

TEHRAN TIMES

Assad will remain in power, Iranian commander says

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Iranian oil production soars to pre-sanctions levels: IEA

Iran's crude production has returned to levels last seen before sanctions were imposed over its nuclear program as the nation ramps up

output to regain market share, according to the International Energy Agency. Output reached 3.56 million barrels a day in

April, the highest since November 2011, and exports soared to 2 million barrels a day, just shy of the level before the trade restrictions.

China was the biggest buyer of Iranian crude last month, taking more than 800,000 barrels a day, the IEA said. (Source: Bloomberg)

Esteghlal Khuzestan crowned Iran Professional League champion



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CHTHO asks Iranians abroad to report smuggled artifacts

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran's desk tourism chief Masoud Soltanifar asked Iranians abroad to report smuggled artifacts and antiquities to Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization (CHTHO).



U.S. returned a 2700-year-old Persian griffin during President Hassan Rouhani's visit to New York in October 2103

In an announcement, he asked Iranians who live in different countries to give information about stolen Iranian artifacts existed in other countries to the organization via its website www.ichto.ir.

A collection of ancient Persian seals, which had been smuggled to the U.S. in 2002 have been returned to Iran recently.

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

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

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

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

U.S. and Saudi Arabia have largely lost trust in each other: scholar

INTERVIEW
BY Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Head of the Iran center at London's School of Oriental and African Studies believes that the United States and Saudi Arabia largely "lost trust if each other".

"Whilst there is no interest in breaking the alliance quite yet, both sides have lost a significant amount of trust in each other," Arshin Adib-Moghaddam tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ **The White House had threatened to veto a bipartisan bill to let families victimized by the 9/11 terrorist attacks sue Saudi Arabia. What was the reason behind such a threat?**

A: Current events in the United States are more about the elec-

tions than shifts in the country's foreign policy. Having said that, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and United States is by far less solid than it used to be. There are many voices in Washington DC and beyond who question the viability of the alliance given the heavy-handed actions that Saudi Arabia pursues in Yemen and elsewhere.

■ **Some argue that the strategic importance of Saudi Arabia to the U.S. has diminished. Do you agree with such a view?**

A: Whilst there is no interest in breaking the alliance quite yet,



both sides have lost a significant amount of trust in each other. All in all, as indicated in my previous interviews, the Persian Gulf and the wider West Asian and North African area has lost some of its strategic significance to the West.

There are many voices in Washington DC and beyond who question the viability of the alliance given the heavy-handed actions that Saudi Arabia pursues in Yemen and elsewhere.

Friday the most visited day for Tehran flower and plant exhibition

By Prvin Telli

TEHRAN — Among events held in Tehran, the international flower and plant exhibition was the second most favored, standing after the book fair.

The 14th international flower and plant exhibition officially ended Friday which was the most visited day since its start last Monday, drawing thousands of visitors from across the capital to Goftegoo Park in west Tehran.

Organized by Tehran Park and Green Space Organization, an affiliate of Tehran Municipality, the event is held every year in the same place, aiming to cultivate an echo-friendly culture among Tehraners and encourage them to keep and grow green plants in their apart-



A crowd of visitors are seen together on Friday at 14th flower and plant exhibition held in Goftegoo Park in west Tehran

ments.

Among other goals the exhibition pur-

sued were to familiarize the citizens with other countries' flowers as well as promote domestic flower producers by introducing their products.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, some workshops were set up, each day, where adults and children were trained to grow and raise flowers and plants in small sized apartments; common in Iran's overpopulated capital.

The event, open to the public from 9:am to 9:pm every day, offered a perfect venue for visitors to watch and buy flowers, plants and gardening tools.

Sale and purchase had been scheduled for Saturday and Sunday only but, due to the large number of visitors, the exhibitors were allowed to start selling from Friday noon.

charging stations. Iran Khodro will manufacture the vehicles.

An LG Corp. staffer said, "We stayed in Iran despite international sanctions, which appears to have helped us win the trust that led to the agreement."

(Source: The Chosun Ilbo)

Top Hezbollah commander Badreddine martyred in Syria

Resistance movement probing nature of assassination
By staff & agencies

Hezbollah's top commander Mustafa Badreddine has been killed in an attack in Syria.

Lebanon's Hezbollah movement says it is investigating to find out whether a blast which claimed the life of a top military commander was caused by an airstrike, missile attack or artillery.

In a statement, the resistance movement said Friday that initial information indicates Mustafa Badreddine was killed in a big explosion at one of its bases near Damascus Airport.

Hezbollah is working to "define the nature of the explosion and its cause, and whether it was the result of an airstrike, or missile attack or artillery," the statement said.

Early reports had suggested that Badreddine was assassinated in an Israeli airstrike.

A Hezbollah member of parliament also said Israel is behind the assassination, indicating that the Lebanese movement would respond "at the appropriate time."

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Intl. Green Film Festival kicks off in Tehran

ART TEHRAN — The 5th International Green Film Festival opened at Tehran's Felestin Cinema on Friday with participants who are all concerned about the protection of the environment.

The president of Green Me Global Festival Nicolai Niemann from Germany, along with the head of Iran's Department of Environment, Masumeh Ebtekar, and Cinema Organization of Iran Director Hojjatollah Ayyubi attended the opening ceremony, Persian media reported on Friday.

The organizers of the festival honored Iranian filmmaker Khosro Masumi, whose films mainly focus on the environment protection, at the opening ceremony.

The ceremony was followed by live performances by the popular Iranian pop band, Pallet, which played songs on the environment in both Persian and English. Niemann as well as the co-founder of the Fredd Festival of Toulouse in France, Antonin Haddad, and New Guinean environmental activist Theresa Kamau-kas are the members of the festival jury, which also includes Ahmad Zabeti Jahromi and Alireza Shojanuri, both from Iran.

A selection of 26 full-length documentaries by filmmakers from around the world will be competing in the festival this year.

"Revolution" directed by Rob Stewart from Canada, "10 Billion - What's on Your Plate?" by Valentin Thurn from Germany, "H2OmX" by José Cohen and Lorenzo Hagerman from Mexico, and "Jumbo Wild" by Nick Waggoner from the U.S. are among the submissions.

A section dedicated to short documentaries will also screen eleven films including "Paper Box" by Zbigniew Czapla from Poland and "Food For Thought, Food for Life" by Susan Rockefeller from the U.S.

Actors Reza Kianian and Fatemeh Motamed-Arya are the ambassadors of the festival that aims to raise awareness about conservation of the environment and protecting limited water resources across the country.

The festival will be running in Tehran and several other Iranian cities until May 20.

LG to develop electric car for Iran

LG Group plans to work on an electric car specifically for the Iranian market.

LG and the Iranian government recently signed a preliminary agreement for the development, LG Corp. said.

The agreement only lays out the issues in broad strokes and is to be followed a proper

contract later.

According to the deal, LG will develop 20 EVs for Iran's No. 1 automaker Iran Khodro by 2018 and set up charging stations in Tehran.

LG Electronics, LG Chem and LG Innotek will develop key parts, including engines and batteries. LG CNS will handle the construction of

No hajj until Saudis guarantee safety of Iranians: MP

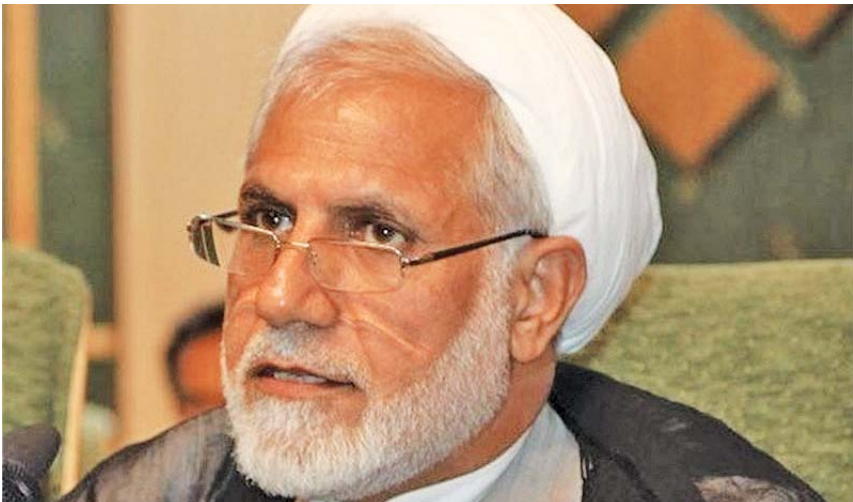
POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Head of desk the Majlis Foreign Policy Committee has said he will not back sending pilgrims to Mecca, conditioning any reconsideration upon Saudis' tighter safety measures for Iranians.

"Members of the Majlis committee have come to the conclusion that no hajj pilgrimage be made until Iranians can make their pilgrimage in safety," Tasnim quoted Hamid Ahmadi as saying on Friday.

Tension between Tehran and Riyadh has been escalating after 464 Iranians lost their lives in a stampede in the area of Mina in September 2015 during the last hajj.

The MP's comment came days after the Iranian Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, the body responsible for annual hajj pilgrimage, briefed the parliamentary body on the latest developments in talks with Saudis.

A delegation from Tehran held four



days of talks in Saudi Arabia last month aimed at thrashing out a deal for Iranians to go to Mecca this year.

"Visa issuance in a third country and transfer of Iranian pilgrims by non-Ira-

nian airlines, as demanded by Saudis, are not acceptable," Ahmadi underscored.

Reportedly, Saudis had raised in negotiations with Iranians some limitations,

which Ahmadi branded as "contrary to the dignity of Iranians".

This is while Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia announced that the Iranian delegation had refused to sign an agreement regarding the planned arrangements for this year's pilgrimage season.

Prior to the remarks, the Iranian Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization had announced a missing of this year's annual hajj, accusing Saudi Arabia of sabotaging arrangements.

The hajj standoff is fueled by Tehran and Riyadh being at loggerheads over other issues, notably the conflicts in Syria and Yemen in which they support opposing sides.

While Saudi Arabia and other Arab states have been backing the militant groups in Syria who have been fighting to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad since 2011, Iran has been supporting the Syrian government nonstop.

Assad will remain in power, Iranian commander says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A senior desk for Iranian military commander said on Thursday that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will stay in power and the Syrians' victory will bring disgrace to warmongering countries.

Major General Hassan Firouzabadi, head of Iran's armed forces, said that the U.S. is making efforts to "manage developments" in the Middle East region and seek to benefit from the war in Syria in the presidential election.

He also said that it has been five years since the Syrian people have been resisting against terrorism.

Strengthening ISIL and spreading blood shedding in Syria have not made the Syrians to give in, the senior military officer added.



Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011.

The UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimates that over 400,000 people have been killed in the conflict, which has also displaced over half of the Arab country's pre-war population of about 23 million, according to Press TV.

Kerry seeks to soothe European bank nerves over Iran trade

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry told Europe's top banks they have nothing to fear from resuming business with Iran, as long as they make proper checks on trade partners and pursue "legitimate business".

European banks, some of which have been punished for breaking sanctions imposed on Iran, are skeptical it is now safe for them to restore trade ties with the country and have largely held back since the lifting of some restrictions in January.

"We want to make it clear that legitimate business, which is clear under the definition of the agreement, is available to banks," Kerry said on Thursday during what is likely to be his last trip to London before November's U.S. election.

Nine executives from leading European banks took part in the meeting, along with British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, secretary of state for business Sajid Javid and Norman Lamont, trade envoy to Iran, a British official told Reuters.

Deutsche Bank (DBKGn.DE) Chief Executive John Cryan, HSBC's (HSBA.L) UK head Antonio Simoes and Credit Suisse (CSGN.S) Chief Financial Officer David Mathers were among the senior bankers who attended.

Representatives from Standard Chartered (STAN.L) and BNP Paribas (BNPP.PA), which have both been fined billions of dollars for breaking sanctions in the past, also attended along with executives from Santander (SAN.MC), Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS.L), Barclays (BARC.L) and Lloyds (LLOY.L).

The United States and Europe lifted sanctions in January under a deal with Iran to limit its nu-

clear program, but other U.S. sanctions remain, including a ban on Iran-linked transactions in dollars being processed through the U.S. financial system.

That has left Europe's banks nervous of resuming trade, despite encouraging words from the U.S. And there was little immediate sign Kerry had provided sufficient additional reassurance during the meeting on Thursday.

Standard Chartered said after the meeting that it "will not accept any new clients who reside in Iran, or which are an entity owned or controlled by a person there, nor will we undertake any new transactions involving Iran or any party in Iran".

French bank Societe Generale said given "remaining uncertainties" it had no plans to resume commercial activities with Iran, adding: "Differences between European and U.S. systems generate significant operating risks for financial establishments".

Other banking and finance sources said uncertainty about the outcome of U.S. presidential elections in November heightened their reservations. A Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll released on Wednesday showed Republican Donald Trump pulling even with likely Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

"What if Trump wins? Do you want

to get involved with contracts now that perhaps in six months would be unenforceable?" a banking source following Iran said.

"There is a distinct reluctance to do anything among the banks."

Another source familiar with European banks' thinking said there was still little clarity on what trade could be done.

"The assurances given by Kerry are still vague and that goes for the whole U.S. approach - there is 'no letter of comfort' for the banks," the source told Reuters.

Hammond said the strategic objective was to draw Iran back into the international community, and this meant overcoming "the reality of what the European banks are finding in practice".

"We're trying to bridge that gap ... to allow these European and global banks to support European businesses in resuming normal trade and investment patterns with Iran," Hammond said.

Banks' fears are exacerbated by the differing tone of rhetoric between federal U.S. officials and State laws, many of which still ban pension groups and funds from investing in overseas companies that do business in Iran, Tom Stocker, a Pinsent Masons lawyer with expertise in trade sanctions, said.

(source: Reuters)

New UNIC director presents letter of appointment to Zarif

New director of United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Tehran Maria Dotsenko presented her Letter of Appointment to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif at the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday, May 11.

During the meeting Zarif welcomed her to Iran and discussed cooperation between UNIC and the Foreign Ministry.

Dr. Dotsenko expressed her appreciation by the ministry's support to UNIC work in Iran and briefed the minister on UNIC's plans, including about publication of bilingual album of historic photos and documents highlighting special moments of UN-Iran partnership.

Iran was among the first countries to invite UN to open its information center, thus UNIC was established in 1950 and it was the first UN office in Tehran.



