto, if only in pursuit of the story's Muggle-world origin. Rowling taught English in Portugal's second city, and wrote some of the now-famous series around the time that she frequented Livraria Lello & Irmao's stained-glass upstairs cafe. The shop boasts breathtaking Gothic Revival and Art Nouveau architecture, and is suspected to be part of the inspiration for the Harry Potter series' settings.

■ Ler Devagar, Lisbon

South of Porto in Portugal's bustling capital, Lisbon's most versatile livraria is aptly named Read Slowly, and is equal parts cafe, local art gallery, concert/event venue,



Ler Devagar, Lisbon

and brimming bookstore. Pop in for an espresso, to buy a new title, to take a peek at the long-standing art on both floors, or for an exhibition or poetry reading.

■ The Strand, New York City

For a taste of rare used books and new titles alike, the 86-year-old Strand in New York's East Village is frequented by both tourists and locals for its rare book room, deal bins, and “Strand”-branded memorabilia like tote bags and T-shirts. The Strand has no shortage of events, from readings and conversational classes to art shows and book signings. It prides itself on housing 18 miles of books—about 2.5 million, not counting a warehouse in Brooklyn that holds another quarter million.

The far-reaching price range hits upwards of \$45,000 for rare titles like a Matisse-illustrated copy of James Joyce's Ulysses signed by the author himself. Those looking for a (slightly) more affordable souvenir can grab first-editions like Virginia Woolf's The Waves for \$200, or, for die-hard readers with padded wallets, a first-issue copy of Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms for \$2,000.

■ Scorpio Books, Christchurch

If New Zealand's seafaring city of Christchurch does one thing well, it's sustainability. Buildings made out of alternative materials ranging from cardboard to shipping containers popped up here after the region experienced

a massive earthquake in 2011.

One example of these shipping-container buildings is Scorpio Books, home to the largest selection of fantasy and science-fiction books in New Zealand—more than a million titles—making it a perfect stop for Lord of the Rings-inspired tourists.

■ Libreria Acqua Alta, Venice

Every existing photo of this canal-side shop in Venice is Pinterest-worthy. Libreria Acqua Alta is piled high with enough books to create the store itself—its steps were created from stacks of hardbacks tied together by string, their colorful spines deteriorating in the humidity. The shop is only about a decade old and houses four cats, who will likely judge you from their comfortable perches as you skim the shelves.

■ Brattle Book Shop, Boston

Boston's esteemed literary scene boasts plenty of must-see book sites, from the historic public library's John Singer Sargent murals to the bronze Make Way for Ducklings statues of the Public Gardens. But local bookworms will tell you that the bookstore in the city with the most character is “The Brattle,” an antiquarian bookseller with an outdoor sale lot that sits under the watchful eyes of authors like Toni Morrison and Franz Kafka—in mural form.

A local institution since its founding in 1825, Brattle Book Shop's mural-lined lot came after its former space burned to the ground in 1980. What took its place is a treasured space for outdoor title browsing, next door to where the three-story shop now stands. Brattle proprietor Ken Gloss inherited the business from his father, and the family business's outdoor carts come out every day year-round, except on days it rains or snows.

■ Atlantis Book Shop, Santorini

Another hand-painted outdoor gem of a bookstore that draws tourists is Santorini's Atlantis Books, a tiny, white-washed bookseller that belongs on a postcard.

The cramped shop sits upon Santorini's picture-perfect seaside cliffs and hosts a book festival every November—offseason—full of writers and artists, with ticket prices ranging from 25 to 250 euro to attend. Visitors come in hordes for the views from this tiny island, but this tiny bookstore is without a doubt a special part of Santorini's many authentic surprises.

(Source: Trip Advisor)

Dramatic population change in Europe from 45,000 to 7,000 years ago

Analyses of ancient DNA from prehistoric humans paint a picture of dramatic population change in Europe from 45,000 to 7,000 years ago, according to a new study led by Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator David Reich at Harvard Medical School.

The new genetic data, published in Nature, reveal two big changes in prehistoric human populations that are closely linked to the end of the last Ice Age around 19,000 years ago. As the ice sheet retreated, Europe was repopulated by prehistoric humans from southwest Europe (e.g., Spain). Then, in a second event about 14,000 years ago, populations from the southeast (e.g., Turkey, Greece) spread into Europe, displacing the first group of humans.

Archaeological studies have shown that modern humans swept into Europe about 45,000 years ago and caused the demise of the Neanderthals, indicated by the disappearance of Neanderthal tools in the archaeological record, explained Reich.

(Source: Past Horizons)

NEWS

Zimbabwe facilitates visa procedure for Iranians

Zimbabwe's Department of Immigration moved 37 countries including China, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Algeria, Turkey and Cuba from Category C to Category B in respect of the visa regime in a move aimed at boosting the tourism sector.



The Zimbabwe migration management system comprises a three-tier model classified into categories A, B and C. Category A refers to countries whose nationals are exempt from visa requirements while those in Category B obtain visas at the port of entry. And Category C nationals are required to apply for visas prior to travel.

But if the local tourism sector is to achieve such a target then the authorities simply need to do more in respect of putting in place measures and strategies to ensure that they tap into key tourism outbound markets (especially for the market such as the Chinese one).

Zimbabwe launched its introductory National Tourism Policy in 2014, with Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry Engineer Walter Mzembi stating at the time that by the year 2020, the country's tourism sector should be a \$5 billion economy, attracting at least 5 million arrivals annually and contributing 15 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

(Source: herald.co.zw)

LIFESTYLE

Steps to becoming a more sustainable traveler

Here are seven things globetrotters can do to ease their impact on the planet:

■ Avoid the plane and take the train. Become part of the emerging “slow travel” trend by going to fewer places and spending more time in each. Train travel is a good way to do this. Not only will you experience a deeper sense of place, you'll also decrease your carbon footprint. Some of my favorite travel-by-train destinations include India, Southeast Asia, East Africa, and China.

■ Give, the right way. Many well-intentioned travelers bring sweets, used clothing, books, and pencils to hand out to children and villagers in developing nations. Sadly, this kind giving often has unintended consequences—it can sow community conflict and encourage a culture of dependency and begging.

It is better to give—be it money or goods—to reputable local organizations that work on social welfare programs, or to international groups that partner with them.

■ Say no to plastic. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a swirling mass of human trash stretching across thousands of miles of the ocean, includes gazillions of throw-away plastic bottles and bags that will take hundreds of years, if ever, to break down—all the while wreaking havoc on marine ecosystems.

Be a part of the solution by opting for locally purified water in recyclable glass bottles (in the tropics, I rely mainly on green coconuts to stay hydrated) and carrying tote bags in your luggage that you can use while perusing street markets and shops. Not only will this cut back on plastic waste, it will also reduce your carbon footprint—petroleum-based ingredients are a staple in manufacturing plastic bottles and bags.

■ Support the real local economy. Locally made crafts and souvenirs are not always cheaper, but purchasing them ensures your contribution to the economy will have a more direct and positive impact.

In Cancun, for example, some gift shops sell “traditional” Mexican sombreros that are imported from China because they cost less, while village artisans who make the hats by hand charge more.

■ Never buy wildlife products—period. On a trip to Vietnam's Halong Bay, I watched a group of American tourists haggling with villagers who were selling some of the most beautiful sea shells I have come across in my travels.

Similarly, in Mongolia, I witnessed a couple of backpackers haggling at an outdoor market to buy a hand-stitched eagle hunter's hat made from plush wolf fur. These travelers were inadvertently helping to support a growing marketplace for trafficking rare and endangered wildlife products as souvenirs. Just say no.

(Source: National Geography)

PICTURE OF THE DAY

IRNA/Ata Ranjbar



Bride and groom (in the middle) pose for a photo with their guests during a traditional wedding ceremony in Kalat, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt. in Jordan
1st Fl., 250 sq.m, 3 bdrs, luxury furn,
garden, balcony, \$3300
Diba: 09128103206

Luxury Apt. in Elahieh
3rd Fl., 170 sq.m, 3 bdrs, luxury furn,
Pkg, 2700 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Pasdaran
300 sq.m, 3 bdrs, fully furn,
outdoor pool, completely renovated,
Diplomatic, \$4500
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Zafranieh
6th Fl., 180 sq.m, 3 bdrs, luxury furn,
lobby, excellent view,
2 Pkg, beautiful & green garden,
SPJ, **Diplomatic**, 4000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Velenjak
350 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn, SPJ,
Diplomatic, 4000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Elahieh
2nd Fl., 150 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn,
Diplomatic Bldg., Pkg, \$2200
Diba: 09128103206

Villa

Duplex Villa in Farmanieh
400 sq.m built, 4 bdrs, furn & unfurn,
completely renovated, green garden,
Pkg, **Suitable for Residency & Office**, 15000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Aqdasieh
600 sq.m built up, 5 bdrs, garden,
SPJ, Pkg, **Diplomatic**, 8000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Shahrak-Qarb
600 sq.m built up, 8 bdrs,
outdoor pool, green garden, Pkg,
Suitable for Embassies & Residencies, 15000 USD
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Japan and South Korea may soon go nuclear

The longtime status quo is crumbling and plutonium stockpiles are rising.

