

## People should see JCPOA results: Zarif

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, the principal architect of the nuclear deal with great powers, said on Saturday that the Iranian people should in practice see the results of the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

According to the deal, brokered in July 2015 and went into effect in January, sanctions against Iran are lifted in exchange for some limitations on Tehran's nuclear activities.

"In the new situation, all the ambassadors' efforts should be focused on developing the country's economy and the people's livelihood and the people should feel the JCPOA results in practice," Zarif told an annual gathering of the Iranian ambassadors in Tehran under the slogan of "JCPOA and Resistance Economy: Opportunities and Capacities".

The foreign minister highlighted the necessity of presenting a "fair" and "realistic" report on results of the JCPOA.

Iran's diplomatic missions in foreign countries can play "important" and "fundamental" role in preparing a "precise" and "real" report on the JCPOA results, especially in financial and banking transactions, the foreign minister noted.

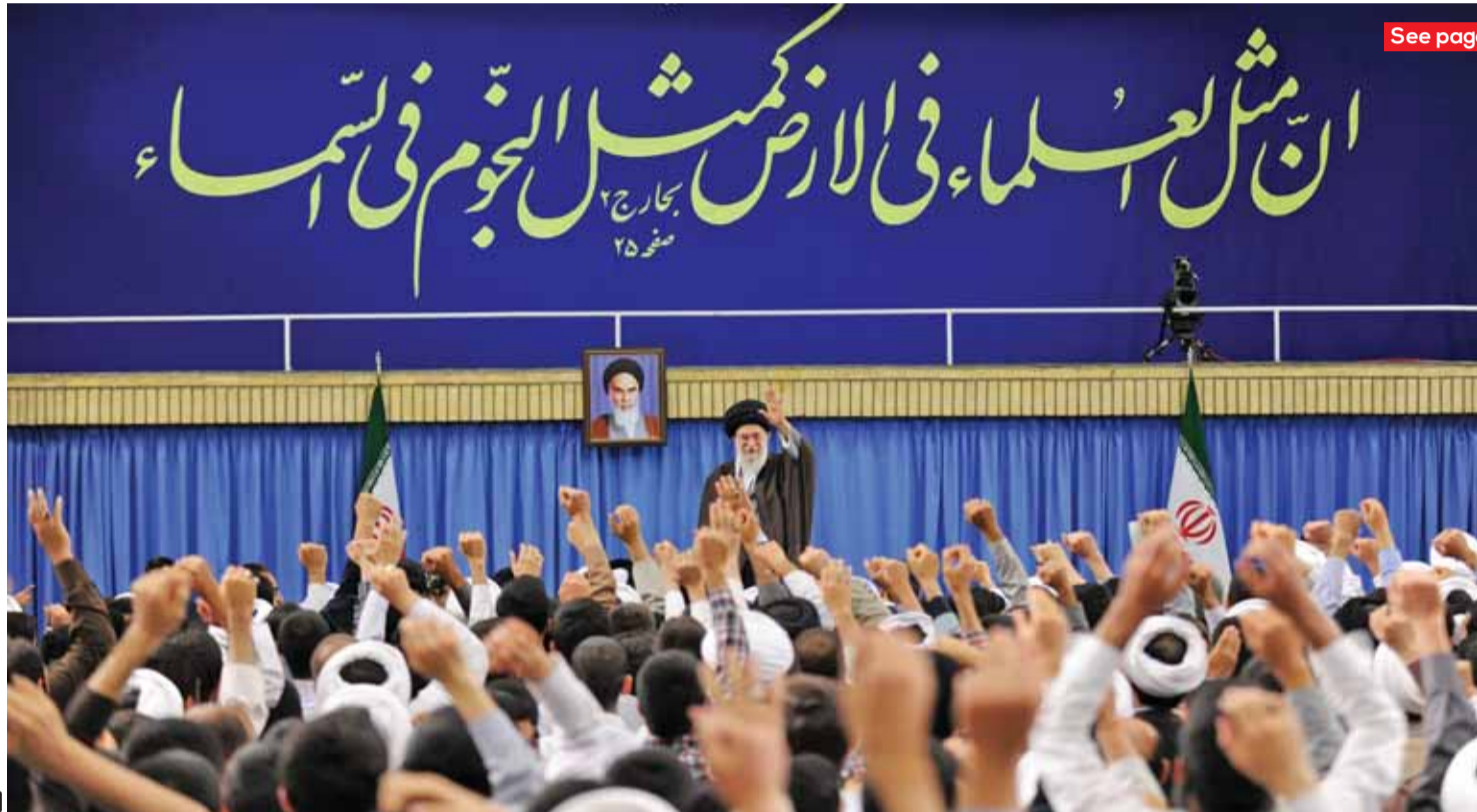
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# Leader: Clerics should counter false and deviant thoughts

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei received on Saturday a gathering of managers, instructors, and clergymen of Tehran-based seminaries,

outlining "intellectual and religious guidance," "political guidance and insight-strengthening," and "guidance and participation in the field of social services" as three main missions of clerics.

"Clerics should prepare themselves for shouldering sensitive responsibilities in the society through acquiring necessary qualifications and awareness in today's different world," the Leader remarked.



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## ARTICLE

**By Ali Omid**  
Associate professor of international relations at Isfahan University

## Four ways U.S. seizure of Iranian assets will impact bilateral ties

The U.S. Supreme Court ruling to confiscate \$2 billion worth of Iranian assets to compensate American victims of terrorist attacks has hit hard in Tehran. The asset seizure, which has the backing of the U.S. State Department, has been described by Iran's President Hassan Rouhani as "blatant theft" while Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called it "highway robbery."

There is no doubt that the measure will have severe repercussions on the already tense relations between Tehran and Washington; its impact can be roughly categorized under four headings.

First, a "wall of mistrust" will be created. The Supreme Court ruling is causing Iranians to be pessimistic about the easing of tensions between Iran and the United States. Following the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in July 2015, political experts were hopeful that the two countries would work toward the easing of tensions and removing this "wall of mistrust." However, with the recent Supreme Court decision, all such hope has been ruled out. This has not only empowered the opponents of the JCPOA in Iran, but also those more broadly opposed to relations with the West. This has prompted the Rouhani administration to adopt a passive approach.

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## Troupe from Isfahan performs parody of "Hamlet"

**ART** **TEHRAN** — A troupe from the central Iranian city of Isfahan is performing a parody of William Shakespeare's "Hamlet" at the Baran Theater in Tehran.

"Seven Labors of Hamlet" has received a great reception from theatergoers over the past two weeks that the troupe has been performing the play, director Mohammad-Javad Sajjadi told the Persian service of MNA on Saturday.

"Seven Labors of Hamlet" was formed in a long process of 15 months of numerous workshops and rehearsals. The outcome was that we learned that 'Hamlet' has the potential to



A poster for "Seven Labors of Hamlet"

be change into a parody," he stated.

The troupe has used some styles of Irani-

an traditional dramatic arts, including naqqali and kheimeh shab-bazi, to stage the play, he added.

Sajjadi said that they must go through a complicated process to perform a play in Isfahan. Thus, he decided to stage the play in Tehran.

The play went on stage with support from actor Hamidreza Azarang and directors Ayyub Aqakhani and Nader Borhani Marand from Tehran.

A cast of three actors perform the play, which won the award for best performance at the Isfahan Theater Festival last year.

The play will run at the theater until May 30.

## Italy's Saras says signs crude supply deal with Iran

Italian refiner Saras said it has signed an oil supply contract with Iran.

The company's contact with Iran has formally opened after

banks began allowing payments "in the last couple of weeks," Saras chief executive Dario Scaffardi said on Friday. Saras still owes Iran

money from debts accrued prior to sanctions being imposed on the country in 2012. "We will of course start repaying the debt we owe to

Iran, and this is in the process of starting. We still have to negotiate exact timings," said Scaffardi.

(Source: argusmedia.com)

## 70 foreign firms to attend Iran Health exhibition

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Seventy foreign firms from Europe and Asia will participate in the 19th Iran Health international exhibition, starting on May 15, at the Tehran Permanent International Fairground.

The companies are to invest in hospital construction and development of medical equipment in Iran, IRNA quoted Hossein Salmanzadeh, director of the exhibition, as saying on Saturday.

He also said most of the European delegations are going to participate in the health exhibition in Iran for the first time and are scheduled to negotiate with Iranian traders.

More than 600 Iranian and foreign exhibitors will take part in the health exhibition, which sits in a 23,000 m<sup>2</sup> area, scattered in 13 halls, he explained.

Active companies in manufacturing medical equipment from Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, the Czech Republic, South Korea, China, Taiwan, India, and Turkey will have their pavilions during the event as well, Salmanzadeh said. Also, some delegations from Syria, Lebanon, and Azerbaijan will be present in the event to brainstorm ways to send Iranian-made medical products out.

The 19th Iran Health exhibition ends on May 18, 2016.

## AirAsia X to resume Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok flights to Tehran

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The Malaysian budget airline AirAsia X announced it will resume direct flights from both Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok to Tehran on June 21 and June 22, respectively.

The flights had been suspended in 2012.

The airline aims to increase the number of tourists who travel to Iran from Southeast Asia and Australia, AirAsia Chairman Datuk Kamarudin Meranun announced during a press conference in Tehran on Saturday.

"We believe that the revival of direct flights to Tehran from Kuala Lumpur is timely and we

foresee that our direct flights from both Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok can improve bilateral relations while encouraging trade and tourism activities between the cities," Chief Executive Officer of AirAsia X Ben-yamin Ismail said during the conference.

AirAsia X flights will take off on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday per week from Kuala Lumpur to Tehran and will on Monday and Wednesday and Friday from Tehran to Kuala Lumpur.

The airline will also provide flights from Bangkok to Tehran on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

## Great opportunities, special incentives for foreign investment in Iran

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Ali Tayyebnia announced that as of the implementation of the nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1, great opportunities and special incentives have been created in Iran to attract foreign investors.

"Foreigners should change their attitude toward Iran, specifically after the withdrawal of the financial embargo, on the way to find a realistic view over the potential investment projects in the Islamic Republic," IRNA quoted Tayyebnia as saying on Saturday.

"Limitations have been converted into advantages, and challenges are changed into opportunities," he said, "It is time for foreigners to experience safe and sound investments in Iran."

According to the economy minister, foreigners are presently capable of making investments in projects up to 100 percent in various sectors, including production, transportation, telecommunication, services, power, construction and health, and they can also possess land pieces in Iran. In addition, the government will issue three-year residential certificates for foreign managers, experts, and their families to stay in Iran.

"Making investments in special and free zones will bring foreign investors a 20-year tax relief and they would be allowed to commute to the zones without visas," he underscored.

**ARTICLE**  
**By: Haniyeh S. Jafariyeh**  
Tehran Times journalist

## Iran's crude oil contracts: term or spot?

Iran stepped out of the international financial embargo against OPEC's No.3 oil producer under the implementation of its nuclear deal with P5+1 in January, while the stringent sanctions had cut Iranian crude exports from a peak of 2.6 million barrels per day (bpd) before 2011 to just over 1.1 million bpd in recent years. Iran was primarily faced with constraints on its oil exports since its customers had concluded deals with other countries, buyers were cautious about boosting trade immediately because of banking and ship insurance difficulties, and the country's crude shipment, particularly to Europe, was intricate by a lack of clarity on ship insurance, dollar clearance and European banks' letters of credit.