Maria is the first female director the UNIC Tehran. Before coming to Tehran Dotsenko served as the representative of UN Department of Public Information Office in Armenia. A native of Ukraine, Dotsenko holds MA in journalism from the Institute of Journalism of Kyiv State University named after Taras Shevchenko and PhD in mathematics.

(Source: UNIC)

MEDIA MONITOR



Zarif condoles with Hezbollah on death of commander

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday wrote a letter of condolence to Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah over the death of top Hezbollah commander Mustafa Badreddin in Syria, Press TV reported.

According to Daily Star, Hezbollah said on Friday that "the great jihadi leader" Badreddine had died in a "big explosion" that targeted one of its bases near Damascus airport. It said it was working to "define the nature of the explosion and its cause, and whether it was the result of an airstrike, or missile or artillery."



We will bury terrorists in Syria and Iraq: Rezaei

TEHRAN — The secretary of the Expediency Council has said the resistance movement will bury terrorists, including Takfiris and Daesh, in Syria and Iraq, Mizan reported on Friday.

Speaking before prayers in Qom, Mohsen Rezaei also pointed to U.S. confiscation of Iranian assets and said, "We will not allow Americans to have one dollar of Iranian assets."

Regarding the implementation of the nuclear deal, he said Iran has to appear demanding.



U.S. Navy strips officer of command over capture of 10 sailors by Iran

TEHRAN — A U.S. Navy officer has been stripped of his command over the capture by Iran of 10 American sailors who wandered into its territorial waters, Reuters reported.

In a statement on Thursday the U.S. Navy announced it had lost confidence in Commander Eric Rasch, who was the executive officer of the squadron that included the 10 sailors at the time of the January incident. He was responsible for the training and readiness of the more than 400 sailors in the unit.



U.S. does not abide by international rules: cleric

TEHRAN — An interim leader of Tehran Friday prayers has said the U.S. does not respect international rules, Fars reported.

Condemning the U.S. over the confiscation of \$2 billion Iranian assets, Mohammad Ali Movahedi Kermani advised the world to withdraw their money from American banks.



Iranian -Oambassadors to meet in Tehran

TEHRAN — Iranian ambassadors will travel to Tehran from around the world to attend a two-day meeting on Saturday and Sunday, Mehr reported on Thursday.

The event comes with the theme "JCPOA and Resistance Economy: Opportunities and Capacities".



Larijani congratulates Askari on new position

TEHRAN — In a letter on Friday Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani congratulated Abdolali Ali-Askari on being appointed as the new director of the national TV, officially called IRIB.

"You have a bright record and much experience in the national medium," he said in his letter, the IRIB reported.

Larijani also appreciated former IRIB chief Mohammad Sarfaraz for his services in the position.



'Riyadh in no position to set conditions for Iran'

TEHRAN —The chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said on Friday that Iran will not let Riyadh lay conditions for it regarding the hajj pilgrimage.

"Saudi Arabia is in no position to set conditions for us. This is us who have to set conditions for them, because experience has shown Saudi Arabia does not have the ability to keep our pilgrims safe," Alaeddin Boroujerdi said, according to Nasim.

A day earlier, Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi called on Iranians not to attend the hajj under the current conditions, saying doing so will go against their dignity.



'If JCPOA successes published opponents will shame'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Thursday that if the government publishes the list of achievements made under the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the opponents at home will feel ashamed.

Chairman of the Expediency Council also said Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime of Israel fiercely oppose the JCPOA.

The JCPOA has provided the ground to make progress in scientific projects and researches and called for more efforts in this respect, Rafsanjani noted.

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



deal went into effect in January 2016.

As of the signing of the nuclear deal, the Rouhani administration has come under attack from domestic opponents who believe the pact to have halted Iran's nuclear progress.

As well as, they say benefits from the deal have not been tangible so far, citing the U.S. perversity and loose commitment to the agreement.

Saudi government officials assisted the 9/11 terrorists, according to a rogue commissioner

A former member of the 9/11 Commission said the commission's report was negligent for not more straightforwardly linking Saudi Arabia to the World Trade Center attacks.

John Lehman is the only commissioner to declare the group's report lacking and publicly point the finger at Saudi Arabia. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens.

"There was an awful lot of participation by Saudi individuals in supporting the hijackers, and some of those people worked in the Saudi government," Lehman said, according to the Guardian. "Our report should never have been read as an exoneration of Saudi Arabia."

Much of the 9/11 Commission's investigation was based upon another report known as "The 28 pages," which contain the findings of a congressional investigation into intelligence weaknesses surrounding the attacks. However, then-President George W. Bush made the document classified in order to shield those involved.

Recently, there has been a swelling call to entirely declassify "The 28 pages," a move the 9/11 Commission's chairman, former New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean, and vice chairman, former Indiana Rep. Lee Hamilton, have not supported, according to a joint statement April 22.

"We would recommend that steps be taken to protect the identities of anyone [in 'The 28 pages'] who has been ruled



out by authorities as having any connection to the 9/11 plot," the statement read.

Lehman strongly disagreed with Kean and Hamilton. "Saudi government officials may 'not have been indicted, but they were certainly implicated," he said.

"There was an awful lot of circumstantial evidence."

And the Saudi government appears to agree with Lehman.

"Our position, since 2002 when the report first came out, was 'release the pages,'" Saudi Foreign Minister Adel

al-Jubeir said, according to Agence France-Presse.

"We know from other senior U.S. officials that the charges made in 'The 28 pages' do not stand up to scrutiny. And so, yes, release 'The 28 pages.'"

(Source: Yahoo News)

Terrorists, U.S. plot against resistance: Nasrallah

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, says the U.S. and its regional allies have nurtured Takfiri and barbaric terrorist groups in the region to break the spirit of the anti-Israeli resistance.

Today, the U.S., Israel, and the West have a problem, called the axis of resistance, which is embodied in Iran, Syria as well as the resistance movements in Lebanon and Palestine, Nasrallah said in a speech on Thursday.

He blamed the U.S. for the rise of the Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group, saying Washington is using the Takfiri group to pursue its own agenda.

Nasrallah also condemned the deadly Daesh bomb attacks that have claimed over 90 lives in the Iraqi capital Baghdad over the past 48 hours.

Describing Daesh terror activities as barbaric, the



ZBOLLAH LEADER DELIVERING SPEECH ON RESISTANCE VEMENT AND LEBANESE, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Hezbollah chief said the Takfiri group takes revenge against people and carries out bombings and acts of aggression whenever it incurs losses in Syria, Iraq or Lebanon.

"When Daesh faces defeat in Palmyra, it attacks Damascus. And when it loses in the eastern mountain range, it retaliates in Dahiyeh," Lebanon, added the Hezbollah chief.

Daesh takes pride in killing women and children, Nasrallah stressed.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Nasrallah said the West has problems with the movements and people who reject Israeli occupation of Palestine as well as foreign hegemony in the region.

They do not want a united Islamic Ummah, he added.

Nasrallah also slammed the crackdown on resistance media, saying such attempts to stifle the voice of resistance come while Daesh-linked media outlets enjoy freedom in their propaganda campaign.

(Source: Daily Star)

Putin mulls measures to 'end threats' from U.S. defense systems

Vladimir Putin on Friday warned that Russia would consider measures to "end threats" from U.S. anti-missile systems in Europe but said Moscow would not engage in a new arms race.

"Now that these anti-missile elements have been installed, we will be forced to consider putting an end to the threats emerging in relation to Russia's security," Putin told defense officials in televised remarks.

Putin spoke after a U.S. anti-missile defense system in Romania aimed at protecting NATO members from threats by "rogue" nations became operational

on Thursday.

The anti-missile defense system in Romania is part of a broader NATO missile shield to include an installation in Poland, work on which was set to begin on Friday.

Referring also to the placing of the Aegis missile defense system on warships in the Mediterranean, Putin said: "All of these are additional steps towards destabilizing the international security system and the start of a new arms race."

The Russian president said the United States violated the Intermedi-

ate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan in 1987, adding that the U.S. sites in Europe could be used to launch intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles.

Work on the sites is happening at a brisk pace and Russia is unable to control what is happening there, Putin said. "And this is an additional threat for us," he added.

Putin insisted that Russia would seek to maintain a strategic balance but at the same time would not allow itself to get sucked into a new arms race.

"We will not be involved in this race, we will go our own way, we will work very carefully," he said.

Located in Deveselu in southern Romania, the U.S. missile interceptor station will help defend NATO members against the threat of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, particularly from the Middle East, officials say.

But Russia sees the missile system as a security threat right on its doorstep, despite the U.S. and NATO insisting it is not aimed at undermining Moscow's defenses.

(Source: AFP)

Brazil's Temer calls for unity, confidence for Brazil recovery

Brazil's interim President Michel Temer called on his country to rally behind his government of "national salvation," hours after the Senate voted to suspend and put on trial his leftist predecessor, Dilma Rousseff, for breaking budget laws.

Temer, a 75-year-old centrist now moving to steer Latin America's biggest country toward more market-friendly policies, told Brazilians to have "confidence" they would overcome an ongoing crisis sparked by a deep economic recession, political volatility and a sprawling corruption scandal.

"It is urgent we calm the nation and unite Brazil," he said, after a signing ceremony for his incoming cabinet. "Political parties, leaders, organizations and the Brazilian people will cooperate to pull the country from this grave crisis."

Brazil's crisis brought a dramatic end to the 13-year rule of the Workers Party, which rode a wave of populist sentiment that swept South America starting around 2000 and enabled a generation of leftist leaders to leverage a boom in the region's commodity exports to pursue ambitious and transformative social policies.

But like other leftist leaders across the region, Rousseff discovered that the party, after four consecutive terms, overstayed its welcome, especially as commodities prices plummeted and her increasingly unpopular government failed to sustain economic growth.

In addition to the downturn, Rousseff, in office since 2011, was hobbled by the corruption scandal and a political opposition determined to oust her.

After Rousseff's suspension, Temer charged his new ministers with enacting business-friendly policies while



maintaining the still-popular social programs that were the hallmark of the Workers Party. In a sign of slimmer times, the cabinet has 23 ministers, a third fewer than Rousseff's.

A constitutional scholar who spent decades in Brazil's Congress, Temer faces the momentous challenge of hauling the world's No. 9 economy out of its worst recession since the Great Depression and cutting bloated public spending.

He quickly named respected former central bank governor Henrique Meirelles as his finance minister, with a mandate to overhaul the costly pension system.

Rousseff defiant

The Senate deliberated for 20 hours before voting 55-22 early on Thursday to put Rousseff on trial over charges that she disguised the size of the budget deficit to make the economy look healthier in the runup to her 2014 re-election.

Rousseff, 68, was automatically suspended for the

duration of the trial, which could be up to six months. Before departing the presidential palace in Brasilia, a defiant Rousseff vowed to fight the charges.

In her speech, she reiterated what she has maintained since impeachment proceedings were launched against her last December by the lower house of Congress. She denied any wrongdoing and called the impeachment "fraudulent" and "a coup."

"I may have made mistakes but I did not commit any crime," she said.

Rousseff's mentor, former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who now faces corruption charges, stood behind her and looked on dejectedly. Even as outgoing ministers wept, Rousseff remained stolid.

"I never imagined that it would be necessary to fight once again against a coup in this country," Rousseff said, in a reference to her youth fighting Brazil's military dictatorship.

"This is a tragic hour for our country," said Rousseff, an economist and former Marxist guerrilla, calling her suspension an effort by conservatives to roll back the social and economic gains made by Brazil's working class.

The Workers Party rose from Brazil's labor movement in the 1970s and helped topple generals who had held power for two decades ending in 1985.

In the heady days of Lula's presidency, starting in 2003, it helped lift millions of people out of poverty before running into recession and scandal, with many of its leaders now tainted by corruption investigations and criminal convictions.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS

Belgium to begin airstrikes against ISIL in Syria: PM spokesman

Belgium will extend its F-16 air strikes against ISIL terrorist group in Iraq into Syria, the government said Friday, as it grapples with the aftermath of deadly ISIL-claimed bomb attacks in Brussels in March.

"In accordance with UN Resolution 2249, the engagement will be limited to those areas of Syria under the control of ISIL and other terrorist groups," a spokesman for Prime Minister Charles Michel told AFP after a cabinet meeting.

"The objective will be to destroy these groups' refuges," the spokesman said, adding that the strikes would begin on July 1.

Belgium launched its first attacks against ISIL in Iraq in late 2014 as part of the U.S.-led coalition, but decided against strikes in Syria amid public fears over getting dragged into a wider conflict.

However, the November 13 Paris attacks which left 130 people dead brought home the ISIL threat to the heart of Europe and changed sentiment sharply.

In early March, Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders said the government was reconsidering its position, as it did not make sense to attack ISIL in Iraq but not in Syria.

Along with the Netherlands and Denmark, Britain has also changed tack and launched its first sorties against ISIL targets in Syria in December.

Michel's spokesman did not spell out the reason for the change in policy but it comes as Belgium is still reeling from the ISIL suicide bomber attacks at Brussels airport and on the metro on March 22 which killed 32 people.

The Paris and Brussels attacks have both been linked to the same extremist cell with links to ISIL in Syria.

(Source: AP)

Rebels may have used chemical weapons in Syria Aleppo

A Syrian rebel group that is laying siege to a Kurdish district in Aleppo may have used chemical weapons, as well as so-called "hell cannon" rockets made from gas canisters, according to a rights group.

Amnesty International said groups fighting under an alliance known as Jaish al-Fatah have been carrying out indiscriminate attacks on the predominantly Kurdish Sheikh Maq-soud district of the city.

The rebels may have used chemical weapons to target civilian homes, markets and mosques, killing and injuring civilians, Amnesty said on Friday.

Among the weapons used by the groups were unguided projectiles, which cannot be accurately aimed, such as mortars, home-made 'Hamim' rockets, and the gas cannister rockets, the report said.

"Hell cannon" projectiles are usually made with cooking gas canisters, which are packed with explosives and fitted with a fin before being fired from home-made canons.

"Two of the armed groups conducting attacks on Sheikh Maqsoud - Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam - have sent representatives to the UN-brokered negotiations on Syria in Geneva, while the others have approved delegates to represent them at the talks," Amnesty said.

"There are around 30,000 civilians living in Sheikh Maqsoud, a district controlled by the Kurdish People's Protection Unit (YPG) forces, and the area has come under sustained attack from opposition armed groups who control areas to the north, east and west of the district," the report said.