By Henry Sokolski

Last Friday North Korean leader Kim Jong Un praised his country's recent hydrogen bomb test and satellite launch as "unprecedented" achievements that will "bring the final victory of the revolution." North Korea's nuclear-weapons program and a growing sense that security arrangements with the U.S. aren't sufficient has eroded the Japanese taboo against nuclear weapons. On April 1, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's cabinet announced that Japan's constitution did not ban his country from having or using nuclear arms.

Meanwhile, South Korea's ruling-party leaders have urged President Park Geun-hye to stockpile "peaceful" plutonium as a military hedge against its neighbors. A Feb. 19 article in Seoul's leading conservative daily, the Chosun Ilbo, went so far as to detail how South Korea could use its existing civilian nuclear facilities to build a bomb in 18 months.

Japan and South Korea are party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and Tokyo's antinuclear-weapons stance dates to 1945 and the nuclear devastation the U.S. wreaked on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But that won't necessarily stop either country from joining the nuclear club—or at least positioning themselves to do so quickly—if they feel the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" is folding.

Japan already has stockpiled 11 tons of plutonium, separated from fuel used in its nuclear-power reactors. A bomb requires roughly five kilograms (or 1/200th of a ton). The old shibboleth, popular with the nuclear industry, that such "reactor-grade" plutonium is unsuitable for weapons, is essentially irrelevant for a technologically advanced country. Japan also has built—but not operated—a large reprocessing plant of French design that can separate about eight tons of plutonium a year.

■ Fast-breeder reactors

The shutdown of Japan's power reactors following the 2011 Fukushima disaster means there are no reactors online that can use this plutonium. But Japan says it will proceed with reprocessing anyway, putatively to keep open the distant possibility of fueling a new generation of so-called fast-breeder reactors.

Japan's nuclear cooperation agree-



ment with Washington allows it to do this with U.S.-origin fuel. South Korea's agreement prohibits this without U.S. approval, something Seoul chafes at. It sees itself the equal of Japan. Should Japan operate Rokkasho, as it plans to do late in 2018, it will be impossible politically to restrain South Korea from following suit.

China, meanwhile, is negotiating with France to build a reprocessing plant similar to Japan's. One might discount the security significance of this; Beijing already has nuclear weapons. But a large reprocessing plant would allow it to expand its nuclear arsenal far beyond its present size. The Chinese are clearly aware of the military significance of nominally civilian plutonium. Consider their loud and repeated complaints about Japan's plutonium stocks.

The Asian goal of stockpiling plutonium to launch a new generation of plutonium-fueled fast-breeder reactors is

one shared with nuclear enthusiasts in the West. But fast reactors are so much more expensive than conventional uranium-burning reactors that they, and the reprocessing of spent fuel they require, have never made economic sense. In Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing there are government officials and advisers who understand this and the security risks of commercializing plutonium. But their concerns have been trumped by nationalistic demands not to fall behind in plutonium technology.

■ Civil plutonium

The obvious fix, which would be economically beneficial for Japan, South Korea and China, is a collective pause in the rush toward civil plutonium. For the U.S. to credibly broker this, Capitol Hill needs to support the Energy Department's February decision to terminate the construction in South Carolina of a plutonium plant designed to fuel U.S. power reactors that is billions over budget and years behind

schedule.

An Asian-U.S. plutonium pause has support within the administration and Congress. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz recently told the Journal's Beijing office: "We don't support large-scale reprocessing." He said a large commercial Chinese reprocessing plant "certainly isn't a positive in terms of nonproliferation."

At a March hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sens. Bob Corker (R., Tenn.) and Ed Markey (D., Mass.), both backed a "time out" on East Asian plutonium recycling.

Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Countryman agreed: "I would be very happy to see all countries get out of the plutonium reprocessing business." In the House a plutonium timeout has been championed by Reps. Brad Sherman (D., Calif.), Jeff Fortenberry (R., Neb.) and Adam Schiff (D., Calif.).

They understand that a collective plutonium timeout would calm East Asia and save our Asian allies, China and the U.S. hundreds of billions of dollars. President Obama, with less than a year in office to make a lasting contribution to nuclear nonproliferation, should feel comfortable backing this proposal.

(Source: The Wall Street Journal)

The Asian goal of stockpiling plutonium to launch a new generation of plutonium-fueled fast-breeder reactors is one shared with nuclear enthusiasts in the West.

A 'steady march to authoritarianism' in Turkey

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's decision to resign following disagreements with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will heighten political polarization inside Turkey, said the Atlantic Council's Aaron Stein.

"Half the country views this as, to use their language, a palace coup. There are real concerns among the half of the country that does not vote for the AKP that this is a steady march to authoritarianism," said Stein, a Resident Senior Fellow in the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. The ruling Justice and Development Party is known by its Turkish acronym AKP.

"Erdogan remains the most powerful politician in Turkey by about ten miles, if not twenty now. He has no rival," Stein added.

Davutoglu, who served as Erdogan's foreign minister and became prime minister in 2014 after Erdogan assumed the presidency, said on May 5 that he will step down after an extraordinary meeting of the AKP on May 22. Davutoglu's departure clears the way for Erdogan to appoint a more pliable prime minister.

Davutoglu's decision to resign followed a dilution of his powers as AKP leader last week, but is likely the result of a steady buildup of differences between him and Erdogan. "Davutoglu was a very lukewarm supporter of the presidential system and was probably forced to publicly say that he supported it. That really is the crux of the disagreement," said Stein.

Under Turkey's constitution, it is the prime minister who is the most powerful elected official in the country. However, Erdogan—who would like to amend the constitution to vest more powers in the presidency—has been widely



viewed as the pre-eminent power.

The AKP saw an unexpected reversal of fortunes in a second round of elections in November of 2015 after it failed, just five months earlier, to secure a decisive parliamentary majority—a first for the party in thirteen years. It suffered the setback in June, leading to new elections in

There are real concerns among the half of the country that does not vote for the AKP that this is a steady march to authoritarianism.

November, where it secured a majority (317 seats), but still did not pass 330.

Erdogan has been firmly in control since 2003—first as prime minister, and since 2014 as president. His goal of rewriting Turkey's constitution and transforming the country from a parliamentary into a presidential form of government has been stymied by the fact that the AKP, despite its electoral gains in November, does not have enough seats in parliament to push through such an amendment. However, the AKP has said it will present an amended constitution in June. Stein contended that Erdogan could call early elections in the fall if he sees a way to give the AKP the parliamentary majority it needs to push the amendments through.

Davutoglu's exit could also have implications for Turkey on the world stage.

Carl Bildt, a member of the Atlantic Council's International Advisory Board and a former prime minister of Sweden, took to Twitter to warn that "the credibility of Turkey's EU road rests today with PM Davutoglu. If he leaves, bets are off."

Stein described Davutoglu as the architect of Turkey's foreign policy, but said it has been Erdogan who has called the shots all along. With Davutoglu's departure Turkey's relationship with Europe may get "a little dicey" because "Erdogan is far blunter in his dealings with European leaders, so the continued implementation of the refugee deal could become more difficult and Erdogan could use it as a means to continue to extract concessions, particularly from [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel," he said.

(Source: Atlantic Council)

The migrant crisis will never end. It is part of the modern world

By David Blair

Sometimes, one fact goes a long way towards explaining a global crisis. Behind the rubber dinghies laden with desperate people washing up on European beaches and the refugee camps spread across the deserts of Jordan – or, for that matter, the plains of Chad – lies a remarkable figure.

The number of people driven from their homes by conflict worldwide has jumped by 40 per cent since 2013. You have to go back to the early 1990s – the era of the

Rwandan genocide and the Yugoslav wars – to find a time when the ranks of the huddled masses rose so sharply in such a short period.

The raw data are as follows: in 2013, the global total of refugees (who have escaped across borders) and "internally displaced people" (who are fugitives within their own countries) stood at 33 million. By 2015, the number had climbed by 13 million to reach 46 million.

■ **Quantum leap in forced displacement**

The immolation of Syria was the big-

gest cause, but on the other side of the world, two million people fled the path of Boko Haram's pitiless offensive in Nigeria; another 2.2 million escaped civil war in South Sudan. In the terse phrase of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which compiled the figures, this amounted to a "quantum leap in forced displacement".

