

TEHRAN TIMES

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New director appointed for IRIB

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Rouhani: Peace meaningless without power

President says his govt. has been unique in helping to boost defense power

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that his government, the 11th of its kind since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has been unrivalled in seeking to boost the country's defense power.

"No government has helped the strengthening of the country's defense capability as much as the 11 governments," Rouhani remarked.

The president also said establishment of peace will be meaningless without power.

"We believe that peace is meaningful under the shadow of power," the president said during a meeting at the administrative council of Kerman.

The president, who started a two-day tour of Kerman province on Tuesday, added that the administration, parliament and Judiciary are all making efforts to develop the country with the guidelines set by the Supreme Leader.

"The three branches of government are following the path of the country's development under the guidance of a powerful leadership." →2

Malaysia trying to double trade with Iran to \$1 billion

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — "The worth of trade between Iran and Malaysia was \$532 million in 2015 and with the removal of sanctions against Iran we are trying

to increase this number to \$1 billion", according to Dato' Dzulkifli Mahmud, the CEO of Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation known as MATRADE. "Kuala Lumpur is eager to

increase trade with Tehran in the shortest time," IRNA quoted Mahmud as saying on the sidelines of an Iran-Malaysia trade forum in Tehran on Tuesday. →4



The 33rd International Qoran Competition was opened in Tehran on Wednesday afternoon. Prominent Qoran reciters have been invited to participate in the event. The conference was inaugurated by Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

IRGC Navy chief: Iran boosting military power to counter U.S. threats

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has slammed Washington for its hostilities toward the Iranian nation, saying the Islamic Republic continues to enhance its military capabilities to counter U.S. threats.

Addressing a gathering of foreign military attachés in Tehran on Wednesday, Ali Fadaavi praised the Iranian Armed Forces' military preparedness in the Persian Gulf, saying, "Today, nobody can claim that insecurity has been created because of the Islamic Revolution's (military) power and capabilities in the

region."

On the contrary, the rear admiral said, the Islamic Republic is among the main victims of insecurity, which has its roots in the U.S. hostilities toward the country since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The commander further emphasized that Iran has become very powerful and strong in the face of U.S. threats, adding that it is natural for every country or military force threatened by other countries to

strengthen its capabilities against threats.

Speaking to Tasnim last week, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari also slammed the U.S. government's enmities and its opposition to Iran's military presence in the Persian Gulf, saying though enemies do not want the country to have presence in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf "we will continue our powerful presence in the two areas ... and stage our war games."



FAO highlights role of local communities on Integrated Forest Fire Management in Iran

The FAO Representative to Iran highlighted the significance of the role of local communities in applying effectively the voluntary guidelines for saving forests from fire outbreaks at the opening session of the First national roundtable and training course (9-12 May 2016) on "Integrated Forest Fire Management" (IFFM) being conducted in Kalarabad, Mazandarn Province.

"FAO has supported the design of IFFM framework, especially using the concept of roundtables on Fire Management for defining the participatory approach in fire management which now is being conducted in the Islamic Republic of Iran", Serge Nakouzi, the FAO Representative to Iran and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), said in his speech addressing national and international officials as well as experts attending the event.

"FAO has been coordinating a multi-stakeholder process to prepare a global strategy to enhance international cooperation in fire management, including: voluntary guidelines; global assessment of fire management; and review of international cooperation in fire management" he added.

Nakouzi acknowledged the FAO's voluntary



guidelines to be a primarily tool for land-use policy makers, planners and managers in fire management, including states, the private sector and non-governmental organization. He underscored that the guidelines for fire management have covered both the positive as well as negative social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts of natural and planned fires in forests, woodlands, rangelands, grasslands, agricultural and rural/urban landscapes.

According to the FAO Representative to Iran the Organization's fire management framework approach comprises such measures as early warning, prevention, preparedness (at the international, national, sub-national and com-

munity levels), safe and effective initial "attack" on incidences of fire and landscape restoration following it.

The four-day roundtable and training course that has been organized and by the Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Management Organization (FRWO) in collaboration with the Representation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, is engaging representatives from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Global Wildland Fire Network (GWFFN), Regional Central Asia Fire Management Resource Centre (RCAFM-RC), and the Regional Fire Monitoring Centre (RFMC).

The roundtable constitutes on of the events being organized within the country as part of the First International Fire Management Week which is further underpinned by the voluntary framework of the International Wildfire Preparedness Mechanisms (IWPM). The IWPM offers capacity-building and cross-boundary cooperation in fire management through exchange of expertise and application of voluntary standards in fire management.

Iran to help S. Africa build desalination plants

South Africa has partnered with Iran to develop desalination plants in coastal communities to boost water supplies, the South African water minister said on Wednesday, as the worst drought in living memory dries dams.

South Africa last year record its lowest annual rainfall levels since comprehensive records began in 1904 as an El Nino-driven drought rips through the region,

putting millions at risk of food shortage.

"Now with the partnership that we have entered into through the binational commission between South Africa and Iran we want to go full steam," Nomvula Mokonyane told reporters.

She said the first investment meeting with Iran, where President Jacob Zuma visited last month, takes place next month and that

there were no indicative costs at this stage.

The largest desalination plant in South Africa, which converts salty seawater to drinkable water, is situated in Mossel Bay, in the Western Cape. It helped supply water to state oil company PetroSAs gas-to-fuel refinery.

"We have been over-dependent on surface water," Mokonyane said, adding that government

would focus on all coastal municipalities in three provinces, including the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

South Africa's weather woes have been largely attributed to a powerful El Nino system, a warming of ocean surface temperatures in the eastern and central Pacific that occurs every few years with global consequences.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran blames Saudis for probable cancellation of hajj

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari said on Wednesday that Saudi Arabia will be blamed if no agreement is reached upon dispatching Iranian pilgrims to hajj.

Saudi Arabia mixes the issue of hajj with political differences and has so far obstructed sending pilgrims to hajj, he said in a televised interview.

He expressed hope that Saudi Arabia would change its "wrong policy" and make it possible to reach an agreement on executive affairs.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have been at odds over a number of regional issues. Apart from the Mina hajj stampede during which about 400 Iranian pilgrims were killed, the two countries are at loggerheads over other issues, particularly the Syrian conflict.

Saudi Arabia severed its political ties with Iran after the country's diplomatic posts in Tehran and Mashhad were stormed in a public mob, though Iran has taken legal action against the culprits.

Mohammad Hassan Asafari, a member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on May 8 that Saudi Arabia is refusing to give guarantees that it will take care of the lives of pilgrims. Also, Iranian Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Ali Janati said on April 18 that Saudis have not been cooperative over the past months, noting that the Riyadh government is twisting hajj negotiations.

ARTICLE

By Ali Mirchi and Kaveh Madani

A grand but faulty vision for Iran's water problems

Massive water transfer schemes are no solution to Iran's growing problems with drought

A grand vision of eliminating water scarcity looks attractive for tens of millions of people in the desert cities of central Iran worried about drought. Ambitious water transfer projects are being put in place to answer a call from President Hassan Rouhani.

Two high-profile projects would see desalinized water transferred to the central plateau from the Caspian Sea, and from the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman.

Mohammadreza Khabbaz, governor of Semnan, a province sandwiched between the lush Caspian Sea coastline and the central salt desert, is a staunch supporter of the Caspian Sea water transfer project as a "permanent" solution.

Last month he said there was "no other option...to meet water demand in, and transfer water to, Iran's central desert, including Semnan province".

The Caspian Sea project was initiated in 2012 during the administration of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. It was shelved when Rouhani took office in 2013 due to concerns raised by the department of environment but is now back on the table and at planning stage.

A 460km (285 miles) underground pipeline would be installed, with pump stations to send water up over 2000 meters to cross the Alborz Mountains. The water would go as far as Qom, Kashan, and Isfahan, and eastward toward Khorasan. This, say proponents, would avoid water rationing in the cities and ease acute shortages threatening to cripple fragile agricultural communities and ruin ecosystems. →10

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MEDIA MONITOR



Leader appreciates disabled war veterans

TEHRAN — Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday sent representatives to the homes of a number of disabled war veterans to appreciate their sacrifices during the Saddam regime's war against Iran in the 1980s, the YJC reported.

The arrangement was to mark the birth anniversary of Abalfazl el-Abbas, brother of Imam Hussein (AS), which is dubbed the Day of Disabled Veterans in Iran.



Jannati: Guardian Council's oversight extends over all stages

TEHRAN — The secretary of the Guardian Council has said the council's monitoring and confirmation of the qualification of candidates extends over all electoral stages and is not bound to a certain time.

He made the remarks in reaction to media barrage over the disqualification of Minoo Khaleghi who was elected to the parliament from the Isfahan constituency in the Feb. 26 elections, Rajanews reported on Wednesday.



IRGC Naval Force general dies

TEHRAN — Mohammad Nazeri, a top commander of the IRGC Naval Force, died of heart stroke on Tuesday evening, Tabnak reported.

He commanded the operation that ended in the arrest of 15 British Royal Navy personnel in 2007.



'Aref most likely Majlis speaker'

TEHRAN — The secretary general of the Islamic Labor Party has said Mohammad Reza Aref is the most likely person to become speaker of the next Majlis.

It is obvious that reformists will be vital to who will be the speaker and the vote belongs to them, Hossein Kamali told Nasim on Wednesday.



'Larijani favors inclusive principlist group'

TEHRAN — Ali Larijani is urging formation of an inclusive principlist parliamentary group, lawmaker-elect Ahmad Amirabadi has said.

Amirabadi added the principlist groups as well as independent figures are holding regular meetings over their activities in the next Majlis, ILNA reported on Wednesday.



Election results in 40 constituencies approved

TEHRAN — The results of parliamentary runoff election in 40 districts have been approved, Saimak Rahpey, deputy chief of the Guardian Council for administrative affairs and elections, said on Wednesday.

The total constituencies are 55 that 42 of them were addressed in a session on Wednesday, he told the IRIB. He added 2 of the constituencies had to go further investigation before approval.



Iranian, German officials discuss regional developments

TEHRAN — Markus Ederer, the state secretary of Germany's Federal Foreign Office, met Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for African and Arab Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Tehran on Wednesday to discuss the latest regional developments.

The two stressed the need for adopting a political approach to the problem of terrorism, ISNA reported.



Azeri ambassador presents credentials to Zarif

TEHRAN — Bunyad Hasanov, the new ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Iran, delivered his credentials to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday.

Zarif praised friendly relations between the two neighbor countries and said there is no problem to improve bilateral ties, Trend reported on Wednesday.

The Azerbaijani ambassador, for his part, conveyed his country's interest in strengthening ties with Iran.

Iran calls for seriousness in meeting JCPOA commitments

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi said on Tuesday that signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action should be "serious" in meeting their commitments, especially in financial and banking exchanges.

"Fulfillment of Iran's commitments has been confirmed in the International Atomic Energy Agency's reports," he said during a meeting with Markus Ederer, state secretary of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany.

According to the JCPOA, commonly called the nuclear deal, Iran is obliged to slow down its nuclear activities in exchange for a termination of economic sanctions, including financial restrictions.

The deal signed on July 14, 2015, went into effect on January 16, 2016. However, major European banks and insurance



companies have been hesitant to resume interaction with Iran, citing possible pun-

ishment by the U.S. However, Secretary of State John Kerry said on Tuesday that

foreign companies should not use the United States as an excuse for not doing business in Iran.

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 the nuclear agreement.

Takht-Ravanchi also welcomed an increase in consultations among Iranian and German officials.

He also called on Germany to be more active in finding a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the Middle East region.

For his part, Ederer highlighted the importance of expanding ties in various spheres especially economic area.

He called expansion of economic cooperation with Iran one of Germany's priorities. He also called for expansion of cultural cooperation between the two countries.

Rafsanjani calls establishing ties with world 'big job'

Iran can 'shine like a sun' in the region, Expediency Council chief says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a visit to the Anzali free trade zone on the shores of the Caspian Sea on Wednesday Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said the current government's success in inching a nuclear deal with great powers and establishing ties with the world was a "big job".

Rafsanjani, chairman of the Expediency Council, said those who are against the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the nuclear deal, are making a "mistake".

Iran and the 5+1 group - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany - finalized the text of the JCPOA in Vienna in July 2015. The deal took effect in January 2016.

"Contrary to the views of some people the JCPOA is not a one-way street. They are in need of us more because they know that there is no country like Iran in the region."



Elsewhere in his remarks, Rafsanjani said the world needs the help of Iran in "containing" terrorism.

He added, "We should maintain our unity and protect our country in the volatile world."

"Iran has a particular situation and can shine like a sun in the region. Iran is safe and the world needs us," the former president noted.