Taj Kordsh, a spokesman for the Syrian Democratic Forces, an alliance which includes the YPG, Jaish al-Thuwar and other Kurdish groups, told Al Jazeera there have been several such attacks in recent months.

"These attacks targeted civilians in Sheikh Maqsoud. We have proof that these rebel groups obtained these weapons and used them to target residential areas," Kordsh said.

Amnesty said it obtained the names of at least 83 civilians, including 30 children, who were killed by attacks in Sheikh Maqsoud between February and April.

One man, Mohamad, lost seven members of his family when his home was struck by an improvised "Hamim" rocket launched by an armed group on 5 April, the group said.

"There are no [military] checkpoints near my house. It is a residential street and there are even people displaced by fighting or who fled airstrikes in Aleppo city living on the same street," he told Amnesty.

Saad, a pharmacist, told Amnesty that April 5 was "the bloodiest day the neighbourhood had witnessed". He said that shelling from armed groups went on for nine hours.

Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director Magdalena Mughrabi said that Sheikh Maqsoud was on the brink of a humanitarian crisis.

"It is critical that the Syrian government and armed groups urgently allow unfettered access for humanitarian aid and allow civilians who wish to leave the area to do so," Mughrabi said.

Aleppo ceasefire

On Monday, government forces and rebels in Aleppo agreed to extend their truce for a second time, according to the Syrian army.

The cessation of hostilities was initially to last for two days but was later extended until Tuesday at 00:01 am (21:01 GMT Monday).

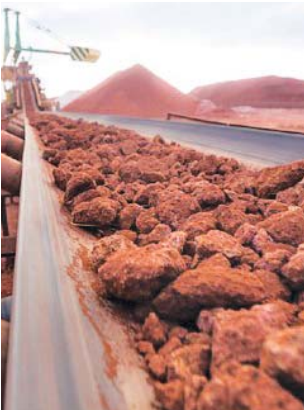
Announcing a further extension, the army command said: "The 'regime of silence' in Aleppo and its province has been extended by 48 hours from Tuesday 01:00 am [local time] to midnight on Wednesday."

A tenuous ceasefire has been in place since February, brokered by Russia and the United States, but Damascus has continued to bomb rebel-controlled parts of Aleppo. Nearly 300 people have been killed in a recent surge of violence.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Iran to seek bids for Guinea bauxite pipeline in aluminum push

Iran expects to issue a tender by the end of 2016 to build a pipeline in Guinea for transporting bauxite mined in the West African nation to a port for shipment to the Persian Gulf country to provide raw material for a planned \$10 billion aluminum production push.



The tender would be issued after an economic feasibility study is received by German consultants DMT GmbH in the next two to three months, Mohammad Aghajanlou, director of the mineral industries department of state-owned Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization, said in an interview in Tehran on Thursday. Iran plans to boost aluminum production to 1.5 million metric tons a year by 2025.

Iran has a joint partnership with Guinea's government to develop a bauxite mine in Dabola, about 370 kilometers (230 miles) from the coast, under a 99-year agreement that is renewable every 25 years. The project was inactive for the first 25 years due to high transportation costs and inadequate infrastructure, Aghajanlou said.

"The government of President Hassan Rouhani has decided to revive aluminum projects including the one in Guinea," he said. "Import of bauxite into Iran via large ship is much more economical compared to what it was 20 years ago."

A pipeline for the bauxite is considered a better option than building a railway from the mine to waterfront, Aghajanlou said. "The idea of a railway has now been replaced by a pipeline as transport through railway is very costly and uneconomical," he said. The bauxite stone would be crushed, mixed with water and then pumped through the pipeline to a port for export, he said.

Iran's aluminum production of 350,000 tons a year is below capacity of 470,000 tons because of a shortage of bauxite and insufficient electricity generation, Mehdi Karbasian, managing director of IMMIDRO, said on Wednesday. To reach the 2025 goal of 1.5 million tons, Iran needs 1.6 million tons of additional alumina, the material made from bauxite that is then processed into aluminum, and an integrated power network connected to the aluminum industry, Aghajanlou said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Iran ends free shipping of oil to India: Pradhan

Iran has ended free shipping of crude oil to India and has asked refiners like Mangalore Refineries (MRPL) and Essar Oil to arrange for freight, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said today.

Iran had in November 2013 offered free delivery of crude oil to Indian refiners as tough Western sanctions hit its exports. With shipping lines refusing to transport Iranian crude for fear of being sanctioned, Iran used its shipping line for the delivery and did not charge for transportation.

"From April 2016, NIOC has informed oil-importing companies like MRPL and Essar Oil that the future delivery would be based on Free on Board (FOB) basis and the freight has to be arranged by the buyer," Pradhan said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha here.

FOB is a trade term requiring the seller to deliver goods on board a vessel arranged by the buyer.

During the last two-and-a-half years, Iran sold Indian refiners crude oil on cost, insurance and freight (CIF) basis. CIF is a trade term requiring the seller to arrange for the carriage of goods by sea to a port of destination. Pradhan said the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), however, has agreed to provide vessels and insurance till such time Indian companies are able to arrange the same.

Iran came out of western sanctions in January and has since then made several changes in the way it trades its vast oil. Besides ending free shipping, it has terminated a three-year-old system of getting paid for half of the oil dues in rupees. "NIOC has asked for all the payments in euros," he added.

Iran wants all bills raised from April to be settled in euros and the nearly \$6.5 billion that refiners like Essar Oil and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MPRL) owe it in past dues, to also be cleared in euros. Since February 2013, Indian refiners like Essar Oil and MRPL paid 45 per cent of their import bill in rupees to the UCO Bank account of the Iranian oil company. The remaining has been accumulating, pending finalization of a payment mechanism.

With the lifting of sanctions, the payment channels will reopen and Iran is seeking the pending dues in euros.

MRPL owes close to \$3 billion to Iran while Essar Oil has an outstanding of about \$2.5 billion. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) owes over \$580 million to Iran while smaller payments are due from HPCL-Mittal Energy (HMEI) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation.

Iran has accumulated about Rs 12,000 crore (about \$1.797 billion) in the UCO bank account which it could use to make payments for imports of steel and other commodities from India.

"In the international market, contracts for supply of crude oil are negotiated on FOB or CIF basis. Hence, the cost of import of crude oil from Iran during 2016-17 will depend on the negotiated terms and conditions between NIOC and Indian oil companies," Pradhan added.

(Source: The Times of India)

Tunisian energy min. to negotiate oil, power co-op in Tehran

TEHRAN — Tunisian Minister of Energy and Mines Mongi Marzouk will confer construction of a power plant and an oil refinery in his country as well as completion of Tunisia's electricity network with three Iranian ministers.

As Tasnim news agency reported on Friday, Marzouk would have meetings with Iranian Minister of Oil Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, Minister of Industry Mohamadreza Nematzadeh, and his counterpart Hamid Chitchian.

Almost a month ago, the official in charge of foreign relations of Iran-Tunisia Joint Chamber of Commerce Afes Nour ad-Din said that Letters of Credits (LCs) would be opened between the two countries



MRPL ready to clear oil dues to Iran

Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals (MRPL) on Thursday said it is ready to clear its dues for oil import from Iran as soon as the banking channels are available.

"Now that the sanctions on Iran have been fully lifted, we hope there will be clarity on payment channel, and it would be sorted out very shortly, and as soon as banking channels are available, we will be making the payment," MRPL Manag-

ing Director H Kumar told reporters here.

Kumar was responding to a query on the issue of clearing \$6.5 billion of oil dues to Iran by Indian refiners including MRPL.

Earlier, the payment was getting deferred due to unavailability of banking channels because of western sanctions on Iran, Kumar said.

"During the sanction period, the ar-

rangement was the refiners were paying 45 percent of the cost in Indian rupees and now the pending 55 percent of the cost is to be paid in Euros. Because there were no banking channels available earlier, the payment was getting deferred," he said.

And depending upon RBI clearances, the refiners were making payments to Iran for exporting crude oil to India, he

added.

Refiners like Essar Oil and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd owe nearly \$6.5 billion in dues to Iran.

On Iran's decision to end free shipping of crude oil to India, Kumar said the modalities are being worked out for the refiners like MRPL and Essar Oil to arrange for the freight.

(Source: The Times of India)

Oil prices fall on stronger dollar; Russia warns of longer crude glut

Oil prices dipped in early trading on Friday as a stronger dollar weighed and Russia warned that a global crude supply overhang could last into next year.

The dollar has recovered 2.46 percent in value from May lows against a basket of other leading currencies, reversing an almost 8-percent fall earlier in the year.

A stronger dollar, in which oil is traded, makes fuel imports more expensive for countries using other currencies, potentially hitting demand.

International Brent crude futures LCOc1 were trading at \$47.71 (£33) per barrel at 0025 GMT, down 37 cents from their last settlement.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures CLc1 were down 41 cents at \$46.29 a barrel.

But analysts said that declining output, especially in North America was preventing deeper price falls. "A stronger U.S.-dollar came up against more positive fundamentals ... due a fall in U.S. oil production," ANZ bank said on Friday.



U.S. crude oil production C-OUT-T-EIA has fallen 4.7 percent from 2016 peaks in January to 8.8 million barrels per day (bpd), according to U.S. Energy Information data, and output is down 8.4 percent from its 2015 peak. In Canada, crude production outages from oil sand fields following forced closures due to wildfires still stood

around 1 million bpd as of Wednesday, although operators said they were gradually ramping up output.

Yet top crude oil producer Russia poured cold water on the notion that recent falls in production in the Americas, Asia and Africa had wiped out a global production and storage overhang that helped pull down oil prices by over 70 percent between 2014 and early 2016.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak told reporters on Thursday that the global oil surplus stood at 1.5 million bpd and that the market might not balance out until the first half of 2017.

"(The outlook that the market won't balance until the first half of 2017) is an optimistic forecast as oversupply persists and the decline in production volumes is slower than analysts expected," he said.

Novak said he expected Russia to produce 540 million tons (10.81 million bpd) or more of oil this year, up from 534 million tons in 2015.

(Source: Reuters)

Bank of England says Brexit slowdown could lead to recession

The Bank of England said Britain's economy would slow sharply, and could even fall into recession, if the country voted to leave the European Union and said there were limits to what the bank could do about it.

In its starkest warning so far about the impact of an "Out" vote in the June 23 referendum, the central bank said sterling could fall sharply and unemployment would probably rise.

"In that scenario we would expect a material slowing in growth, a notable rise in inflation, a challenging trade-off," BoE Governor Mark Carney told a news conference.

"Of course there's a range of possible scenarios around those directions, which could possibly include a technical recession," he said in response to questions from reporters.

Jitters about the referendum are already weighing on the economy and the central bank trimmed its growth forecast for this year to 2.0 percent from February's estimate of 2.2 percent, even if Britain votes to stay in the EU.

Carney said there were limits to what the BoE could do in response to an "Out"

vote. "Monetary policy cannot immediately offset all the effects of a shock," he said.

Prime Minister David Cameron, who along with finance minister George Osborne, has tried to focus voters on what Brexit would mean for their incomes, said the central bank "couldn't be more clear" that leaving the EU was a risk.

Opinion polls suggest British voters have been relatively resistant so far to warnings about the economic costs of Brexit, with voting intentions in many polls roughly evenly split.

But Carney's comments ahead of Scotland's 2014 referendum on the costs of independence were viewed as swaying some voters.

He is due to make a high-profile speech at London's Mansion House a week before the vote, alongside Osborne, giving them another platform to speak about the dangers of Brexit.

Supporters of Brexit argue Britain would benefit from less EU regulation and could strike better overseas trade deals on its own. Some have accused Carney of over-stepping the central bank's line of political neutrality.

(Source: Reuters)

SWIFT says second bank hit by malware attack

SWIFT, the global financial messaging network that banks use to move billions of dollars every day, warned on Thursday of a second malware attack similar to the one that led to February's \$81 million cyber heist at the Bangladesh central bank.

The second case targeted a commercial bank, SWIFT spokeswoman Natasha de Teran said, without naming it. It was not immediately clear how much money, if any, was stolen in the second attack.

While SWIFT had previously warned that the Bangladesh heist was not an isolated incident, and said its core messaging system remained intact, confirmation of a second attack on a bank will likely increase scrutiny on the security of a network that is a linchpin of the global financial system.

SWIFT said in a statement that the attackers exhibited a "deep and sophisticated knowledge of specific operational controls" at targeted banks and may have been aided by "malicious insiders or cyber-attacks, or a combination of both."

The organization, a Belgian co-

operative owned by member banks and used by 11,000 financial institutions globally, said that forensic experts believe the second case showed that the Bangladesh heist "was not a single occurrence, but part of a wider and highly adaptive campaign targeting banks."

News of a second case comes as authorities in Bangladesh and elsewhere investigate the February cyber theft from the Bangladesh central bank account at the New York Federal Reserve Bank. SWIFT has acknowledged that that scheme involved altering SWIFT software to hide evidence of fraudulent transfers, but that the messaging system it controls was not compromised.

In both cases SWIFT said insiders or cyber attackers had succeeded in penetrating the targeted banks' systems, obtaining user credentials and submitting fraudulent SWIFT messages that correspond with transfers of money.

In the second case SWIFT said attackers had also used a kind of malware called a "Trojan PDF reader" to manipulate PDF reports confirming the messages in order to hide their tracks.

(Source: Reuters)

Apple falls below \$90 as iPhone worries fester

Shares of Apple dropped below \$90 on Thursday for the first time since 2014 as Wall Street worried about slow demand ahead of the anticipated launch of a new iPhone later this year.

A mainstay of many Wall Street portfolios, Apple fell to as low as \$89.47 before recovering slightly to end at \$90.34, a 2.35 percent loss.

Component suppliers in Taiwan will receive fewer orders from Apple in the second half of 2016 than in the same period last year, the Nikkei Asia Review reported on Thursday, citing sources. Apple typically launches its high-end phones in September.

Restoring image, growth at Mitsubishi is biggest challenge: Nissan CEO

Nissan Motor Co CEO Carlos Ghosn said on Friday that restoring Mitsubishi Motors Corp's reputation, profitability and growth would be the biggest challenge, a day after announcing a \$2.2 billion investment for a controlling stake in the troubled automaker.