Since the lifting of financial sanctions, the Islamic Republic has sought to ramp up oil production in a bid to regain its market share and today, almost six months after the implementation day, Iran's oil output stands at 3.7 million bpd, while its oil and gas condensate exports is more than 2.2 million bpd and as senior officials say there are no immediate plans for a fresh rise in its oil exports from the current level.

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MEDIA MONITOR

NASIM



Prosecutor general pushing ahead with action on seizure of Iranian assets

**TEHRAN** — Iran's prosecutor general said he is pressing on with his call on the Foreign Ministry to take diplomatic action on the U.S. for its decision to seize the Central Bank of Iran's assets in an American bank.

Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said he is pursuing the issue firmly, Nasim reported on Saturday.

Montazeri had also proposed setting up a juridical task force, made up of top Iranian judges, to take legal action, within the framework of international law, against the U.S. measure.



IRGC has sent 100 advisors to Syria, Iraq since past year

**TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps has dispatched 100 trainers and commanders from its Imam Hussein University to Syria and Iraq over the past year for advisory missions, commander of the military university told Tasnim on Saturday.

General Morteza Saffari said that the instructors from Imam Hussein University have been dispatched to Syria and Iraq for two-month missions.

A number of those IRGC forces have returned home after accomplishing their missions, while a number of others have been martyred or wounded, the commander explained.



Rezaei denies being given mission to liberate Aleppo

**TEHRAN** — The secretary of Iran's Expediency Council has quashed rumors that he has been given a mission by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to liberate Aleppo in Syria from the terrorist groups.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran on Friday, the former IRGC chief categorically denied stories spread by foreign media outlets regarding the issue, Mehr reported.

Rezaei, however, noted that he has worn "green fatigues" to provide whatever assistance he can.

"Nevertheless, Aleppo will be liberated by God's grace," he underlined.



Larijani: Using false name for Persian Gulf is 'childish'

**TEHRAN** — The Majlis speaker has deplored efforts by certain Western and regional countries to misname the Persian Gulf, Fars reported.

"Some are trying to eliminate the word Persian from the Persian Gulf; this is a childish act and they should admit that the Iranian nation has a glorious civilization," Ali Larijani said, addressing the closing ceremony of the 29th International Tehran Book Fair on Saturday.



Iran plans to file lawsuit against U.S. court at The Hague

**TEHRAN** — Iranian officials have decided to file a suit with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) following a recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court which authorized seizure of \$2 billion of Tehran's frozen assets deposited in an account at the City Bank of America.

Since Washington has already accepted the ICJ authority, the door is open for Iran to file a complaint against the ruling, IRNA reported on Saturday.

If Iran can present enough legal evidence to the court to prove that the country has nothing to do with the issue of terrorism, of which the U.S. court has accused Iran, then the door will be open for Tehran to restore its rights.



'Sectarian charges against Iran by Saudis is surprising'

**TEHRAN** — The Iranian political attaché at the UN has ridiculed an accusation by Saudi Arabia that Iran is promoting sectarianism.

"It is a wonder why Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of sectarianism while everybody knows where the Takfiri mode of thought emanates from and who implements it," Javad Safaei told the general debate of the UN Security Council on Friday, IRIB reported.

TASNIM

MEHR

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# Leader: Clerics should counter false and deviant thoughts



Recommending clerics to cherish values and responsibilities associated with being a cleric, Ayatollah Khamenei noted an unreligious society will face serious problems in this world and the hereafter.

"If all specializations demanded by a society are available in the best way possible, but the society is not religious, that nation will suffer losses in this world and the hereafter, and it behooves Ulema and clerics to turn the society into a religious one."

The Leader said clerics in their "religious guidance" role should explain "pure Islamic thoughts".

He also pointed to the role of the virtual world in fueling religious ambiguities and their underlying political motives, saying, "The field is a real battlefield and equipped and prepared clergymen and seminary students should enter the scene of countering false and deviant thoughts and ambiguities."

The Supreme Leader gave "the re-



actionary, bigoted Islam without understanding spiritual realities and superficial inanition" as a real manifestation of deviant thoughts, noting, "At the other blade of the scissor, the eclectic Islam and American Islam are battling the pure Islam."

■ Understanding pure Islam based on Holy Quran and tradition is clergymen's important mission

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader referred to "understanding the pure Islam based on the Quran and tradition" as an important duty of clergymen via Islamic

logic and thoughts, saying practical guidance of people is complementary to their intellectual guidance.

Pointing to strengthening inherited beliefs of people, Ayatollah Khamenei called for rectifying the beliefs which may have atrophied over the course of time through "correct reasoning."

On political guidance as another key responsibility of clergymen, Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the significant role of "revolutionary seminaries" as it guarantees the continuity of the revolution in the right path.

Referring to Americans' attempts to purge clergymen from the very beginning of the 1979 revolution, he stated that by doing this they aimed to abort the revolution.

As the third main duty of clergymen, the Leader cited participation in the field of social services, underscoring clergymen's presence in providing people with social services, school- and hospital-building, emergency situations, and other areas will involve people.

## People should see JCPOA results: Zarif



potential and using foreign capacities economic prosperity can be achieved."

He added that the post-JCPOA condition, especially in economic areas, is more important than the JCPOA itself. However, he noted, a materialization of the people's expectations with the implementation of the JCPOA is time-consuming.

He added the Rouhani administration from the very beginning did not wait for the lifting of sanctions and it believed that sanctions "were not and will not be" the cause of all problems and therefore it revised financial and monetary policies.

Ambassadors must give "assurances" to the private sector of the countries in which they serve about importance of economic cooperation with Iran, the head of the presidential office suggested.

He said foreign economic entrepreneurs who are interested in the Iranian market should be "connected to

the private entrepreneurs" in Iran.

"For development of economic ties with the world all opportunities should be seized at the shortest time, however we should avoid haste in order to avoid a repetition of past mistakes so that our country would not be turned into a great consuming market."

■ 'Over \$3b in foreign direct investment have been attracted'

Management and Planning Organization director Mohammadreza Nobakht also said more than 3 billion dollars in direct foreign investment (FDI) have been attracted since the signing of the nuclear deal. Nobakht also said Iran's oil exports have more than doubled since the deal went into effect.

Nobakht also called on ambassadors to facilitate the flow of foreign investment in water, environment, and rail transport projects in accordance with the plans of the resistance economy.

## Zarif to visit Finland: ambassador

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Harri Esko Kamarainen, the Finnish ambassador to Tehran, said on Saturday that Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad

Zarif will take a trip to Finland in two weeks.

The visit will help expansion of economic ties, he said during a meeting with governor of Lorestan province.

Kamarainen also said that Finland is ready to expand cooperation with Iran in educational area. He added that big Finnish corpora-

tions are interested in investing in Iran.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran and Finland have had friendly relations and cooperation since past.

## Iranian officials offer condolences to Hezbollah over loss of top commander

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Senior Iranian officials have been offering their condolences to Hezbollah over the martyrdom of its top commander Mustafa Badreddine over the past days, showing strong ties between the movement and Iran.

Hezbollah's top military commander Mustafa Badreddine was martyred in a blast at a base near Damascus airport on Friday by artillery shells.

"Investigations have showed that the explosion, which targeted one of our bases near Damascus International Airport, and which led to the martyrdom of Commander Mustafa Badreddine, was the result of artillery bombardment carried out by takfiri groups in the area," Hezbollah said in a statement.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday wrote a letter of condolence to Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, relaying to him "that martyrdom

of this great commander Mustafa will further strengthen resistance forces against the Zionist and terrorism."

Hezbollah is fighting in Syria, backing the government of President Bashar al-Assad against a range of takfiri groups including Daesh and the al Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front.

Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani sent both condolences and congratulations to Hassan Nasrallah, saying, "That great martyr dedicated years of his life in the front line, battling the Zionist regime and their allies."

In the Islamic culture, people congratulate those who die in pursuit of sublime goals.

Also, Ali Akbar Velayati, top aide to the Supreme Leader, wrote to Nasrallah, saying the martyrdom of the commander will make Jihadi forces stronger in their resoluteness and resistance to stand up to plotters and the Zionist regime.

Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan also penned a condolence letter to the Hezbollah chief, saying, "There is no doubt that the blood of Mustafa Badreddine and oth-



## Germany is prepared to invite Rouhani

By staff and agency

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's government is prepared to invite Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Germany in a signal of support for improved ties with the Islamic republic, according to people familiar with the deliberations.

The government is now weighing an invite, though no date has been set for a prospective visit, Bloomberg reported.

While the Foreign Ministry favors inviting Rouhani to Berlin, the government has stopped short of issuing an

invitation amid opposition from members of Merkel's bloc, who warn against sending the wrong signal to Israel, a German ally.

European nations are flocking to invest in Iran after last year's global nuclear accord led to a lifting of sanctions on trade and finance in return for the country scaling back its nuclear program.

Rouhani skirted the German capital in a tour of Europe in January, when he visited Paris and Rome, announcing deals with companies including Airbus Group

SE and carmaker PSA Group. Rouhani unexpectedly canceled a state visit to Austria at the end of March, citing security reasons. German Economy Minister and Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, who heads Merkel's Social Democratic Party coalition partner, sent his deputy to Tehran earlier this month.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a fellow Social Democrat, raised the possibility of a Rouhani visit to Europe's biggest economy when he met with the Iranian president in Tehran in February.



# ISIL terrorists raid western Iraqi city, kill six

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists have launched attacks in a town in Iraq's western Anbar Province, killing at least six people.

The police chief of the town of Am-riyat Fallujah, Col. Ali al-Issawi, said on Saturday that the victims — a civilian and five security forces — were killed when 14 ISIL terrorists launched coordinated raids at military, government and residential buildings in the town.

Al-Issawi said five of the attackers blew themselves up while clashing with security forces, and nine others who had been holed up inside buildings were later killed by security forces.

He added that another 18 people were wounded in the attacks.

Earlier accounts by Iraqi security officials had reported fewer bombers, and the civilian death toll had been reported higher.

Large swathes of territory in western and northern Iraq have been under the control of ISIL since being overrun by the Takfiris in the summer of 2014.

Iraq's regular army troops as well as Popular Mobilization units are engaged in operations to liberate the city.

Iraqi forces have been making steady progress in western Iraq this year, retaking full control of Anbar Province's capital city, Ramadi, and liberating territories in several regions of the province.

Another ISIL stronghold is Mosul, the capital of Nineveh Province and the country's second largest city, which is located in northern Iraq.

The liberation of the strategic town of Fallujah would pave the way for the Ira-



qi leadership's long-anticipated offensive against ISIL in Mosul.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has pledged to put an end to the ISIL terrorist campaign by 2016.

■ **ISIL preventing Iraqi civilians from leaving Fallujah: Pentagon official**

Elsewhere, ISIL terrorist group is preventing civilians from leaving the embattled western Iraqi city of Fallujah, with its snipers targeting the humanitarian corridors established by Iraqi security forces.