Today's wars generally create far more refugees than previous conflicts. It may sound strange, but that is not necessarily bad news. After all, the biggest reason is simply that even the most volatile coun-

tries have also experienced rapid population growth.

Had civil war broken out in Syria in 1970, the refugee crisis would have been a fraction of today's catastrophe. Back then, Syria had only six million people, compared with at least 20 million today.

If Boko Haram had swept across northern Nigeria in 1970, the gunmen would have been ravaging a country with barely one quarter of today's population. The refugee camps across the border in Chad would have been tiny by our standards.

➔

COMMENT

Why Rousseff's impeachment battle is bad for Brazil – but could be good for democracy

By Gretchen Helmke

Latin America was synonymous with political instability throughout the 20th century. The specter of military coups faded in the 1980s, yet political crises -- like the one now engulfing Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff -- still plague the region.

If Rousseff loses her looming impeachment battle over claims of illegal accounting, she will be the 18th elected Latin American president since 1985 (excluding Haiti) forced to leave office by means other than the ballot box. And the second Brazilian president since Fernando Collor de Mello resigned under threat of impeachment in 1992.

When the military stays in the barracks and presidential ousters follow the constitutional rules, it is tempting to see this as a good sign for democracy. After all, if corrupt presidents are being impeached for misdeeds, doesn't it show that checks and balances are working?

■ Democratic spring

Consider recent events in Guatemala. When President Otto Pérez Molina was caught in the middle of a corruption scandal uncovered in 2015 by the International Commission Against Impunity, political analysts applauded his stunning resignation. They touted his downfall as a sign of a "democratic spring" in Central America.

More broadly, one major concern about presidential systems that entail fixed terms is their rigidity -- and, hence, their vulnerability to regime breakdown when presidents fail to govern effectively. Presidential crises could instead be viewed as a positive sign that these systems are adopting "parliamentary traits."

Yet reasons for skepticism remain. First, the succession process is key. Even if the charges used to remove presidents are valid, how succession is carried out affects a country's rule of law and the quality of democracy going forward.

Latin American presidents are notorious for decrying the politicization and corruption of the courts and legislatures -- only to pack them with their own loyal supporters. Similarly, legislatures often bypass vice presidents and replace ousted leaders with members of the opposition.

Indeed, in Latin America, most presidential ousters look more like partisan affairs. Of the region's 17 ousted leaders, only six successors were the vice presidents -- and most of those cases were not from the same party as the president.

Replacing Rousseff is likely to be particularly fraught. Brazil's entire line of succession is under investigation for corruption with the nation already seething over a harsh recession.

■ Supreme Federal Tribunal

The Supreme Federal Tribunal recently ruled that Vice President Michel Temer, whom Rousseff alleges has masterminded the conspiracy against her, must face separate impeachment charges. The next in line, the speaker of the lower house, Eduardo Cunha, is implicated in a scandal involving Petrobras, the state-owned oil giant, and was just named in the Panama Papers leak exposing offshore financial deals. He is charged with taking up to \$40 million in bribes. The Senate president, who is third in line, is also deeply implicated in the Petrobras scandal, as well as other corruption charges.

Though Rousseff was narrowly re-elected in 2014, the only plausible option seems to be new elections. But which sort of candidate would prosper in this environment? Anti-system, anti-establishment politicians -- think Alberto Fujimori of Peru and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela -- are not known for their commitment to democracy or the rule of law.

The second concern hinges on basic checks and balances. As envisioned by The Federalist Papers, this system was designed primarily to slow things down and serve as a deterrent. So, even if a president is forced out for a valid reason, we should still be concerned that institutions are failing to prevent political corruption in the first place.

Consider, for example, the role of the judiciary: To be an effective deterrent to corruption and other political crimes, the courts must be fully independent from politicians.

Yet before 2012, when the Supreme Federal Tribunal under Chief Justice Joaquim Barbosa began to assume a more activist role, most Brazilians had a justly cynical view of their judicial system, neatly captured by the maxim: "The police arrest; the courts set free."

There is every reason to suspect that the same elites under investigation for corruption also assumed that they could act with impunity. Looking forward, strengthening accountability in Brazil and elsewhere must ultimately be about convincing elites that committing political crimes is too risky. In fully consolidated democracies, checks and balances should work to discourage bad behavior -- not sporadically sanction it afterward.

Recent history also suggests that the negative effects of presidential crises in Latin America rarely remain exclusive to the executive branch. Most end up pulling other important political institutions into their vortex. Polarization and decreasing public trust increases along the way.

This holds true with the current Brazilian crisis, in which more than 50 percent of all Congress members are facing corruption charges. Judge Sergio Moro, the celebrated lead prosecutor in the Petrobras scandal, has recently come under scathing attack for his controversial decision to release wiretapped conversations between Rousseff and former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The key question is whether ousting elected presidents increases or decreases the credibility of other institutions. If the former, a virtuous cycle begins. If the latter, a vicious cycle prevails. Unfortunately, the trajectory of other Latin American countries, where presidents were forced from power, does not bode well for Brazil.

(Source: Reuters)



DILMA ROUSSEFF

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If you're not already a fan of strawberries, you should be. Read the listing below to find out for yourself why you need to consider adding the fruit to your summer food basket.

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- Reduce inflammation
- Regulate blood pressure
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- Aid in weight management

NEWS IN BRIEF

Junk food causes similar high blood sugar levels as type 2 diabetes

A junk food diet can cause as much damage to the kidney as diabetes, according to a study published in Experimental Physiology.

Type 2 diabetes is often associated with obesity and the number of cases are rising worldwide at an alarming rate. In type 2 diabetes, the body doesn't produce enough insulin or doesn't react to it. This causes an accumulation of sugar (glucose) in the blood, which can have severe long-term consequences for organs, including the kidneys, where it can lead to diabetic kidney disease.



Hence, finding a way to block glucose reabsorption in the kidneys could offer a potential treatment for lowering blood sugar levels.

In their study, researchers used animal models of diabetes and models of diet-induced obesity and insulin resistance to see how insulin resistance and too much sugar or fat affect glucose transporters in the kidney.

The rats were fed junk food consisting of cheese, chocolate bars, biscuits and marshmallows for 8 weeks, or a rodent chow high in fat (containing 60%) for 5 weeks. The researchers then tested the effect of these diets on blood sugar levels and the different glucose transporters in the kidneys.

The effect of the diets on these transporters was compared with the changes also seen in rat models of type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

They found that certain types of glucose transporters (GLUT and SGLT) as well as their regulatory proteins were present in a higher number in type 2 diabetic rats. But a high-fat diet and junk food diet caused a similar increase in those receptors.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Strong solar storm sparks gorgeous, dancing auroras

A strong solar storm impacted Earth from Sunday night into the wee hours of Monday morning, and it produced some incredible auroras for observers with clear skies in high latitudes.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC), the solar storm reached the G3 level at its peak, potentially producing northern lights as far south as Illinois.

This storm marks the strongest solar storm yet in 2016, according to Spaceweather.com, and sky watchers shared many photos of the dancing lights.

Auroras are produced when charged particles from the sun — carried on the solar wind — slam into Earth's magnetic field.

Some of those charged particles slip through the magnetic field and impact neutrally charged particles in the planet's upper atmosphere, causing them to glow in greens, blues, purples and more.

Usually, auroras can only be seen in the highest latitudes on Earth, but when major solar storms impact the planet, it can cause the oval of the aurora to shift farther south, giving folks in different parts of the world a chance to see the cosmic lights.

Major storms can cause issues for satellites in space: The charged particles streaming from the sun can increase drag on objects and even create electrical issues for spacecraft. Severe storms could even affect electrical grids on Earth, potentially causing wide-spread power outages, though those kinds of solar storms are few and far between.

A huge solar storm that struck the Earth in 1859, called the Carrington Event, was so strong it lit telegraph lines on fire, according to some reports.

(Source: Mashable)

Vertical-lift flying car is a perfect personal aircraft

One of the great disappointments of 1950s-style retro-future conjecture is that we still don't have a genuine flying car, ala The Jetsons, parked in the driveway.

Well, by the year 2018, we might have several models to choose from. Germany's Lilium Aviation is promising that its light-weight model will be the most advanced personal aircraft ever developed.

The Lilium aircraft's super-compact design will allow the aircraft to lift off vertically from any 50-foot-square flat area.

That small footprint -- plus the vehicle's quiet all-electric engine -- means the Lilium could be a genuine park-in-the-driveway kind of flying car for urban and suburban commuting, according to developers.

Piloting system

The Lilium also features a computer-assisted piloting system that will require only 20 hours of training, designers say -- although presumably aviation authorities will have something to say about that.

According to a report in the UK publication The Telegraph, the Lilium would be classified as a Light Sport Aircraft, design-



The Lilium also features a computer-assisted piloting system that will require only 20 hours of training, designers say -- although presumably aviation authorities will have something to say about that.