"The biggest challenge is to support Mitsubishi changing itself and growing and being profitable and restoring its reputation," Ghosn told a news conference at Nissan's headquarters in Yokohama, south of Tokyo.

He added that winning back consumers' trust was Mitsubishi Motors's job, but that Nissan would support its efforts.

General Motors denies it cheated emission tests

Based on published media reports in Germany, General Motors' European Opel vehicles are equipped with illegal "defeat devices" used to fool official emissions test machines.

The German magazine Spiegel claims TÜV Nord, a German testing and certification company, found the defeat devices in Opel vehicles sold outside the U.S.

According to Spiegel, it's very similar to the Volkswagen scandal as Opel vehicles emit more nitrogen oxides than allowed by law. Spiegel specifically says the exhaust gas treatment in Opel cars cause emissions to be severely limited or completely turned off.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran, Turkey determined to boost tourism cooperation

TOURISM TEHRAN — The director of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization of Iran, Masoud Soltanifar, and the Turkish minister of culture and tourism, Mahir Unal, held a meeting in Tehran on Thursday, voicing determination to expand ties in the field of tourism.

"The two counties are determined to boost tourism cooperation, to benefit from mutual capacities, and to share experiences," Soltanifar said.

During the meeting, which was held at Tehran's Laleh Hotel, the two sides stressed the need for private sector to invest in the field of tourism in the two countries.

"Iran and Turkey aim to make a balance between Iranian and Turkish tourists. For the time being, the number of Iranians who travel to Turkey exceeds that of Turkish tourists who visit Iran," Soltanifar said.

Soltanifar pointed to organizing some combination tours for Chinese, Indonesian and Indian tourists to visit historical and cultural attractions of Iran and Turkey in the near future.

Iran's safety is one of the most important advantages of the county in the region, which paves the way for providing tourism infrastructures, Soltanifar said.

Unal, for his part, said Iran and Turkey has great potentials in the field of tourism, which may lead to more success in the future through mutual co-



Turkey's tourism minister Mahir Unal (L) and Iran's tourism chief Masoud Soltanifar held a joint press conference following their meeting in Tehran on May 12, 2016. (Anadolu Agency/ Fatemeh Bahrami)

operation.

"Charter flights, in addition to scheduled flights, are one of the main factors that have a direct impact on seasonal tourist numbers. In this regard, it is one

of our priorities to increase both the number of chartered flights as well as their destinations," the Turkish official added.

"Several Turkish investors are ac-

companying me to Tehran to explore opportunities for building hotels and other infrastructures in the country," he said.

Unal and Soltanifar later attended a joint technical committee meeting, after which they signed a memorandum of understanding towards promoting cooperation in the field of tourism.

The document contains agreements on informing Turkish investors of opportunities in Iran, sharing experience in the areas of tourism planning, promoting, training, and classifying. It also aims to encourage mutual visits by nationals of both countries.

■ Iran-Turkey technical tourism committee

Meanwhile, a number of Iranian and Turkish tourism activists participated in a technical tourism committee meeting on Thursday.

The CHTHO deputy director for tourism affairs, Morteza Rahmani-Movahhed, was amongst the participants.

During the meeting Iran pledged to provide some investment packages for Turkish tourism industry in the near future.

The Turkish part also committed to encourage travel agencies to plan some tours to Iran.

Turkey will also hold some educational workshops for Iranian tour guides in the field of tour planning and marketing in the near future.

A CLOSER LOOK

Ways you're wasting time while traveling

When you're traveling it never seems like there are enough hours in a day, let alone enough vacation days in a year. No matter where you go there's always more than enough to see, and even if you prefer to relax, you can never spend too many hours sitting by the pool.

■ Waiting in security lines

Most of the time, arriving at least two hours before your flight is necessary to make sure you can get through security in time. It's impossible to know how long it will take, but there are a few things you can do to get to your gate faster.

If you're flying out of the U.S., signing up for TSA Pre-check allows you to keep your shoes on at security and buys a bit more time for you to enjoy your destination. Similarly, if you're arriving on an international flight, waiting in the long lines at Immigration and Customs can be time-consuming, especially when many planes are arriving at the same time. But with Global Entry, you can be pre-approved, skip the lines, and get on with your vacation.

■ Flying with connections

Naturally if you book a ticket on a connecting flight, it's probably going to be cheaper but take a lot longer. But even if you can budget enough time to accommodate this extra-long itinerary, you're running a huge risk. The more connections you have and the more stops your plane has to make, the more likely it is you'll run into delays. When booking, remember there is a big difference between "direct" and "non-stop." The difference is that a direct flight can sometimes mean stopping even if you don't have to get off the plane, while a non-stop flight will not land until you arrive at your final destination.

■ Flying to an airport far away from the city

In big hub cities that handle a lot of air traffic, there are often multiple international airports that serve the area. However, not all these airports are equally far away from the main city. For example, JFK in New York is twenty miles from central Manhattan, while LaGuardia is only ten. It's best to do your research and book an airport closer to the city so you can spend less time getting there and back, especially if it's a city notorious for traffic jams.

(Source: Trip Advisor)

Tehran hosting Islamic world's most prestigious Quranic event



Top Quranic reciters and memorizers from 75 world countries attended 33rd International Competitions of the Holy Quran in Tehran.

Announcing the above in an interview, Head of Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization Hojatoleslam Ali Mohammadi pointed to the 33rd International Competitions of Holy Quran held in Tehran with the participation of 130 top reciters and memorizers from more than 75 world countries and said: "Currently, Islamic Republic of Iran is forefront and flag bearer to fight against global arrogance in world and this is a great pride for the Islamic Iran."

Speaking in the inaugural ceremony of 33rd Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran, held on Wednesday May 11 in Congregational Prayers site (Mosalla of Imam Khomeini (RA), he expressed his special thanks to the distinguished reciters and memorizers, jury members, the esteemed blind memorizers of the Holy Book who took part in this prestigious Quranic event and said: "Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, it is hoped that this edition of competition will be brought about great blessings for the Islamic states."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior official of the organization referred to the organizing these competitions took place under the auspices of the Holy Quran and glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution and said: "Quranic competitions will bring about prosperity and good omen in Iran and Islamic world in particular."

"According to the sublime recommendations of supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, organizing Quranic competitions will pave suitable way in the county in the field of learning recitation of the Holy Book among all walks of life," he maintained.

Leader's representative in the Organization pointed out that this edition of Quranic competitions is held in Tehran with the motto of "One Book, One Ummah" and reiterated: "A number of 130 participants will compete with one another in this round, comprised of 57 memorizers, 57 reciters and 16 the blind memorizers of the

malicious behaviors of the global arrogance.

As inspired on the holy verses of the Holy Book, Muslims in Islamic world should not be deceived by enemies, because, enemies are sowing seeds of discord and disunity among Muslims and they should be aware of their plots in this respect, he reiterated.

At the present condition, United States of America is the main enemy of Muslims in Islamic world and in this way, it makes utmost efforts in order to materialize its malicious objectives in the Islamic world, he said, adding: "Under such circumstances, leaders of Muslim states should unite and joint their hands together in order to thwart enemies' plot."

In the end of his remarks, Head of Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization Hojatoleslam Ali Mohammadi commemorated name and memory of the reciters and memorizers of the Holy Quran who lost their lives in Mina mishap took place last year in annual gathering of Hajj rites and rituals and asked the Almighty God to bestow forbearance and patience to their bereaved families.

Majlis Speaker:

Being away from Quran, main cause of human disasters

Stay away from the Holy Quran is the main cause of human disasters.

Parliament Speaker Dr. Ali Larijani said the above statement in the inaugural ceremony of 33rd Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran in Tehran and expressed his special thanks to the Leader's representative and head of Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization Hojatoleslam Ali Mohammadi and functionaries for organizing this prestigious event.

Turning to a narration attributed to Imam Ali (AS) on the proximity and affinity with the Holy Book and said: "Once everyone resorts to the Holy Book, he or she will be needless of anything in world in a way that in our religious tradition, affinity and be true follower of the Book both in understanding and action are considered as criteria of needless in personal life."

Blessing in family circle in terms of material and spiritual growth strictly hinges of the recitation of the Holy Book, he maintained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, chief legislator pointed out that Islamic Revolution in Iran materialized the said objective and formed a jurisprudent-based society cording to the Quranic pattern.

He pointed to the effort of some quasi-Islamic governments in supporting terrorist and Takfiri groups and reiterated: "Today, these governments offer tyranny to the oppressed people both in Yemen and Syria and sow seeds of discord among Islamic nations, the issue of which will serve interests of oppressors and Zionist regime."

In the end, Majlis speaker pointed to recent U.S. Supreme Court's Anti-Iran ruling of confis-

cation of Iranian frozen assets and called it as a "highway robbery" and said: "Islamic nations should be vigilant on conspiracies waged by U.S. and other countries in Islamic world and should join their hands together in order to thwart their plots."

Foreign ministry's spokesman:

Organizing Intl. Holy Quran Competitions to help uproot divisive crises in Islamic World

Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari said that organizing Holy Quran competitions in Islamic countries will pave suitable way for most Islamic states to pay due attention to religious and cultural commonalities.

In contemporary world of today, Islamic states are in dire need of unity and amity more than ever, the issue of which should be taken into consideration, he maintained.

He urged Islamic countries to avoid conflicts and divisive factors, because, spread of any conflict among Islamic Ummah will serve interest of enemies.

In the end, he said: "At the current situation, organizing international Holy Quran competitions in Islamic states will strengthen and improve unity among Islamic community and will help these states get rid of current critical situation."

Iran's Int'l Quran competition: panel of judges

Seven Quran experts from Iran and 10 from other countries will form the panel of judges of the Islamic Republic of Iran's 33rd international Holy Quran competition.

According to Hojatoleslam Seyed Mostafa Hosseini, secretary of the competition, Master Abdol Rasoul Abayi will chair the panel.

He said Mohammad Hossein Saeedian, Hashem Roghani, Hamid Reza Derayati, Shahriar Parhizkar, Mohammad Reza Shahidipour, and Mohammad Reza Sotudenia are other Iranian members of the panel.

He added that Mohammad Mehdi Bahrololum, Behruz Yarigol and Mutaz Aghayi will act as guide to the participants in the recitation and memorization categories.

As for the foreign members of the panel of judges, he said that they will be from Jordan, Algeria, Iraq, Pakistan, Indonesia, Syria, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Yemen.

The competition, whose motto is "One Book, One Ummah", will kick off in Tehran on Wednesday, May 11, and run until Tuesday, May 17.

75 countries from the five continents of the world will send 130 Quran memorizers and reciters to the contest.

The international Quranic event convenes Quran reciters and memorizers from around the Muslim world every year.

Endowments and Charity Affairs Org.'s Spokesman:

46 media outlets in Islamic countries to cover 33rd Intl. competitions of holy Quran

Head of Information Dissemination and Publicity Committee of 33rd Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran Rabiei said that a number of 46 media outlets in Islamic states will fully cover the prestigious Quranic event in this edition of competition.

Turning to broadcasting more than 1,000 minutes of TV and radio productions in this round of competitions, he said: "Different audiovisual productions are at the production stage, the most important of which can be



referred to teaser of 33rd Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran in two versions of "conceptual teaser" and "graphic information dissemination teaser".

He, who is the Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization's spokesman, also pointed to the production of "documentary" in this edition of competitions and said: "It is for about 20 days that documentation of the competition has been commended and current activity will continue by the end of this month (to end May 20)."

Given the above issue, special programs of 33rd Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran will be aired from TV Channel 1.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the director general of Public Relations Department of the Organization said: "Effective steps have thus far been taken in cooperation with "Quran" Radio in the field of media relationship, based on which, different sessions have been held in the presence of IRIB chief and his deputies in the field of covering all sideline programs of the competitions in the best form possible."

The issue of artistic directing of the competition is one of new innovations followed up strictly in this round of competitions, he said, adding: "For this purpose, we have invited Mr. Hossein Fardro, a distinguished and outstanding director, to help us in better directing of the competitions."

In the end, he expressed his special thanks to those officials who cooperated with the Organization in line with materializing its objectives in this edition of competition.

Rodrigo Duterte: A new era in the Philippines

No one knows for sure whether the election results will lead the country to a better future or worse.

By Richard Javad Heydarian

The "old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born," Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci once said. Three decades after the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship, which left deep and lasting wounds on an impoverished nation, the Filipino people are once again clamoring for "change".

Amid a zeitgeist of "grievance politics", a significant number of Filipinos have voted for "outside the box" candidates who have openly questioned the utility and wisdom of existing democratic institutions in the country.

Fed up with empty promises, and suffering from one of the highest rates of poverty and unemployment in Asia, the Philippine electorate has voted into power a curious mixture of

political outsiders.

Exit polls suggest the country has elected its first self-described "socialist" as a president. Rodrigo Duterte, the tough-talking and iconoclastic mayor of the provincial city of Davao, has claimed a landslide victory by capturing more than five million votes over his nearest rival in the Philippines' single-round presidential elections.



It was a polite, democratic slap in the face of the oligarchic establishment, which has ravaged a highly promising nation for decades.

After having raised expectations to stratospheric levels, however, the incoming Duterte administration faces an uphill battle in satisfying an impatient, exhausted, and polarized citizenry.

→9

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Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Niavaran

1000 built up, 6 bdrs, semi furn, green garden, outdoor pool, Pkg, completely renovated, **Suitable for Embassies & Residence**
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Dilma Rousseff is on trial – and so is Brazil's faltering democracy

By Carolina Matos

The suspension of the president is the latest blow for a country that is still struggling to shake off its history of authoritarianism and social inequality.

The impeachment of Dilma Rousseff is a sad day for democracy and can be seen as a tragedy for Brazil's struggling path towards further democratization. But it also signals a new beginning, a possibility for the renewal of hope. Brazil, like other Latin American countries such as Argentina and Chile, still has a long way to go before it can become an advanced stable democracy, where pluralism and diversity in the media and in the political public sphere is encouraged and celebrated, and not undermined. A place where the intellectual zeitgeist is one of equal opportunities, social inclusion and fair play.

Rousseff has been a victim of her own mistakes in the economy, currently engulfed in a deep recession, and her inability to deal politically with allies and with a hostile, aggressive and conservative opposition. But she has also fallen foul of a process that is being seen as extremely controversial and hypocritical – for many a form of “soft coup” – led by politicians who themselves have been accused of corruption.