Colonel Steve Warren, a United States spokesman for the so-called anti-ISIL forces said on Friday that shooters from the extremist network are stopping dwellers of Fallujah, located roughly 69 kilometers (43 miles) west of the capital, Baghdad, from escaping the city amid

acute shortage of basic commodities and medicine.

"We know that the Iraqis have attempted on several occasions to open up humanitarian corridors to allow some of those civilians to come out," Warren said in a video call from Baghdad.

The U.S.-led alliance has been mounting air raids against so-called ISIL positions in Iraq since 2014, but the aerial campaign, which has taken a heavy toll on Iraqi civilians and infrastructure, has done little to uproot the terror group.

There have also been numerous reports that U.S. aircraft even support the terrorist group by dropping weapons and ammunition to them in the areas under their control.

The Pentagon official further noted that Iraqi government troopers have tried to establish three corridors, but have all been deserted because of the presence of snipers.

The report comes as Takfiri terrorists have reportedly executed nearly a dozen civilians in Iraq's beleaguered northern province of Nineveh.

The spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Mosul, Saeed Mamouzini, said ISIL killed 11 residents of the militant-held city, located some 400 kilometers (248 miles) north of the capital, Baghdad, for using mobile phones.

Mamouzini added that the victims came from al-Tahrir neighborhood of Mosul, and ISIL terrorists executed the victims by firing squad in a militant base.

United Nations Special Representative for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Jan Kubis told the UN Security Council on May 7 that more than 50 mass graves have been found in various parts of Iraq after retaking the areas from ISIL terrorists.

Late last April, ISIL members executed 250 women in Mosul after the victims did not accept a proposal to temporarily marry the militants.

The northern and western parts of Iraq have been plagued by gruesome violence ever since ISIL terrorists mounted their offensive in June 2014.

Iraqi army soldiers and fighters from allied Popular Mobilization Units are seeking to win back militant-held regions in joint operations.

(Source: Press TV)

## UN panel warns against 'excessive force' by Israel

A United Nations panel against torture has expressed concerns about allegations of "excessive use of force", including deadly force, by Israeli security forces in Palestinian areas, and warned authorities about barring access to detained suspects, including minors.

The Committee Against Torture, which works under the office of the United Nations human rights chief, released its "concluding observations" about Israel and five other countries as part of regular reviews by the panel.

The panel, which generally conducts reviews of assenting countries every four or five years, does not have investigative or fact-finding powers of its own and relies mostly on information from the media, advocacy groups, UN and other sources in drawing up its findings.

In a 12-page segment on Israel, the committee pointed to "allegations of excessive use of force, including lethal force, by security forces" at demonstrations, in response to attacks or alleged attacks against Israelis and

it took aim at Israel's controversial policy of administrative detention, under which it can arrest suspects and hold them without charge for months at a time.

■ **Administrative detention**

The committee said 700 people - including 12 minors - were reportedly in administrative detention even as its members were discussing the issue with Israeli officials. Panel co-chairman Jens Modvig of Denmark said administrative detentions can last "for months or even years", with almost no access to those detained.

The committee also said that it was "gravely concerned that solitary confinement and separation can be applied to minors".

Israel has defended the system of administrative detention as a necessary tool in preventing Palestinian attacks.

Human rights groups and Palestinians have alleged that Israeli forces have often been quick to pull the trig-



ger, rather than trying to subdue suspects.

Palestinian officials say the violence is the result of despair living under Israeli occupation and frustration over the prospect of ever reaching statehood.

(Source: agencies)

## London Mayor Sadiq Khan wants to 'educate' Trump on Islam

London's new Mayor Sadiq Khan would welcome presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump to London to "educate" him about Islam and its compatibility with Western values.

In an interview with NBC News on Friday, the son of a Pakistani immigrant bus driver said Trump's "ignorant" views on Islam were "inadvertently playing into the hands of extremists" who prey on young Muslims.

"To suggest that it's incompatible to be Western and to be Muslim is, I think, really, really risky," Khan said during a visit to a London elementary school.

Real-estate mogul and reality TV star Trump in December suggested a temporary ban on all Muslims entering the United States after a deadly mass shooting in San Bernardino that officials said was inspired by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Trump's proposal triggered widespread criticism and condemnation from

global political and religious leaders.

"I want Donald Trump to come to London so I can introduce myself to him as a mainstream Muslim, very, very comfortable with Western liberal values, but also introduce him to hundreds of thousands, dare I say millions of Muslims in this country, who love being British, love being Western."

"I want to educate Donald Trump. I want to show him that you can be Muslim and be Western," said Khan, who was sworn-in on May 7.

Trump this week said his proposed ban on Muslims entering the U.S. was "only a suggestion" and told the New York Times that he was "happy" about Khan's election.

He also told the Times that the Khan could be an exception to the ban.

Khan has rejected Trump's exemption, and said he will try to visit the U.S. before the November presidential election.

Goldsmith, a member of Britain's ruling Conservative party, has been ac-



cused of running a divisive campaign that aimed to link Khan to religious extremists.

Khan has condemned Goldsmith's campaign as coming "straight out of the Donald Trump playbook" and said his election could provide lessons for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clin-

ton.

He thanked Americans for their messages of support, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, who were quick to congratulate Khan on his election win.

(Source: NBC NEWS)

## Hezbollah: Badreddine martyred in extremists shelling

The Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah, says its top military commander Mustafa Badreddine was killed by terrorist groups in Syria, adding his death will boost the movement's resolve to fight the extremist militants.

In a statement released on Saturday, Hezbollah said investigation shows that Badreddine's death was caused by artillery shelling by the militants near the Damascus International Airport.

"Investigations have showed that the explosion, which targeted one of our bases ..., and which led to the martyrdom of ... Badreddine, was the result of artillery bombardment carried out by Takfiri groups in the area," the statement read.

Badreddine's killing will only boost Hezbollah's "will and intention to continue fighting these criminal gangs," the statement added.

It emphasized that the Lebanese resistance move-



ment is engaged in a war against the United States and the Israeli regime, with terrorist groups active on the frontline.

Hezbollah fighters are combating alongside the

Syrian government forces against a range of terrorist groups operating in the war-torn country, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) and the al-Qaeda-affiliated al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra).

On Friday, Hezbollah announced Badreddine's death and held a military funeral for him in southern Beirut.

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

Badreddine also directed military operations against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and was a frequent target of attempts by Tel Aviv, Washington and its allies 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.

(Source: Al Manar)

### NEWS

## ISIL terrorists secretly treated at Turkish hospital

Four wounded Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists have been treated at the Ersin Arslan regional hospital, located in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, an unnamed source told Sputnik. They were admitted on May 5, the medical worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity, added.

One of them, named Bagur Ferhad, is an Afghan national born in 1993, the source said.

"I examined Daesh (ISIL) fighters. They had gunshot wounds. None of them received life-threatening injuries," the medical worker detailed.

Earlier, Turkish forces opened fire when a group of foreign fighters tried to cross into Syria near O?uzeli, a city in the Gaziantep province. Three militants were killed, 11 were injured. Four of them were brought to the Ersin Arslan regional hospital. No record of their stay has been made.

"I think that the hospital's authorities don't want the public to find out that these people received medical treatment here. Doctors and health workers working here don't want to treat Daesh fighters. Some of the doctors come from Kilis, a town that is daily shelled from Syrian territories under Daesh control," the source explained.

The Gaziantep province shares a 50-kilometer-long border with Syria. Its capital city, located less than 100 kilometers north of Aleppo, has long served as a staging post for those, who wanted to fight in the war-torn Arab country.

■ **Syria seizes Turkish-made arms, medicines from terrorists**

Elsewhere, the Syrian army has killed all members of a terrorist group affiliated with al-Nusra Front, confiscating Turkish-constructed ammunition and medicines from the militants.

An unnamed Syrian military source told the official SANA news agency on Saturday that the incident took place on a road to the Qantara village in the southern countryside of the western province of Hama.

The source said the terrorists were slain during a special operation conducted by a unit of the Syrian army.

In a video released by Russia's RT television network on Friday, Syrian intelligence forces said they have captured a haul of medical supplies near Aleppo City that came from Turkey and was destined for ISIL elements in the Iraqi city of Mosul.

A staunch opponent of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the Turkish government has long been providing support to Takfiri terrorist groups operating to topple the government in Damascus.

Reports say Turkey actively trains and arms the Takfiri terrorists operating in Syria and facilitates their safe passage into the war-torn country.

In May 2015, the Turkish daily Cumhuriyet posted a video on its website that purportedly showed trucks belonging to Turkey's National Intelligence Organization, also known as the MIT, carrying weapons to the terror groups in Syria.

■ **Ankara routinely ignores terrorist cross-border activity**

The development follows as Thousands of ISIL terrorist group associates have been routinely crossing into Syria aided by contacts in Turkey, phone calls tapped by Ankara security forces and handed to the media by opposition MP Erem Erdem reveal. He accuses the government of a massive cover-up.

Transcribed phone recordings belonging to Ilhami Bali, well known in ISIL ranks and suspected of staging high-profile bomb attacks in Ankara and the mainly-Kurdish border city of Suruc, detail the lack of control along the Syrian Turkish border. The 98-kilometer (61-mile) stretch of border has only two crossings, the Jarablus and Al Rai entry points across from Turkey's Gaziantep and Kilis.

Pressured by the international community to impose stricter border controls to stem the flood of militants into Syria, Ankara has been erecting walls at key crossing points, but to no avail as surveillance data from the Municipality of Ankara Provincial Security Department revealed.

The transcripts of the recordings have been passed on to the media by Turkish opposition politician, Eren Erdem of the Republican People's Party (CHP), who is facing a witch-hunt from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government over his repeated allegations of massive cover-up of IS activity on Turkish soil.

While daily logs by the Turkish Armed Forces reveal that Turkish security forces apprehended 961 ISIL members from 57 countries in 2015, the alleged reality exposed by the Erdem leak, shows that thousands of ISIL fighters and their family members cross the Turkish border from Syria on a daily basis. But even those who get arrested on the Turkish side are often released at the crossing points.

For instance several documents suggest that ISIL coordinators helped some 1,400 people cross the Turkish border from September 22 - October 17. In one of the phone conversations, Ilhami Bali asked his interlocutor named Erkek, who according to the conversations helps smuggle people, the exact number of persons he has helped cross the border.

Turkey has time and again been accused of aiding and abetting militant groups operating in Syria with reports saying that Ankara actively trains and arms the Takfiri militants there, and facilitates their safe passage into the country. Ankara has also been accused of buying smuggled oil from ISIL.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Stafan de Mistura estimates that over 400,000 people have been killed in the conflict, which has also displaced over half of the country's pre-war population of about 23 million

(Source: agencies)

NEWS

## Turkish, Belgian companies to cooperate in building 5 power plants in Iran

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Energy companies from Turkey and Belgium have formed a consortium to collaborate for construction of five combined-cycle power plants in Iran, the Managing Director of Iran's Thermal Power Plant Holding Mohsen Tarz-Talab announced on Saturday.