Cactus-skin fuel cell membrane may boost electric cars

A cactus skin-inspired fuel cell membrane may boost the performance of electric cars, scientists have suggested.

Car manufacturers are gearing toward manufacturing more electric cars in the future. To address some of the challenges in water and heat management in fuel cell systems, researchers from Hanyang University in Korea and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Australia have developed a membrane that has a water-retaining property similar to that of a cactus plant.

The researchers reported that the membrane can increase fuel cell efficiency in electric cars by four times during hot conditions.

CSIRO researcher and study co-author Aaron Thornton explained that the skin functions similarly with the cactus, which retains water in dry environments. Thornton said that what they developed would be significant in the electric car industry because the membranes would allow the proton exchange membrane fuel cells



(PEMFCs) to remain hydrated.

Present electric cars

In present electric cars, hydration of fuel cells is done by putting the cells with a radiator, humidifier and water reservoir that take up a lot space and use up more power.

'Second skin' may reduce wrinkles, eyebags, scientists say

The idea sounds like fantasy: an invisible film that can be painted on your skin and give it the elasticity of youth. Bags under the eyes vanish in seconds. Wrinkles disappear.

Scientists at Harvard and M.I.T. have discovered that it is not fantasy at all. Reporting on Monday in the journal Nature Materials on pilot studies with 170 subjects, the researchers said a "second skin" composed of commonly used chemicals deemed safe by the Food and Drug Administration can accomplish that — and in small studies of it, so far no one has reported irritation or allergic reactions.

Undereye bags are just the start. You can soak the film with sunscreen and protect yourself without worrying about sweat or water washing it away, researchers said. They expect it can be used to treat eczema, psoriasis and other skin conditions by covering dry itchy patches with a film that moistens and soothes.

The chemicals are siloxanes — their basic form is one atom of oxygen linked to two atoms of silicon — which form polymers, long chains of repeating units. The researchers made a large collection of them by modifying molecular features such as the chain length to get the ones with the properties they wanted.

Two-step process

Then they devised a two-step process. First, a polymer, a clear liquid, is applied. Its chains are not very strong,



though, so the next step is applying a product that links them together.

By modifying the chemistry of the chains, the researchers can alter the properties of the second skin, depending on how it will be used, making it more or less permeable, for example. A more permeable second skin might be used for undereye bags while a less permeable one might hold a medication in place. It can be removed with a solution that dissolves the polymer.

The research was funded by a small, privately owned biotechnology company in Cambridge, Mass., Living Proof, and the product is being developed by another small, privately owned Cambridge company, Olivo Laboratories, which owns the patents. All of the authors on the new paper have an equity interest in Living Proof and so, indirectly, in Olivo.

(Source: The NYT)

Child's obesity tied to mom's pregnancy weight: study

A mother's excess weight gain or elevated blood sugar levels in pregnancy may put her child at increased risk for being overweight or obese, a new study finds.

"When women have elevated blood sugar and gain excess weight during pregnancy, it seems to change the baby's metabolism to 'imprint' the baby for childhood obesity," said study lead author Dr. Teresa Hillier.

She's a senior investigator with the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, Ore.

"We're not sure yet of the exact mechanism of this change, but it appears the baby is adapting to an overfed environment, whether from glucose or extra weight," Hillier said in a Kaiser news release.

Researchers analyzed data from more than 24,000 mothers and their children in three states, Oregon, Washington and Hawaii. All the children were normal weight (5.5 to 8.8 pounds) at birth and were followed to age 10.

Risk for obesity

Those children whose mothers had elevated blood sugar during pregnancy were at increased risk for obesity, the study found. The risk was greatest when mothers had gestational diabetes, the highest level of elevated blood sugar.

Compared to children whose mothers had normal blood sugar during pregnancy, those whose mothers had elevated blood sugar were at least 30 percent more likely to be overweight or obese by

ated to fly in uncongested airspace to a maximum altitude of three kilometers, or just under two miles.

More details from the Lilium's online spec sheet: The aircraft will have a maximum velocity of 250 mph, with a maximum takeoff weight of 600 kg, or just over 1,300 lbs.

Designers are aiming for a range of about 500 km, or around 300 miles.

The Telegraph article notes that, in Europe at least, flying the Lilium would require clearance from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which would also need to grant permission over any landing site.

So while you couldn't take off from your front yard, you could use your friendly neighborhood helipad facility. Or, naturally, an airport.

Here in the United States, aviation company Terrafugia announced that its prototype TF-X flying car will be ready in two years.

Lilium Aviation is run by a team of designers from the Technical University of Munich and has received funding and support from both the European Union and the European Space Agency. Oh, and they're hiring.

(Source: discovery.com)

Co-author and fellow CSIRO researcher Cara Doherty said they took inspiration from the stomatal pores present in the cactus skin. Doherty said these pores help retain water by closing when the surrounding conditions become hot and dry.

Doherty explained that water generation would occur through an electrochemical reaction regulated by nanoracks within the skin.

The "cracks widen when exposed to humidifying conditions and close up when it is drier," said Doherty. "This means that fuel cells can remain hydrated without the need for bulky external humidifier equipment."

Hanyang University professor and lead researcher Young Moo Lee said that the development of electric vehicles would greatly benefit from their study. He also said that other technologies requiring hydrated membranes, such as devices used in gas separation and water treatment, would also benefit from the research.

(Source: Tech Times)



age 10, the study found.

Compared to children whose mothers gained less than 40 pounds during pregnancy, those whose mothers gained more than that were at least 15 percent more likely to be overweight or obese during their first decade.

Women should gain no more than 40 pounds during pregnancy, according to the Institute of Medicine.

More than one-third of American children and teens are overweight or obese, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We can't wait until the baby is born to determine and address the impact on childhood obesity," Hillier said. "We need to intervene during the mom's pregnancy to help her with nutritional and lifestyle changes that will result in healthy weight gain, healthy blood sugar, and ultimately, healthy children."

(Source: HealthDay News)

Toyota battery breakthrough means magnesium could eventually replace lithium

Engineers at the Toyota Research Institute of North America (TRINA) think they've found the secret to using magnesium in rechargeable batteries. This would replace lithium as a safer, more energy-dense option for batteries in everything from cell phones to cars.

Magnesium has been considered a potential replacement for lithium in rechargeable batteries for some time. Lithium is not stable in air and can combust when exposed, so to make lithium-ion batteries safer, the ions are reduced and the lithium is embedded into graphite rods. This reduces the amount of metal (reducing density), which limits the amount of power the li-ion battery can store. To increase density, engineers have toyed with the mix of lithium and graphite and the shape of the cells, but the balance is tricky.

Magnesium is stable

Magnesium, on the other hand, is stable in the atmosphere and more potentially energy dense than is lithium in terms of storage. The trouble is, forming an electrolyte that doesn't degrade the magnesium while offering efficient transfer had proven difficult — until a chance discovery during research into hydrogen fuel cells changed that.

Principal scientist and chemical engineer Rana Mohtadi of Toyota overheard colleagues discussing the challenges of developing a magnesium-friendly electrolyte. She realized that the properties of the hydrogen storage material she'd been working with might be conducive to a magnesium-based battery. They formed a team and set to work to test it.

The manager for Toyota's research group, Paul Fanson, attributes the discovery to the diversity of the research staff at TRINA and the collaborative nature of the facility's culture.

The team has produced a paper outlining the discovery, which was published in the Angewandte Chemie International Edition. They hope that other researchers outside of Toyota can find use in the material and hasten the development of usable magnesium-based batteries. There is still some way to go before we'll be slotting magnesium batteries into our smartphones with the researchers estimating that it could be 20 years before these batteries go mainstream. The hope is that making the discovery public may help speed up that timeline.

(Source: Gizmodo)

A rights advocacy group claimed on Tuesday that Turkish border guards have in the past two months killed five Syrians who were trying to cross into Turkey, and called on the country to investigate the reported use of excessive force by soldiers.

In a statement, New York-based Human Rights Watch accused border guards of shooting and beating asylum-seekers and at least one smuggler. It said that five refugees — including a child — were killed and 14 others were wounded in March and April.

A Turkish Interior Ministry official denied that the incidents cited by Human Rights Watch had occurred and insisted that the country, which is home to 2.7 million Syrian refugees, does not shoot at asylum-seekers. The official cannot be named because of regulations that bar

Right group claims Turkish border guards killed 5 refugees



Ali Haider Gilani freed in Afghanistan

United States and Afghan forces have freed the kidnapped son of a former Pakistani prime minister in Afghanistan, the Pakistani foreign ministry has said in a statement.