Leftwing parties

The exaggerated claims of the demise of Latin America's leftwing parties have been an easy, and lazy, attempt to dismiss the political forces that struggle for more justice and more democracy. There have, of course, been setbacks across the continent, from Argentina to Guatemala and Venezuela. The history of Latin American populism is a long one, but the fact of the matter is that leftwing parties on the continent have had a mixed bag of success and failure, and are all very different from each other.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Michelle Bachelet, from Brazil and Chile respectively, chose to adopt a New Labour-style form of social democracy in contrast to other more populist parties of the region.

The setbacks have occurred because of their failure to conduct political reform or to respond to the corrupt practices of some of their own members, while simultaneously creating the means to grant more autonomy to federal policy and the justice system in their fight against corruption.

Latin America is considered one of most unequal regions in the world, and grew more so during the 1990s. It was only with Lula's Workers' party (PT) that a truer vision for a more just and equal country – which offered opportunities and inclusion for the poor from the north-east, the indigenous populations, African-Brazilians and less privileged women – was actually articulated.

This crisis can only be understood by looking at Brazil's



Supporters of Dilma Rousseff gather at the presidential palace in Brasilia after the senate voted to accept impeachment charges against the Brazilian president.

history of authoritarianism, social inequality and exclusion of the poor by elites who, with exceptions, have traditionally been hostile to any form of social change. Brazil needs deep structural reforms, from agriculture to politics and taxation. Currently 70% of taxes are charged on consumption, and only 30% on property. Privatization of a few state companies and deeper cuts in public spending will not solve the country's serious problems.

Corruption scandal

At the moment the country is deeply divided, with many having jumped on the impeachment bandwagon due to frustrations with the corruption scandal, the recession and growing unemployment, not to mention the strong influ-

Rousseff has been a victim of her own mistakes in the economy, currently engulfed in a deep recession, and her inability to deal politically with allies and with a hostile, aggressive and conservative opposition.

ence of the mainstream media and other conservative sectors in shaping public opinion against the PT and Rousseff.

Growing disillusionment towards Brazil's institutions and their commitment to democracy has also expanded significantly, spreading even to how people view the supreme court, until recently seen as a bastion for upholding the values and articles of the 1988 Brazilian constitution.

It is not just a simple matter of the left adapting and learning from its mistakes – although it should, of course. The left still has a big role to play across Latin America by focusing on combining market dynamics with the pillars of social democracy.

After ignoring the importance of dealing with inequality for many years, the rightwing opposition has started to take these concerns on board, with interim president Michel Temer even stating that his new government would not cancel programs such as the Bolsa Familia, which has lifted millions out of poverty and was praised by the World Bank. The right has as much to learn from its mistakes as the left. It must stop assuming the moral high ground and work harder to adapt to social change and the new demands of the Brazilian population. This means the right must rid itself of its nasty authoritarian practices and mindset, follow in the footsteps of modern conservative parties, and leave behind its fusty, old-fashioned views.

(Source: The Guardian)

What Obama can say at Hiroshima



President Obama added a couple of firsts to his list of achievements when he became the first sitting president to visit Myanmar and, later, Cuba. He will add another at the end of this month when he visits Hiroshima in conjunction with the Group of 7 leaders meeting in Japan. Though the White House is playing down expectations, the visit gives him a significant opportunity to offer some tangible new initiatives to advance his vision of a nuclear-free world — a major goal at the outset of his administration that has since faded against a host of other foreign policy challenges.

Apart from an appearance in 2010 by an American ambassador, John Roos, and Secretary of State John Kerry's trip to Hiroshima early last month, senior American officials have conspicuously avoided the war memorial for the 200,000 people who lost their lives in the two nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that ended the war in the Pacific. Given the 70-year alliance between Japan and the United States that has flourished since the end of the war, Obama's decision to visit the memorial seems well overdue.

Yet it was arrived at only after an intense month-long debate within the administration. Some officials were concerned that such an appearance would be interpreted as an apology for America's wartime actions and further inflame this year's presidential election. During Obama's first year in office, his critics unfairly accused him of making an “apology tour” when he traveled to the Middle East and Europe in an effort to reset relationships that had deteriorated

during the Bush administration.

News reports have said that most Japanese are not looking for an apology, and Obama is not planning to offer any. Instead, according to one senior official, he will “offer a forward-looking vision focused on our shared future.”

Japan and the United States have much to celebrate. The alliance constructed from the ashes of devastation and war has helped keep the peace in Asia. The two countries continue to work together on development and security projects in other parts of the world as well.

Though he has fallen well short of his lofty aim of a world “without nuclear weapons” announced in 2009, Obama can justly claim important achievements. Among these are the 2015 nuclear deal that seeks to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, and the 2010 New Start Treaty mandating cuts in the number of strategic warheads deployed by the United States and Russia to 1,550 warheads each.

Obama's missteps have made his goal harder to achieve. Nothing is more at odds with his vision than his befuddling support for a \$1 trillion program to rebuild the American arsenal over the next 30 years. But there are still opportunities to improve his credibility — small steps like canceling the new air-launched, nuclear-armed cruise missile and persuading the United Nations Security Council to endorse the nuclear test. Perhaps, too, in his visit to Hiroshima, a strong speech and even a new initiative.

(Source: The NYT)

Erdogan has his hands untied after Davutoglu's resignation



Does Ahmet Davutoglu's resignation mean a strategic reorientation of Turkey's foreign policy away from Europe and the U.S. to the Islamic world? After Davutoglu's removal from the top echelons of power President Recep Erdogan now has his hands untied, M.K. Bhadrakumar notes.

The removal of Turkey's PM Ahmet Davutoglu from power has given the EU powers quite a jolt: the Turkish politician leaned toward closer cooperation with the West. While he was the architect of “neo-Ottomanism,” he was at the same time considered a “modernizer”

As Cengiz Candar of Al-Monitor's Turkey Pulse noted, “The era of Davutoglu in Turkish, international, Middle Eastern and Islamic world politics has come to an end... He coined the famous motto ‘zero problems with neighbors.’ Yet... There is nearly no neighbor or a major international player that Turkey does not have acute problems with.”

Refugee deal

The situation is complicated by the fact that Davutoglu played a key role in concluding the refugee deal with the EU and Germany. That is all the more reason for Berlin to worry.

Last Friday German Foreign Ministry spokesman Martin Schaefer declared that the EU-Turkish refugee agreement must be implemented despite Davutoglu's resignation.

“The agreement is concluded with governments and states, not with persons. This is key. Everything arranged must be implemented. There are appropriate treaty obligations. We both must work hard on them,” Schaefer emphasized during a briefing.

“Of course, the refugee problem is an

existential issue for the EU — and for German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in particular, whose political prestige is at stake,” Bhadrakumar notes.

However, Berlin cannot boast having Erdogan on a string.

“Make no mistake, Erdogan will not blink if the West resorts to pressure tactics. He will never agree to certain key ‘preconditions’ of the EU deal that Davutoglu negotiated whereby Turkey is required to change its anti-terror legislation in line with the European acquis and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights,” the Indian former diplomat remarks.

visa-free travel

Thus unsurprisingly, the Turkish leader has recently denounced the European Commission's request to change Turkey's highly controversial anti-terror laws, as a condition for proposed visa-free travel in the EU.

“On the question of visas, let those who call on Turkey to modify its anti-terrorism law start by removing tents set up by the terrorists at the doors of the European Parliament,” Erdogan said in his speech in the city of Malatya.

According to Bhadrakumar, there are clear signs that Erdogan will shift Turkey's domestic and regional policy from “neo-Ottomanism” to nationalism, centralizing power and transforming the country into a “presidential system.” The Indian expert suggests that the Turkish President may appoint his son-in-law Berat Albayrak (presently energy minister) to the position of Turkey's prime minister in order to strengthen his own power.

(Source: Sputnik)

COMMENT

How theft has hampered Nigeria's war on Boko Haram

By John Campbell

From 2011, when it re-emerged, until early 2015, Boko Haram inflicted one defeat after another on the Nigerian security services, principally the army. Boko Haram carved out a territory the size of the U.S. state of Maryland, and threatened Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state and a major Nigerian city.

For many observers, the seeming collapse of the Nigerian military, once regarded as the best in West Africa, was bewildering, and a sign that Boko Haram was a formidable fighting force. Boko Haram was beaten back in 2015 by a multinational effort, South African mercenaries, and a revived Nigerian military.

However, since Muhammadu Buhari assumed the presidency in May 2015, there have been regular revelations of spectacular levels of theft of funding intended to fight Boko Haram during the Jonathan administration. The latest chapter is the early May 2016 disclosure by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo that the previous administration lost some \$15 billion to fraudulent security spending. The previous estimate had been that \$5.5 billion had been misappropriated. The vice president observed that \$15 billion “is more than half of the current foreign reserves of the country.”

Boko Haram's ostensible success clearly owed more than observers thought at the time to the criminal misallocation of resources away from the Nigerian army and the other security services into private pockets. Boko Haram's success was not so much the result of its strength and the weaknesses of the Nigerian military, but in large part the result of theft.

(Source: europe.newsweek)

Donald Trump and Paul Ryan need each other

Here's how they can turn American anger into real reform

By Steve Hilton

Let's be honest: expectations for Thursday Donald Trump-Paul Ryan meeting are low, to say the least. Of course it's possible that the two men will spend a cordial hour or so in each other's company. We might even hope that they agree to keep talking. But the prospect of any substantive rapprochement on policy seems remote.

That is a shame. Why? Because, unlikely as it may sound, there exists the potential of a radical conservative—yes, those two words can go together—governing agenda that combines the



Paul Ryan

Donald Trump

thoughtful and technically impressive approach of House Speaker Ryan with the best of Trump's anti-establishment, disruptive impulses.

The overarching ambition of such an agenda would be to apply philosophically coherent conservative principles to the sources of voter dissatisfaction that Trump has successfully highlighted. In so doing, a radical, anti-establishment GOP policy platform could turn America's anger into an agenda for real reform.

Over the last few decades, the systems and structures we have built to run the modern world have gotten too big, bureaucratic and distant. It's true in the economy, where too many industry sectors are now dominated by giant corporations that use their lobbying muscle to shape policy to their ends and keep competitors out. And it's true in the public sector, too. In both instances, true conservative principles demand an all-out assault on such concentrated power—a spirit that is perfectly in tune with the shake-things-up-and-break-things-up energy of Trump's campaign.

Ryan's instincts

This kind of reform is also in line with the Ryan's instincts and some of what he's previewed of his policy agenda that he will unveil this year. But it goes well beyond anything we have seen from the GOP to date—and that's where Trump could be such a powerful ally for conservative radicalism. By framing market-based reform as an assault on the establishment—which is exactly what it is—he could help deliver the emotional victory that is crucial to the success of any intellectual reform effort.

For example, consider how Trump and Ryan could work together on job growth. Trump has been the first Republican politician to convey a genuine, emotionally resonant understanding of the fact that globalization and technological change, alongside their benefits, have relocated American jobs and reduced Americans' incomes. But saying “you've been screwed” is an observation, not an argument. And it's certainly not an answer. Simply promising to bring jobs back will not actually bring any jobs back. It's not even clear that we should want the same jobs back, anyway.

But a radical, Rynesque policy could deliver on this Trumpian pitch. For years, federal and state governments have wasted billions of dollars on training programs that don't fit either the practical realities of workers' lives, or the skills that employers actually need. Through technology—and some bold policy thinking—we could shake up the entire system.

And there's no need to stop there. Many of the services that government currently provides (badly)—from schools to health care to anti-poverty programs—could, thanks to advances in data science and other fields be provided through decentralized markets, putting real power and control in people's hands.

Thought-reading headset lets users speak their mind

By combining a wireless connected EEG headset from Emotiv and an assistive communication app, California-based Smart-stones is bringing the power of speech to those who have difficulty communicating verbally. The "think to speak" technology works by reading the brainwaves of the user and expressing them as phrases spoken through the app.



It's a valuable tool for people who are living with conditions that present verbal communication challenges, such as ALS, Autism and Cerebral Palsy, or have suffered brain or spinal injuries. But for others, the movements required to use the app can also be difficult to perform, due to conditions like Parkinson's or ALS, which inhibit a person's motor skills. That's where the EEG headset comes in.

Using Emotiv's Epoc or Insight headset in conjunction with the :prose app, a user can simply think about the motions tied to each command, and the headset reads their brainwaves, transmits the signal to the app via Bluetooth, and speaks the related phrase aloud. It works the same way as gestures and touch interfaces, but removes the element of physical movement that some people may struggle with. Users can even send messages to other devices with the power of thought alone.

The system is reportedly really easy to learn, compared to previous pictogram-based approaches, and relatively inexpensive. Combine this with other technologies such as EyeControl or the cheek-movement speech synthesizer used by Stephen Hawking, and the future could be a little brighter for those "locked in" their own bodies. *(Source: Gizmag)*

New study suggests rethink of dementia causes

University of Adelaide researchers have developed a new theory for the causes of dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases, involving an out-of-control immune system.

Published in the journal *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, the researchers have assembled strong evidence that the neurological decline common to these diseases is caused by 'auto-inflammation', where the body's own immune system develops a persistent inflammatory response and causes brain cells to die.

"Dementia, including the most common form Alzheimer's Disease, and related neurodegenerative conditions are dramatically rising in frequency as people live longer and our population ages," says study lead Professor Robert Richards, from the University of Adelaide's School of Biological Sciences. "Australia is predicting that by 2050 there will be almost double the number of people with dementia, and the United States similarly says there will be twice as many.

"Currently we have no effective treatments to assist the millions of affected people, and these diseases are an enormous burden on families and the public healthcare system."

Previously, researchers have focused on the role of protein deposits called amyloid plaques that lodge in the brain of Alzheimer's affected people. But it is now clear that this is an inadequate explanation for Alzheimer's disease.

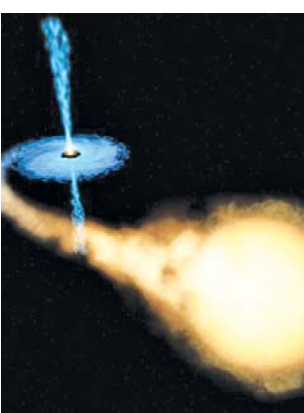
There are many distinct forms of neurodegeneration including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Huntington's diseases. These conditions are distinguished by the different types of brain nerve cells that are first affected and by the symptoms that first appear. However, as all of these diseases progress, they become more similar.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Intense wind felt around V404 Cygni, the black hole closest to Earth

A team of international astrophysicists, including Professor Phil Charles from the University of Southampton, have identified an intense wind from one of the known black holes nearest to the Earth.