As IRNA quoted him saying, the intended plants with the capacity of 5,000 megawatts are at the value of \$3 billion and would be the first projects running on foreign investments in this sector.

"Primary negotiations which led in signing the regarded agreement were conducted almost a year ago and the process was accelerated after the implementation of Iran's nuclear deal with the six world powers in January," he added.

Earlier in March, Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Didier Reynders told Anadolu Agency that "with the lifting of the embargo on Iran, there will be many changes in the energy sector and we will see new investments in the country. Turkish and Belgian companies are already co-operating in a number of projects."

## HSBC criticizes John Kerry over business with Iran request

HSBC has criticized the U.S. secretary of state, John Kerry, for asking European banks to do more business with Iran while Washington continues to restrict American financial firms from doing the same.

The bank's chief legal officer, Stuart Levey, said HSBC had no intention of doing any new business with Iran after a meeting in London on Thursday in which Kerry urged a gathering of European bankers to make a push into the country.

The US and European Union lifted sanctions against Iran in January. Despite this, the banking industry remains fearful of large financial fines, - the threat of losing crucial licenses to operate in the U.S., for falling foul of regulations.

HSBC was fined £1.2bn by the U.S. in 2012 for money laundering offences in relation to Mexico while Standard Chartered was fined more than £400m for breaching sanctions with Iran. In 2014, French bank BNP Paribas was fined more than £5.2bn for breaching U.S. sanctions.

At Thursday's meeting, Kerry had told representatives from all the major European banks that he wanted to "clarify and put to rest misinterpretations or mere rumors about how [the deal] is applied".

(Source: Guardian)

# Tunisia seeking Iran's experience in power sector

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Tunisian Minister of Energy and Mines Mongi Marzouk met with Iranian Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian, in Tehran on Saturday, voicing interest in using Iran's experience and expertise in energy sector.

In a meeting held in Iran's Ministry of Energy building in Tehran, Chitchian and his Tunisian counterpart explored the grounds of cooperation between the two countries in energy sector.

Addressing the press after his meeting with Chitchian, the Tunisian minister said, "Since Tunisia's electricity demand is growing, we need to collaborate with Iranian companies to see to this demand".

Marzouk also noted that considering Iran's progress in the field of electricity generation, they have scheduled some meetings with Iranian companies to explore the grounds of cooperation.

"The cooperation of Iranian and Tu-



Tunisian Minister of Energy and Mines Mongi Marzouk (R) visited Iranian Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian in Tehran on Saturday.

nian companies in this regard could strengthen the economic relations between the two countries "he added.

Marzouk also mentioned Iran's plans regarding renewable energies and said,

"In Tunisia's outlook for 2030, 30 percent of electricity generation is seen to be from renewable energies like wind and we have been investigating ways of cooperation in this field, too."

"Considering Iran's experience and expertise in this regard and knowing that Iranian wind farms meet all the global standards, we hope to use Iranian companies' experiences in this area", he added.

### Iranian companies ready to renovate Tunisian power plants'

Chitchian, for his part, said that Iranian companies are ready to cooperate with Tunisian counterparts in various fields including renovation of power plants, generating electricity from renewable resources and via combined-cycle power plants and also providing them with technical and engineering services.

He went on saying, "This is the first time that the Tunisian energy minister visits Iran, we have explored various spheres for co-operation and during this visit a number of meetings have been scheduled for the minister to negotiate further cooperation with Iranian companies."

## Iran, Kyrgyzstan sign 4 MOUs on economic cooperation

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran and Kyrgyzstan signed four memorandums of understanding (MOU) on economic cooperation during the 11th meeting of Iran-Kyrgyzstan Joint Economic Committee in Bishkek, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Signed by Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhoundi and his Kyrgyz counterpart Aydarov Zamirbek Kazakbaevich, the cooperation documents focused on establishment of an investment joint council, combating money laundering, energy cooperation, ten-year economic cooperation, boosting mutual trade, holding common exhibitions, backing foreign investments and providing incentives for applicant investors,

extraterritorial cultivation, as well as further educational and scientific cooperation.

The Iranian minister also visited Kyrgyzstan's President Almazbek Atambayev and some other Kyrgyz senior officials during his stay.

The 10th meeting of Iran-Kyrgyzstan Joint Cooperation Committee was held in Tehran five years ago.

Iran and Kyrgyzstan have expanded their bilateral ties and mutual cooperation in different fields since independence of the Central Asian state in the 1990s.

In June 2015, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in a meeting with the new Kyrgyz Ambassador to Tehran, Asanbeyk Osman Aliyev, underlined the need for further expansion of Tehran-Bishkek relations.

## Tehran, Tokyo negotiating co-op in water, wastewater industries

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Second Iran-Japan Joint Conference on Water and Wastewater Industry opened on Saturday in Tehran in the presence of Iranian Deputy Minister of Energy Sattar Mahmoudi and Japanese Ambassador to Iran Hiroyasu Kobayashi.

As IRNA reported, Iranian private sector companies besides representative from nine Japanese companies such as Swing Corporation, Yokogawa Electric Corporation, Kubota Corporation, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, Mitsubishi Rayon, Asahi and Toei are participating in the two-day event.

The conference aims at founding a permanent secretariat for joint cooperation on water and wastewater, introducing the capabilities of the nine Japanese companies participating in the event

and having Iranian companies familiarized with them, attracting Japanese investors to Iranian water projects on the way to transfer knowledge and implementing joint projects, developing desalination systems, improving wastewater treatment plants, localizing Japanese companies' advanced technologies in Iran, improving Iranian managers and experts' knowledge by holding training courses and etc.

In February, Japan and Iran signed a bilateral investment pact in a bid to give Japanese firms an edge in the global rush for access to the resource-rich nation.

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida signed the pact with Iran's visiting Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ali Tayyebnia during a ceremony in Tokyo.

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# Some wild underwater adventures

Back away from the brochures touting captive dolphin excursions and get on our level. We've uncovered reef trails, long lost cities and the Pacific Ocean's equally unsettling answer to the Bermuda Triangle. So pack your new suit and get your playlist ready; we've got oceans to explore.

## ■ Go on an underwater scavenger hunt: All around the world

Signing up for Geocaching – the world's biggest game of scavenger hunt – is easier than ordering Seamless (and much more fulfilling). Put in your email and set up a password, and suddenly at your fingertips is an endless bounty of coordinates, riddles, and hints leading to hidden treasures. While most caches are on land, dive caches are lurking in waters around the world.

There's the Jellyfish Lake – Ongeim'l Tketau cache on the southern end of the Palau archipelago (nestled between the Philippines and Micronesia), and the Captain Jacques Yves Cousteau cache at the Avalon Underwater Park in Catalina, California. Coordinates and clues should be enough for you to find your target, but hint: you can always cheat a little by reading through comments and reviews.

## ■ Sleep with the fish at Atlantis: The Palm, Dubai

That one was just too easy; but no, we don't mean in the scary Godfather way you're now imagining...we're talking about spending the night at a 5-star luxury resort. Floor-to-ceiling glass windows in the bedroom and bathroom of the Atlantis' underwater Poseidon and Neptune suites spell out epic views of the Ambassador Lagoon Aquarium's native Arabian rays, sharks, and angelfish.

The regal digs have pleased the likes of the Kardashian clan, so if the view, the complimentary 24-karat gold flake soap, and an around-the-clock dedicated butler don't have you feeling ritzy enough, we'd really love to see where you live.

## ■ Visit Europe's first underwater museum: Museo Atlantico, Lanzarote, Spain

British artist Jason deCaires Taylor –



Mail a waterproof postcard at an underwater post office in hideaway Island, Vanuatu

creator of the Museo Subacuático de Arte in Cancún and the Molinere Underwater Sculpture Park in Western Grenada – is back at it again, this time with Europe's premier underwater museum: Museo Atlantico. The newly-sunk displays include the Raft of Lampedusa, a haunting lifeboat piled with 13 hyperrealistic refugees, and The Rubicon, 35 figures frozen in time, walking towards a wall that the artist calls a point of no return (climate change, anyone?).

Taylor's pieces are more than just politically eye-opening, they're also functioning as artificial reefs, rehabilitating and regenerating the sea bed. We're not saying you have to go and support the cause...but it is what Leonardo Dicaprio would want (and isn't that what we all want?).

## ■ Take a mermaid class: Boracay, Philippines

Whether you're new to mermaiding or have already invested in a splashy custom tail, the Philippine Mermaid Swimming Academy is ready to make you a veritable siren. Mermaids, mermen and criminally-adorable merchildren can hone their duck diving, handstanding, dolphin kicking and mermaid kissing skills with group classes, private lessons, or a scuba session.

There are also options for mer-poseurs – those interested more in the flaxen-haired, shimmering mermaid aesthetic than the physically demanding dives. A 30-minute session with a personal photographer and pose instructor will ensure that you flood your friends' feeds with

stunning shots.

## ■ Dive to Yonaguni, the Japanese Atlantis: Yaeyama Islands, Japan

With pillars, walls, platforms and a whole bunch of intriguingly perfect right angles, the submerged rock formations of Yonaguni have led observers to question whether or not they were naturally formed or totally man-made. The site has been so hotly debated that the History Channel devoted an entire episode of Ancient Aliens to it.

Could this be the remains of a primitive civilization terrorized by a Pacific Rim tsunami? Or maybe just an impressively geometric, yet entirely organic rockbed? If you need to see the 5,000-year-old complex up close before you come to any conclusions, Inside Japan Tours will take you on a dive 60 feet under the ocean's surface and right into Dragon's Triangle – an area known for bizarre phenomena.

## ■ Mail a waterproof postcard at an underwater post office: Hideaway Island, Vanuatu

It's the ultimate vaca humblebrag: mailing friends and family a waterproof postcard from the world's only underwater post office. At the Hideaway Island Resort & Marine Sanctuary in Port Vila, scuba divers, snorkelers, and generally strong swimmers can send mail domestically or internationally by dipping 3 meters below the surface. Just pop your postcard in the submerged mailbox, or hand it to a postal worker who mans the tiny office a couple hours each day.

## ■ Night snorkel with Manta Rays: Kona Coast, Hawaii

Off the Kona Coast on Hawaii's Big Island, manta rays playfully taunt divers and snorkelers. Since visitors are given express instruction not to pet the rays, the intelligent creatures indulge in a little you-can-look-but-you-can't-touch jest, swimming within inches of contact before gracefully gliding away. Though the sassy behemoths are out all day, everyday (there is no peak season), the best time to catch them is at night, when illuminated by spotlights, the 20-foot rays come out to feast on plankton.

## ■ Dive to the ruins of Parco Archeologico Sommerso di Baia: Pozzuoli, Italy

Poor Italy has had its fair share of debilitating volcano encounters, and Baia makes the country's list of civilizations lost. Once a thriving resort town – favored by Roman hotshots Nero, Cicero, and Caesar – Baia met its watery fate in the 14th century.