Rafsanjani also described boosting interaction with the world as the only way to success.

Rafsanjani also said political factions in the country should not be involved in "futile" political wrangles.

"We should not allow Iran be caught in futile political disputes especially after the (Majlis) elections" in which women also contested the polls and a won a considerable number of seats in the parliament, Rafsanjani added.

By using the potential of women the ground should be laid for economic development, he said, adding Iran with such great "divine resources" should not be an undeveloped country.

U.S. says delivery of S-300 to Iran is not violation of JCPOA

By staff and agency

State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau said in a press conference on Tuesday that delivery of S-300 missile to Iran does not violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

"We're aware of reports of progress towards the delivery by Russia of the S-300 defensive missile system. We've

been making clear our objections to any sale of the S-300 missile system for quite a while. The secretary has raised it with Foreign Minister Lavrov repeatedly. We have long objected to the sale of such sophisticated defense capabilities. We continue to monitor it closely," State Department website quoted Trudeau as saying.

She added, "While we're opposed to the sale, it is not a violation of the JCPOA or UN Security Council Resolution 2231."

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

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

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.



Rouhani: Peace meaningless without power



➔ The president also said launching rumors that the society is polarized and seeking to put officials against each other is what the enemy is wishing for.

"Instead of giving hopes some are sowing the seeds of disappointment" by "repeating the statements of the enemies and plotters," the president noted.

He added, "At a time that the world is seeking interaction with Iran belittling the country... is surprising."

■ President calls on Majlis to avoid adopting laws in haste

The president also called on the outgoing parliament to avoid a hasty approval of laws, saying there is no room for haste or trial and error in adopting important legislations.

"I request respected representatives to avoid hasty and speedy decisions because the tenth Majlis (which will start its work late May) is also a continuation of the previous Majlis and there should be no haste and tri-

al in approving macro and important legislations."

Elsewhere, he said that boosting domestic production and economic interaction are required in order to implement resistance economy.

In a press conference at the end of his tour of Kerman, he also said a report on the seizure of Iran's \$2 billion fund by the U.S. is being prepared which will b released to the public.

He called the U.S. act "wrong" and "illegitimate".

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.

In his speech to well-wishers in Kerman on Tuesday, Rouhani said that Iran will take the issue of the \$2 billion assets appropriated by the U.S. to international court.

Lavrov discusses Syria developments with Zarif, Kerry



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Tuesday discussed developments in Syria with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Lavrov conferred with his Iranian and American counterparts the Geneva talks between the Syrian government and the opposition groups.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Zarif and Lavrov explored peaceful ways of resolving the Syria crisis, reinforcing the ceasefire and aiding the civilians based on UN resolutions 2254, 2268.

The two officials insisted on the need to cut off the funding and supply routes for the terrorist groups including Daesh and al-Nosrah Front.

Lavrov had also a phone conversation with Kerry.

The conversation focused on Russian and U.S. efforts as co-chairs of the International Syria Support Group to resolve the conflict in that country.

They underlined the need to continue negotiations between the Syrian government and the entire spectrum of opposition groups, under UN mediation and while strictly observing the ceasefire.

The two officials also noted the critical role of coordination between Russian and U.S. militaries, as well as through the joint operations center established in Geneva.

Lavrov reiterated both the need for the earliest possible dissociation from anti-government forces by Washington and cutting off the funding and supply routes for the extremists via Turkey.

They discussed other current international issues, including the problems of settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the possible steps of the OSCE Minsk Group at this stage.

They also touched on some other aspects of bilateral relations.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation)

Iraq: At least 50 killed in Sadr City market explosion

A car bomb in a predominantly Shia district of the Iraqi capital has killed at least 50 people and wounded at least 100 others, police sources told Al Jazeera.

A sport utility vehicle (SUV) packed with explosives blew up near a beauty salon in a bustling market at rush hour in Baghdad's Sadr City on Wednesday. Most of the victims were women, Iraqi police and hospital sources told the Reuters news agency.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group, claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on social media shortly after the blast.

The group said the assault was carried out by a suicide bomber, a claim that Iraqi officials denied.

There are fears that the death toll will rise further.

In the last two weeks, ISIL has claimed responsibility for two attacks targeting the Shia community in Baghdad.

First, a car bomb, targeting an open-air market frequented by Shia in Nahrwan near the Iraqi capital, killed at least 23 people and injured 38 others.

Two days later, a car bombing targeting Shia pilgrims commemorating the death anniversary of a revered 8th-century Imam killed at least 18 people.

In February, ISIL also claimed a



twin suicide bombing in Sadr City that killed 70 people.

According to the United Nations, at least 741 Iraqis were killed in April owing to ongoing violence, a sharp decline from the previous month.

In its monthly report issued on May 1, the UN mission to Iraq put the number of civilians killed at 410, while

the rest were members of the security forces. A total of 1,374 Iraqis were wounded that month, it added.

In March, at least 1,119 people were killed and 1,561 wounded.

Baghdad remains the worst-hit area in terms of documented deaths, with 232 civilians killed and 642 wounded in April.

The fight against ISIL terrorist group has exacerbated a long-running sectarian conflict in Iraq, mostly between the Shia majority and the Sunni minority.

Sectarian tensions also threaten to undermine efforts to dislodge ISIL from vast areas of the north and west of Iraq that they seized in 2014.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Britain's queen calling Chinese officials 'very rude'

Queen Elizabeth has been caught on camera saying Chinese officials were "very rude" during a state visit to Britain by President Xi Jinping that London had said would herald a "golden era" in relations with Beijing.

She was speaking at a garden party at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday, the same day that Prime Minister David Cameron was filmed making undiplomatic remarks to her about corruption in Nigeria and Afghanistan.

The queen's remarks may not be helpful to the British government's determined efforts to boost trade ties with China.

Under her constitutional role, the 90-year-old monarch never makes any politically or diplomatically sensitive comments in public, and it is rare for the content of her private conversations to be revealed.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said Xi's visit to Britain last year had been "extremely successful" and both countries' officials had made great efforts to that end.

In footage broadcast by the BBC,



the queen is seen meeting senior police officer Lucy D'Orsi, who is introduced by an official as having been in charge of security during Xi's visit in October.

"Oh, bad luck," the queen says in response.

D'Orsi then describes her dealings with Chinese officials as "quite a testing time" and recounts that at one point they had walked out of a meeting and told her "the trip was off".

The queen says: "They were very rude to the ambassador."

Lu said he had not heard anything about Xi's visit possibly being called off at any point, adding that the visit had opened a new "golden age" in relations, brought about by both countries. (Source: Reuters)

Turkey refuses to change terrorism law in stand-off with EU

Turkey refused on Wednesday to make changes to its anti-terrorism laws demanded by Brussels, hardening Ankara's position in a stand-off with the bloc over dealing with militants, migrants and travel.

European Union officials and rights groups have accused Turkey of using the broad anti-terror legislation to crush all dissent - though Ankara says it needs the laws to battle Kurdish militants at home and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group in neighboring Iraq and Syria.

The EU said last week Turkey still had to change some laws, including narrowing its legal definition of terrorism, to secure visa-free travel for its citizens - part of a wide-ranging deal to secure Turkish help in reducing the flow of migrants into Europe.

But Ankara's minister for EU affairs, Volkan Bozkir, told broadcaster NTV on Wednesday that there had been no deal to change the terrorism laws in exchange for visa-free travel, and said the legislation already met EU standards.

"It is not possible for us to accept

any changes to the counter-terrorism law," Bozkir said.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan told the European Union on Friday that Turkey would not make the changes, declaring: "we're going our way, you go yours".

Wednesday's repeated refusal, and assertion that there had never been a reciprocal deal over the laws, will likely alarm EU officials already worried by the departure of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, seen as a more flexible negotiating partner.

One Erdogan adviser and a member of parliament for the ruling AK Party, Burhan Kuzu, tweeted late on Tuesday: "The European Parliament will discuss the report that will open Europe visa-free for Turkish citizens. If the wrong decision is taken, we will send the refugees."

Europe is counting on Turkey to maintain the migration deal that has helped to sharply reduce the flow of refugees and migrants via Turkish shores. More than a million people used the route to reach Greece and Italy last year.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. to switch on European missile shield despite Russian alarm

The United States' European missile defense shield goes live on Thursday almost a decade after Washington proposed protecting NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) from Iranian rockets and despite Russian warnings that the West is threatening the peace in central Europe.

Amid high Russia-West tension, U.S. and NATO officials will declare operational the shield at a remote air base in Deveselu, Romania, after years of planning, billions of dollars in investment and failed attempts to assuage Russian concerns that the shield could be used against Moscow.

"We now have the capability to protect NATO in Europe," said Robert Bell, a NATO-based envoy of U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter. "The Iranians are increasing their capabilities and we have to be ahead of that. The system is not aimed against Russia," he told reporters, adding that the system will soon be handed over to NATO command.

The United States will also start construction on a second site in Poland on Friday that is due to be ready in 2018, giving NATO a permanent, round-the-clock shield in addition to radars and ships already in the Mediterranean.

Russia is incensed at such a show of force by its Cold War rival in formerly communist-ruled eastern Europe where it once held sway. Moscow says the U.S.-led alliance is trying to encircle it close to the strategically important Black Sea, home to a Russian naval fleet and where NATO is also considering increasing patrols.

The readying of the shield also comes as NATO prepares a new deterrent in Poland and the Baltics, following Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea.



In response, Russia is reinforcing its western and southern flanks with three new divisions.

Despite U.S. assurances, the Kremlin says the missile shield's real aim is to neutralize Moscow's nuclear arsenal long enough for the United States to make a first strike on Russia in the event of war.

The shield relies on radars to detect a ballistic missile launch into space. Tracking sensors then measure the rocket's trajectory and intercept and destroy it in space, before it re-enters the earth's atmosphere. The interceptors can be fired from ships or ground sites.

The Russian ambassador to Denmark warned a year ago that Danish warships would become targets for Russian nuclear missiles if Denmark joined the shield project by installing radars on its vessels. Denmark is upgrading at least one frigate to house a ballistic missile sensor.

Turkey is already hosting a U.S. radar and the

Netherlands has equipped ships with radars. The United States also has four ships in Spain as part of the defenses, while all NATO nations are contributing funding.

"Ballistic missile defense sites could pose threats to the stability and strategic assets of the Russian Federation," Russia's ambassador to NATO, Alexander Grushko, told Reuters last month.

■ 'Rogue states'

Elsewhere, U.S. officials dismiss the Russian view as "strategic paranoia" and blame Moscow for breaking off talks with NATO in 2013 that were aimed at explaining how the shield would operate.

The United States says Russia was seeking a treaty limiting the capability and range of ballistic missile interceptors. "No government could agree to that," U.S. adviser Bell said.

Russian officials are concerned about technology that the United States says it does not have, including a missile defense interceptor capable of speeds of 10 km (6.2 miles) per second that could destroy Russian missiles.

First agreed by the U.S. government 2007 and then canceled and relaunched by the newly-elected U.S. President Barack Obama in 2009, the missile defense shield's stated aim is to protect North America and Europe from so-called rogue states such as North Korea. That is part of a U.S. strategy that includes missile interceptors in California and Alaska.

Ballistic missiles, which differ from cruise missiles because they leave the earth's atmosphere, can travel distances of up 3,000 km (1,875 miles).

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS

Hillary fights two battles as Bernie wins another Democratic primary

Hillary Clinton lost West Virginia on Tuesday night to rival Bernie Sanders, continuing her slog through the Democratic primary even as she spent the past week fending off attacks from presumptive GOP nominee Donald Trump.

"Let me be as clear as I can be: We are in this campaign to win the Democratic nomination," Sanders told a crowd of thousands of supporters in Oregon on Tuesday night. He predicted a string of wins in Kentucky, Oregon and the Dakotas over the next couple of weeks.

Clinton is fighting on two fronts. The former secretary of state has a near-lock on the Democratic nomination, but continues to lose states to Sanders, who hammers on her as a creature of Wall Street at his rallies that still draw thousands of supporters. Trump, meanwhile, now clear of any GOP rivals, has spent the past week directing all his considerable fire at her.

Trump's called her "Crooked Hillary" and resurrected his attack against Bill Clinton's past sexual relationships with women, painting Hillary as an "enabler" who wanted the women "destroyed." At a rally in Washington Sunday, Trump said Hillary was playing the "woman card" to get support. "You know what? The women get it better than we do, folks. They get it better than we do. If she didn't play that card, she has nothing," he said.