Ali Haider Gilani, the son of Yousaf Raza Gilani, "has been recovered today in a joint operation carried out by the Afghan and U.S. security forces", the statement on Tuesday said, adding that preparations were being made to return him to Pakistan following a medical check-up.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the chairman of the prominent Pakistan People's Party (PPP), tweeted that Ali Haider Gilani had been "recovered in a successful operation".

The rescue operation was carried out overnight on Monday in the eastern border region of Paktika province, and according to the Afghan government, Gilani was being held by al-Qaeda affiliated group.

The news comes just over three years after Gilani was kidnapped by suspect-



ed Taliban fighters in a hail of gunfire on May 9, 2013 in Pakistan, two days before the national election in which he was campaigning.

Gunmen on a motorbike opened fire before abducting him in a black Honda car on the outskirts of Multan in Punjab province. His secretary and a bodyguard were killed, and four people wounded.

In May last year he was able to phone his father to tell him he was well.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

China slams nearby passage of U.S. warship in South China Sea

China has denounced the United States for sending yet another warship close to an island in the disputed South China Sea, saying the move threatened "peace and stability."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a daily news briefing on Tuesday that the U.S. warship entered the strategic waters without Beijing's permission.

Guided-missile destroyer, USS William P. Lawrence, sailed within 12 nautical miles of a land feature in the South China known as Fiery Cross Reef on Tuesday. U.S. Defense Department spokesman Bill Urban said the voyage was made to "challenge excessive maritime claims of some claimants in the South China Sea."

Pentagon claimed that the warship conducted a "routine freedom of navigation operation" near Fiery Cross.

"This action by the U.S. side threatened China's sovereignty and security interests, endangered the staff and facil-

civil servants from speaking to journalists without prior authorization.

Human Rights Watch also urged Turkey to reopen its border to all Syrian asylum-seekers, saying Turkish border guards blocked thousands of fleeing displaced Syrians after their camps near the Turkish border had been attacked on April 13 and 15.

The report could not independently be verified by The Associated Press.

Turkey maintains that it has an open-door policy toward migrants, although new arrivals are rare.

"Firing at traumatized men, women, and children fleeing fighting and indiscriminate warfare is truly appalling," said Gerry Simpson, senior refugee researcher at Human Rights Watch.

(Source: AP)

ities on the reef, and damaged regional peace and stability," Kang said.

It is the third time in less than a year that Washington has sent its warships to the sea in a move repeatedly condemned by China as "the real militarization" of the region.

The South China Sea has become a source of tension between China, the U.S., and some other regional countries who are seeking control of trade routes and mineral deposits there. China has on different occasions asserted its sovereignty over the sea, which is also claimed in some parts by Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The U.S. has accused Beijing of attempting to take advantage of the situation and gradually asserting control over the region. China, however, rejects the allegations and says the U.S. is interfering in regional affairs, deliberately stirring tensions in the South China Sea.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

German knifeman kills one in possible extremist attack

A German man stabbed to death one person and slashed three more on Tuesday in what authorities said may have been an Islamist attack, without ruling out that the assailant suffered mental problems.

Police said they had arrested a 27-year-old German national who knifed four people around 5:00am (0300 GMT) at the commuter railway station of the small town of Grafing, east of Munich.

One of the victims, a 50-year-old man, later died of his wounds in hospital. The others injured were men aged 43, 55 and 58. One of the victims was seriously hurt, the other two more lightly wounded.

The "assailant made remarks at the scene of the crime that indicate a political motive -- apparently an Islamist motive," said Ken Heidenreich, spokesman for the prosecutor's office. "We are still determining what the exact remarks were."

Bavaria State's Interior Minister Joachim Hermann said the attacker, named locally as Paul H., was a Ger-

man national, as authorities said he hailed from central Hesse state and did not have a migrant background.

In the dawn attack, the assailant stabbed one man aboard a train, another on the platform, then left the station and slashed two more men on bicycles outside, said Bavarian police spokesman Karl-Heinz Segerer on NTV news channel.

Town mayor Angelika Obermayr expressed shock at the bloody crime in the sleepy town of 13,000 people.

Last August, two extremists claiming to belong to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group threatened Germany with attacks in an online execution video.

In the rare German-language video they urged their "brothers and sisters" in Germany and Austria to commit attacks against "unbelievers" at home.

Since then Germany had seen at least two bloody knife assaults blamed on Islamists, before Tuesday's attack.

In February a 15-year-old girl identified as Safia S. stabbed a policeman in the neck with a kitchen knife in what prosecutors later said was an ISIL-inspired attack.

Federal prosecutors later said the teenager had "embraced the radical jihadist ideology of the foreign terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" and was in contact with an ISIL fighter in Syria.

Last September, a 41-year-old Iraqi man identified as Rafik Y. stabbed and seriously wounded a policewoman in Berlin before another officer shot him dead.

The man had previously spent time in jail for membership of a banned Islamist group and had been convicted in 2008 of planning an attack in Berlin against former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.

According to the German domestic intelligence agency, some 740 people have left Germany to join extremist groups in Syria or Iraq. About 120 of them have been killed, while about one third have returned to Germany.

(Source: AFP)

Knesset to discuss report on Israeli failures in Gaza war

Israel's blockade keeps Gaza in the dark

The Israeli parliament, the Knesset, is going to review the findings of a draft version of a report on the failures of the Israeli army during the 50-day Israeli war on the besieged Gaza Strip back in 2014.

The draft reportedly contains an assertion, among other statements, that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Military Affairs Moshe Ya'alon did not inform the cabinet about prior warnings.

The warnings were reportedly given by Israel's internal security service against potential military confrontations with Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in July 2014.

Netanyahu also reportedly never raised the issue about border tunnels that are being used by the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip to bring in supplies to the blockaded coastal sliver.

The draft report, written by Israel's Comptroller Yosef Shapira, would also put the former chief of the general staff

of the Israeli army in hot water over military surveys he submitted to the cabinet.

Fifty-three legislators from various opposition parties, including left-wing Meretz, center-left political alliance Zionist Union Camp and Yesh Atid, have already signed an initiative to hold a special session on the matter. The date of the discussion is yet to be determined.

■ Call for grilling Netanyahu

Meretz Chairman Ilan Gilon said, "Serious failures of the previous Netanyahu administration, which are coming to light in the leaked draft report, prove that the security of Israel is in the hands of people who can't be trusted."

"We demand even more so that, given the latest incidents in the south, the prime minister appears to the Knesset to be held accountable and provide clear answers," he added.

Reserve General Yom-Tov Samia, who served as Deputy Commander of Israel's Southern Command during the Gaza

war, also criticized the regime for the management of the 50-day offensive.

"I have not read the draft report but however drastic it may be — I am not sure that it will be drastic enough," he said.

Israel launched its latest war on the Gaza Strip in early July 2014.

The 50-day military aggression, which ended on August 26, 2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians, including 577 children. Over 11,100 others — including 3,374 children, 2,088 women and 410 elderly people — were also wounded in the war.

Israel continues to carry out attacks on the Palestinian enclave from time to time.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

■ Israel's blockade keeps Gaza in the dark

Elsewhere, the electricity crisis in the

besieged Gaza Strip affects every facet of daily life, from making bread, to obtaining medical treatment, to earning a living. It also endangers lives: Last week, three siblings were burned alive after the candles they were using during a power cut set their house on fire.

Gaza is currently on a schedule of eight hours off and eight hours on, but even this is unreliable and subject to frequent change. Distribution is unequal, and cuts of up to two hours are common during each eight-hour span. The bombing of Gaza's power plant in 2006, coupled with sanctions and restrictions imposed as part of Israel's blockade on the coastal enclave, have exacerbated the crisis, while the electricity network suffered further damage in the 2014 war.

This densely populated area of Gaza City has yet to recover from the 2014 Israeli offensive that killed more than 2,000 Palestinians and flattened entire neighborhoods.

(Source: agencies)

IMF, Kim Hong ink MoU to co-op in Iran's marine projects

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran Marine Fund (IMF) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Singapore's Kim Hong Holdings on cooperation in Iran's marine projects, IMF office of public relations reported.

According to the report, based on the MoU, which was signed by Mehrdad Mozaffari, the managing director of Iranian marine fund, and Regional Manager of Singapore's Kim Hong Holding in Tehran on Monday, Kim Hong announced their

readiness to provide a 400 million euro finance to Develop Iran's Marine Industries in several phases.

According to the memorandum the parties are committed to cooperation in construction of platform supply vessels, offshore cranes, petroleum tank vessels and also manufacturing Aluminum and fiberglass vessels.

In the event, Kim Hong also offered a comprehensive package of applicable services in the field of maritime industries to IMF.

JUMP

The migrant crisis will never end. It is part of the modern world

➔ There are more refugees because there are more people — and, in turn, there are more people because the world has broadly succeeded in reducing infant mortality and raising life expectancy, even in the poorest countries.