The city's major draw – its medicinal hot springs – also happened to be its downfall, as the natural volcanic vents on which it sat swallowed it into the sea. Today, divers can peruse the remaining ruins to get a better picture of the underwater Pompeii's bygone glory. Highlights include the Villa Pro-tiro with its black and white tiles laid out in hexagonal patterns, and the Sunken Nymphaeum with its thermal baths and reconstructed marble effigies.

## ■ Play Jenga at the clear lounge underwater oxygen bar: Cozumel, Mexico

If you're more of a pool person than an open water person, we've got options for you, too. In Cozumel, hit the pool at the Clear Lounge O2 Bar where you'll be fitted with a high-tech Sea TREK helmet that keeps you dry from the shoulders up and pumps out a steady stream of aromatherapy-infused oxygen (take your pick of peppermint, citrus, lavender, jasmine, piña colada, appletini or fuzzy navel).

Float around at your leisure, shoot bubble guns, grab some props for the underwater photo booth, grab a magnetic writing board to communicate with others, or play a game of Jenga.

(Source: Trip Advisor)

## A CLOSER LOOK

### Things you should always pack

Don't you dare leave for your next trip without packing these vacation-saving essentials. They're all readily available, and will keep you comfortable, prepared, and ready for anything vacation can throw your way.

#### ■ Copies of all travel documents

Picture this: You're having the time of your life in a far-off land, maybe so much fun that you notice your purse or wallet is no longer in your possession until it's too late. It's gone, and with it your cash, credit cards, and most alarmingly, your passport.

Before you leave, make sure to have a readily available copy of your passport, whether a photocopy in your suitcase, a scanned version on your phone or in your email account, or a copy left with a trusted loved one back home who can email it to you in a pinch. This copy will make for a speedier replacement of your travel documents at a local consulate office.

#### ■ Contact info for credit cards

Keep a running tab of the credit cards in your wallet, plus the cards' customer service numbers in case your cards are lost or stolen and you need to freeze transactions. The cash in your wallet may be long gone, but at least you won't have to finance a thief's credit-card shopping spree.

#### ■ First aid kit

You never know when you're going to need a first aid kit in a hurry. For example, my daughter went horseback riding on the beach in Nicaragua, totally unaware that she had developed a severe (but thankfully, non-deadly) allergy to horses. Within minutes, she was covered in rashes, her throat had tightened, and her eyes were so inflamed that her contact lenses popped out. Moral of the story, be prepared for most first-responder ails with epi pens, stomach-relief pills, antibacterial cream, and other first aid kit basics.

#### ■ Plastic bags

A plastic bag is an indispensable packing item for smart travelers. Pack a few and use them to separate dirty from clean clothes in your suitcase, to take to the farmers' market, or for soiled items.

Depending on your budget, you can invest in heavy-duty vacuum or compression bags, or simply pick up a box of freezer bags (not just regular zip-top bags) for just a few bucks. I've found Ziploc-brand bags as large as two gallons on the grocery aisle shelves.

#### ■ Wet wipes

Every parent knows not to leave home without them. From wiping the fold-down tray on the plane to refreshing your dirty hands, wipes are another must-pack travel item—and one that is readily available at most pharmacies and grocery stores.

For facial wipes, quality and pricing runs the gamut, but it's easy to find good quality wipes at a decent price. I like L'Occitane at \$12 per pack and Burt's Bees at just under \$15 for a two-pack bundle.

(Source: Smarter Travel)

## Head of Endowments and Charity Affairs Org.:

# resorting to Holy Quran, an honor for Islamic Iran



Organizing Quranic competitions in Iran will frustrate malicious plots of enemies of the Islamic Iran and also will anger enemies of the country.

Head of Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization and Leader's representative Hojjatoleslam Ali Mohammadi announced the above statement prior to the Friday prayers' sermon this week and clarified the programs at 33rd Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran.

He put the number of participants in this round of competitions at 130, comprised of 57 reciters, 57 memorizers and also 16 virtually-impaired activists in the

field of memorization of the Holy book.

He pointed to the motto of the current competitions as "One Book, One Ummah" and said: "Holy Quran considers Muslims as a single Ummah and invites people to spread peace and justice as well as unity and amity among themselves."

Dissemination of Quranic culture in society is one of the main duties of the Islamic Republic of Iran, eh said, adding: "Supreme Leader of the Islamic revolution has focused on disseminating culture of Quran in society."

It is hoped that Quranic culture will be spread across the society among all walks of life, he ended.

## Official Reveals Upbringing 1,259,000 Memorizers in comprehensive Quranic Memorization Plan

Cultural and Social Deputy of Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization Hojjatoleslam Sharafkhani pointed to the upbringing of 1,259,000 memorizers of the Holy Quran in a nationwide plan dubbed "Training Memorizers of the Holy Quran" and said: "Recitation of software research of Master Karim Mansouri was unveiled in this prestigious Quranic competition for the first time in world."

In a commemoration ceremony of top memorizers of Nationwide Holy Quran Memorizers' Plan, Sharafkhani pointed to one of strategies adopted by supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in 1390

(ended March 20, 2013) in the field of upbringing and training 10-15 million Holy Quran memorizers in the Islamic Iran and said: "With the coordination made in this regard, Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization and Leader's representative were obliged to embark on upbringing one million memorizers of the Holy Quran in different categories across the country during four years i.e. from 2012 to 2015.

Turning to the capacity of each city and province and also number of endowed properties as well as Quranic institutions, he said: "In 2012, 220,000, 314,000, 327,000 and 389,000 people registered and en-

rolled their names in Nationwide Holy Quran Memorizers Plan in 1391 (ended March 20, 2013), 1392 (ended March 20, 2014), 1393 (ended March 20, 2015) and 1394 (ended March 19, 2016) respectively.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the implementation of the said plan in prisons across the country and said: "With the coordination made in this regard with the Cultural Deputy of the Prisons' Organization, top memorizers and trainers were dispatched to offer quality training services to the applicants."

In general, a number of 16,000 prisoners participated in this comprehensive plan, details of which brought about a sea change in



activities of the prisons, he maintained.

In the end of his remarks, Cultural Deputy of Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization Hojjatoleslam Sharafkhani said: "Recitation software of assembly research of Master Karim Mansouri, which is unique of its kind in world, will be unveiled in this edition of competition. This masterpiece of Master Karim Mansouri will be provided available to all public in the form of two DVDs as free of charge."

## Veteran cinema and stage actors, actresses and athletes attend 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl. Competitions of Holy Quran

A number of veteran and distinguished cinema actors including *Mehran Rajabi, Mahmoud Paak-Niyat, Mehdi Faqih, Dariush Arjomand, Majid Majidi, Jamal Shourjeh and Hassan Joharchi* attended the 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl Competitions of the Holy Quran held in Imam Khomeini (RA) Mosalla in Tehran.

In addition, veteran Iranian actress Fariba Kowsari also attended the prestigious Quranic ceremony.

It is worth mentioning that veteran cinema and stage actor Mehdi Faqih conducted an interview on the sidelines of the competition and said: "It is a great honor for me that my family members have established very close relationship



with the Holy Quran."

He went on to say that his wife in cooperation with neighbors hold Quranic sessions and

welcome Quranic lovers with open arms.

Casted in popular Quranic TV serial dubbed "*Virgin Mary*", he pointed to

the key role of Holy Book in life of all walks of life and said: "When we look into the grandeur of the Holy Quran, all problems facing human life are alleviated under the auspices of sublime recommendations of the Book."

Holy Quran's statements have been uttered by the Almighty God, he said, adding: "The Book has been revealed to the humanity by the great Prophet of Islam Hazrat Muhammad (S) for guidance of people."

Another figure named Hossein Rezazadeh, distinguished and international athlete and world champion was among other personalities who attended the ceremony of 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran.

## "Mina" mishap case to be followed up in 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl. Competitions of Holy Quran decisively

Last year during annual gathering of Hajj rites and rituals, scores of Iranian pilgrims attained martyrdom in Mina Tragedy and caused anger and wrath in the Islamic world.

Given the above issue, symbol of House of God (Ka'aba) and images of "Mina" tragedy were unveiled at the exhibition held on the sidelines of 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran to commemorate the name and memory of Iranian pilgrims who lost their lives in this stampede.

In tandem with high significance of current year's Quranic competitions, it was decided that the issue of "Mina" tragedy would be followed up strictly which is a human catastrophe took place in last year's Hajj rites and rituals.



## Families of nine martyred Quranic activists honored at 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl. Competitions of Holy Quran

In a glorious ceremony held on the sidelines of 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran, families of nine Quranic activists were commemorated in the presence of Head of Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization and Leader's representative Hojjatoleslam Ali Mohammadi, Head of Quranic Affairs of the Organization Hosseini, distinguished and prominent international reciter Shahriar Parhizgar, Head of Quran and Etrat (Progeny) Organization Rahim Qorbani.

It should be noted that this prestigious ceremony was held on May 13, based on which, family of martyr Ayatollah Mo'ayyedi Qomi was honored with awarding Plaque of Honor and valuable prize.

In addition, family of martyrs Mohammad and Reza Sakhavati, Morteza and Mostafa Ne'mati Jam', Mohammad and Hossein Samyari and Davood and Majid Keshkari were honored separately.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Intl. Competitions of the Holy Quran is run from May 7-11, 2016 in congregational prayers site (Mosalla of Imam Khomeini (RA) with the participation of renowned reciters and memorizers from more than 70 countries.



# Why Brexit would be the perfect gift for Vladimir Putin



## ARTICLE

**Garry Kasparov**

Former world chess champion

Politics often makes for strange bedfellows. Far-right parties in the UK and across Europe push for anything that will weaken the European Union – a goal shared by Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump. Last week,

their fellow Brexiteer Boris Johnson went as far as to repeat the Kremlin line that Europe is partly to blame for Putin's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

One does not expect clear policy statements from Trump or Johnson, but Putin's reasoning is irrefutable. His goal is to weaken the institutions, including NATO and the EU that could thwart his neo-Soviet ambitions. The Kremlin was in mourning when Scotland narrowly voted to stay in the UK. Putin sees Europe as his enemy and wants his adversaries to be divided,

smaller and weaker.

Divide and conquer isn't new, but that doesn't mean it isn't effective. During his 16 years in power, Putin has done a good job of picking off the weakest, most pliable members from the herd of European leaders and using them as a wedge against a united Europe. He had Silvio Berlusconi, who boasted he was Putin's personal advocate. He had Gerhard Schröder – and in fact still has him as chairman of the Nord Stream gas pipeline connecting Russia to Germany, which Schröder signed into



effect as German chancellor.

Brexit isn't simply an item on Putin's wish list. Russia Today and Sputnik, Kremlin propaganda outlets that are inexplicably treated as legitimate news sources in the west, are full of Brexit articles (next to the pro-Trump ones).

### ■ Divisive elements

Putin always supports the most divisive elements in European politics, and hopes they will repay the favor by voting to end the EU sanctions placed on Russia after his invasion of Ukraine.

→9

# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

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14<sup>th</sup> Fl., 250 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn, Tehran view, nice balcony, nice lobby, SPJ, **Diplomatic Bldg.,** price: 6000 USD **Negotiable**  
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## Occasion

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2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., 120 sq.m, 2 bdrs, fully furn, completely renovated, **1300 USD**  
**Diba: 09128103206**

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# Details emerge on global bank heists by hackers

New details emerged on Friday about a pair of related attacks on banks that use the Swift message service, which allows financial firms and companies to transfer payments around the world.