Clinton gave several TV interviews the past week — more than usual for the candidate — and debuted her line of attack against Trump as a "loose cannon" who can't be trusted with the nation's security. She also rolled out a sweeping policy proposal in several stops in Kentucky on Tuesday, including a plan to provide federal grants and other assistance so that no family pays



more than 10 percent of its income on childcare.

"Boy, do I think this presidential election has about the highest stakes that we've seen in a very long time," she told a fired-up crowd in Louisville on Tuesday evening.

She playfully pushed back on Trump's "woman card" attacks. "I have never gotten a discount when I got to the cashier," she said. Clinton repeated her defense of Trump's woman card attack, saying that if caring about women's health means playing the woman card, then "deal me in!" The crowd shouted the words in unison with the candidate.

Clinton didn't mention Sanders. The campaign's director of state and political engagement, Marlon Marshall, sent a fundraising email to supporters about the need to prepare for the general. The email included code visible to readers who received it on their phones. The coded message proclaimed, "Here comes the general!"

But the Clinton campaign has been sucked back into the Democratic primary all the same, spending nearly \$200,000 on TV ads in Kentucky's Democratic primary, which takes place next week. The ad buy is the campaign's first since April 26, when Clinton swept several Mid-Atlantic states and pivoted toward the general election. But Sanders refused to get on board with that plan. He won Indiana last Tuesday, and has vowed to continue to fight for every last vote in the primary, even threatening to contest the Democratic convention in July.

The campaign celebrated Clinton's primary ad buy. "If you're looking for a sign that the Clinton campaign knows this primary is far from finished, here it is," Sanders campaign manager Jeff Weaver wrote in an email to supporters earlier on Tuesday.

Sanders would need to win every remaining state by unprecedented margins to beat Clinton in the delegate race at this point, making his chance of winning the nomination remote. But his continued wins pull Clinton away from the general election, where Trump is focusing all of his energy.

Trump recently seized on Clinton's town hall comments in March when she vowed to put coal miners out of business in favor of clean energy jobs. Last week, Clinton spent days on a tour through Appalachia apologizing for those remarks, and they most likely hurt her in West Virginia's primary.

Still, it's possible that by staying out of the general election fray, Clinton will appear to be taking the high road to voters, while Trump's more personal attacks may backfire, particularly among women. She continues to lead him in polls by wide margins in hypothetical head-to-head matchups.

Clinton hinted as much in an interview with reporters on Monday. "I'm going to let him run his campaign however he chooses," she said. "I'm not running against him. He's doing a fine job of doing that himself. I'm running my campaign."

(Source: Yahoo News)

Bangladesh executes Motiur Rahman Nizami for war crimes

Bangladesh has executed head of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami party Motiur Rahman Nizami for war crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence to break away from Pakistan, the country's law minister said.

Nizami was hanged at Dhaka Central jail at one minute past midnight local time on Wednesday after the Supreme Court rejected his final plea against a death sentence imposed by a special tribunal for genocide, rape and orchestrating the massacre of top intellectuals during the war.

Thousands of extra police and border guards were deployed in the capital Dhaka and other major cities to tighten security as Jamaat-e-Islami called for a nationwide strike on Thursday in protest of the execution. (Source: agencies)

NEWS

Croatian president to visit Iran with large business delegation

Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic leading a large business delegation will visit Iran next week to expand cooperation with Iran after sanctions on the Islamic Republic were lifted in January.

Despite the fact that Iran has been visited by a large number of foreign businesspeople and investors from economically strong and powerful countries, the visit by the Croatian president accompanied by the Croatian Chamber of Economy is expected to be successful and should result in a stronger economic cooperation between the two countries.

About 50 Croatian companies will send their representatives to join the president on the trip. Some of these companies are already present in this market, while others will establish their first contacts, Vecernji List reported on Wednesday.

It is well-known that this market of 80 million people has a great potential. In previous years, politicians and businessmen from Iran said that Croatia was an extremely important country for them, not only because of its geopolitical position, but also because they considered Croatia as a friendly country which had never turned its back to Iran and therefore had a certain advantage compared to other countries.

Even while sanctions were still in effect, Iran was visited by members of former government, Foreign Minister Vesna Pusic and Tourism Minister Darko Lorencin, as well as former Parliament Speaker Josip Leko, which made it clear how important cooperation with Iran was for Croatia.

In January this year the sanctions against Iran were lifted. Since there are no more obstacles, Iran has become a major regional economic power, and the EU and the United States see it as a major political and economic partner.

For Iran, which has large gas reserves and could take over an important role of gas producer, Croatia is located at an extremely important geopolitical location and could become a distributor of Iranian gas to many European countries. Iranians are interested in investing in an LNG terminal, shipbuilding, petrochemical industry and tourism, while Croatian companies want to invest in infrastructure and energy.

In 2008, INA signed an agreement on oil and gas exploration at 17 fields in Iran, but the project was stopped due to sanctions. Now the company accepted the invitation of the Croatian Chamber of Economy to travel to Iran. It will be joined by representatives of many other businesses. *(Source: total-croatia-news.com)*

Iran unveils first domestically manufactured cryogenic pump

TEHRAN — Iran unveiled the first domestically manufactured cryogenic pump to be applied in the refineries of South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Addressing the ceremony to unveil the product, Ali-Akbar Sha'banpour, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company, which is in charge of developing South Pars gas field, said that manufacturing of cryogenic pumps requires some high technology, highlighting that the domestically manufactured model complies with the international standards.

Addressing the same ceremony, Mehdi Farajpourmand, the board of directors' chairman of Iran Industrial Pumps Company, said that for the first time all stages of manufacturing cryogenic pumps for the gas refineries have been conducted inside the country, saying that there is no different between the domestically-manufactured pump with the similar foreign model.

Noting that the pump was manufactured within 15 days, Farajpourmand highlighted that it is a record in the world.

UK factory output records biggest annual fall since 2013

British factory output recorded its biggest annual fall in nearly three years in March, as shutdowns in the steel industry due to global overcapacity led broad-based declines, official figures showed on Wednesday.

Manufacturing in March was 1.9 percent lower than a year earlier, the steepest decline since May 2013, the Office for National Statistics said and in line with economists' predictions in a Reuters poll.

In March alone, manufacturing output edged up by 0.1 percent, slightly less than forecast, after dropping by 0.9 percent in February.

But the figures do not point to any revision of the estimate of overall gross domestic product released last month, the ONS said, in part due to big upward revisions for the broader measure of industrial output for February.

These reflected a recalculation of the effect of the leap year, and late data on the oil and gas industry, which recorded a 17.0 percent annual increase in production in February, and a 10.9 percent annual gain in March.

Overall industrial output rose 0.3 percent on the month in March and was 0.2 percent lower than a year earlier.

For the first quarter as a whole, figures were unchanged from those used in April's first-quarter GDP estimate, with a quarterly decline of 0.4 percent.

The ONS said that basic iron and steel manufacturing in March was down by 37.3 percent compared with a year earlier and contributed to a drag of 0.3 percentage points on annual industrial output.

Britain's overall economy slowed in the first quarter, preliminary data has shown, with the pace of growth easing to 0.4 percent compared with 0.6 percent in the previous three months.

Things could get worse in the second quarter. A series of surveys of businesses published last week suggested growth was on course to slow to just 0.1 percent in the April-June period.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran owns world's 22nd largest shipping line

TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) holds the place of 22nd largest shipping line in the world, according to a May 2016 report of Alphaliner.

IRISL was classified number 23 in February and number 24 in March by Alphaliner, the global information platform designed to serve the needs of the liner shipping industry.

With owning 45 ships, IRISL currently has the capacity of 97,871 twenty-foot-equivalent unit (TEU), together with 2,288 TEU in order-book, the review indicates.

Based on Alphaliner's latest report, the IRISL's capacity takes up 0.5% of world's shipping lines.

IRISL has resumed its routes to various destinations across Europe, the IRIB



quoted the IRISL managing director Mohammad Saeedi as saying in April.

Iran's shipping lines to Europe had been cut for seven years under the western-led sanctions against the country, but shipping lines to Homburg in Germany, Antwerp in Belgium, and Genoa in Italy are now re-connected thanks to the removal of sanctions, the official said.

He added that Iran also plans to resume its shipping lines to Latin America, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay on the way to make its exports and imports easier and of course at lower prices.

Saeedi, elsewhere, announced that IRISL's transportation and banking difficulties have been majorly overcome in the post-sanction era, while insurance-related problems of Iranian vessels and their rankings have also been managed.

Malaysia trying to double trade with Iran to \$1 billion

1→

"We predict a 20 to 30 percent rise in the level of trade between the two countries for the present year," he noted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mahmud said that Malaysian companies are keen to enter the Iranian market. "We are also eager to use Iran as a hub for exporting

Malaysian goods and products to the neighboring countries in the region," he added.

Touching upon Malaysia's membership in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the official stated, "Malaysia could be the gateway for Iran's access to this influential organization's

market".

He also mentioned his country's interest in expanding ties with Iran in the fields of tourism, aviation, and shipping and noted, "We are probing the potentials to invest in the field of tourism and we also like to expand the relationship between the two countries' manufactur-

ers in the fields of aviation and shipping".

In the end, Mahmud emphasized, "Development of economic relations between Iran and Malaysia will face serious challenges but considering the long and positive history of relations between the two countries, we will certainly overcome such challenges".

Iranian economy minister due to IDB meeting in Jakarta next week

TEHRAN — Iran's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ali Tayyebnia will leave Tehran for the Indonesian capital Jakarta next week to attend the 41st annual meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group Board of Governors.

An economic delegation will accompany Tayyebnia in his trip to take part in the meeting. Iran is the third main shareholder of the IDB, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The 41st annual meeting of the IDB will be held from May 15 to 19 for seeking solutions to the problems faced by the member states, such as poverty, low investment, and infrastructure financing.

The Islamic Development Bank is an international financial institution

established in pursuance of the declaration of intent issued by the Conference of Finance Ministers of Muslim Countries. The purpose of the bank is to foster the economic development and social progress of member countries and Muslim communities individually as well as jointly in accordance with the principles of Shari'ah i.e., Islamic Law.

The present membership of the Bank consists of 56 countries. The basic condition for membership is that the prospective member country should be a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), pay its contribution to the capital of the bank and be willing to accept such terms and conditions as may be decided upon by the IDB board of governors.

China will meet economic growth goal this year: vice premier

China's economy faces downward pressure but will be able to meet its economic growth target for the year, China's vice premier Zhang Gaoli said at a forum in Beijing on Wednesday.

Growth in M2 money supply slowed in April versus March, Zhang said at a meeting on tax administration hosted by the OECD. M2 money supply grew 13.4 percent in March.

China has set a target for 6.5 percent to 7 percent GDP growth in 2016, after growth fell to a 25-year low of 6.9 percent in 2015.

Zhang said that China will reduce leverage in the economy through efforts including bankruptcies, and is not resorting to large-scale stimulus.



The global economic recovery is weak and faces uncertainties, but the Chinese economy remains resilient, Zhang said.

Zhang's comments come as expectations for further monetary stimulus fade after record credit growth in the first quarter of the year boosted economic indicators in March, though April data so far indicates the rebound may be short-lived.

Chinese markets fell after a commentary in the official People's Daily on Monday said there is no need to stimulate growth by excessive credit expansion that could heighten risks and trigger a systemic financial crisis if not controlled properly.

(Source: Reuters)

Panama, Lebanon among recent joiners of global tax info sharing deal: OECD

Panama, rocked by a recent major tax scandal, has joined around 100 countries in an agreement to share financial information automatically to tackle tax evasion, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said on Wednesday.

The information sharing scheme was


already in the works when Panama came under pressure after the leak of thousands of confidential documents from a Panamanian law firm in April showed their failure to cooperate in global efforts to clamp down on tax evasion by the rich and powerful.

Bahrain, Lebanon, Nauru and Vanuatu are also signing up to the agreement on automatically swapping tax information, which around 100 countries have now joined. Such exchanges are expected to start in September 2018, the Paris-based OECD said.

"These political commitments to join the fight against tax evasion must be turned into practical reality, through implementation of the standards and actual exchange of information," OECD chief Angel Gurría said in a statement.

(Source: Reuters)


NEWS IN BRIEF



Premier oil says it will meet or exceed 2016 production forecast



Disney reports rare earnings miss, shares sink



Toyota sees first profit drop in five years on yen strength

Premier Oil Plc, an explorer operating on four continents, said it would meet or exceed its production forecast for the year.

The first well brought into production at the Solan project in the North Sea has pumped more than 14,000 barrels of oil a day and a second well at the field will start up by the middle of the year, Premier said in a statement Wednesday. The company's total oil and gas output was 57,300 barrels of oil equivalent a day from Jan. 1 to April 30 and is on track to be at or above the upper end of its forecast for the year of 65,000 to 70,000 barrels.