Many of those improvements, incidentally, were driven by the aid programs of the very European countries that now find themselves inundated with refugees. The EU and its members have spent huge sums on primary health care and childhood vaccination campaigns across Africa and the Middle East. The result is that more children live to become adults, the population rises — and so does the number of people who are vulnerable to becoming refugees if war breaks out.

■ Volume of migrants

The volume of migrants heading for Europe is not solely because of war and poverty. The affected countries also have many more people than in the past — partly because Europe did the right thing by, for example, eradicating smallpox and immunizing children against polio.

All this means that our understanding of the "migration crisis" will need to change. The very word "crisis" is misleading for it implies a passing moment of danger that will eventually come to an end.

But the central causes of the outflow of refugees from Africa and the Middle East are not transient, but structural. In its latest Armed Conflict Survey, the IISS casts around for policies that might stop people from fleeing war zones and ends up resorting to platitudes.

The IISS also urges "better access for humanitarian relief in the country of conflict" so that people are not compelled to leave simply to find food and shelter. Again, some chance. The likes of Boko Haram or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group are never going to allow a free pass for aid workers in their bloodsoaked domains.

Wars will always force large numbers of people to flee. Populations are generally growing, so future conflicts will create even more refugees than today. If 46 million people are now living in camps or other sanctuaries, the conflicts of the 2020s are likely to displace still more.

Instead of being a passing phase, the "migration crisis" is part of the fabric of the world.

(Source: Telegraph)

Trump says he'd make exception to Muslim ban for London mayor

United States presidential hopeful Donald Trump suggested on Monday that he would make an exception to his proposal to ban Muslims from entering the country for London's newly elected mayor, according to The New York Times.

"There will always be exceptions," Trump told the paper when asked about Sadiq Khan, who was elected on Friday as London's first Muslim mayor.

"I was happy to see that," Trump said about the mayor's election. "I think it's a very good thing, and I hope he does a very good job because frankly that would be very, very good."

Khan, in an interview after his election, pointed out that he wouldn't be able to visit the United States if Trump becomes president.

"I want to go to America to meet with and engage with American mayors," Khan told Time magazine over the weekend.

"If Donald Trump becomes the president, I'll be stopped from going there by virtue of my faith, which means I can't engage with American mayors and swap ideas," he added.

"... I think if he does a great job, it will really - you lead by example, always lead by example. If he does a good job and frankly if he does a great job, that would be a terrific thing," Trump said.

(Source: The Hill)

UN: 'Disproportionate' crackdown on dissent in Egypt

The Egyptian government has been using "disproportionate" force in dealing with protesters, journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders who appear to be taking part in peaceful protests or dissenting, the United Nations has said.

"The worsening crackdown on peaceful protest and dissent in Egypt represents a further setback for an open political environment and a vibrant civil society," said a statement released by the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.

"The use of force against civil society and against the expression of dissenting views on political issues contribute to a deteriorating climate for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights that form the essential components of a democratic society," it added.

Anti-government protests broke out on April 15, and again on April 25 after the Egyptian government ceded two islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia. According to the UN, more than 380 protesters, journalists and human rights activists were arrested during the rallies. The UN condemned what they called a "harsh response" of mass arrests and continued clampdown on peaceful protests during the largest rallies in Egypt over the past two years.

Security forces stormed Egypt's Journalists' Syndicate in Cairo on May 1 and arrested two journalists, two days before World Press Freedom Day.

And last Saturday, Egypt sentenced six people to death, including two Al Jazeera journalists, who were accused of leaking state secrets to Qatar.

Asmaa Mohamed al-Khatib, identified as a reporter with the pro-Brotherhood Rassd news outlet, was also sentenced to death in absentia. Ibrahim Helal, former director of news at Al Jazeera's Arabic channel, and Jordanian citizen Alaa Omar Mohamed Sablan were both tried in absentia.

The Committee to Protect Journalists says Egypt is second only to China as the world's worst jailer of journalists, holding at least 23 in jail.

(Source: agencies)

SOC received the special trophy of Oilshow 2016


ECONOMY TEHRAN — Sepahan Oil Company (SOC) received a Plaque of appreciation and was awarded the special trophy for active participation at the 221st international Iran oil, gas, refining and petrochemicals exhibition, Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported.

According to this report, a plaque of appreciation and the special Trophy for active participation in the 21st International Exhibition of Oil, Gas, Refining

and Petrochemical (Iran Oilshow 2016) was awarded to Sepahan Oil Company, the largest producer of base oils in the Middle East and the manufacturer of industrial and motor oils under the brand "Speedy".

Iran's 21st international exhibition of oil, gas, refining and petrochemical was held at Tehran international permanent fairground on May 5- 9 and more than 1,900 foreign and domestic Companies including SOC, participated in this tradeshow.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



I have found that if you love life, life will love you back.
Arthur Rubinstein

LEARN ENGLISH

Believing in Predictions

Armond: I hope that this New Year will bring me better luck.
Patricia: You can find that out easily enough. My **astrologer** says...
Armond: Hold on. You **consult** an astrologer? You really believe in that **nonsense**?
Patricia: It's not nonsense and, yes, I believe in it. I like getting predictions about the future and knowing what is in the stars for me.
Armond: Astrologers are **charlatans** and what they tell their customers is **phony**. They **make it all up** and tell people what they want to hear.
Patricia: I don't know how you can say that. The **horoscope** for my **sign** each day gives me warnings and helps me avoid mistakes. And when I have big decisions to make, I go for a reading. The guidance I get is **invaluable**.
Armond: You're too smart to **be taken in** by **con artists** who **style themselves** as **mystics**. It's all smoke and mirrors.
Patricia: You're wrong. I'll give you an example. My horoscope today said that an unpleasant person will try to **shake my beliefs**. It said I should just walk away.
Armond: Hey, where are you going?

(Source: eslpod.com)

■ **Words & phrases**
astrologer: someone who uses astrology to tell people about their character, life, or future
consult: to ask for information or advice from someone because it is their job to know something
nonsense: ideas, opinions, statements etc. that are not true or that seem very stupid
charlatan: someone who pretends to have special skills or knowledge - used to show disapproval
phony: someone who is phony is insincere and pretends to be something they are not
make something up: o pretend that something is true in order to deceive someone
horoscope: a description of your character and the things that will happen to you, based on the position of the stars and planets at the time of your birth
sign: also star sign: a group of stars, representing one of 12 parts of the year, that some people believe influences your behavior and your life
reading: here it means to go to an astrologer who will then predict what your future will be either by looking at your palm or some cards etc.
invaluable: extremely useful
be taken in: to be completely deceived by someone who lies to you
con artist: someone who tricks or deceives people in order to get money from them
style yourself: to design clothing, furniture, or the shape of someone's hair in a particular way
mystics: someone who practices mysticism which is a religious practice in which people try to get knowledge of truth and to become united with God through prayer and meditation
shake your belief: to make someone feel less confident, less sure about their beliefs etc.

QUIZ OF THE DAY

151) What does the idiom mean?
Lend me your ear a moment.
a) look at me.
b) listen to me.
c) turn towards me.
(Quiz No. 150 answer: a)

PHRASAL VERB

Sink in

■ **Meaning**: to be fully understood
■ **For example**: It took a while for the scale of the disaster to sink in.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Distance makes the heart grow fonder

■ **Explanation**: when you are separated from the person you love, your feelings are even stronger

Iran hails Japan's collaboration to help restore Lake Urmia

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran hailed Japan's collaboration in restoration of Lake Urmia through empowering rural women and optimizing water consumption patterns and agricultural methods around the lake.
The two nations have undertaken efforts to empower women residing in 70 villages around Lake Urmia, chief of Iran's Department of Environment Ma'soumeh Ebtekar said.
She made the remarks during the first Symposium of Iran-Japan on Women, Peace and Sustainable Development which was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran on Monday.
"Women who participated in the program are now trained and could take on a role in sustainable agriculture," Ebtekar added.
Additionally ten funds to provide suitable alternatives to the farm-based employ-



ment and encouraging non-farm based jobs are set up in the region, she added.
The collaboration between Iran and Japan is also focusing on reforming water usage and revising old farming techniques in the lake basin, Ebtekar said.
The program which had so far been implemented in 70 villages will now expand to 90 villages located on the lake basin, the chief of DoE noted.
Japan has already spent \$3 million dollars on the aforesaid program, she said, and

Iran's share is some \$570 million dollars.
The third phase of Contribution to Lake Urmia Restoration document was signed on April 5 in attendance of Masoumeh Ebtekar, chief of the Department of Environment, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative in Iran Gary Lewis and Japanese charge d'affaires.
This project specifically addresses the restoration of the lake mainly through engaging local community and farmers by applying sustainable agriculture techniques.
Lake Urmia, north-western Iran, which was once the largest salt-water lake in the Middle East has been in a critical condition for some years now.
In order to save the lake and its ecological values various restoration programs have been drawn up and implemented so far. Seeking international cooperation is on top of the agenda to save the lake.