Computer security researchers briefed on the investigation into one of the attacks, on the Bangladesh Bank, raised several theories about the crime, including the possibility that groups from Pakistan and North Korea may have been spying on the bank. Other analysts investigating the attacks said there were striking similarities between the "multiple bespoke tools" used by the hackers in both the banking cases and the attack on Sony Pictures in 2014.

The latest breach detailed by Swift in a letter to its users on Friday occurred at a commercial bank that appeared, according to a leading online security firm BAE Systems on Friday, to be located in Vietnam.

That attack and the \$81 million heist from the Bangladesh central bank account at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in February are thought to be part of a broad assault on the global banking system by thieves whose operating methods and digital fingerprints are being studied carefully by analysts worldwide.

In both attacks on banks, the intruders obtained legitimate credentials to sign in to the Swift network. They initiated fraudulent money transfers, then covered their tracks using tailor-made malware.

Swift, an acronym for the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication, is a global banking consortium that operates a secure and trusted network that sends payment instructions between banks across international borders. In the predictable finger-pointing that has followed the news of the attacks, Swift has pointed out that its core network was not hacked — just the end points at which the banks tap into it — and the New York Fed has reiterated that it followed all proper procedures.

Investigators briefed on the investigation at the Bangladesh central bank say that they had uncovered the presence of three groups of intruders inside the bank's systems: two nations — Pakistan and North Korea — and a third, unidentified group of digital criminals thought to have siphoned the funds from the bank to accounts in the Philippines.

Also on Friday, two forensics investigators at BAE Systems outlined evidence that suggested similarities between the Bangladesh heist and a 2014 attack against Sony Pictures that law enforcement and intelligence agencies in the United States have traced to North Korea. The investigators pointed to specialized, identical tools



— including identical encryption keys, file names and a highly unusual data deletion technique — that were used in the attack on Sony Pictures, the Bangladesh central bank and the Vietnamese bank.

However, people briefed on the actual investigation at the Bangladesh bank, who would speak only on the condition that they not be named, said that while the same tools were present inside Bangladesh's systems, suggesting any link between that heist and the North Korean hackers would be premature.

Large banks in the United States and Europe, which are part owners of Swift, have been monitoring the developments and are studying whether they need to adjust

any of their defenses to guard against similar intrusions.

In the heist at Bangladesh Bank, the thieves used the stolen credentials to authorize the transfer of \$951 million from the central bank's account at the New York Fed.

The Fed approved five of the payments to accounts in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. As far as the bank employees in the United States could tell, the payment requests had been authenticated by Swift.

The New York officials relied entirely on Swift to authenticate the transfers, according to a letter from the New York Fed that Ms. Maloney's office released on Friday. It does not independently vet other users on the Swift network.

The New York Fed withheld an additional 30 requested transfers from Bangladesh because one address that was supposed to receive a payment contained the same name as a ship known for smuggling activity, the person briefed on the matter said.

It turned out the address and the smuggling ship were unrelated, but that was enough to raise the New York Fed's concerns. When they couldn't reconfirm with officials in Bangladesh that transfers were legitimate, the New York bank denied them.

(Source: NY times)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### U.S. energy bankruptcy wave surges despite recovering oil prices

The wave of U.S. oil and gas bankruptcies surged past 60 this week, an ominous sign that the recovery of crude prices to near \$50 a barrel is too little, too late for small companies that are running out of money.

On Friday, Exco Resources Inc, a Dallas-based company with a star-studded board, said it will evaluate alternatives, including a restructuring in or out of court. Its shares fell 35 percent to 62 cents each.

Exco's notice capped off one of the heaviest weeks of bankruptcy filings since crude prices nosedived from more than \$100 a barrel in mid-2014.

Prices have bounced back to \$46 a barrel from February lows in the mid-\$20s, but the futures market shows investors do not expect U.S. benchmark crude to rise above \$50 for more than a year.

That will not help smaller producers built for far higher prices. These companies have largely exhausted funding alternatives after issuing more equity and debt, tapping second-lien loans and shedding assets over the last two years to stay afloat as banks trimmed credit lines.

(Source: Reuters)

### G7 to take steps on global steel glut: draft

The Group of Seven nations will take steps to tackle a global glut in steel that many blame on overcapacity at Chinese producers of the material used in construction and cars, according to a draft text obtained by Reuters.

If adopted at the G7 summit in Japan later this month, it will likely add to pressure on China, which accounts for about half of global steel output, to take steps after production hit a record high earlier this year. Steel mills from Australia to the U.K. are under threat of closure because of the glut.

"We recognize the negative impact of global excess capacity across industrial sectors, especially steel, on our economies, trade and workers," the draft text says.

"We are committed to moving quickly in taking steps to address this issue by enhancing market function, including through coordinated actions that identify and seek to eliminate such subsidies and support, and by encouraging adjustment."

G7 leaders will meet on May 26-27 in Ise-Shima near Nagoya, a major car production and steel manufacturing center.

(Source: Reuters)



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Improve overall body metabolism

Afternoon naps can raise blood pressure, scientists find

It might seem the ultimate relaxing indulgence, but having an afternoon nap can damage people's health, scientists have warned.

New research has found that taking a snooze in the middle of the day can raise the risk of high blood pressure by up to a fifth.

But, despite the perceived wisdom that eating cheese before sleeping gives you nightmares, another study has discovered that small amounts of Italian cheese can keep blood pressure at safer levels.

At least 16 million people in Britain have high blood pressure and, left untreated, it can lead to a heart attack, stroke and kidney disease.

Patients are given drugs to reduce the pressure, but in up to a fifth of cases these do not work.

A daytime nap is generally considered restorative and good for your health, but that conventional wisdom is now being challenged.

Researchers from the Mayo Clinic, in the U.S. State of Minnesota, pooled data from nine previous studies with a total of 112,267 participants. They found those sleeping for a short period in the middle of the day were between 13 and 19 percent more likely to have hypertension, which is abnormally high blood pressure.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Origami robot may operate from inside the body

It may sound like science fiction but university researchers have built a tiny, foldable robot that may one day operate on people -- from inside their body.

This tiny robot would be swallowed inside a capsule and then, once inside the patient's stomach, it would unfold itself and then crawl across the stomach to repair a wound or remove a swallowed button battery, for instance.

"It's really exciting to see our small origami robots doing something with potential important applications to health care," said Daniela Rus, an MIT professor who also directs the university's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, in a statement. "For applications inside the body, we need a small, controllable, untethered robot system. It's really difficult to control and place a robot inside the body if the robot is attached to a tether."

So far, the robot has been tested on a synthetic stomach, made of silicone rubber and based on the mechanics of the stomach and esophagus of a pig.

For several years now, robots have been



So far, the robot has been tested on a synthetic stomach, made of silicone rubber and based on the mechanics of the stomach and esophagus of a pig.

used in operating rooms to assist with surgeries.

This is the first time researchers have closed in on building a robot that could

work from the inside of the body.

The research is being done by a group of scientists from MIT, the University of

Sheffield, in England, and the Tokyo Institute of Technology.

Stick-slip motion

MIT reported that the robot moves itself over the surface of the stomach by what they call a "stick-slip" motion.

That means the robot's appendages are made to stick to the surface using friction, but then slips free when its body flexes to make another move.

MIT noted that since the human stomach is filled with fluids, 20% of the robot's forward motion is by propelling water or thrust.

Once in the stomach, the robot doesn't have to work its way out of the capsule it was swallowed in. The capsule itself is designed to dissolve, automatically freeing the robot.

The robot, rectangular in shape, is designed with accordion-like folds with a magnet on one of the folds that responds to magnetic fields outside the body. Using that magnet, doctors could manipulate the motion of the robot, moving it to where it needs to go.

(Source: Computerworld)

New target found for potential HIV vaccine



In the blood they found an antibody — a protein made by the immune system — that was able to prevent roughly half of the 208 HIV variations tested from infecting other cells.

Although antibodies produced in the body after HIV infection may stop new infections in the lab, they don't allow

Researchers isolated an antibody from a person infected with HIV that can block the virus from infecting other cells.

Shortly after HIV was identified in 1984 as the cause of AIDS, scientists started working on a vaccine to protect people against the infection.

Researchers have discovered an antibody that can bind to a region on HIV and stop it from infecting cells. This antibody also targets an area of the virus that was thought to be invulnerable.

While the discovery has generated excitement, it is tempered by the difficulty researchers have had in the past in outmaneuvering HIV.

Infected with HIV

In the new study, published in the journal Science, researchers examined the blood of a person infected with HIV.

a person's immune system to rid the body of HIV. That's because these antibodies are not always effective or develop after infection.

Antibodies target specific areas on a virus or bacteria. The one that the researchers isolated didn't match any of the known target areas on HIV.

"This is the first time that a specific epitope — or a very specific region of the protein — has been identified as a neutralizing epitope and can be targeted by antibodies to block HIV entry," Dr. Michael Root, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Thomas Jefferson University, told Healthline.

The fusion peptide helps the HIV membrane fuse with the same element of the cell. This is needed for the virus to infect a cell with its genetic material.

(Source: Healthline)

Natural regeneration of tropical forests reaps benefits



The importance of forest conservation and forest regrowth in climate mitigation and carbon sequestration - capturing carbon dioxide (CO2) from the atmosphere - has long been recognized by climate scientists. But, detailed information needed to make accurate estimates of this potential has been missing.

Now, an international team of 60 scientists - working together as the 2ndFOR Network—has completed studies on the effects of forest conservation and secondary forest regeneration across 43 regions in Latin America and has come up with real answers.

In "Carbon sequestration potential of second-growth forest regeneration in the Latin American tropics" published in the May 13 issue of Science Advances, University of Connecticut professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Robin Chazdon and her colleagues report a series of major findings related to their research.

Objectives of study

Chazdon reports the objectives of the study were to model the areas covered by regrowth forests across the lowlands of the Latin American Tropics in two age classes, to project above ground carbon storage in these young forests over four decades, and to illustrate alternative scenarios for carbon storage where 0-80% of these forests are allowed to regenerate and where 0-40% percent of pastures are allowed to regenerate into forests.

She says, "This research is vital because actively growing vegetation takes carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and con-

verts it to plant tissues such as wood and leaves. Old growth forests contain large stocks of carbon in their biomass. When these forests are cleared and burned, this carbon is released into the atmosphere contributing to global warming. This is one of the main reasons why it is important to halt deforestation.

"But, we have also learned that when forests regrow, their carbon stocks in above ground biomass increase over time, depending on climate, prior land use, and features of the surrounding landscape. This regrowth can happen without planting trees, through the spontaneous process of natural regeneration. This is a low-cost way of restoring forests and of reaching carbon mitigation goals that should receive greater attention from policy makers, non-governmental organizations, and international conventions."

(Source: phys.org)

80 percent of world's city dwellers breathing bad air: UN



Over 80 percent of the world's city dwellers breathe poor quality air, increasing their risk of lung cancer and other life-threatening diseases, a new World Health Organization (WHO) report warned Thursday.