The company's shares rose as much as 6.8 percent to 74.5 pence, before paring gains in line with the wider market. They traded at 69.75 pence at 8:33 a.m. in London.

Walt Disney Co, an investor favorite for consistently beating Wall Street earnings targets, reported a rare miss on Tuesday as advertising and subscriptions declined at sports channel ESPN and theme park revenue came in weaker than expected.

The home of Mickey Mouse got a boost from animated hit film "Zootopia" but it announced an exit from the console video game business as it dropped the Infinity title it launched less than three years ago.

Shares of the world's best-known entertainment company fell more than 5 percent in extended trading.

Toyota Motor Corp. said annual net income will probably decline for the first time in five years, as currency swings that had spurred record profits now pose stiff headwinds.

Net income may drop 35 percent to 1.5 trillion yen (\$13.8 billion) for the fiscal year ending in March, Japan's largest company said in a statement Wednesday. The forecast trailed the 2.19 trillion yen average of 23 analysts' estimates compiled by Bloomberg.

President Akio Toyoda has presided over three straight years of record annual profit, as a weakening yen boosted earnings from Japan-exported Corolla compacts and Lexus RX SUVs sold overseas.

Austria ready to invest in Iran's tourism industry

T**OURISM** **TEHRAN** — Austria is ready to invest in tourism industry of Iran, Austrian ambassador to Iran Friedrich Stift said.

He expressed Austria's readiness to establish a tourism school in Iran.

He made the remarks after visiting the Iranian historical city of Seimareh, western Ilam province, on Tuesday.

Stift, who had a two-day trip to Ilam province, said "Austria is ready to invest in tourism industry of Iran, especially in Ilam province. We have reached an agreement, in which we have highlighted Ilam," he said.

The present position of Austria in the global tourism industry and the diversity and richness of Iran's tourist attractions can pave the way for fur-



The historical city of Seimareh, Ilam Province

Beautiful pedestrian-friendly destinations that don't allow cars

There's nothing like gearing up for an incredible vacation full of promise — of pampering, of relaxation, of blissful days free from stress — only to have your dreams crushed by rental car snafus, traffic jams, stir-crazy kids, and (let's be honest) aggressive drivers in unfamiliar destinations.

■ Venice, Italy

Let's jump right in with one of the most famous car-free destinations of all: watery Venice. Instead of being vehicle-clogged, Venice's winding streets are packed with travelers on foot. And for when you need to get around faster than your own two feet can carry you, hop aboard one of the vaporetto water taxis, water buses — or private gondolas if you're feeling flush.

■ Fire Island, New York

New York's Fire Island is the sandy summer escape of East Coast dreams. Just off the southern shore of Long Island, this charming island swaps cars for island walkways and bike trails. And with quaint little communities — exactly like what you'd imagine on a sleepy, car-free island — plenty of coastline, and views for miles, Fire Island fills up quickly during warm weather.

■ Mackinac Island, Michigan

Another U.S. addition to our list,



Cinque Terre, Italy

Lake Huron's Mackinac Island has been car-free for well over a century. A popular summer resort, the island feels decidedly vintage; where else can you take a horse-drawn carriage to dinner, without it feeling too kitschy? It has the views to match with

timeless panoramas of Lake Huron and the Straits of Mackinac.

■ Little Corn Island, Nicaragua

Nicaragua's Caribbean secret, Little Corn Island is located about 45 miles off the country's eastern coast. A tiny island beloved for its scuba diving, snorkeling, and seafood, here you won't come across any cars; there are no roads and no motorized vehicles, so your legs will take you everywhere you want to go. Although at only five square miles, there really aren't many places but the beach. And that works just fine for us.

■ North Captiva Island, Florida

Aptly named, the four-mile crescent of North Captiva Island sits just north of Captiva Island, in southwestern Florida. (The two islands were once connected, but major storms split the landmass.) This is one of those "can-it-really-exist?" kinds of places, where beaches are sprinkled with coquina shells and dolphins frolic in the surf. In addition to no roads, there are no grocery stores, no hotels, and few amenities — so we recommend staying on Captiva Island and taking the ferry for day trips.

■ Cinque Terre, Italy

There are few places in the world as

magical as the Cinque Terre: five ancient hill towns that hug the Italian Riviera, where a mountaintop hiking trail gives pedestrians easy access to each car-free (or cars-very-very-restricted) towns. Each of the villages — Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, and Riomaggiore — are tiny, so you'll spend most of your day splashing in the sea and sitting at cafes. Oh, and did we mention? This region is the birthplace of pesto. You're welcome.

■ Catalina Island, California

It's hard to believe that there's anywhere in California where cars are endangered, but Catalina Island is real. Here, pedestrians (and golf carts) own the roads, including the oh-so-quiet Main Street, where you can go total Americana at old-fashioned ice-cream parlors, bakeries, and sidewalk restaurants. We also love Wrigley Memorial & Botanical Garden, a pedestrian paradise (no golf carts allowed!) of tropical blooms and 200 buf-falo (yep).

(Source: Trip Advisor)

NEWS

This is the world's fastest growing tourism market

The always sun-drenched Caribbean is looking particularly fetching right now.

Island sojourns are in high demand, hotels in the region are getting deluxe upgrades and airlines are opening more routes connecting the world to the Caribbean -- all of which has made for tourism growth that's outshining the rest of the world's.

The Caribbean opened its arms to 7% more tourists last year, growth that was higher than every other region, and nearly double the 4.4% global average tourism growth in 2015, according to the World Tourism Organization.

So why are more folks flocking to the tropics?

Mostly because more people have more money to play with now that the global economy is getting itself in order.

Jet Blue was the Caribbean's biggest fan, adding flights from the U.S. to Curacao, Grenada and Barbados, with plans to open up flights from Fort Lauderdale to the Bahamas in August.

Delta increased air capacity to Belize and St. Croix, and Alitalia added flights from Milan to Antigua & Barbuda.

The super dollar helped encourage Americans to pack their flip-flops and sarongs for island getaways, with visits growing 6.3% to 14.3 million, or roughly half of all trips to the Caribbean last year.

Europe saw seven-year high growth with 4.2% more people taking their euros to the islands. Intra-Caribbean travel hit a high, too, as 11.4% more Caribbean travelers spent the year checking out neighboring countries.

Stats aside, Caribbean tourism is up because people just want to escape the general global disquietude.

"The Caribbean is considered a zone of tranquility; that is particularly appealing when there are issues overseas," Hugh Riley, secretary general of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, offered. The region has also tapped into its air of romance.

"We suspect that declaring 2016 'The Year of Romance in the Caribbean' has attracted some very favorable response," Riley added. Romance or otherwise, a sunny set of Caribbean countries is courting the world's jetsetters.

Barbados, Cuba, Curacao, Haiti, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago saw some of the greatest tourism growth in 2015, and Belize is coming into its own as a hotspot. These seven isles are 2016's "it" destinations, and where many will want to be next time they swap their desk for the beach.

(Source: CNN)



An afternoon in Laleh Park: the immortal tulip

By Madi Jahangir

I love the evenings of Laleh Park. A mere 10 minute walk from Vali Asr square into green Keshavarz boulevard, The bustles of impatient cab drivers shouting for customers, motorbikes speeding dangerously between the small spaces of traffic, rushing people in the queue of a fast food restaurant, pedestrians at the bus stops waiting for the next BRT bus to arrive, the malls, shops and bargains — all fade away as I pass through the two lines of plane trees with the afternoon sun which is blinking through the green leaves.

Laleh Park was named after the Persian word for tulip, one of the national flowers of Iran, as all-in-one-tulip-crescent on Iran's flag is, a martyr symbol. As one of the 800 public parks in Tehran, it is said to be similar to New York's Central Park and the design of the spiral water canals has been inspired by Japanese gardens that create miniature idealized landscapes. However, the narrow passageway between the Iranian pines planted almost half a century ago and the sounds of water falling off the chanting fountains is more Iranian than everything.

The shadow of dancing willow trees is a scape from the scorching sun in the summer evenings as is the nice breeze forever cuddling the exhausted faces. In a hot afternoon of Tehran, that most of the time has the taste of a saffron ice cream, walking in the garden is a runaway from the noise and the traffic that is a typical scene of the nearby area. So is the sitting under the willow trees a



The passageway at Laleh Park

good leisure for students to carry their heavy school books all the way on the refreshing grass and study the courses of tomorrow.

Laleh park reminds me of my days in China. As is the tradition in People's garden of Shanghai, Laleh park is also a popular meeting place for friends in Tehran. After the sermons of the Friday prayer, families cross the Kargar street to have a lunch at the park in a lazy Friday afternoon. As a relaxing place for our elders, a quiet refuge for reading the newspaper, the pollution and madness of Tehran 's traffic seems so distant. City workers may stop by and lay on a wooden bench to take a nap and a visitor may stand for prayer under the shadow of tall trees that seem would never struggle with fall season.

Laleh is well-kept. It has beautiful

green areas adjacent to The Ministry of Agriculture in the east, Iran's National Carpet Gallery to the northwest, and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in the west. Even though named after tulip, it is full of Acacia trees, the symbol of immortality. And that is what the Iranian gardens are all about. As everything has a season, when there is a time to blossom, there is a time to wither, and when there is a time to be born, there is a time to die, Iranian garden is an exceptional example of immortal beauty.

It is not seasonal but for all seasons like the garden of Eden. A place for relaxation of people in a variety of manners, leisurely for a picnic with family and friends and spiritual for flow with an unrestrained easygoing breeze, as is the idea of a paradise on the earth.

(Source: Dream of Iran)

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London's bridge to European Muslims

The election of a Muslim as London's mayor, along with other examples of respect for religious differences, helps counter an anti-Islam narrative in Europe.

One news narrative in Europe has been the rise of anti-Islam extremism, reflected in the electoral gains of nationalist parties that portray Muslims as "the other." This storyline about religious inequality, however, is not sustainable in the face of some obvious facts on the ground, let alone the values of a continent

historically rooted in mutual respect for sectarian differences.

One fact that should help overturn the narrative was the May 6 election of a Muslim as mayor of London, one of the world's most influential cities. The son of immigrants from Pakistan, Sadiq Khan won by a greater vote margin than the two previous mayors.

He is now one of the most prominent Muslim politicians in the West, although he promises to be "mayor for all Londoners."

A 2011 census found 12.4 percent of the city's 8.6 million population identified as Muslims.

■ Warm spirit of inclusiveness

To make his point, Khan took office at a ceremony in London's Southwark Cathedral. A human rights lawyer who rose up from poverty, he also was able to maintain a warm spirit of inclusiveness during the election campaign when some opponents tried to tag him as a friend of terrorists.

"Fear doesn't make us safer, it only makes



us weaker and the politics of fear is simply not welcome in our city," he said at his swearing-in.

That sort of message, combined with the opportunities in Europe for minorities like him to be elected to high position, helps undercut a strong recruiting message for Islamic State and other violent extremists.

The British Parliament now has 13 Muslim MPs, up from 8, while the Netherlands port city of Rotterdam has had a Muslim mayor since 2009.

→9

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Banks cutting money flow for charities squeezes relief in Syria

Frances Guy was close to rolling out a program to feed hundreds of displaced people in war-torn Syria last year. Guy, the Middle East head of Christian Aid, had secured funds and found partners. But there was one obstacle she couldn't overcome: The charity's bank, Standard Chartered Plc, refused to transfer \$50,000 to put the project in motion.

Christian Aid, which is sponsored by 41 churches in Britain and Ireland, isn't the only organization to face such restrictions. Since U.S. authorities levied billions of dollars in fines against Standard Chartered, HSBC Holdings Plc and BNP Paribas SA for violating sanctions on pariah nations in recent years, banks have been unwilling to send money to some countries and have even shut accounts. Charity Finance Group, a London-based trade association with 1,350 members, says 200 to 300 organizations have had their accounts canceled or endured long delays and rejections of money transfers.

In 2014, HSBC stripped Islamic Relief, the UK's largest Muslim charity, of its accounts. Some U.S. banks have refused to transfer cash for Oxfam, the global anti-poverty organization that began in 1942 to relieve famine in Greece. Such obstacles are taking a toll in places where aid is needed most. This winter, Christian Aid made arrangements to deliver blankets to displaced people in Iraq, but by the time the money came through it was almost spring. The three charities are seeing donations from supporters held up by banks and online payments-processing companies.

"The unintended consequence here is that aid is being denied to people in desperate need of assistance," said Guy.