Tehran Street, Seoul Street stand as symbols of friendship

Tehran Street in southern Seoul and Seoul Street in Iran's capital are prominent symbols of the special bond that has withstood the test of time and can pave the way for a brighter future, observers said Tuesday.
The 4-kilometer-long Tehran Street, which runs through the capital's affluent Gangnam district from east to west, is considered one of the richest areas in the country with countless high-rises flanking the boulevard that is used by an endless stream of cars and pedestrians every day.
Four decades ago, the area was mostly empty space

crisscrossed with gravel roads and farmland.
In 1977, the then-Mayor of Tehran Gholamreza Nikpay offered his counterpart Koo Ja-choon to exchange names for streets in their capital cities. Nikpay was visiting South Korea to sign a sisterhood relations pact.
Still, the name survived and is now synonymous as one of the main hubs of international finance in South Korea and a magnet for Seoul's countless venture firms.
The area first became the heart of the IT industry when leading IT firms started to settle in the area in the 1990s.

The district that surrounds the business quarter is also renowned for apartments that fetch top prices.
Tehran Street's counterpart Seoul Street in the Iranian capital also stands as a symbol of the two countries' friendship.
In 2003, Seoul Park opened in the capital amid the rising popularity of Korean pop culture in the Middle Eastern country.
A park keeper said the park is enjoyed by ordinary citizens for jogging and is crowded with families on picnics during the weekends.

(Source: koreaherald.com)

IRCS Division for Education, Research and Technology commemorates World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day

“Human beings are members of a whole”

By Dr. Seyed Hamid Jamaldini
Under Secretary General for Education, Research, and Technology of IRCS

Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) launched its commemoration activities in a national week campaign highlighting "human beings are members of a whole" from May 7 to May 13, 2016.
The week covers May 8th, World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, the anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant (born on May 8, 1828), the founder of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize.
In the course of the week, Iranian Red

Crescent, as a member of the National Society in this unique humanitarian network and as an auxiliary to the country senior authorities for humanitarian affairs, commemorated World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day as an annual opportunity to recognize the amazing work of volunteers and staff who go out saving lives and changing minds every day and to celebrate the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
IRCS division for education, research and technology also welcomes the Day and appreciates the zealous humanitarian endeavors of the IRCS human resources of youth, volunteers, relief workers and staff. This divi-

sion is of the belief that trainings, education, research as well as technology can provide vital support ensuring the proper capacity for the human resources to carry out their humanitarian mission efficiently and effectively.
The division took such an opportunity of commemorating the World Red Cross Red Crescent Day to underscore the importance of training and education of local actors aiming at enhancing their capacity and disseminating the culture of resiliency among them. The division also focused on advocating proper platform for local actors by addressing institutionalization of a shift in attitude and a change of mind-set enabling them to save lives and to reduce



vulnerabilities locally.
There are 190 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world, including Iranian Red Crescent Society, with more currently being formed. This unique network forms the backbone of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Hunger and conflicts walk hand in hand

➔1 Jordan is generously sharing its natural resources with about one million Syrian refugees, in addition to those who fled from Iraq and Gaza in earlier times.
This is all happening in a region that is considered the most arid in the world, which is facing an unprecedented escalation in water scarcity. The average availability of fresh water per capita stands at just 10% of the world average and is set to decline further as a result of increasing needs as well as the impacts of climate change.
Food insecurity, natural resources scarcity, unemployment and migration, as well as the impoverishment of rural areas, will continue to destabilize peace and stability if sustainable solutions are not implemented urgently.
This defines FAO's engagement with its Member Countries in the region.

Together, we have launched regional initiatives to address water scarcity and food security challenges, to build resilience in crisis contexts, and to tackle the root causes of rural poverty and unemployment among women and youth.
It is high time give priority to investing in the resilience of farmers and rural communities.
We need to invest massively in infrastructure, human capital and social protection in rural areas, create the conditions to diversify the source of economic growth, bridge the spatial inequality gap and stop the migration dynamics.
We need to put in place comprehensive rural poverty alleviation strategies to support family farmers, enhance their productivity of small holders and link them to markets, and improve the professionalization of pro-

ducer organisations.
We need to reverse the escalation of water scarcity by enhancing governance of the water sector, strengthening the role of farmers and communities in water management, and scaling up technologies and best agriculture practices that improve agriculture water productivity and conserve the quality of water.
The Near East and North Africa Region has the capacity to emerge stronger from the current series of conflicts and crises. Other countries and regions have succeeded in the past, sometimes against the odds. This requires decisive collective action to restore confidence and build a shared vision among the region's member countries. It will also need the support of all its partners and friends, and FAO is committed to do its part in this endeavour.

IN FOCUS @ doe.ir



Akie Abe, wife of the Japanese prime minister, planted a tree in Tehran's Pardisan Park as a symbol of peace and friendship between the two nations.

5 illegally built restaurants demolished in Tehran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Five illegally constructed restaurants stretching over 20,000 square meters of land in Hesarak neighborhood, northern Tehran, were demolished on Monday, IRIB reported.
Unfortunately, due to mismanagement, some opportunists have taken advantage of the situation and built the restaurants and gazebos in the gardens in this district, said an official with Tehran's district 5 municipality.
"Regarding the fact that we needed a warrant for demolishing these illegally constructed buildings it took us three years to obtain the document," Mehdi Haq-Badri regretted.
On Monday, with police and municipality forces in attendance, "we finally succeeded in demolishing these restaurants," Haq-Badri noted.

Iran openes the door to youth

Hamed Haddadi will lead the charge for Iran at the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament (OQT) in Turin this summer but other famous faces in the country's basketball program will be missing.

There will be no Samad Nikkhah, no Mahdi Kamrani, no Hamed Afagh and no Javad Davari. The absences, head coach Dirk Bauermann says, must not be viewed as a sign of doom and gloom. Instead, it's a positive.

"There's a ton of good, talented young players who I think deserve a chance to compete at the highest level," Bauermann said on the Iranian Basketball Federation's official website.

The German coach has not made clear which youngsters will go, but he did name plenty in his 23-man provisional squad. Among the young candidates are Mohamad Yousofvand, Navid Rezaeifar, Ali Allahverdi and Salar Monji. All four were in the Iran team that played at the 2015 U19 World Championship in Greece.

Some would argue that a youth movement began a couple of years ago for Iran. Behnam Yakhchali was in the national side that competed at the 2013 FIBA U19 World Championship. He is a 20-year-old shooting guard who played for the senior team the following year at the FIBA Basketball World Cup in Spain and again last year at the FIBA Asia Championship.

Despite an injection of youth, there will be some experienced players in the Iran squad. In addition to Haddadi, there will be Oshin Sahakian. Another is Arsalan Kazemi, who made his senior team bow at the 2010 FIBA Basketball World Cup.

Haddadi, though, is going to be the focal point. Bauermann will require his scoring and rebounding. He will need the 2.18m center to protect the rim on defense and call on the Ahvaz-born pivot, who turns 31 on 19 May, to be a leader.



He has been vital for Iran since the 2007 FIBA Asia Championship. Haddadi had a prominent role the last couple of summers, including at Spain 2014.

"Hamed Haddadi is going to be really important, even more than in recent years, in terms of leadership and being more of a focal point offensively," Bauermann said. "But otherwise, it will be a young group so it should be an interesting summer."

esting summer."

At the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament, which is being staged 4-9 July, Iran will play in Group A against Greece and Mexico. In Group B will be Croatia, Italy and Tunisia. Only the side that wins the OQT will clinch a spot in the Rio de Janeiro Games.

(Source: FIBA)

Mazloumi to remain as Esteghlal coach until the end of the season

T I S P O R T S After Tuesday's Esteghlal's Board of Directors, it was decided that Parviz Mazloumi to continue his post as the head coach of Blues until after the Saba match in the final week of Iran professional League.

Esteghlal's 3-2 loss defeat against Tractor Sazi in front of more than 70,000 fans at Azadi Stadium destroyed the Blues' hopes of winning the title.

Esteghlal 4-2 defeat against archrival Persepolis in last month's Tehran derby was a big loss for Esteghlal and made their fans angry.

Mazloumi who signed a three-year contract with Esteghlal in June 2015 has also led his team to the Hazfi Cup final. Esteghlal will take on Zob Ahan in the Hazfi Cup final on



May 29 in Khorramshahr.

Esteghlal is currently in third place with 51 points while Persepolis and Esteghlal Khuzestan are at the top with 54 points and just the goal difference has separated them.