Urban residents in poor countries are by far the worst affected, WHO said, noting that nearly every city (98 percent) in low- and middle-income countries has air which fails to meet the UN body's standards.

That number falls to 56 percent of cities in wealthier countries. "Urban air pollution continues to rise at an alarming rate, wreaking havoc on human health," Maria Neira, the head of WHO's department of public health and environment, said in a statement.

The UN agency's latest air pollution database reveals an overall deterioration of air in the planet's cities, and highlights the growing

risk of serious health conditions also including stroke and asthma.

The report, which focused on outdoor rather than household air, compared data collected from 795 cities in 67 countries between 2008 and 2013.

Harmful pollutants

Tracking the prevalence of harmful pollutants like sulfate and black carbon, WHO found that air quality was generally improving in richer regions like Europe and North America, but worsening in developing regions, notably the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Overall, contaminants in outdoor air caused more than 3 million premature deaths a year, the UN body said.

The quality of air pollution data provided by individual countries varies considerably, and WHO does not compile a ranking of the world's most polluted cities.

But, in a sample of selected megacities with a population above 14 million, New Delhi was the most polluted, followed by Cairo and Bangladesh's capital Dhaka.

Crucially, key African centers like Nigeria's mega-city Lagos were excluded from the list because of the sparse availability of air quality data in many parts of the continent, WHO said.

A sample of European data showed that Rome had slightly worse air than Berlin, followed by London and Madrid.

Carlos Dora, coordinator at WHO's public health and environment department, pointed to several key factors that determine the quality of a city's air.

(Source: AFP)



***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  
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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:

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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.

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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.

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***Procurement and Logistics General Department  
Iranian Islamic Republic Railways***

A professor who won the Israel Prize - considered one of the country's highest honors - has pledged to donate a cash award to an Israeli group dedicated to helping Palestinians.

American-born Israeli David Shulman, a professor of Asian studies at the Hebrew university in al-Quds (Jerusalem) who won the award for academic work, said he would donate the \$20,000 prize to Ta'ayush - or Living together - an organization he helped to found that advocates for Palestinians. Shulman was given the honor this week as part of celebrations to mark the foundation of the Israeli state, an anniversary marked by Palestinians as al-Nakba, or "the catastrophe".

"I hesitated to accept the prize given the deteriorating situation [in the occupied Palestinian territories] which includes the persecution of Ta'ayush and other peace and human rights activists by the establishment and the far right who seek to perpetuate the occupation," he said in a YouTube video.

"We in Ta'ayush feel an ethical duty to defend the innocent civilian population

## Israeli academic to use cash prize to help Palestinians



and to stand by them in the face of ongoing violence."

In the video, footage showed Shul-

man, along with other Israeli peace activists, helping Palestinians with an olive harvest and cleaning debris and damage

from what it said were attacks by Israeli settlers.

Ta'ayush describes itself on its website as, "a grassroots movement working to break down the walls of racism, segregation, and apartheid by constructing a true Arab-Jewish partnership."

"For more than a decade, Ta'ayush has been working in area C of the occupied Palestinian territories, especially in the South Hebron Hills, to support Palestinian residents in their struggle to retain their homes and agricultural lands," the website says.

"Palestinians in these areas face constant harassment and violence by Israeli settlers and the army."

The awarding committee said Shulman's academic work was "outstanding in its diverse engagement with various literary genres and different areas of research, among them religion, mythology, art, folklore and imagination."

He is also Israel's leading expert on Indian cultures and languages and has received several other awards for his work.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Russia says yacht detained by North Korea

A Russian yacht has been detained by North Korean coastguards in the Sea of Japan with five crew on board and towed in to land, Russian officials said Saturday.

"The North Korean side has communicated that the yacht has been taken to the port of Kimchaek," Igor Agafonov, a foreign ministry official in the far-eastern city of Vladivostok told state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

"The crew is alive and well. We are still waiting for an explanation from North Korea as to the reasons for the detention," Agafonov said, adding that diplomats were

seeking permission to visit the crew.

Earlier an unnamed official at the Russian embassy in Pyongyang told TASS news agency that the sailboat Elfin was detained by North Korean coastguards late Friday with five people on board as it was sailing from a competition in the South Korean port of Busan to Vladivostok.

"The embassy... has handed over a note to the North Korean side demanding the immediate release of the crew," Denis Samsonov, a spokesman

for the Russian mission in North Korea, told RIA Novosti.

On Friday the vice president of the regional sailing federation Yevgeny Khromchenko wrote on Facebook that the vessel had been stopped by "North Korean fishermen" 85 nautical miles (160 kilometers) from shore and was being towed in to land.

Russia shares a short land border with North Korea and enjoys relatively friendly ties with the country's reclusive Stalinist regime.

(Source: AFP)

## Four ways U.S. seizure of Iranian assets will impact bilateral ties

➔ Indeed, the commander of Iran's paramilitary Basij force, Brig. Gen. Mohammad Reza Naghdi, has stated, "This is not a small matter. After all the patience and flexibility to reach a [nuclear] agreement, the United States is now using something that happened 33 years ago as an excuse to confiscate \$2 billion of assets that belong to the Iranian nation." Meanwhile, Rouhani has talked of the unflinching difficulties facing the relations between Tehran and Washington and likened the U.S. Supreme Court ruling to that of a hungry cat that is greedily eyeing Iran's assets. He said, "We have had, still do and will continue to have problems with the United States. So why should we throw meat in front of a cat and not expect it to be devoured?"

The U.S. ruling has also become a subject for puns among Iranians on social media, with one person writing, "Very soon Iran will have to pay a multi-billion dollar compensation for the diapers used by [U.S. Secretary of State] John Kerry's grandchild," while someone else wrote, "United States! Don't pick our pocket, lift the sanctions instead."

The second impact of the court ruling is the increased prospects of the collapse of the JCPOA. Although the Supreme Court ruling is not directly linked to the JCPOA — and is in fact based on a lawsuit dating back to 2003 — these kinds of developments are often intertwined. The expectation among the Iranians following the conclusion of the nuclear talks was that all negotiating parties would cooperate based on goodwill. However, with the Iranians now viewing the recent U.S. move as a malicious act, it will be difficult to engage in reciprocal cooperation to implement the JCPOA.

At present, the majority of JCPOA opponents in Iran

unanimously agree that the Rouhani administration showed too much flexibility in regard to the nuclear file and that the U.S. Supreme Court ruling is an indication of that. Former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who represents a wide array of Principlists, has described the JCPOA as a document supplemented with evident drawbacks for Iran, the result of which has been the stealing of Iranian assets. In a statement, Ahmadinejad's office rhetorically asked, "How can Iran's nuclear rights and its facilities that are approximately worth \$30 billion be thrown away — some destroyed while others left to be covered with dust — all based on vague, half promises made by the U.S. president and his foreign secretary, without any concrete guarantee?"

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has, however, yet to take a direct stance regarding the U.S. Supreme Court ruling. Just days before the asset seize, Ayatollah Khamenei had referred to the JCPOA as fragile, saying, "On paper the United States claims to have lifted sanctions, but in reality different steps are taken that create Iranophobia. The U.S. banking regulations, which some European Union members are bound by, prevents them from doing business with Iran."

The third impact of the ruling is the neutralization of the grounds for trade. The neofunctionalist theory of international relations and history show that trade links can lead to bilateral political relations between nations and reduce their political differences. Considering that Iran's private sector is weak and that its economy is mainly state-run, measures such as the U.S. Supreme Court ruling will prevent both Iran's government and its private sector from depositing even a single dollar in a bank account when there is a possibility that Ira-

nian assets could be confiscated by the United States. This has widened the gap between the two nations and their governments, while making it easier for hard-line politicians to maneuver as they wish. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, bilateral trade between Iran and the United States — which is largely conducted by the private sector — was worth less than \$300 million in 2015, with \$271 million consisting of U.S. exports. The Supreme Court ruling is likely to decrease this figure further.

Last but not least, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling will empower Iran's hard-liners and weaken the Rouhani administration. The seizing of Iranian assets has had a negative impact on the image of Rouhani and Zarif, both of whom have pursued a policy of interaction and engagement with the West. If measures such as the asset seizure are repeated, and Iran's economy does not experience a significant change due to previous U.S. sanctions, Iranian opponents of interaction with the West will definitely flex their muscles in the country's upcoming 2017 presidential elections. Though Rouhani's popularity has seen no palpable change as a result of the Supreme Court ruling, it has the potential to be negatively affected. According to a 2015 survey, public satisfaction with Rouhani declined only 1% between the spring and winter of 2015, reaching 48%. Public dissatisfaction with the Rouhani administration's economic performance also declined very little during this time. Given that Iranian voters are first and foremost preoccupied with the economy, these are all warning signs that require the United States and the West to adopt more logical policies toward the current administration in Iran.

(Source: al-Monitor)

## Iran's crude oil contracts: term or spot?

➔ Likewise, the country has endorsed several oil agreements, namely with France's Total, Greece's Hellenic and a number of Italian companies, and all these post-sanction deals are in form of term contracts, as Seyed Mohsen Qamsari, the director for international affairs of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) declared in a news conference which was held on the sidelines of Tehran's 21st International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2016) on May 6, IRNA

**Iran's oil output currently stands at 3.7 million bpd, while its oil and gas condensate exports is more than 2.2 million.**

reported. Admitting that in term crude contracts payments are cleared via U.S. dollar and Euro, NIOC Managing Director Rokneddin Javadi on the same date and occasion announced that all barriers on the way of transferring money between Iran and some of its oil customers would be removed within a month, Tasnim news agency reported. The senior oil official did not disclose details in this regard though, adding that related negotiations are underway.

The fundamental question would be framed here about the feasibility of term contracts under the present conditions, since based on primary sanctions imposed by U.S. Treasury Department's Office of

Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), financial transactions in international oil market are dollar-based and Iran is still ruled out of American financial system (U-Turn), i.e., dollar-based SWIFT transactions are inaccessible to Iranian entities and individuals. Moreover, Iranian banking system, which was locked out of the international interactions during sanction years, has newly taken some initial steps as of the withdrawal of financial embargos to re-emerge in international banking arena and recuperate its brokerage relations with western and European banks, the goal which does not seem to be reached overnight.

It is worth noting that as in sanction years, Iranian officials still attempt to lessen reliance on dollar and eliminate this currency from the country's international trade through restricting Iran's transactions to some specific countries namely India, China, Russia, and utilizing their currencies. But in practice, the endeavor to replace dollar with other currencies, could be basically foiled because U.S. dollar has gained strength in recent years thanks to America's economic growth via overcoming banking and financial crises, the country's current 25-percent share of international trade market, and its exports volume of shale oil. International entities' confidence in the U.S. dollar is ever-increasing. Consequently, in post-sanction era, the Islamic Republic is better to think of adopting a different attitude if it intends to expand its trade ties with the globe.