■ Closed accounts

Laws meant to stop banks from providing services to terrorists, criminals and firms that do business in sanc-



tioned states are having an unanticipated impact on relief efforts, according to more than a dozen interviews with aid directors, senior bankers, lawmakers and industry experts. More than half of the 170 local and regional banks surveyed by the World Bank last year reported losing their relationships with global partner banks.

Banks also have closed accounts for hundreds of money-transfer firms that provide lifelines to migrants and their families in the \$582 billion remittance business. Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England and chairman of the Financial Stability Board, has warned

about the "financial abandonment" of entire countries.

"If the current trend continues, people and organizations in the more volatile areas of the world could be completely cut off from access to regulated financial services," said Emile van der Does de Willebois, a World Bank lawyer specializing in financial-market integrity.

What started as a response to Sept. 11 has morphed into a dilemma with implications for governments, banks and hundreds of millions of people struggling to survive in nations with little financial infrastructure. Law enforcement authorities have made tracking

the global flow of money a key tool in their fight against al-Qaeda and Islamic State, as well as organized crime and drug traffickers.

■ Rational reaction

The Obama administration and other G-7 leaders are increasingly employing sanctions to push nations such as Russia and Iran. That's led to an explosion of new standards and regulations on both sides of the Atlantic dictating what banks can and can't do when serving clients. Uncertain which rules hold ultimate sway, banks are electing to take the safest course and simply shut accounts for customers with a scintilla of risk.

"What we are seeing is a rational reaction to increased regulation," said Lanier Saperstein, a New York-based partner at Dorsey & Whitney, a law firm that represents major lending institutions. "There comes a point where the benefits of onboarding such clients aren't worth the cost."

But such de-risking threatens to undermine the West's push to stem the flow of migrants heading toward Europe from the embattled Middle East, according to Christian Aid's Guy. Earlier this year, British Prime Minister David Cameron pledged 2.3 billion pounds (\$3.3 billion) to ease the suffering of Syrian refugees and improve the lives of those still in the country. Much of that money won't reach its destination if charities, one of the conduits for delivering government aid, can't transfer cash.

Guy said the group's field-kitchen project would have done more than just supply food and water to refugees; it would have stimulated demand for suppliers, drivers and other workers. That's vital to showing there's a future inside Syria, she said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Most UK listed firms hedging for pound to fall on Brexit: survey

Four-fifths of Britain's major companies have taken steps to hedge against the risk that a vote to leave the European Union will knock more than 10 percent off the value of sterling, a poll of almost 800 of Britain's top 1,000 companies showed on Wednesday.

The poll by banking researchers East&Partners, seen by Reuters before its release later on Wednesday, by contrast suggested 83 percent of small and medium-sized firms think sterling will be unharmed by a vote for Brexit.

Only 22 percent said they were hedged against such a risk.

The pound has fallen in value by around 10 percent since the start of December as investors moved to price in expectations that a vote to leave would knock as much as another fifth off its value against the dollar.

The currency has steadied in the past month to trade around \$1.44, still close to its lowest since the 2008 financial crash, but some major banks have forecast a fall to as low as \$1.20 in the event of a vote to leave.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil dips on record U.S. inventories; Canada output to improve soon

Oil prices dipped on Wednesday as Canadian oil sands production was expected to gradually ramp up following forced closures due to wildfires, and as record crude inventories especially in the United States put pressure on markets.

An ongoing fight by Middle East producers for market share in Asia also weighed on prices, countering production declines and disruptions around the world.

International Brent crude oil futures were trading at \$45.44 per barrel at 0702 GMT, down 8 cents from their last settlement, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures were down 16 cents at \$44.51 a barrel.

ANZ bank said that recent "gains in prices were capped as concerns over further disruptions in Canada eased as producers looked to return to their operations."

Oil sands companies around the Canadian energy hub of Fort McMurray began to restart operations on Tuesday after an out-of-control wildfire forced a week-long shutdown.

Provincial and industry officials said production in much of the region should ramp up soon.

(Source: Reuters)



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran builds first home-made radio telescope

Head of Iranian Space Organization Mohsen Bahrani said the country has designed and built the first locally-made radio telescope.



He said Iran's Mesbah satellite is ready to be launched, but it is kept in Italy due to sanction-related problems.

"We are in talks with Italy and we hope that the satellite could be launched soon."

He said Mesbah 2 and Nahid 1 satellites are being designed, adding Iran is also after designing Amir Kabir, Zafar and Dousti satellites as well.

He said the organization hopes that it will have accomplished positioning, navigation, aerial exploration, remote-sensing and space telecommunications by 2025.

(Source: : ISNA)

Microsoft's touchscreen that predicts how you're going to touch it

Capacitive touchscreens changed the way we interact with mobile devices, but they haven't evolved much at a fundamental level since then. Apple is trying to augment touchscreens with 3D Touch, but Microsoft Research is looking to create a touchscreen you don't even have to touch.

The pre-touch sensing prototype smartphone can trigger different types of interactions based on how you're holding the phone and where your fingers are without actually touching the glass.

Microsoft isn't the first to design a screen that can register input without actually being touched. Samsung does something similar with inductive technology in its Note styluses, and Sony had a very similar system for a brief period back in 2012. Sony's "Floating Touch" platform was only deployed on one phone, and software support was limited. Android didn't have extensive support for hover actions as it's not really a mouse-based OS.

Microsoft is taking similar technology and imagining what a platform might be able to do if it was designed with pre-touch sensing in mind.

There are two basic types of capacitive sensors in touchscreens. There are standard mutual capacitance sensors that you'd find in other screens, then there are self-capacitance sensors. Microsoft's prototype screen uses self-capacitance sensors because they have extremely high sensitivity that can detect your finger hovering an inch or two away. In the past, these have only been able to sense a single input, but Microsoft appears to have addressed that shortcoming.

The demo video shows some of the interesting interactions that are possible with Microsoft's test device.

(Source: Extreme Tech)

Malaria vaccine offers safe, effective protection for over 1 year

There is currently no vaccine for malaria, but with almost half of the world's population at risk for the disease, there is a desperate need for one. Now, researchers believe they may be well on their way to fulfilling this need.

Published the journal Nature Medicine, the results from a phase I clinical trial reveal that a vaccine called PfSPZ protected healthy adults against malaria for more than 1 year.

Malaria is a disease most commonly transmitted through the bite of an infected Anopheles mosquito.



Symptoms of malaria include fever, flu-like illness, headache, shaking chills, muscle aches, and nausea and vomiting. It can also cause anemia, jaundice, and - if not treated properly - seizures, kidney failure, coma, mental confusion, and death.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were around 214 million cases of malaria across the globe last year and around 438,000 deaths from the disease.

In the new study, principal investigator Dr. Robert A. Seder, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Vaccine Research Center, and colleagues reveal how the PfSPZ vaccine achieves long-term protection against P. falciparum.

In previous research, Dr. Seder and colleagues found that the vaccine was highly protective against P. falciparum for 3 weeks following immunization.

For this latest research, the team set out to investigate whether the vaccine would offer longer-term protection.

The researchers gave the vaccine to 59 healthy adults aged 18-45 years with no history of malaria. A further 32 healthy, age-matched adults without a history of malaria were enrolled but were not vaccinated, serving as controls.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Nine more planets which could hold alien life found by NASA's Kepler spacecraft

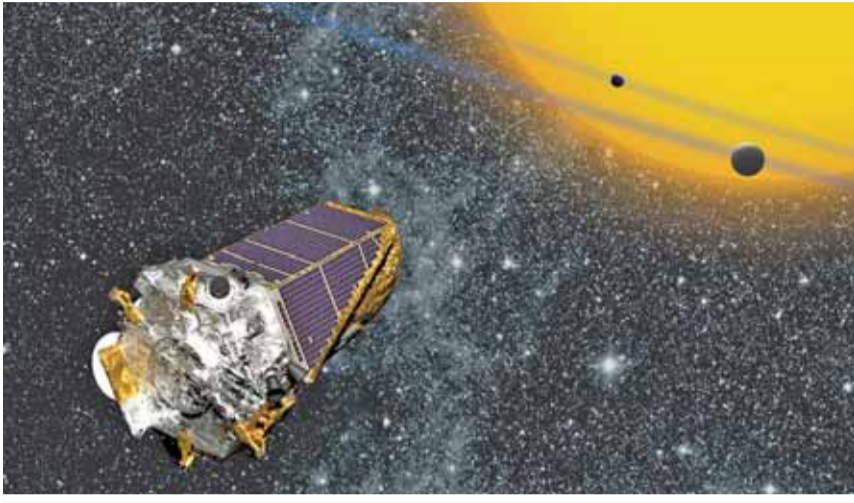
The number of planets outside the Solar System has doubled after NASA confirmed nearly 1,300 new worlds, nine of which are rocky planets which could hold alien life.

The Kepler spacecraft has been looking for Earth-like planets since May 2009 and before the recent findings had discovered thousands of candidate planets, including 12 in the 'Goldilocks Zone' - neither too hot, not too cold to sustain life.

At a press conference in the U.S., scientists at NASA announced they had validated a further 1,284 new planets which more than doubles the 1,041 confirmed worlds already found. Nearly half are rocky planets like Earth.

However it is the nine planets in the habitable zone which are the most intriguing. The most promising is Kepler 1638b, which is around 60 percent larger than Earth and slightly closer to its star with an orbit of 259 days. If it was in our Solar System it would sit between Earth and Venus.

Paul Hertz, Astrophysics Division director at NASA Headquarters in Washington, said: "One of the great questions of all time is whether we are alone in the universe.



The Kepler spacecraft has been looking for Earth-like planets since May 2009 and before the recent findings had discovered thousands of candidate planets, including 12 in the 'Goldilocks Zone' - neither too hot, not too cold to sustain life.

To reduce risk for Alzheimer's, get onto the yoga mat

Inner peace and a flexible body may not be the most valuable benefits that yoga and meditation have to offer, suggests new research by a UCLA-led team of neuroscientists.

The team found that a three-month course of yoga and meditation practice helped minimize the cognitive and emotional problems that often precede Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia -- and that it was even more effective than the memory enhancement exercises that have been considered the gold standard for managing mild cognitive impairment.

"Memory training was comparable to yoga with meditation in terms of improving memory, but yoga provided a broader benefit than memory training because it also helped with mood, anxiety and coping skills," said Helen Lavretsky, the study's senior author and a professor in residence in UCLA's department of psychiatry.

dence in UCLA's department of psychiatry.

Cognitive impairment

People with mild cognitive impairment are two-and-a-half times more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The study, which appears May 10 in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, is the first to compare outcomes from yoga and meditation with those from memory training, which incorporates activities ranging from crossword puzzles to commercially available computer programs. The study of 25 participants, all over the age of 55, measured changes not just in behavior but also in brain activity.

"Historically and anecdotally, yoga has been thought to be beneficial in aging well, but this is the scientific demonstration of that benefit," said Harris Eyre, the study's lead author, a doctoral candidate at Australia's

Scientists develop method to test for Zika Virus

Scientists have made a breakthrough in their testing against the Zika virus, with researchers from Harvard University's Wyss Institute coming up with a method to detect the mosquito-borne virus in humans.

Ianka Mikaelle Barbosa, 18, poses for a photograph with Sophia, 18 days old, who is her second child and was born with microcephaly, at her house in Campina Grande, Brazil February 17, 2016.

The discovery could help to prevent the spread of Zika, which is now reported in 55 countries worldwide- 42 of which had never had any outbreaks previous to 2015, according to the World Health Organization.

The low-cost, rapid paper-disc diagnostic tool screens blood, urine, or saliva samples for specific strains of the virus, according to the release on the Wyss Institute website. It then changes to purple if the virus is present, or becomes yellow if the sample is free from infection.

Global health crisis

The "growing global health crisis caused by the Zika virus propelled us to leverage novel technologies we have developed in the lab and use them to create a workflow that could diagnose a patient with Zika, in the field, within two to three hours," said synthetic biologist James Collins of the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University, who led the research.

The Zika virus, transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected Aedes aegypti mosquito, has had scientists across the world scrambling to find some sort of immunization. It is extremely difficult to combat as the tiny mosquitoes attack both during the day and at night, and can live both in- and outdoors. Sexual transmission of the Zika virus is also possible.



Zika is especially dangerous for pregnant women, as it is linked to several severe birth defects transferred to the fetus - including microcephaly- a condition in which a baby is born with a small head or the head stops growing after birth.

"We hope a tool like this can help reduce the impact of the outbreak until a vaccine can be developed," said Keith Pardee, one of the study's co-first authors and an Assistant Professor in the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy at University of Toronto, in the release.