During observations of V404 Cygni, which went into a bright and violent outburst in June 2015 after more than 25 years of quiescence, the team started to take optical measurements of the black hole's accretion disc with the use of the 10.4m Gran Telescopio CANARIA (GTC). This telescope has been known to be the biggest optical-infrared telescope in the world, and can be found at the Roque de los Muchachos Observatory (Garafía, La Palma) in the Canary Islands.



The results revealed presence of a wind of neutral material, unionized hydrogen and helium, which is formed in the outer layer of the disc and is known to be responsible for regulating the accretion of material by the black hole. The wind that was detected for the first time in a system of this type, has a very high velocity at 3,000 kilometers per second so that it can escape from the gravitational field around the black hole, Science Daily reported.

At the end of the outburst, the GTC observations showed the presence of nebula formed from material spewed out by the wind. This phenomenon has been observed for the first time in a black hole, also allows scientists project the quantity of mass emitted into the interstellar medium.

(Source: Science World Report)

Hyperloop One accelerates toward future with high-speed test

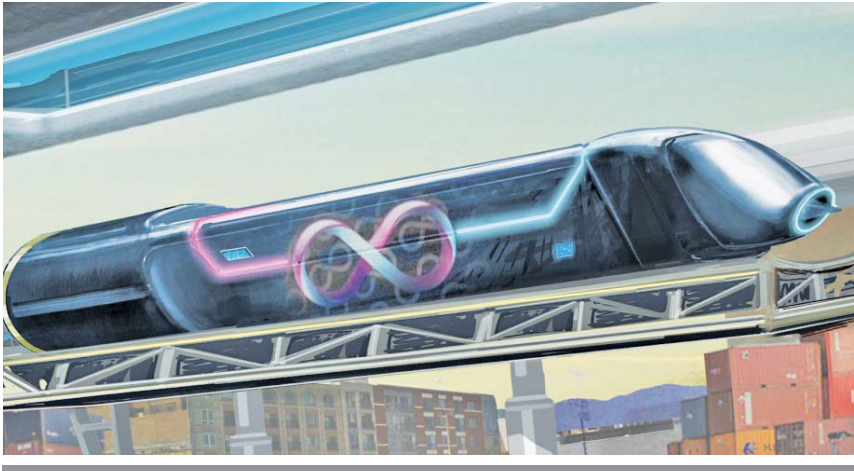
On Wednesday in the desert north of Las Vegas, Hyperloop One Inc. conducted the first test of the propulsion system that is essential to the high-speed transportation invention when a sled zipped down a track for about two seconds and crashed into a pile of sand, as intended.

On the eve of the test, the company announced it has formed ties with more traditional transportation companies and raised fresh capital.

All are milestones in the company's plan to create a fully operational hyperloop system by 2020.

The "hyperloop is real. It's happening now," said Chief Executive Rob Lloyd, during an interview Tuesday in Las Vegas. The company on Tuesday changed its name from Hyperloop Technologies, to help distinguish it from its main rival.

Hyperloop One is one of the startups aiming to commercialize the idea that billionaire inventor Elon Musk floated in a 2013 paper: transporting people in low-pressure tubes at 760 miles an hour, nearly the speed of sound.



Hyperloop One is one of the startups aiming to commercialize the idea that billionaire inventor Elon Musk floated in a 2013 paper: transporting people in low-pressure tubes at 760 miles an hour, nearly the speed of sound.

■ Propulsion motors

Musk envisioned it as pods powered

by propulsion motors that use magnets to hover on a sliver of air in near-vacuum

MSF responds to WHO TB treatment and diagnostic recommendations

The World Health Organization (WHO) has just recommended that countries move toward shorter treatment regimens for some people with drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB), including people co-infected with HIV, children, and people with simple MDR-TB who have not been treated before or and have no known resistance to any of the drugs in the regimen.

This recommendation comes following results from a number of large observation cohort studies using the shortened regimen.

Current DR-TB treatments usually run for 24 months and cause significant side effects; shortened regimens, which run as few as nine months, lessen disruption of patients' lives and are easier for patients to tolerate and adhere to.

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) began implementation of the shortened DR-TB



treatment course in Uzbekistan in 2013 before expanding use of the regimen to Swaziland.

WHO is also recommending that people with confirmed rifampicin-resistant TB or multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) be tested for extensively-drug-resistant (XDR) and pre-

XDR-TB using rapid molecular tests as the initial test, so that they can be offered treatment that is appropriate for them as soon as possible.

■ Prospect of two years

David Lister, TB doctor for MSF in Uzbekistan and coordinator of the Nine-Month Short Course Regimen study: The "prospect of two years of TB treatment drives parents to hide their children from treatment, teenagers to abandon their ambitions, adults to decide between providing for their family or getting healthy and the elderly to wish for death.

The "fear of relentless suffering due to side effects man-ages to outweigh any hope of cure or returning to a normal life. But when I tell patients that it's only nine months of treatment, they respond, 'I can do that.'"

(Source: msf.org.uk)



***Iranian Islamic Republic Railways (RAI)
Procurement and Logistics General Department***

Notice of Bid Invitation for Qualification of the Suppliers International Tender Extending No. 11-95-1 Purchase of 70 units Shunting Locomotives

Notice of Bid Invitation for Qualification of the Suppliers
International Tender Extending no. 11-95-1 for purchase of 70 units shunting locomotives
(10 units CBU locos & 60 units PLB locos)

Iranian Islamic Republic Railways (RAI) intends to entrust the supply of 70 units shunting locomotives (10 units CBU locos & 60 units PLB locos) to the competent companies within framework of tenders holding law approved by Iranian Islamic Republic Parliament in 2004 and by virtue of Article 164 of Iranian Islamic Republic's Fifth Development Plan through utilization of foreign financial facilities (Finance). In this respect, all qualified companies with related work records are invited to obtain the supplier's qualitative evaluation documents from the below address. Meanwhile, the company's agent should submit an introduction letter for receiving the documents.

1- General specifications of the tender subject as follows:

Purchase of 70 units shunting locomotives (10 units CBU locos & 60 units PLB locos)

2- Place of Execution:

Iranian Islamic Republic Railways (RAI)

3- Deadline for purchase of the tender documents:

The Bidders shall receive the tender documents from the below address utmost by 16:00 PM local time on Saturday 21.May.2016 corresponding to 1395/03/1.

Procurement and Logistics General Dept. (Foreign Orders Dept.):

2nd Floor Iranian Railways Central Building ; Argentina Sq., Africa Blvd., Tehran- Iran. P.O. Box 15197-13111.

4- Deadline for submitting the bid offers:

The Bidders shall submit the completed documents to the below address utmost by 16:00 PM local time on Tuesday 21.June.2016 corresponding to 1395/04/1.

Procurement and Logistics General Dept. (Foreign Orders Dept.):

2nd Floor Iranian Railways Central Building; Argentina Sq., Africa Blvd., Tehran- Iran. P.O. Box 15197-13111

5- Price of qualitative evaluation documents and payment method:

RLS 400000 to be paid to account no. 4001064004005747 of Iranian Railways Revenues opened with the Central Bank of Iran (payable in all the branches of Bank Melli Iran). Receipt of documents through <http://jets.mporg.ir> site is free-of- charges.

*Procurement and Logistics General Department
Iranian Islamic Republic Railways*

The UN has voiced alarm over an already dire food security situation in Yemen amid relentless Saudi attacks, saying the crisis could get much worse if it fails to receive more funding to address the issue.

In a statement released on Thursday, the UN said its Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) needs more funding.

It warned that the food and nutrition situation in Yemen will turn into a "humanitarian disaster" if more food is not delivered to the war-stricken country.

FAO should deliver timely aid in the April/May cereal and vegetable planting season and the summer fishing season, and vaccinate livestock before winter, it added.

Around 14.4 million people – over half of Yemen's population – urgently need food security and livelihood assistance as the country is reeling from a blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia, FAO reported earlier this week.

Yemen has been under military attacks by Saudi Arabia since late March last year. At least 9,400 people, including 4,000 women and children, have been

Yemen on brink of humanitarian disaster, UN warns



killed, and over 16,000 others injured since the onset of the aggression on Yemen.

The impoverished nation is under a de facto blockade of the kingdom which is hampering shipment of food, medicine and other basic needs.

Shortage of medical supplies is also threatening the lives of the injured and doctors have to treat patients in damaged buildings, with poor equipment.

Back in January, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in a report expressed alarm about attacks targeting hospitals in the country, warning that lack of medical supplies has put the life of millions of people at risk.

"Drugs, medication and medical supplies have been prevented from crossing frontlines into hospitals which desperately need these supplies," it said.

The ICRC called for the removal of barriers for the delivery of medical supplies as well as an end in attacks on health care facilities.

(Source: Press TV)

Top Hezbollah commander Badreddine martyred in Syria

➔ "This is an open war and we should not pre-empt the investigation but certainly Israel is behind this," Nawar al-Saheli said told al-Manar TV station.

"The resistance will carry out its duties at the appropriate time," he said.

The 55-year-old Badreddine was the commander of Hezbollah's military wing which is helping the Syrian government drive out foreign-backed Takfiri terrorists from the country.

In doing so, the movement says it is trying to prevent the Syrian conflict from spilling over to Lebanon and keep Takfiri terrorists at bay.

"He said a few months ago, 'I will not come back from Syria, unless a martyr or carrying the flag of victory,'" Hezbollah said in a statement carried by the Al-Manar TV channel.

"He is the top commander Mustafa Badreddine. And he came back today as a martyr," it added.

Badreddine also directed military operations against



the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and was a frequent target of attempts by Tel Aviv, the US and its allies in the Middle East to assassinate or capture him.

He was the cousin and brother-in-law of top Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyeh who was assassinated

by Israel in 2008.

Mossad killed Mughniyeh by remotely detonating a bomb planted in the spare tire of a parked SUV in the Syrian capital.

Mughniyah's son, Jihad, was also assassinated in an Israeli airstrike in Syria in January 2015.

Israel is widely known to have been supporting terrorists fighting to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

According to Israel's Channel 2 television, Israeli medics have treated more than 2,100 militants injured in the war on Syria since 2011.

In December 2015, the British newspaper Daily Mail said Israel had saved the lives of more than 2,000 Takfiri militants since 2013.

The Syrian army has repeatedly claimed to have seized sizable quantities of Israeli-made weapons and advanced military equipment from militants in the Arab country.

Turkey urged to prosecute Russian pilot's murderers

Moscow has demanded Ankara to find and prosecute all those responsible for the death of a Russian pilot whose fighter jet was shot down by the Turkish military on the Syrian border last November.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova's demand on Friday came after Turkish authorities dropped all charges against main suspect in the killing, Alparsalan Celik.

Addressing reporters in Moscow, Zakharova called on Turkish authorities to "search and hold accountable all involved in the murder of the Russian pilot" identified as Lieutenant Colonel Oleg Peshkov. Turkish fighter jets shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 bomber on the Syrian border on November 24, 2015, sparking a crisis in their diplomatic ties.

The crew of the plane ejected but one of the pilots was killed by Turkish nationalists on the ground as he was parachuting down. The other pilot was rescued by the Syrian army.

Zakharova voiced serious concern over the fact that Ankara has not charged Celik. A court in the Aegean coastal city of Izmir dropped all charges against him on Monday.

Celik had been arrested along with 13 other men at a restaurant in the Turkish province of Hatay after saying his group killed the Russian pilot.

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

Zakharova asked Ankara to charge Celik and all those "involved in the crime under his supervision."



"Such stance of the Turkish authorities is very worrisome and raises a lot of questions," she said.

"There is an impression that Turkish authorities are deliberately trying to acquit the person who has publicly confessed in committing this serious crime," the Russian spokeswoman added.

Zakharova said there is "no clarity or transparency about what is happening."

Practically, Ankara is expressing its reluctance to take responsibility for the actions, which have led to the annihilation of the aircraft and ultimately death of the pilot. Celik is the son of a former district mayor or elected from a Turkish nationalist party. In an interview with Hurriyet newspaper, Celik had said the killing was in retaliation for Russia's aerial campaign against militants in neighboring Syria.

Relations between Moscow and Ankara took a nosedive following the downing incident, with the Kremlin imposing a raft of economic sanctions against Turkey. (Source: RT)

Eight Turkish soldiers, 22 militants killed as violence widens in southeast

Eight Turkish soldiers and 22 Kurdish militants have been killed in clashes over the last two days, authorities said on Friday, as violence widened in the largely Kurdish southeast following two bombings.

After the collapse of a ceasefire between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the government last July, Turkey's southeast has seen some of its worst fighting since the height of the Kurdish insurgency in the 1990s.

President Tayyip Erdogan has said the violence, and a concurrent threat from ISIL terrorist group, justifies Turkey's broad anti-terror laws, which have become a sticking point with the EU in talks about a landmark deal to stem the flow of illegal migrants to Europe.

"The fight by our security forces in coordination and in harmony with soldiers, police, village guards and all units against terror will continue with determination," Erdogan said in a statement.

Erdogan, who had spearheaded the peace process between the state and the PKK, has ruled out any return to negotiations and has vowed to crush the militant group. Thousands of people, including hundreds of civilians, have been killed in the renewed violence. More than 40,000 people, most of them militants, have been killed since the PKK took up arms in 1984. The group wants autonomy for Turkey's Kurdish minority.

■ Iraq border

Six soldiers were killed and eight were wounded in clashes with militants in the southeastern Hakkari province near the border with Iraq on Friday, the military said.

Two more were killed in a separate incident when a helicopter crashed in



Hakkari due to a technical fault, the military said. Six PKK militants were also killed in an operation in that region.

In the nearby Siirt province, one militant was killed when security forces pursued vehicles attempting to flee a security check, the local governor's office said. They found 200 kilograms of explosives in one of the vehicles.

On Thursday, 15 militants were killed in clashes in Simak province, the military said.

The military has also carried out regular air strikes against PKK camps in mountainous northern Iraq. A total of 140 militants have been killed in such attacks between April 29 and May 10, broadcaster NTV said, citing the military.