Iran's super heavyweight Salimi targets Olympic gold medal

T I S P O R T S Iran super heavyweight weightlifter Behdad Salimi says that he is going to win a gold medal in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

Salimi, who won a gold medal by hoisting 455 kg in total in the 2012 London Olympic Games, wants to make the Iranian people happy once again.

"My only goal is to win a gold medal in Olympic. I am working hard to earn my second gold medal in Olympic," Salimi told Tasnim news agency.

The lifter tore his left ACL during an attempted 262 kilo clean & jerk in training in late October.

The injury kept him from competing in the 2015 World Weightlifting Championships in Houston.



"I've started my training from March 21 and I am well-prepared at the moment. I want to break the record at Rio 2016," Salimi said.

"I'm going to make the Iranian people happy once again by winning a gold medal at Olympic," he concluded.



Iran football 5-a-side team has been pitted against host Brazil, Turkey and Morocco at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

Iran discovers rivals at football 5-a-side at Rio 2016

Group B consists of Argentina, China, Mexico and Russia.

The top two teams in each group will qualify for the semi-final.

It featured at the Paralympics for the first time at Athens 2004, and has been contested at every Games since. Brazil is the only team to win Paralympic gold and is hunting its fourth successive title at Rio 2016.

World Championships take place every four years in between the Paralympics.

Football 5-a-side teams are made up of four outfield players and one goalkeeper, Paralympic.org wrote.

To ensure fair competition, all outfield players must wear eyeshades. Teams can also have off-field guides to assist them.

The ball makes a noise due to a sound system located inside that helps players orientate themselves. As a result spectators must remain silent whilst watching the game until a goal is scored.

Blind football is played on a rectangular field that measures 40m long and 20m wide. The whole length of the pitch must be covered by kickboards to prevent the ball from going out of play.

The duration of the match is 50 minutes, divided into two 25-minute halves. Each team can request a one-minute time-out in each half. During the last two minutes of both halves, and in case of an extra time, the timekeeper must stop the clock for a free kick, kick-in, goal kick and corner kick.

We have seven finals ahead of us to qualify for Olympics: Mojtaba Mirzajanpour

T I S P O R T S Iran volleyball player Mojtaba Mizajanpour believes that his side has a tough way ahead in the Olympic Qualifying Tournament which will be held Japan later in May.

"All of our opponents are great teams. We need to have a strong start to the competition in order to qualify for the Olympics. Our first game is against Australia who eliminated us in the last round. I believe we have seven finals in front of us and winning these seven games will lead us to Rio," Mirzajanpour said.

Iran national volleyball team, who is currently in France for two preparatory games, will take on FIVB World League champion France on May 13 and 14.

"We have to play friendly games to get

ready for the tournaments. Playing against FIVB World League champion as a friendly game will show our weaknesses so we can work on it before the tournament," Mirzajanpour added.

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 play-



ers for the trip to France: Saeid Marouf, Mahdi Mahdavi, Shahram Mahmoudi, Amir Ghafour, Farhad Ghaemi, Milad Ebadipour, Mojtaba Mirzajanpour, Hamzeh Zarrini, Sayyed Mohammad Mousavi, Adel Gholami, Armin Tashakori, Mostafa Sharifat, Farhad Zarif, and Mahdi Marandi.

Lionel Messi hopes Real Madrid win nothing

Lionel Messi admits he and his Barcelona team-mates are keen to see Real Madrid end the season without a trophy.

Barca can finish the season by winning La Liga and the Copa del Rey, and the Argentina forward hopes Atletico Madrid come out on top in the Champions League final on May 28 to deny Zinedine Zidane the prospect of leading Los Blancos to a record 11th European Cup success.

"It's obvious the people of Barcelona don't want Madrid to win anything. They'd be the same with us.

"For the people of Barcelona, it would be a pleasure to see Atletico win the Champions League," Messi told ESPN, according to AS.

"In Barcelona, supporters would prefer to see Real win nothing.



"Atletico are a very uncomfortable and difficult opponent to face, but they and Diego Simeone are there on merit.

"But hey, it's a Champions League Final and it's those two again and we need to think of what we can achieve.

"We know it would be wonderful to finish with the League and the Cup. They're not easy to win. We've competed with Madrid, Atletico, Sevilla, Villarreal, there are a lot of important teams so you have to enjoy this.

"We've won so much, more than I thought I would when I started in football. Perhaps there's still a thorn with the national team, where I've played some finals and not won any of them. But that's football."

(Source: Eurosport)

FOOTBALL

Bayern announce Mats Hummels coup on top of £63m Renato Sanches capture

Bayern Munich have clinched deals for Benfica wonderkid Renato Sanches and Borussia Dortmund defender Mats Hummels.

Midfielder Sanches has signed a five-year contract with the German champions after passing a medical on Monday - and Bayern quickly followed up that announcement with the news that Hummels will also be joining the club.

Hummels, who started his career with Bayern before joining Dortmund in 2008, initially on loan, will return to the German champions on a deal until 2021, joining former team-mates Robert Lewandowski and Mario Gotze at the club.

He had been linked with a summer move to Manchester United - but Dortmund recently revealed he wanted to move to the Allianz Arena at the end of the season.

Hummels won the World Cup with Germany in 2014 amid his 46 caps and has two Bundesliga titles to his name. He finished as a runner-up in the Champions League final of 2013, losing to Bayern.

Sanches, 18, scored against Bayern in the Champions League quarter-finals last month, and is tipped to impress for Portugal at Euro 2016 in France.

According to reports United had scouted the player for 22 games, but he has gone to Bayern for an initial fee of €35m - which is complemented by potential add-ons of €45m making him one of the most expensive teenagers in history with a total package of £63m.

He was Bayern's first signing of the close season - beating Hummels to the punch by mere minutes - as they prepare for life under new coach Carlo Ancelotti with Pep Guardiola heading for Manchester City.

Sanches signed a lengthy contract with Benfica back in 2011, but it was clear they would have trouble keeping him after he impressed in his first full season in the first team.

"Renato Sanches has been observed over a long period by Bayern," said Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

"We are fortunate to have signed him despite well-known international competition.

"Renato is a dynamic, combative and technically gifted midfielder who will strengthen our team further."

We asked our Munich office to give us their thoughts on the remarkable double deal announced on Tuesday.

Mats Hummels: 'The home of the German national team'. With Mats Hummels, Jerome Boateng and Manuel Neuer Bayern now have the defensive axis of the world champions. Hummels had a tremendous season with Dortmund and is one of the best central defenders in the world. With the triangle of Boateng, Hummels and Neuer they now have the best defence in the world.

Renato Sanches: Sanches is one of the jewels of world football. He is very calm on the ball, a very good central midfielder and enjoyed a very good performance in both legs against Bayern in the Champions League quarter-finals. Bayern reporter Florian Bogner says: "Sanches reminds me of Christian Karembeu."

(Source: Eurosport)

FIFA President Infantino sad ex-boss Platini remains banned

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Gianni Infantino expressed sadness Monday that Michel Platini failed to overturn his ban, despite the new FIFA president gaining soccer's top job after charges of financial wrongdoing knocked his former boss out of the race.

Platini saw the FIFA presidency as his destiny, but the UEFA leader was prevented from running in February's election when a payment of 2 million Swiss francs (\$2 million) from the global governing body was exposed.

Instead, Infantino was plucked from the relative of obscurity of the UEFA general secretary job to become Europe's candidate to succeed Sepp Blatter.

Infantino received the news that the Court of Arbitration for Sport had reduced Platini's ban to four years while in Mexico City preparing for his first congress as FIFA president.

"Obviously as FIFA president I need to respect the decision of the CAS — there is no doubt about that," Infantino said. "On a personal level, of course, I am very sad about the decision. I have worked with Michel for the last nine years in UEFA, seven as general secretary. ... All together we did some great things.

"And I really want to keep these positive memories, at this moment focus on the positive memories."

The CAS panel ruling clears a potential barrier to Infantino seeking a second term leading FIFA. The election will be in approximately May 2019, and Platini will remain banned until late 2019.

FIFA's ethics committee provisionally suspended Platini along with Blatter in October and then banned them for eight years in December. FIFA's appeal panel cut two years off their sanctions in February as reward for their long service to the sport.

Both men are appealing to CAS, but Platini's case was heard first, and another two years were slashed from his ban.

CAS said it was "not convinced by the legitimacy" of Platini being paid 2 million Swiss francs by FIFA in 2011, nine years after his work as a Blatter adviser ended when he joined the executive committee.

Asked if FIFA would now seek to reclaim the cash, Infantino said: "Now is not a moment to speculate about these things."

Infantino hosted the first meeting Monday of the FIFA Council, which has replaced the discredited executive committee following far-reaching corruption and bribery scandals.

The exhibition runs until May 20 at the gallery located at No.27, North Allameh Blvd., in the Saadat Abad district.