(Source: cnbc.com)

World's first consumer 3D-printed wheelchair set to launch in London

We've seen countless projects look to 3D printing as a manufacturing method, from satellite antennas and titanium rib cages, to printed beaks and jaws. Layer Design's new product takes the fabrication technique's unique ability to quickly provide tailored products, and uses it to build a custom wheelchair with an attractive design.

The design of the product, known as the GO wheelchair, is the result of research conducted with dozens of wheelchair users, as well as medical professionals, over a six-month period of information gathering. The finished product is designed to help people stop seeing wheelchairs as medical devices, removing that stigma, and presenting them as vehicles to improve lives.

The team listened to the wants and needs of the users, and tallied those desires with practical advice from the medical professionals. The result is the GO wheelchair - a lightweight, functional and attractive piece of kit that's built to fit the needs of various users with different disabilities.

The key element

The key element of the product, which is set to be officially launched at the Clerkenwell Design week in London later this month, is its made-to-measure nature - something that would have been more difficult, and a lot more expensive without 3D printing. Specifically, there are two custom-made pieces - the seat and the foot bay - which are built to accurately fit the user's body shape, weight and their disability.



The company maps the user's biometric information, ensuring that each chair is a good fit. The seat is printed from a semi-transparent resin combined with thermoplastic polyurethane for elasticity. Its exact placement is also adjusted based on the body mapping data, ensuring that the center of gravity is correct.

The geometry of the 3D-printed foot bay, which is constructed from titanium, is built to fit the user's leg length, sitting position and foot shape, and features an anti-slip finish.

Elsewhere, the frame of the chair is built from titanium, with a simple design that cuts down the number of struts to a minimum, lowering the visual weight of the chair. The wheels are also lightweight, with carbon fiber spokes and molded push-grip rims.

(Source: Gizmag)

Legal culling of wolves increases poaching: study

Allowing the legal culling of wild wolves in order to discourage illegal poaching is counter-productive, researchers reported Wednesday in a study that challenges long-practiced conservation strategy.

During a 15-year period when wildlife management policies in two U.S. states flipped half-a-dozen times, growth in wolf populations slowed systematically whenever culling was permitted, even after controlling for the number of animals legally killed, they found.

"Ours is the first study to quantify this mechanism," said Guillaume Chapron, a professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Riddarhyttan, of the research published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

"What we found is that when the government allowed culling, the wolf population grew 25 percent less," he told AFP. "And this is due to poaching."

For decades, local and national authorities in Europe and the United States have authorized the controlled killing



of wolves, bears, big cats and other endangered species within the framework of conservation efforts.

Reducing poachers

In calling for the removal of protected status for grizzlies in Yellowstone Park, for example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service argued earlier this year that legal hunting would "increase tolerance and local acceptance of grizzly bears and reduce poaching."

Governments in Norway, Sweden, Finland, France and other European countries have put in place similar policies, even as they acknowledge that there was no scientific literature to back up their claims.

In Finland, for example, 20 percent of the wolf population was legally eliminated last year, roughly 50 out of 250 individuals.

To see if this widespread approach actually works, Chapron and Adrian Treves of the University of Wisconsin took advantage of a legal tug-of-war between wildlife advocates and state governments in Wisconsin and Minnesota that resulted in twelve distinct time periods when culling was alternately allowed and banned.

"For us scientists, it created a quasi-experiment that we would never have been able to set up otherwise," Chapron said.

But once the researchers had determined that wolf numbers declined even beyond the number culled during periods of legal hunting, they still had to figure out why.

(Source: AFP)

British police apologized after officers shouted the Arabic phrase "Allahu Akbar!" during a terror training exercise in a shopping centre in northern England.

In video footage of the exercise broadcast on British television, a masked man dressed in black could be seen running into the complex in Manchester shouting the words before setting off a bomb and falling to the floor.

"On reflection, we acknowledge that it was unacceptable to use this religious phrase immediately before the mock suicide bombing, which so vocally linked this exercise with Islam," said Garry Shewan, a senior officer at Greater Manchester Police.

In a statement, Shewan said the scenario had been based on "a suicide attack by an extremist Daesh (ISIL/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant)-style organization" -- Daesh being an Arabic acronym for the ISIL terrorist group -- but added: "We recognize and apologize for

British police apologize for Muslim phrase in terror exercise



Anti-ISIL coalition devoid of robust strategy to destroy group: Turkish FM

The coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group has not succeeded in creating a solid and functioning strategy to destroy the terrorist organization, Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in a meeting May 11.

"There are 65 countries in the anti-ISIL coalition, a majority of which are NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) members. We have some fragmented strategies, most of which have unfortunately not worked. We do not have a robust and functioning strategy to destroy and to defeat the terror organization. I hope this will change," he said in a speech in the Mediterranean resort of Antalya.

Cavusoglu said it was not possible to defeat terror organizations, including ISIL and al-Nusra (Jabhat al-Nusra), without resolving the problems in Syria.

"People from more than 120 countries come to join terror organizations in Syria. Even if we defeat these organizations, new ones will erupt. There was no ISIL or Boko Haram some four years ago, but there was al-Qaeda," he

said. "Almost all terror organizations are connected to each other, representing the parts of a huge network...If we cannot resolve the terror issue; it will find us one way or another in the end. The terror problem in our region first hit Turkey and then Europe," he said.

The minister also said Turkey was not uncomfortable with hosting over 3 million Iraqis and Syrians, but noted that it was necessary to create joint solutions.

"We have spent some \$10 billion on them so far. We do not see them as a burden. The international community has given just \$472 million until now. This is also not a problem for us. When people, however, lose their hopes about their future, they start to seek new destinations. If they had been happy with their hometowns, they would not have moved somewhere else in masses," he said, adding that Turkey and the European Union had worked together to resolve the refugee crisis as the huge influx had mainly affected the two entities.

(Source: Hurriyet)

Nigeria rebuffs David Cameron over corruption remarks

Nigeria's government has rejected comments by the British prime minister that it is "fantastically corrupt".

President Muhammadu Buhari said he did not want an apology from David Cameron, but said Britain could return assets stolen by officials who fled to London.

The response on Tuesday came after Cameron was caught on tape saying in front of Queen Elizabeth II that "some leaders of some fantastically corrupt countries [are] coming to Britain" for an anti-corruption summit.

"Nigeria and Afghanistan, possibly the two most corrupt countries in the world," Cameron said as Buhari and Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani were due to attend the anti-corruption conference hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

"I am not going to demand any apology from anybody. What I am demanding is the return of the assets," Buhari told the conference.

Nigeria, which ranks 136 out of 168 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index for 2015, has struggled for years to fight corruption among its political elite.

the offence that this has caused."

The phrase is Arabic for "God is (the) greatest."

Tony Lloyd, mayor of Greater Manchester, said using the phrase was "ill-judged, unnecessary and unacceptable".

"It didn't add anything to the event, but has the potential to undermine the great community relations we have in Greater Manchester," he said.

The role play exercise on the outskirts of Manchester involved 800 people, including actors made up to resemble gunshot victims with horrific injuries.

Police said there was no specific threat in Manchester and that the exercise was devised in December a month after the Paris attacks which killed 130 people and were claimed by the ISIL terrorists.

Britain's terror threat level remains at severe, which means the security services consider an attack to be "highly likely".

(Source: AFP)

But since Buhari was elected to power in 2014 on a campaign that vowed to root out corruption, anti-fraud agencies have arrested several senior politicians accused of embezzlement.

Asked whether Cameron regretted his comments, a Downing Street spokesman said: "Both leaders have been invited to the summit because they are driving the fight against corruption in their countries. The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with them as they do so."

Money laundering in Britain

Cobus de Swardt, Transparency International's managing director, said Britain is actually "a big part of the world's corruption problem".

"There is no doubt that historically, Nigeria and Afghanistan have had very high levels of corruption, and that continues to this day," de Swardt said. "But the leaders of those countries have sent strong signals that they want things to change."

"This affects the UK as much as other countries. We should not forget that by providing a safe haven for corrupt assets, the UK and its overseas territories and crown dependencies are a big part of the world's corruption problem."

(Source: agencies)

Israel introduces restrictions ahead of Nakba Day

Israeli authorities have enforced tough restrictions across the occupied territories as thousands of Palestinians are gearing up to mark the 68th anniversary of the Nakba (Catastrophe) Day.

Nakba refers to the 1948 Palestinian exodus when more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from their homes by Israel during the 1948 Palestine war.

Israel plans to mark the day with celebrations, barring Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip from entering East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

According to the Israeli military, the ban will be imposed as of 1:00 a.m. on Wednesday local time (2200 GMT Tuesday) until midnight (2100 GMT) on Thursday.

Israeli Culture and Sport Minister Miri Regev said all cultural and sports facilities across the occupied lands, including Arabic institutions, will have to raise the Israeli flag on the Nakba Day.

Every year on May 15, Palestinians all over the world hold demonstrations to mark the Nakba Day.

Two Palestinian youths were injured on Wednesday morning after being violently attack by Israeli military forces on the outskirts of al-Quds, according to Palestinian news agency Ma'an.

The incident occurred in the Arab village of Kfar Aqab, located near Qalandiya refugee camp, where witnesses say Israeli troops entered while conducting an investigation. According to Ma'an, Palestinian youths confronted the troops upon their entrance.

Red Crescent Medical Emergency services said that



a Palestinian youth was seriously injured after he was shot in the chest and was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Another youth allegedly shot in the leg was in moderate condition and was taken to a Ramallah medical facility. Israeli officials also imposed a travel ban on Omar Barghouti, a co-founder of the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

The travel restrictions against Barghouti, a Qatari-born Palestinian, came on Tuesday; weeks after Israeli Interior Minister Aryeh Deri said he is considering revoking his residency rights. Barghouti has described the decision as "clearly political."

The BDS campaign against Israel over its apartheid

policies toward the Palestinians has gained momentum globally in recent years. The BDS campaigns to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

BDS activists expect the United Methodist Church, which has nearly eight million members in the United States, to join the movement this year, underscoring the growing momentum of the U.S. protest movement against Israel.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967 and imposes a wide range of restrictions on its 2.5 million Palestinian residents. Several hundred thousand Israelis have also established unlawful settlements in the West Bank, which the United Nations and much of the international community consider illegal.

Israel dismisses hunger-striking prisoner's appeal

Separately, Israel's Supreme Court rejected on Tuesday the petition of a 43-year-old Palestinian prisoner who is on hunger strike to protest against his administrative detention.

More than 7,000 Palestinian prisoners are currently held in some 17 Israeli jails, dozens of whom are serving multiple life sentences.

Over 500 detainees are under the so-called administrative detention, which is a sort of imprisonment without trial or charge that allows Israel to incarcerate Palestinians for up to six months. Palestinian detainees have continuously resorted to open-ended hunger strikes in an attempt to express their outrage at the illegal and unfair administrative detention and to demand an end to the policy.

(Source: Press TV)



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The twin-city agreement between Iranian "Shiraz" and Hungarian "Pécs" was inked by mayors of the two cities.

In a meeting with mayor of Hungary's "Pécs" city, Shiraz Mayor Alireza Paak-Fetrat pointed to the historical and cultural commonalities of the two cities and said: "Shiraz and 'Pécs' are among the oldest cities in the world which date back to over 2,000 years ago, the issue of which shows the rich culture of the two cities."

Currently, a great number of Iranian students are studying "Medicine" in Hungarian universities, he said, adding: "It is hoped that rich Iranian-Islamic culture will be disseminated across the world."

Exchanging knowledge and science is one of the

ICOBIGE held the first "fraud detection and prevention" seminar

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — permanent secretariat of international conference on banking industry and global economy (ICOBIGE) held the first "fraud detection and prevention" seminar at the research center of Tehran's Industrial Management Institute (IMI) on

Tuesday May 10th. A number of senior managers, experts and scholars in the field of banking and payment information technology attended this seminar which was sponsored by renowned companies such as Informatics Services Corporation, Kish Iran Credit Card Corp and Shahrtech.

Practical Knowledge on what fraud is and how to prevent it, introducing different methods of fraud in various payment ports, risk management and fraud detection system implementation methodology, evolution of card industry and relevant standards and preventing fraud in the organizational

structure of banks, were among subjects covered in this seminar.

It is worth mentioning that the course instructor was David Cole who is executor of advanced anti-fraud enforcement systems in some of the largest banks in the world.

JUMP

London's bridge to European Muslims

6→ Khan's election also points to the absurdity of stereotyping all Muslims as a threat, which is a theme of Donald Trump's presidential campaign in the United States.

Another fact on the ground in Europe is the steady work done since 2015 to resettle Syrian asylum seekers, either many of those who fled by boat to Greece or those who have applied legally in the Middle East.