The widening violence follows two bombings on Thursday. Four suspected bomb makers were killed and 23 people were wounded when an explosion ripped through a village in the southeast as PKK militants loaded explosives onto a small truck, the government said. (Source: Reuters)

Syria: Militants kill 19 civilians in Alawite village

Foreign-backed Takfiri militants have shot dead 19 civilians from the Alawite minority in their own homes after seizing their village in central Syria, a monitor says.

Other villagers were kidnapped following the assault in which eight volunteer militiamen were killed trying to defend al-Zara in Hama province, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Friday.

"During the attack, they entered houses and opened fire on families, killing at least 19 civilians, including six women," observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP, referring to the terrorists.

State news agency SANA condemned the "massacre" of villagers in

Hama, which has a significant Alawite minority.

"Terrorist groups infiltrated al-Zara and carried out a massacre as well as destruction and pillage," it reported.

Syrian Prime Minister Wael al-Halqi said Takfiri militants abducted a number of children and women after massacring many others.

"The international community should support Syria in its battles against terrorism and help prevent the flow of arms and money to the Takfiri militants from their foreign sponsors, particularly Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey," Halqi said.

According to a police official, the attackers rampaged through the town, destroying houses and looting property. (Source: SANA)

Shooting and bombing in northern Iraq kill 16

Three gunmen opened fire overnight on a cafe in northern Iraq where young men had gathered at the start of the weekend, killing at least 12 and wounding 25, police and hospital sources said Friday.

The assailants in the predominately Shia Muslim town of Balad, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad, sprayed machine gun fire from their cars for around 10 minutes before speeding off.

Hours later a suicide bomber set off his explosive vest at a nearby vegetable market after police and Shia members cornered him in a disused building and exchanged gunfire, security sources said. Four were killed and two critically wounded, medical sources added.

There was no immediate claim of

responsibility for the attacks but the area, which was nearly overrun by ISIL terrorist group in 2014, remains around 40 km from a frontline held by Shia militiamen.

The attackers had passed three police checkpoints before reaching their target, said police sources who declined to be identified as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Security forces deployed throughout the town Friday morning, fearing more attacks. An intelligence source said fighters from the powerful Badr Organization raided a nearby house and detained 13 members of a Sunni family. There were reports of gunfire in an adjacent orchard. (Source: Reuters)

JUMP

Rodrigo Duterte: A new era in the Philippines

➔ The Philippines has entered a new period of uncertainty, with hopes of radical change flying along fears of democratic backsliding.

Without question, this has been the most polarized election campaign in modern Philippine history. Until the final hours of the campaign period, leading candidates, during their speeches, adopted a highly pugnacious language against their opponents. The Duterte camp, which effortlessly managed to gather hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic supporters, saw the firebrand mayor promising radical change and an end to oligarchic rule.

His closest opponent, former interior secretary Mar Roxas, the anointed successor of the outgoing President Benigno Aquino, promised to fight for democracy against the supposed impending threat of dictatorship under Duterte.

■ Reformist camps

No less than the incumbent president called upon reformist camps, led by Mar Roxas and neophyte Senator Grace Poe, to unify against Duterte, who hasn't been shy about mentioning dictatorship, abolishing of congress, and a whole host of controversial statements in the past months.

It was a clash of narratives, raising fears of massive election-related fraud and violence.

To the delight of everyone, however, the Commission on Elections, which has always been a favorite target of media critics and opposition candidates, managed to pull off arguably the most peaceful, credible, and transparent elections in Philippine history.

The only wrinkle in the picture could be the vice presidential race, which is separately contested.

It has been neck-and-neck between Ferdinand "Bong Bong" Marcos Jr, the sole son of the former dictator, and Leni Robredo, the widow of one of the most revered statesmen in Philippine history, Jesse Robredo.

The Duterte camp, which effortlessly managed to gather hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic supporters, saw the firebrand mayor promising radical change and an end to oligarchic rule.

Most experts believe that Leni Robredo, who has been described as a social-democratic legislator, is tipped to become the second most powerful official in the country.

Unwilling to concede, Marcos has flirted with the possibility of launching a formal complaint after shedding doubt on the credibility of the elections.

In many ways, the Philippines is poised to elect its first left-leaning government, led by two former provincial officials, Duterte and Robredo.

Though extremely different in their demeanors and views on democracy, both figures are political outsiders par excellence - reflecting the depth of popular discontent with mainstream candidates.

Similar to Latin America in recent decades, the Philippines, a former Spanish colony, seems to be lurching to the left, with voters booting out conservative-centrist candidates from the upper echelons of power.

In the senate race, for instance, Risa Hontiveros, a long-time leftist activist, managed to make it to the "magic 12" circle of new incoming upper-house legislators.

■ Duterte is not Trump

Contrary to the Western media coverage, Duterte is no Donald Trump, although both of them have gained international notoriety for uttering highly controversial statements.

But unlike the real estate mogul, Duterte is not just some "reality show" star. For two decades, he oversaw, with an "iron fist", the transformation of the Hobbesian city of Davao into one of the safest and most prosperous in the country.

Starting with limited resources, but overseeing an astute social media blitzkrieg, Duterte gradually managed to outgun his well-heeled opponents by presenting himself as the only "authentic" candidate with requisite political will to end decades of incompetent and corrupt leadership in the country.

He captured the imagination of peripheral regions such as Mindanao and Visayas by promising an end to the reign of "imperial Manila", giving more political autonomy and fiscal resources to the provinces. He built a strong base among the upper and middle classes by promising a swift end to crime and corruption, not to mention Manila's grinding traffic.

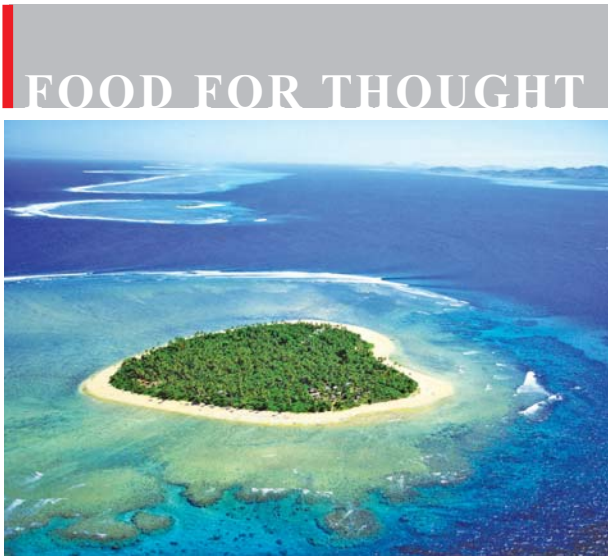
The challenge for Duterte, however, is to make a speedy and steady transition from a campaign-trail candidate, loose cannon on rhetoric and bumper sticker in policy proposals, into a sleek and 'statesmanly' president with tangible solutions to the country's myriad problems. Bringing together a cabinet filled with seasoned technocrats and new faces, Duterte seems to be beginning to rally support and sympathy from both markets and the civil society. Amid ongoing disputes in the South China Sea, he has also sought better relations with powerful neighbors such as China. A new era awaits the Philippines, but no one knows for sure whether it is for better or worse. (Source: Al Jazeera)

Donald Trump and Paul Ryan need each other

➔

■ Radical change

This type of radical change would not only improve, through competition and choice, the individual services provided (thus addressing the core economic grievances that explain much of Trump's appeal); it would also achieve a wider political goal. Ryan may have some of the policy, but he needs energy; Trump has plenty of energy, but he needs to channel it in more constructive and intellectually rigorous ways. That's why a reformers' alliance between these two wildly different GOP leaders could produce a lot more than the sum of their parts. Many conservatives are worried that Trump could be death to their cause. In fact, there's a chance he could lead to its rebirth. (Source: Time)



I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.
Martin Luther King, Jr.

LEARN ENGLISH

Mergers and Acquisitions

Marisol: What do you think of the big announcement this morning?
Lamar: That our company is going to **merge** with McQ Corp.? From what I've **heard through the grapevine**, this isn't a **merger** but a **hostile takeover**.
Marisol: But the CEO said this morning that our company and McQ Corp. are **equals** in this merger, and the **integration** of the two companies will be **seamless**.
Lamar: Don't you believe it! McQ Corp. has a history of taking over companies with high **valuations** and a lot of **assets** and selling them off in pieces. This is no friendly **acquisition**.
Marisol: But what about all of that talk about our two companies **consolidating** into a strong **business entity** and creating great **synergy**? Didn't you **buy** any of that?
Lamar: Not one word. When McQ Corp. is through with us, we'll be lucky to still have **the shirts on our backs**!

(Source: eslpod.com)

■ **Words & phrases**
merge: to combine, or to join things together to form one thing
hear something through the grapevine: to hear about something because the information has been passed from one person to another in conversation
merger: the joining together of two or more companies or organizations to form one larger one
hostile takeover: when the takeover is not wanted by the company being bought
equal: someone who is as important, intelligent etc. as you are, or who has the same rights and opportunities as you do
integration: the combining of two or more things so that they work together effectively
seamless: done or made so smoothly that you cannot tell where one thing stops and another begins
valuation: a professional judgment about how much something is worth
asset: the things that a company owns, that can be sold to pay debts
acquisition: the act of getting land, power, money etc.
consolidate: to strengthen the position of power or success that you have, so that it becomes more effective or continues for longer
business entity: organization established as a separate existence for the purposes of taxes; corporations, limited liability companies, and sole proprietorships are types of common business entities
synergy: the additional effectiveness when two or more companies or people combine and work together
buy: to believe
the shirts on your backs: a phrase to talk about when you lose everything you have even your clothing

QUIZ OF THE DAY

153) What does the idiom mean?
It is way over my head.
a) I don't understand
b) it is too high for me to reach
c) I cannot see it
(Quiz No. 152 answer: c)

PHRASAL VERB

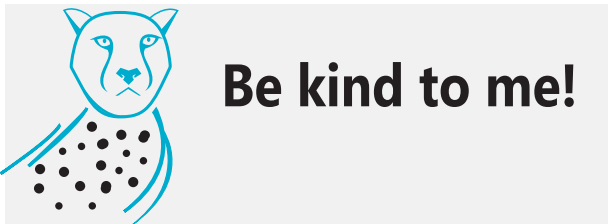
Sleep over

■ **Meaning**: stay overnight at someone else's home
■ **For example**: You're welcome to sleep over if you don't want to drive in this weather.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Don't dig your grave with your own knife and fork

■ **Explanation**: don't do something yourself that causes your own downfall



Be kind to me!

Female cheetah dies in a road accident

SOCIETY TEHRAN — A female cheetah was killed in a road accident in Shahrud, northeastern Iran, Mehr news agency reported.

The dead cheetah was firstly spotted with its three cubs in 2012 and was being monitored in the region for two years.

Last year the aforesaid cheetah was once again spotted with another cub and during the same year one of its cubs, which is now a mother itself, was observed with its three cubs.

Most probably the cheetah's youngest cub cannot live on its own yet and would face difficulty to survive. Searches to find the cub are still ongoing in the area.

For the last decades accidents have been the leading cause of death for the cheetahs which are on the verge of extinction and the death of this successful mother is a shock to this small population of the cheetahs.



On average every two years three cheetahs get killed in road accidents and considering the population of 40 to 70 cheetahs in Iran that is a big number.

Houman Jokar, director for Conservation of Asiatic Cheetah Project (CACP) told Mehr news agency that unfortunately except for the last year every year accidents of the same kind happen in the same area.

There are signs on the road warning the drivers about the cheetahs that might be passing the road but they don't notice, Jokar regretted.

"We also need the traffic police to help install speeding cameras on the roads," he said, adding, "constructing underpasses and overpasses are also other options to help safeguarding these species."

The dead cheetah was insured and so far Dana Insurance Company has paid 1 billion rials (nearly \$28,000) for two of the dead cheetahs, he explained.

"10 percent of the money was spent on the research programs and the rest would be spent on construction projects," the CACP director noted.

WHO clears air: Delhi no longer most polluted, that's Zabol in Iran

Delhi is no longer the world's most polluted city, says WHO. The national Capital is now the 11th most polluted city in the world, based on average annual PM 2.5 readings of 3,000 cities in 100 countries, according to the WHO's latest urban air quality database for 2016.

The new WHO report warned that over 80 per cent of the world's city dwellers breathe poor quality air.

Released on Thursday, the database shows that the annual PM 2.5 levels for Delhi were down from 153 micrograms per cubic meter in the WHO's 2014 report to 122 micrograms per cubic meter.

The 2014 report was based on 2010 data while the latest report includes data from 2012, 2013 and a part of 2014 for India, a year before the new AAP government took charge in Delhi. As for other global cities, the data spans a period of 2008-2013, depending on the numbers available from those locations. The report states that global urban air pollution levels increased by eight per cent, despite improvements in some regions.

The latest PM 2.5 level rankings show Iran's Zabol topping the list with 217 micro-

grams per cubic meter followed by Gwalior with 176 and Allahabad with 170. Patna at sixth place (149) and Raipur on seventh spot (144) are the other Indian cities in the top 10. In total, the top 20 global cities with highest PM 2.5 levels includes 10 Indian cities, including Kanpur, Ludhiana and Firozabad.

The PM 2.5 top 10 list also includes Saudi Arabia's Riyadh (156) and Al Jubail, and two cities from China, Xingtai (128) and Baoding (126).

Among cities with highest PM 10 levels, Nigeria's Onishta tops with an annual mean of 594 micrograms per cubic meter, followed by Peshawar at 540 micrograms per cubic meter. Delhi is at 25th position, with an annual level of 229 micrograms per cubic meter, based on data from 2012, according to the WHO.

Gwalior, with an annual average of 329 micrograms per cubic meter, is at tenth and the only Indian city on the top ten list of those with highest PM 10 levels.

PM 2.5 and PM 10 refer mostly to particles of dust, smoke and gaseous pollutants under 2.5 microns and 10 microns, respectively, in size — a strand of human hair is

between 50 and 70 microns thick.

WHO's air quality guidelines state that by reducing particulate matter (PM10) from 70 to 20 micrograms per cubic meter, air pollution-related deaths could be reduced by roughly 15 per cent. WHO safe limits for annual mean of PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels are 10 and 20 micrograms per cubic meter, respectively.

Among the other findings of the 2016 WHO report are:

■ Urban air pollution levels were lowest in high-income countries, with lower levels most prevalent in Europe, the Americas, and the Western Pacific Region.