Despite concerns raised by some politicians, the European Union is embracing those opposed to Islamic State in Syria — and who chose to flee to Europe.

Europeans can also note another counter-narrative fact about the treatment of Muslims: the May 7 reopening of a historic mosque in Banja Luka, a Serb region of Bosnia.

The original 16th-century mosque, called Ferhad Pasha, was destroyed by Christian Serbs during the Bosnian war of the 1990s and replaced with a parking lot.

Its rebuilding 23 years later, said Bosnian Serb President Milorad Dodik at a ceremony that included Muslims, Jews, and Christians, sends a message of peace. The head of Bosnia's Muslim community, Efendi Husein Kavazovic, said the restoration is a "triumph of light over darkness."

In an April report on Islamophobia in Europe, the Turkish think tank SETA made a recommendation for educational institutions and other stakeholders to work towards creating an "alternative narrative" about Muslims and to dispel a negative image of Islam. That work may already be underway. It just needs to be noticed.

(Source: The CSM)

Germany to increase troops for first time since Cold War ended

Germany is raising the number of its troops for the first time since 1990, ending a quarter of a century of successive cuts in the army since the end of the Cold War.

The Bundeswehr (unified armed forces of Germany) is expected to increase in the next seven years by 14,300 soldiers, while 4,400 civilian officers will also be added to the service, Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen said.



This boost in troop strength is "necessary given the current situation" of increasing tensions with Russia over the conflict in Ukraine, as well as several foreign missions undertaken by the army, she said.

Germany is preparing to join efforts to bolster NATO's (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) presence on its eastern flank bordering Russia, in a bid to reassure east European alliance members rattled by Moscow's annexation of Crimea.

The Bundeswehr has also deployed troops to Mali as part of a United Nations mission to monitor a peace deal between the government and northern rebels in the west African country. It has also joined an international coalition battling the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists in Iraq and Syria.

German soldiers totaled 178,000 last December, hovering close to the cap of 185,000 imposed since 2011.

The army has seen a significant reduction in troop numbers since Germany's reunification and after the Cold War.

In 1990, the number of soldiers reached 585,000.

Berlin's latest announcement also appeared to be an answer to a repeated call by the United States for NATO members to stomp up more in defense spending.

U.S. President Barack Obama made the plea in April during his visit to Germany, where he also berated Europe for having "sometimes been complacent about its own defense".

(Source: AFP)

IKCO Starts Exporting Police Cars to Turkmenistan

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO) has started to export police cars to Turkmenistan with the aim of increasing its share in the car market of the Commonwealth of Independent States, IKCO office of public relations reported.

According to the report, in an address to the opening ceremony of police cars export to Turkmenistan, IKCO Deputy CEO for Export and International Affairs, Saeed Tafazzoli said that based on an agreement signed between two sides; IKCO will export 200 police cars to Turkmenistan, adding, if approved by the Turkmen side, IKCO will continue to supply the country's police fleet in future.

Outlining IKCO's plans for 2016, Tafazzoli said, 30 percent of IKCO export -between 6 to 9 thousand cars - would be shipped to CIS. He noted that IKCO will also export some of its products to Iraq including trucks and CKD cars.

"Export to Tunisia and reviving Venezuela site are among other plans of IKCO for 2016," he said, adding that IKCO is set to export a total of 30,000 cars by 2016, March 20.

For his part, the CEO of IKCO's site in Ashgabat, Yaghmour Gholizadeh said Japan and South Korea have the largest share in Turkmenistan's market, adding IKCO's vehicles with their high quality and affordable price can attract the attentions of the Turkmen and take a larger share in the CIS market in the near future.

Gholizadeh concluded that entering Russia's market is the next goal of IKCO.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.
Albert Einstein

LEARN ENGLISH

Using Renewable

Carl: Uh! What's that smell?

Jody: I'm working on my latest **invention**. I'm turning our old food into an energy source for our car and our house.

Carl: Why? There are already lots of types of **renewable energy** that power cars and homes, and none of them smell like this! Jody: Well, I think I'm onto a better alternative. Imagine being able to **recycle** your unwanted food into **fuel**. That's the wave of the future.

Carl: You mean you think that it would be more **efficient** than **wind power** and **solar energy**? There are **geothermal** and **hydroelectric power plants** that already provide energy for lots of homes and businesses.

Jody: But I'm using food that would otherwise be **wasted**.

Carl: I hate to **break it to you**, but if you want to **convert** food into fuel, there are already different types of **biofuels** that work pretty well.

Jody: You mean somebody has already **beaten me to the punch**?

Carl: Yes, and I bet they've found a way to do it without this **stench**!

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

invention: a useful machine, tool, instrument etc. that has been invented

renewable energy: energy from a source that is not depleted when used, such as wind or solar power

recycle: to put used objects or materials through a special process so that they can be used again

fuel: a substance such as coal, gas, or oil that can be burned to produce heat or energy

the wave of the future: a trend or development that may influence or become a significant part of the future

efficient: if someone or something is efficient, they work well without wasting time, money, or energy

wind power: power obtained by harnessing the energy of the wind

solar energy: power obtained by harnessing the energy of the sun's rays

geothermal: relating to or coming from the heat inside the earth

hydroelectric: using water power to produce electricity

power plant: a building where electricity is produced to supply a large area; power station

waste: to not make full use of someone or something

beak news to someone: if you break unpleasant news to someone, you tell it to them

convert: to change something into a different form of thing, or to change something so that it can be used for a different purpose or in a different way

biofuel: a fuel derived immediately from living matter

beat somebody to the punch: to do or get something before anyone else does

stench: a very strong bad smell

QUIZ OF THE DAY

152) What does the idiom mean?

He has the weight of the world on his shoulders.

a) to lift something above your shoulders

b) he has big shoulders

c) to have problems

(Quiz No. 151 answer: b)

PHRASAL VERB

Sleep in

■ **Meaning**: sleep later than usual

■ **For example**: Tomorrow is Saturday, so I can sleep in!

ENGLISH PROVERB

Don't judge a book by its cover

■ **Explanation**: don't judge by appearances



Without
earth no
birth!

Indian woman, 70, gives birth to first baby

New Delhi (AFP) — An Indian woman who gave birth at the age of 70 said Tuesday she was not too old to become a first-time mother, adding that her life was now complete.

Daljinder Kaur gave birth last month to a boy following two years of IVF treatment at a fertility clinic in the northern state of Haryana with her 79-year-old husband.

Kaur said the couple, married for 46 years, had almost lost hope of ever having a child and had faced ridicule in a country where infertility is sometimes seen as a curse from God.

"God heard our prayers. My life feels complete now. I am looking after the baby all by myself, I feel so full of energy. My husband is also very caring and helps me as much as he can," Kaur told AFP from the northern city of Amritsar.

"When we saw the (IVF) advert, we thought we should also give it a try as I badly wanted to have a baby of my own," she said.

Kaur put her age at about 70, a common scenario in India where many people don't



Indian father Mohinder Singh Gill, 79, and his wife Daljinder Kaur, 70, hold their newborn

have birth certificates, while the clinic said in a statement that she was 72.

The baby was conceived using the couple's own egg and sperm and was now "healthy

A grand but faulty vision for Iran's water problems

➔1 Transferring water from the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman is even more ambitious in aiming to secure drinking water for 47 million people in 16 provinces. In March 2016, Rouhani announced a budget of \$400m to launch the initiative.

Hamidreza Janbaz, managing director of Iran's National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company, a state body, has explained the scheme as several sub-projects that are at different stages. Most are still in planning but some have broken ground, including water transfer from the Sea of Oman to the northern part of Sistan-Baluchistan province.

But as construction begins, a simple question remains. Is pumping desalinized water from hundreds of kilometers away a sustainable way to support dehydrated mega-cities and parched farmlands?

The country's water and natural resources experts say no. They object on both economic and environmental grounds. Some academics and environmental activists have demanded the Caspian Sea project be scrapped because of the likely consequences of deforestation, and habitat and biodiversity loss, in the Hyrcanian forests, the steppe and alpine ecosystems of the Alborz Mountains, and in the Caspian Sea itself. They are also concerned that Iran might set a precedent for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan, the four countries also adjoining the land-locked Caspian Sea.

Some of those opposing water transfer projects argue that the plans contravene article 50 of Iran's constitution, which makes environmental sustainability a public duty, forbidding "economic and other activities that inevitably involve pollution of the environment or cause

irreparable damage."

The dichotomy of water management and environmental sustainability is hardly new. But it is growing. Water shortages result from a mix of rapid population growth, disproportionate spatial distribution of people, inefficient agriculture, mismanagement and thirst for development.

With a mere 250mm (10 inches) of rain a year, less than a third of the global average, Iran is generally dry. Over many decades, the country has been tempted by grandiose, supply-oriented engineering solutions such as dam construction and water transfer tunnels to secure water supply.

But Iran should already have learned that inter-basin transfers - moving water from one geographic region to another, typically over long distances - are no panacea. A series of water diversions from the western headwaters of the Karoun River over a few decades more than doubled the natural flow of the Zayandeh-Rud River, a major surface water source for a strategic socio-economic hub in central Iran, but this promoted unbridled development and encouraged people to move in.

As a consequence, scarcity reappeared just years after each project was finished, while downstream the Gav-Khouni marsh faced a reduced flow inadequate to maintain aquatic habitats. Overall, the Zayandeh-Rud projects made the situation worse, not better.

Once a source of pride, largescale supply-oriented solutions are now being understood as a major cause of environmental degradation, manifested in drying up of Lake Urmia, the Middle East's largest saltwater lake, and in dust storms and haze in the west and southwest. Furthermore, declining groundwater resources are a clear sign of

unsustainable management and national "water bankruptcy" whereby withdrawals exceed natural aquifer recharge.

The magnitude of the planned water-transfer projects means that any miscalculations can leave deep, lasting scars. Skepticism is reinforced by past failures. The Gotvand Dam (in Khuzestan province was built on salt beds that make the water in the reservoir too salty to use: the planning phase failed to detect that the geology would not permit the storage of water suitable for irrigation.

These are complex issues and pressures are real on government to ensure drinking water and encourage agricultural and industrial development in the central provinces. Around the world, other desperate governments - as in Brazil and China - are looking for solutions based on water transfers.

But it is still possible to implement a host of water management strategies to alleviate water scarcity before slashing the country with lavish projects. These include appropriate water pricing, incentives for conservation, improving farming technologies and practices, capturing storm waters, reducing leakage in aging distribution networks, limiting groundwater withdrawal, and recycling waste water.

Interbasin transfer of desalinized water is one of the less favorable options. It should only be used only as a last resort.

Ali Mirchi is a research assistant professor at the Department of Civil Engineering and the Center for Environmental Resource Management at the University of Texas at El Paso. Kaveh Madani is a senior lecturer in environmental management at the Centre for Environmental Policy of Imperial College London

(Source: The Guardian)

Pile-up, bus overturn on Qazvin -Karaj highway leaves 9 injured

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Over a **d e s k** pile-up, involving 30 vehicles, and a bus overturn on Qazvin-Karaj highway, nine got injured, Nasimonline reported.

"Fortunately there were no fatalities," Qazvin province traffic police Bahram Zeynali said.

In the first accident, 30 cars crashed into each other which caused a heavy traffic but with the timely intervention of police and relief forces the traffic congestion was eased soon, Zeynali noted.

Over the first accident four got injured who were transferred to the hospital, he added.

Not paying attention to the road while driving, over speeding on slippery roads, and not maintaining the safety distance with the car driving in the front are of the causes of the recent multiple collision, he noted.

In the second accident a bus with 17 passengers overturned on the highway and five of the passengers got injured, he explained.

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ چ

Iron, vitamin D supplements being distributed among school girls

Iron and vitamin D supplements are being distributed among high school girls over the current Iranian school year (September 23, 2015-June 20, 2016), the deputy health minister said.

"Over the current school year we have distributed iron and vitamin D supplements among 3.2 million school girls," Ali-Akbar Sayyari told Fars news agency.

"Considering the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency among school girls, distribution of supplements is a priority for us," Sayyari added.

"We have also educated 500,000 students as health ambassadors nationwide," he noted, adding, "Additionally we have initiated campaigns which call for healthy diet, getting enough exercise, and avoiding smoking."

Sayyari stated that the cooperation between health and education ministries on health issues and raising awareness among students has well-improved for the past two years.

توزیع قرص آهن و ویتامین دی بین دانش آموزان دختر دبیرستانی

معاون وزیر بهداشت گفت در سال تحصیلی جاری قرص آهن و ویتامین دی بین دانش آموز دختر دبیرستانی توزیع کردیم.