■ Highest urban air pollution levels were experienced in low-and middle-income countries in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regions, with annual mean levels often exceeding 5-10 times WHO limits, followed by low-income cities in the Western Pacific Region.

■ In the Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regions, and low-income countries in the Western Pacific Region, levels of urban air pollution increased by more than 5 per cent in more than two-thirds of the cities.

TOP 10 (PM 2.5)

Zabol, Iran	217
Gwalior	176
Allahabad	170
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	156
Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia	152
Patna	149
Raipur	144
Bamenda, Cameroon	132
Xingtai, China	128
Baoding, China	126

* Micrograms per cubic metre.
* Annual average of years anywhere between 2008-13

* More than half of the monitored cities in high-income countries and more than one-third in low and middle-income countries reduced air pollution levels by more than 5 per cent in five years.
(Source: indianexpress.com)

Government says he's dead, but man insists he's very alive

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A Lincoln man says he's not dead, despite what the Social Security Administration has said.

Chuck Zellers learned of his demise in March after his Social Security deposit was removed from his bank account while he and his wife, Alice, were in Arizona, he told the Lincoln Journal Star.

They talked to a woman at the Social Security office who checked her computer and told him, "Oh, by golly, you are dead," Zellers said.

"She told me it could be a funeral home declared you deceased; or that someone just put in a wrong keystroke or something like that," he said.

So, he's spent the past few weeks going from agency to agency, business to business, proving with various documents that Charles Richard Zellers II, of Lincoln, Nebraska, is not dead yet.

It was "a lot of driving and a lot of calling," he said.

Luckily, when he cut his Arizona trip short and returned home, his local Social Security office paid him what he was owed — but only after they saw him alive.

His Veteran's Administration disability payments were recently reinstated and his credit rating is also back.

IN FOCUS IRNA/ Davood Qahrdar



Twins, triplets and other multiples gathered together on Thursday in Tehran to mark the 6th Twins and Multiples National Day.

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Iran has had steepest birth decline worldwide: official

TEHRAN — According to the reports provided with world's credible population monitoring centers Iran has had the steepest decline in newborns, a member of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution said on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion of the national week of population starting from May 14, Kobra Khaz'ali, director of cultural and social committee of the SCCR, said that Iran's birth drop occurred over the past 10 to 15 years and if it continues the population starts to grow old.

Khaz'ali noted that based on global standards population policies should reform every 5 to 10 years while in Iran they haven't changed for the past 50 years.

Last year the council decided to set May 14 as the national day of population and it is being observed this year for the first time in Iran, she said.

عضو شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی: در ایران سریعترین کاهش جمعیت جهان رخ داد

یکی از اعضای شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی روز سه شنبه گفت: بر اساس گزارش مراکز معتبر پایش جمعیت دنیا ایران سریع ترین کاهش جمعیت را داشته است.

رئیس شورای فرهنگی - اجتماعی شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی در نشست خبری که به مناسبت هفته ملی جمعیت که از ۲۵ اردیبهشت آغاز می شود گفت: این کاهش جمعیت طی ۱۰ تا ۱۵ سال اتفاق افتاده و اگر ادامه پیدا کند سبب پیر شدن تدریجی جمعیت می شود.

خزعلی خاطرنشان کرد: در استانداردهای جهانی هر ۵ تا ۱۰ سال باید در سیاست های جمعیتی بازنگری انجام شود و این در حالی است که سیاست های ایران از ۵۰ سال گذشته تغییری نکرده است.

وی گفت: سال گذشته ۲۵ اردیبهشت به عنوان روز ملی جمعیت به تصویب شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی رسید و امسال اولین سالی است که این روز در ایران برگزار می شود.

Esteghlal Khuzestan crowned Iran Professional League champion

T T S P O R T S Esteghlal Khuzestan football team made history winning Iran Professional League for the first time in history.

The Ahvaz-based team defeated Zob Ahan 2-0 in Ahvaz's Ghadir Stadium on Friday thanks to a brace from Rahim Mehdi Zohaii.

Esteghlal Khuzestan, who dubbed as Iranian Leicester City, won the league title with 57 points from 30 games thanks to the better goal average ahead of Persepolis.

Persepolis beat Rah Ahan 2-1 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium to level the points with Esteghlal Khuzestan but they finish second behind the Ahvaz-based club.

Ramin Rezaeian scored from the penalty spot in the 82nd minute and substitute Ahmad Nourollahi extended the lead three minutes later.

Mehrdad Mohammadi pulled a goal back in the 89th minute.

Elsewhere in Qom, Esteghlal was held to a 1-1 draw against Saba to finish in third with 52 points. Tractor Sazi thrashed Esteghlal Ahvaz 5-0 in Tabriz to finish in fourth with 51 points.

The top four teams will play in next year's AFC Champions League while Malavan, Rah Ahan and Esteghlal Ahvaz were relegated to Azadegan League.

In the other matches, Foolad was held to a 1-1 draw against Gostaresh, the reigning champion Sepahan lost 2-1 to Padideh to finish in 11th place. Siah Jamegan beat Malavan 2-0 to escape the relegation while Saipa and Naft played out a goalless draw in Tehran's Dastgerdi Stadium.



Japanese TV channel to air Zahra Nemati documentary



T T S P O R T S WOWOW, Japan's leading premium pay TV broadcaster, has announced

that its first series of documentaries featuring many of the world's leading Para athletes will start airing this October.

Archer Zahra Nemati made history at London 2012 becoming the first Iranian women to win Olympic or Paralympic gold. She has qualified for both the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio.

The "Who I Am" series have been produced by WOWOW, Japan's TV channel.

The "Who I Am" series will tell the stories of a number of Para athletes following their journey to the Rio 2016, PyeongChang 2018 and Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

The documentaries are produced in collaboration with the International Paralympic Committee as part of a five-year agreement leading up to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

"We are so proud of all the athletes featured in our

series," said Akira Takana, WOWOW President. "They are all strong high performance medal winning athletes and each brings a unique and powerful story to the table. I cannot wait to share their stories and experiences with the world."

The first eight athletes to appear in the series are: Daniel Dias (Brazilian swimmer), Ellie Cole (Australian swimmer), Marlou van Rhijn (Netherlands' sprinter), Ricardo Alves (Brazilian football 5-a-side player), Safet Alibasic (Bosnia and Herzegovina's sitting volleyball player), Shingo Kunieda (Japanese wheelchair tennis player), Zahra Nemati (Iranian archer) Tatyana McFadden (USA's wheelchair racing athlete)

As part of the series, WOWOW, who are celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, has enlisted Kunihiko Ryo to produce the series theme song and Keiichi Nitta to capture photography.

Mahdavia: Ronaldinho still one of the best

T T S P O R T S Former Iran national team captain, who played in the FIFA All-Star match against Mexico's All-Star friendly on Thursday, believes that Ronaldinho is still one of the best footballers in the world.

The game was held in a stadium which was under renovation so there were no fans while the FIFA officials were the only spectators. The game time was divided into four 20-minute periods and the Iranian went to play in the third period alongside Salgado, Marcel Desailly, Ronaldinho, Aimar and the other.

"Ronaldinho is really a great player. He has an unbe-



lievable control on the ball and made a lot of technical moves during the match. He also provides an assist for me to score a goal. At the end it was a great honor for me as an Iranian to take part in the FIFA congress and also FIFA All-Star friendly game," he added.

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.

Clubs ready cheque books as 'king' Ibrahimovic bids PSG adieu

Sweden's larger-than-life captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic will play his final game for Paris Saint Germain on Saturday, he said in a social media post that is likely to send clubs around the world reaching for their cheque books.

With an ego in keeping with his imposing physique, the ageing but still prolific striker announced his departure in typically flamboyant style.

"I came like a king, left like a legend," he said on Facebook, confirming expectations he would seek to add a new chapter to a glittering career after saying in March that only a statue of him erected in place of the Eiffel Tower would persuade him to stay.

The 34-year-old Swede joined PSG in

2012, adding four Ligue 1 titles to an already impressive trophy cabinet, though some questioned his decision to compete against teams of lesser means in France, rather than move to England or back to Italy.

He rattled almost a goal a game in establishing the star-studded PSG as the dominant force in French football, and his scintillating domestic and Champions League form this season saw his name again linked with a host of clubs.

MLS side LA Galaxy are now widely rumoured to be leading the race for his signature, and Ibra has also been linked to clubs in the Premier League, the Middle East and China.

Sweden coach Erik Hamren believes

he could still deliver in England, despite his advancing years.

"He has a fantastic physique," he recently told Reuters. "If Zlatan is motivated mentally, then he can stay at the top for several more years."

Having famously said that the World Cup in Brazil wouldn't be worth watching because he wouldn't be playing, Ibra is set to lead Sweden at this summer's Euro 2016 finals in France.

With Saturday's cup final against Marseille set to be his last for a club side on French soil, he will be hoping for a few more electric performances for Sweden before he finally saying "adieu" to the country that has been his home for four years.

(Source: Reuters)



Iran defeats Uzbekistan in CFA Youth Football Tournament



Iran U-17 team beat China 2-1 in the Jiangyin Zhouzhuang Cup CFA Interna-

tional Youth Football Tournament 2016 on Thursday.

Mohammadreza Ghobeishavi and Mohammad Ghaderi scored in the 35th and 80th minutes respectively.

Iran started the competition with a 2-1 defeat against China.

Hamid Alidoosti's boys have been scheduled to face Japan on Saturday.

"Jiangyin Zhouzhuang Cup CFA International Youth Football Tournament 2016" is organized by Chinese Football Association.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran's Ghoochannejhad could leave for MLS: report



Media reports suggest that Iran international striker Reza Ghoochannejhad will

likely join a MLS club.

Ghoochannejhad joined Charlton on a two-and-a-half-year deal in September 2014.

He did not extend his contract with the Championship side and it seems he is reluctant to stay in England.

According to reports, Ghoochannejhad could also join a team from the Netherlands, where he started his playing career with Heerenveen in 2005.

The 28-year-old has played for Cambuur, Sint-Truiden and Standard Liege as well.

(Source: Tasnim)

TAEKWONDO

In taekwondo, South Korea and Iran are friendly rivals



South Korea is the birthplace of taekwondo and the martial art has become a dominant force in international sports including the Olympics. But if there is an Asian country that can beat South Korea at its own game, it is Iran.

Despite Iran's prowess on the arena that make it such a formidable rival, the country is also a friend when it comes to the development of taekwondo with its large number of practitioners and general popularity of the sport.

With President Park Geun-hye's landmark three-day state visit to the Middle East country on May 1-3, the two countries are expected to boost their sports exchange programs, and taekwondo is likely to serve as an important tool.

Taekwondo has been bridging South Korea and Iran more than 40 years. According to the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF), Iran was first introduced to taekwondo in the early 1970s when the country's military and police started incorporating the martial art into their training. Iran became a member of the WTF in 1975.

After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Iran made a remarkable development in taekwondo with help from South Korean grandmaster Kang Shin-chul who first came to the Islamic country as an instructor in 1985.

Kang, who runs Namchang Dojang in Suwon, Gyeonggi Province, served as the Iranian national team head coach from 1985 to 1995 and has also worked as chairman of the technical committee of Iranian national team. At the 2015 Gwangju Universiade, he was the chief head coach of the Iranian team.

Kang, known as "Mr. Master" in Iran, has trained thousands of pupils in Iran, including Seyed Mohammad Pouladgar, president of the Iran Taekwondo Federation. In a previous interview with Yonhap News Agency, the 59-year-old said that popularity of taekwondo surged in Iran when Hadi Saei started to win medals at the Olympics.

Saei captured gold medal in the men's 68kg at the 2004 Athens Summer Games and won another gold in the men's 80kg at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He also has a bronze in the men's 68kg at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

"Iranian taekwondo got stronger because many athletes are competing in contests," Kang said. "There is a league in both poomsae and sparring and taekwondo athletes compete almost every week."

Iran started the world's first taekwondo league in 1999, and based on their performances in the league, athletes qualify for the national team selection, according to Kang. There were a mere

30,000 taekwondo practitioners in Iran 30 years ago, but with continuing efforts, Kang said the country's taekwondo population now stands at about 2 million and there are about 3,500 taekwondo gyms.

According to Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) data, South Korea has some 9,500 taekwondo gyms. But critics say that most of the trainees in the country are elementary school students, while in Iran, most of trainees at the gym are taekwondo practitioners who participate in competitive leagues.

The rise of Iranian taekwondo is threatening South Korea's dominant status in the international scene. In recent years, Iran has overtaken South Korea to win the men's overall titles at major taekwondo competitions. After edging South Korea for the first time at the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, Iran won three gold medals, one silver and two bronzes for the overall men's title at the 2011 World Taekwondo Championships in Gyeongju, North Gyeongsang Province. The hosts settled with two golds and two silvers at the 2011 Worlds.

South Korea then reclaimed the No. 1 status in 2013, but Iran two years later captured the men's overall title again.

In youth level, two countries also has been neck and neck. At the WTF World Cadet Taekwondo Championships, where those aged between 12 and 14 compete, Iran won overall men's title in inaugural event in 2014, but South Korea took the crown in 2015.

"I've said before that Iran could surpass South Korea in a few years," Kang said. "South Korea needs to come up with a measure to improve its taekwondo."

As the competitiveness of Iran's taekwondo is proven, South Korean national youth team in November had a joint training session with its Iranian counterpart in Tehran. This was the first time that the South Korean taekwondo team trained in Iran. Facility-wise, Iran is also taking a big step forward. In May 2010, the country established the World Taekwondo Center in Tehran,

which also serves as a WTF-designated regional training center. The four-floor center is equipped with a hotel, a gym, a training room with four courts and a medical clinic.

"I felt that Iran in general really loves taekwondo," said a KTA official who was with South Korean youth taekwondo team's training in Tehran last year. "Iranian taekwondo athletes were training in line with the global trend."

While some South Koreans lament that the nation's taekwondo is faltering, taekwondo grandmaster Kang claimed that South Korea should actually thank Iran for spurring the development of taekwondo and spreading its traditional martial art.

"We should show generosity when other countries surpasses South Korea because that proves taekwondo has actually spread well across the world," he said. "It also forces South Korea to work harder and put more effort into developing taekwondo as the birthplace of the martial art."

(Source: Yonhap)