علی اکبر سیاری در گفت و گو با فارس گفت: در سال تحصیلی جاری بین ۳ میلیون و ۲۰۰ هزار دانش آموز دختر، ویتامین دی و قرص آهن توزیع کردیم.

سیاری افزود: با توجه به کمبود ویتامین دی در دانش آموزان دختر، این موضوع برای آنها در اولویت قرار دارد. وی خاطر نشان کرد: در طرح سفیران سلامت، تاکنون ۵۰۰ هزار دانش آموز را آموزش دادیم و همچنین در کمپین هایی که تدارک دیده شده است، در زمینه تغذیه سالم، تحرک، پرهیز از مصرف دخانیات اطلاعاتی به دانش آموزان در مدارس داده می شود.

سیاری تصریح کرد: در دو سال اخیر همکاری وزارت آموزش و پرورش با وزارت بهداشت در خصوص سلامت دانش آموزان و موضوع آگاهی بخشی افزایش داشته است.

Iranian wrestling teams know rivals at World Cups

The Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling World Cup draws were announced this week at the United World Wrestling Bureau meeting in Istanbul.

The World Cup is an annual competition featuring the top eight ranked nations from the previous year's world championships. The competition is separated into two groups each comprised of four nations.

The Greco-Roman World Cup will feature Russia, Belarus, Germany and Kazakhstan in Group A, while Group B has Azerbaijan, Turkey, Ukraine and host Iran.

The Freestyle World Cup will feature Russia, Georgia, Turkey and Mongolia in Group A, with Iran, Azerbaijan, and India joining hosts United States in Group B.

The Greco-Roman World Cup will be competed May 19 and 20 in Shiraz, Iran and hosted by the Iran Wrestling Federation.

USA Wrestling will host the Men's Freestyle World Cup be June 11 and 12 at The Forum in Los Angeles.

This year will be the third in a row that Iran and the United States have hosted the Greco-Roman and freestyle World events, respectively. Azerbaijan is the defending Greco-Roman World Cup champion, having won their first-ever title last year in Tehran.

Iran is the defending Freestyle World Cup champions having bested the United States in last year's gold medal final.



Iran's Mahdavia invited to Mexico for All-stars friendly



T T S P O R T S Iranian legendary winger Mehdi Mahdavia has been invited for a match against Mexico's All-stars.

On Wednesday, as the Estadio Azteca celebrates its 50th anniversary, a group of FIFA Football Legends will take to the pitch of the legendary stadium for a friendly game with a team of Mexican all-stars.

Mahdavia plus ex-Manchester United star Dwight Yorke, Marcel Desailly, Fabio Cannavaro, Mia Hamm, Samuel

Eto'o, Clarence Seedorf and Luis Figo, whose 2015 FIFA candidature was endorsed by Mourinho, will play against Mexican stars.

The 66th FIFA Congress is shaping up to be a historic one for the organization. Not only will the assembly in Mexico City be the first one presided over by FIFA President Gianni Infantino, but it will also mark the first time that FIFA's supreme body meets under the revised FIFA Statutes that came into force on 27 April.

Sichuan interested in extending Haddadi's contract



T T S P O R T S Newly-crowned CBA champion Sichuan expressed interest in extending deal with Iranian center Hamed Haddadi.

"Haddadi did help a lot last season," said Geng Jie, Sichuan club president. "We want to keep this champion line-up. We hope Haddadi will stay."

Haddadi was the first Iranian player to have played in NBA. In September 2013, he signed with Sichuan thanks to a three-foreign-player policy in favor of

lowered-ranked CBA teams. Haddadi left Sichuan for Qingdao in the 2014-2015 season.

Haddadi returned to Sichuan in a package deal that also bought Mike Harris and Justin Dentmon from Qingdao, Xinhua reported.

Sichuan will be limited to two foreign players in the 2016-17 season. After witnessing a magical season for Sichuan, some players expressed interest in joining the champion team.

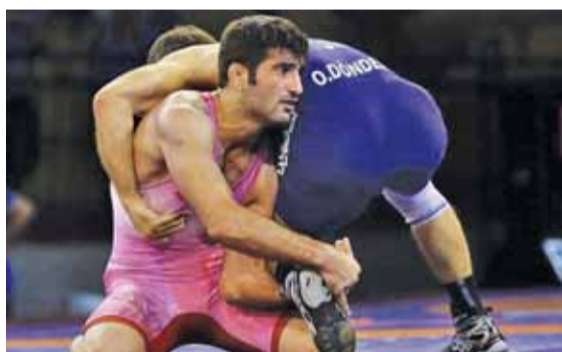
Iran Paralympian bids farewell to wrestling championship universe

Iranian audibly-challenged freestyle wrestler Foroud Hojjati has given an emotional goodbye to fans in his home country during the 4th edition World Deaf Senior Greco-Roman & Freestyle Wrestling Championships currently underway in Tehran.

On Sunday, Hojjati took part in the 57-kilogram weight category contests of the tournament at Tehran's Shohadaye Haftom Tir Sports Hall, and shared a bronze medal with a representative from Kazakhstan.

The Iranian Paralympic freestyle wrestler then announced his retirement after kissing the wrestling mat. He had been sidelined over the past few years.

The 4th edition of World Deaf Senior Greco-Roman



& Freestyle Wrestling Championships started in the Iranian capital city of Tehran on May 6, and will finish on May 10, 2016.

Hojjati was the winner in his third-place bout against an opponent from Kazakhstan in the 55-kilogram weight class of the 2013 Summer Deaflympics in Bulgaria.

The 2013 Summer Deaflympics opened in Bulgaria on July 26, and wrapped up on August 4.

A team of 82 Iranian athletes were in action across nine sports. They competed in athletics, football, judo, karate, swimming, volleyball, Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling, table tennis and taekwondo.

(Source: PressTV)

Machine Sazi secures promotion to Iran Professional League

Machine Sazi football team secured promotion to Iran Professional League (IPL) on Tuesday.

In the penultimate match of the Azadegan League, the Tabriz-based team defeated Mes Rafsanjan 3-0 and won

promotion to IPL.

The Green Machine, which was founded in 1969, is the third Tabriz-based football team in the IPL in the next season.

Tractor Sazi and Gostaresh Foolad also represent the city in the Iranian

league.

Last week, Paykan secured promotion to Iran Professional League and Fajr Sepasi Shiraz and Sanat Naft Abadan could win promotion to IPL next week.

(Source: Tasnim)



Benzema's return to boost Real Madrid



Karim Benzema is returning to full fitness at just the right time for Real Madrid, who will play Atletico Madrid in the Champions League final on May 28.

Coach Zinedine Zidane was relieved to see the Frenchman come back from a hamstring problem and score in Sunday's 3-2 triumph over Valencia, a result that kept Real just a point behind Barcelona with one game to go in the race for the league title.

"He's not been at 100 percent for a while. We've seen that it wasn't easy for him physically," Zidane told Real's website.

"(Against Valencia) he coped with it well and without any problems. We've got two games left. He's getting better every day and he's not feeling any discomfort from his last injury."

Benzema has missed 15 games this season through injury but has still scored 28 goals in 34 games in all competitions -- close to his record of 31 goals in the 2011-12 campaign, the year Real last won La Liga.

The 28-year-old striker has found the back of the net in 20 of his 34 appearances for Real in the 2015-16 campaign, scoring six more goals than last season. Cristiano Ronaldo is Real's leading scorer in the league with 33 goals.

Benzema is expected to start Saturday's league season finale at Deportivo La Coruña.

(Source: Reuters)

Ranieri, Aguero pick up monthly Premier League awards



Leicester City boss Claudio Ranieri has been named the Premier League manager of the month for April, while Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero has won the award for the players.

Ranieri guided his team to three victories and a draw during the month which helped the Foxes, who started as 5,000-1 outsiders to win the league, secure their first English league title in the club's 132-year-old history.

This was the third award this season for Ranieri, who was named Italian football's coach of the season on Monday for his extraordinary achievement in guiding Leicester to the most unlikely of Premier League triumphs.

Aguero scored in all of City's five games in April, including a stunning hat-trick in the win against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on April 16.

The Argentine has struggled with injuries this term but still managed 23 league goals, and is in contention with Harry Kane (25 goals) and Jamie Vardy (24) for the golden boot, despite playing 900 minutes less than the pair.

Aguero's goals have put his club in the driving seat in the race to finish in the top four, as City need a draw in Sunday's trip to Swansea City to confirm their qualification for next season's Champions League.

(Source: Reuters)

FOOTBALL

Arsenal set to tie up £35m signing of Granit Xhaka before Euro 2016

Arsenal are likely to secure the signing of Swiss midfielder Granit Xhaka from Borussia Mönchengladbach in a £35m deal before Euro 2016, according to sources in Germany.

With Arsenal already securing a place in the Premier League top four and only a point needed against relegated Aston Villa on Saturday to secure a spot in the Champions League group phase, Arsene Wenger is keen to start his summer spending early.

Xhaka, who has earned 102 Bundesliga appearance and 40 caps for Switzerland at the age of only 23, is also happy to join the London club before his country's first match of Euro 2016 against Albania on June 11. He would become the most expensive midfielder in Arsenal's history.

The local newspaper near Mönchengladbach - the Rheinische Post - writes that Arsenal have put in an official offer for Xhaka of over 43 million Euros (£33.9m) and that a deal is close to completion.

Elsewhere, the German sport magazine Sport Bild have said that Arsenal's first bid of around 27.5 million Euros (£21.7) plus the offer of a five-year contract for Xhaka was not enough to see the transfer completed.

A deal is likely to be thrashed out in the coming days according to our sources in Germany for a figure Arsenal have scouted extensively and a player the former Swiss national coach Ottmar Hitzfeld described as a "young Bastian Schweinsteiger" in 2012.

Wenger is seeking to add mettle to his midfield with Tomas Rosicky, Mikel Arteta and Mathieu Flamini all set to depart the Emirates as their respective contracts run out next month.

The money spent on Xhaka is only likely to be the start of Arsenal's spending with a central defender and a striker also being lined up by the club as they seek to find a level of consistency that ended up with Leicester ending their latest pursuit of a first Premier League since 2004.

(Source: Eurosport)



Luis Suarez: Liverpool's Steven Gerrard and Kenny Dalglish helped me grow

Barcelona striker Luis Suarez has cited former Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard and ex-manager Kenny Dalglish as having played key roles in his development.

Suarez, 29, scored 69 Premier League goals during three-and-a-half years at Liverpool, after signing for the club from Ajax in January 2011. He won both the PFA and FWA's top individual awards after almost leading the Reds to Premier League glory in the 2013-14 season.

The Uruguayan international left Anfield that summer for his current side Barcelona, but he remains grateful to his former teammate Gerrard.

Suarez won the Treble in his first season at Barcelona, and this term is on course to beat teammate Lionel Messi and Real Madrid rival Cristiano Ronaldo to the Pichichi awards as La Liga's top goal scorer.

He told ESPN's Quique Wolff: "Liverpool turned me to a player of a different level. [A] player like Gerrard, he was so motivating the way he played. I learned so much from him."

"You went in there and you were transformed. They never gave up. The fans it was so motivating. The stadium was always full. It made me grow as a player, I matured, my play improved technically."

Suarez was also asked about which coaches he credits for his development, replying: "Well, first, of course, [former Nacional coach] Martin Lasarte who gave me the chance to debut."

"There were people who said take that kid was never going to score a goal against anyone and he kept supporting me, supporting me, supporting me and gave me the chance to play so I am very grateful because that is very difficult it was Uruguay and I was only 18. His support at that time was incredible and very important."

"Then coaches like I had at Groningen they incentivised me have a winning attitude and show it. They told me all these things, you have to watch what you eat, watch your weight, train harder you have to show what you can do. "Those were all messages that players in Uruguay [league] didn't get but those things are the difference-makers. In Uruguay you do what you want and nothing happens. These are the things that turn you into a professional player over here. And they were tough lessons for me to learn."

"Then, for me, Kenny Dalglish, he changed me for what he did for me at Liverpool, for the way he was. He even compared me to him. He supported me in that moment of racism, he defended me because he believed in me. And I am grateful to him"

"And whether I like it or not, now Luis Enrique continues to change me because of his temperament because one is like him, they are messages that change you when you have good coaches."

"El Maestro,' [Uruguay coach Oscar] Tabarez, he is the only one like a person, human being, he is spectacular. He insisted that I had to be on the national team. When he didn't take me to the Copa America 2007 I was mad and he told me, no, you have to go through the process of playing for the World under-20 championships and then you go to the senior team."

"And then he brought me up slowly. He tells you things for your own good. He has changed me in many ways."

(Source: ESPN)