Considering all the above mentioned, "the spot market seems to be a better

option for Iran to pursue its oil business in short-term," Mahmoud Khaghani, an international energy expert told Tehran Times. "Iran can take advantage of spot market as a short-term measure to come back to the international oil market, since spot crude contracts can be made with various countries based on currencies other than dollar, when dollar-based ones entail some difficulties," he said, "for medium and long-term goals, term contracts seem more efficient." As Khaghani clarified, "countries who have had a low volume of oil purchase from Iran (for example north-west European ones) and are currently customers of our rivals (such as Saudi Arabia) but wish to improve their trade balance with Iran in post-sanction atmosphere, can purchase Iranian oil via spot contracts." Besides, in case of any future hike in oil prices, spot contracts can bring quick profit for Iran, he added.

Whether Iran's oil contracts are made in form of term or spot, an acute dilemma arises here. In mid-January, President Hassan Rouhani called on for economic reforms and less reliance on oil revenues in the post-sanction era, noting that low oil prices were the best reason to cut "the umbilical cord" to oil, Reuters reported at the time. But under the conditions that the international demand for fossil fuels is witnessing an incremental downward trend, Iran, which tried to make its economy less reliant on oil revenues under sanctions, seems to be deviated from the track merely to revive its market share even at the cost of selling the black gold in present low

prices. In better words, in spite of the conferred joint investment in oil projects, the ongoing visits, negotiations, and purchase agreements between Iranian oil officials and their foreign crude oil customers reveals lack of a clear and coherent energy policy, a comprehensive roadmap planned considering post-sanction conditions, to be applied making macroeconomic decisions.

Iran's nuclear deal has been implemented, though a lot still remains on-hold due to some reasons:

**Iran can take advantage of spot market as a short-term measure to come back to the international oil market.**

- The current Tehran-Washington political conflicts and Americans' obstructive measures thwart the nuclear deal's thorough execution casting a shadow over Tehran's international economic relations;

- International banks and entities with U.S.-based operations are hesitant about trading with or investing in Iran because they are concerned with existing non-nuclear sanctions and the prospect of new ones; and

- The impact of some major upcoming political events, including Iran's new term of parliament which will start work in May, U.S. presidential election which will be held in November, and also Iran's presidential elections in June, 2017, will be determined through time.

## JUMP

### Why Brexit would be the perfect gift for Vladimir Putin

➔ Europe's anti-immigrant parties, the quasi-fascists and the not-so-quasi fascists, openly venerate the man who has annexed European territory and continues his military assault in Ukraine — a country Putin wishes to punish for following the dream of joining the EU, a dream some in Britain would freely abandon.

Brexit would embolden the forces of divisiveness and hatred already on the rise. It would be a boon to the terror groups already active inside and outside Europe's borders, to the Russian Putin who is crashing through those borders, and it would reduce the ability of the UK and Europe to resist these assaults. It would be a giant step backwards for the global order, for the globalized economic growth that depends on that order, and for the values of human rights and democracy.

There are limits to broad appeals to the greater good and what Winston Churchill called the "responsibility of greatness". It is reasonable for Britons to ask, "What's in it for me?" Healthy self-interest is a cornerstone of democracy and the free market system that has brought

**UK would still rely on the EU, an EU made less effective and more vulnerable to exactly the tendencies the Brexiteers complain about most.**

freedom and prosperity to so much of the world — the freedom and prosperity we envied so much from behind the iron curtain.

Yet without the UK's influence, the EU will move toward the ideologies and policies that frustrate many Britons (and others). Meanwhile, UK would still rely on the EU, an EU made less effective and more vulnerable to exactly the tendencies the

Brexiteers complain about most. To solve its problems and to become a better version of itself, the EU needs the UK — and the UK needs that better EU.

#### ■ Brussels bureaucracy

I do not have a great deal of sympathy for the Brussels bureaucracy. No one who grew up in a totalitarian state has ever looked at a problem and thought that what was needed was another layer of politicians and functionaries. In this case, however, the cure has proved to be better than the disease. For all its limitations, the EU is far superior to the fractious era that went before.

A quick survey of those who most desire a return to that era is enough to give pause. If you're not sure of the best course of action, you could do worse than look at what Putin wants and do the opposite. For example, he desperately wants Trump to become the next president of the United States.

The European dream is still worth fighting for, and must be fought for. Churchill, addressing the American people on 6 September 1943, pleaded the common values of Anglo-American unity. His coalition of English-speaking peoples is obsolete. The union has expanded to include all those who desire a common language of liberty, peace and democracy. But Churchill's words still apply: "I say, 'You cannot stop.' There is no halting-place at this point. We have now reached a stage in the journey where there can be no pause. We must go on. It must be world anarchy or world order." (Source: The Guardian)

### Turkey: Talks with EU on visa-free travel reach impasse

Turkey has said that talks with the European Union on a deal providing visa-free travel in return for stopping a flow of refugees into Europe had reached a deadlock.

The comments on Friday by Turkey's EU Affairs Minister Volkan Bozkir followed talks with senior EU officials on ways of ending an impasse over part of the EU's deal with Turkey.

"I am not very optimistic about the outcome of the talks we held in Brussels today. It's essential that the European Commission find a new formula," Bozkir told reporters in Brussels, in comments broadcast live on Turkish television.

Bozkir also said that it was not possible for Turkey to make changes to its "anti-terror" law given the security situation in the country, pointing to a spate of recent bomb attacks, Reuters news agency reported.

He said Turkey's law was "no worse" than other countries' "anti-terror" laws, and called on the European Commission to reconsider its stance.

(Source: Reuters)

### Safety level of 30-inch Ahvaz-Pol-e Zaal pipeline upgraded: official

**T**HE ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some corroded parts of 30-inch Ahvaz-Pol-e Zaal pipeline were upgraded by composite coating system in order to secure the transfer of oil products, IOPTC's office of public relations reported.

According to the report, head of corrosive engineering department of Iranian Oil Pipelines and Telecommunications Company (IOPTC) in Khuzestan Province said: "the project of 30-inch Ahvaz-Pol-e Zaal pipeline' composite coating was completed on May 4, based on which, more than 100 corroded parts of the pipeline were immunized and strengthened with composite system."

He pointed to the advantages of composite coating system and said: "Composite coating system does not need welding operation. In addition to increasing safety and reducing probable risks at the time of execution, there will be no need to reduce the pipeline pressure and this is a salient advantage of this system."

He also underlined the application of new technologies in increasing efficiency of projects as one of the most important objectives of Corrosion Engineering Department and said: "This method is less time consuming and more economically efficient in comparison to other methods."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.  
*Winston Churchill*

LEARN ENGLISH

Using Caffeine as a Stimulant

Joan: Hi, how are you? What are you doing? What is this?  
Roberto: Whoa! You're very **high-strung** this morning.  
Joan: Am I? I am a little **wired**. I've been **up all night** trying to finish an assignment for one of my classes.  
Roberto: You don't seem tired at all for having been up all night. In fact, you seem to be **bouncing off the walls**.  
Joan: What are you trying to **imply**? Sorry, I didn't mean to **snap at you**. I've been drinking a lot of coffee and energy drinks. I still have a lot of caffeine in my **system**.  
Roberto: That's for sure. You seem **agitated** from too many **stimulants**.  
Joan: Well, I needed to stay awake, so as soon as I felt **drowsy**, I'd have another dose of caffeine. It gave me an **instant jolt**!  
Roberto: But you're done with your assignment now, right?  
Joan: Yes.  
Roberto: And you have a few hours before your class, so why don't you get some sleep?  
Joan: Sleep? Sleep?! I don't know the meaning of the word!  
*(Source: eslpod.com)*

- Words & phrases
- high-strung:** another term for highly strung; very nervous and easily upset or excited

**wired:** feeling very active and excited, especially because you have drunk a lot of coffee or taken a drug

**up all night:** not sleeping; being awake

bouncing off the walls: be full of nervous excitement or agitation

**imply:** to suggest that something is true, without saying this directly

**snap at:** to say something quickly in an angry way

**system:** someone's body - used when you are talking about its medical or physical condition

**agitated:** so nervous or upset that you are unable to keep still or think calmly

**stimulant:** a drug or substance that makes you feel more active and full of energy

**drowsy:** tired and almost asleep; sleepy

**dose:** the amount of a medicine or a drug that you should take

**instant:** immediate, sudden

**jolt:** a large and sudden increase in energy or enthusiasm

QUIZ OF THE DAY

154) What does the idiom mean?  
She has two left feet!  
a) her feet are big  
b) she is awkward  
3) her left foot is slightly bigger  
(Quiz No. 153 answer: a)

PHRASAL VERB

Slip up

Meaning: make a mistake

For example: You slipped up there! His name is Alex, not Alan!

ENGLISH PROVERB

(A) drop of ink may make a million think

Explanation: a thought expressed in writing can influence a large number of people



Without water,  
everything  
withers

18,000 passengers transferred to book fair on the weekend per hour: official

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — More than 18,000 passengers were transferred to the book fair per hour on the weekend, deputy for transport and mobility of Tehran's Municipality said.

A great deal of the book fair visitors used public transportation, more specifically bus and subway, to get to the fair, IRIB quoted Ja'far Tashakkori-Hashemi as saying.

On average every 10 to 15 minutes a train would transfer the passengers while the time decreased to six and a half minutes on Thursday and Friday, Tashakkori-Hashemi noted.

Therefore, he noted, every 6 and a half minutes 2,000 passengers got off the subway at the Shahr-e-Aftab station and in other words more than 18,000 passengers



were transferred to the book fair per hour.

Tehran's bus operating company has also allocated 400 buses for the visitors at the book fair and the roads leading to the fair, he added.

There are also 100 vans and 50 electric shuttles to take passengers from or to the parking lots and subway stations, he highlighted.

The 29th Tehran International Book Fair which was held for the first time at the Shahr-e-Aftab fairground, southern Tehran, received an enthusiastic welcome, he added.

He went on to say that 33 foreign countries including Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Australia, Turkey, China, Japan, and Canada attended the fair too.

Leonardo Di Caprio ‘regram’ a photo of shrinking Lake Urmia in Iran; gains respect of Iranians

The climate change superstar has done it again. On his official Instagram account, Leonardo DiCaprio reposted a photo by The Weather Channel, which is about a ship dock in an apparent dried surface of Lake Urmia in Iran.

The post garnered 307,000 likes and earned him a 'climate change hero' status in Iran. His repost was also called one of the famous 'regram' on Instagram.

A news report said that his 'regram' has caused a flooding of support and attention to Iran's shrinking and dying Lake Urmia. DiCaprio has several climate change organizations under his belt and also an appointed Climate Change representative by the United Nations.

Lake Urmia has always been a climate change dilemma in Iran because it appears to be shrinking. It used to be the largest salt water lake in the Middle East but due to climate change, irresponsible infrastructures (like dams) and drought, it has started to shrink and dry up. It is evidently shown in the photo reposted by Leonardo DiCaprio. For years, Iranian environmentalists have lobbied for support from local and international groups to help them save the lake but gained very little attention.

Thanks to their new environmental hero, Leonardo DiCaprio, all eyes from all over the world are now directed towards Lake Urmia.

After the photo was regrammed by DiCaprio, Twitter was flooded with thanks and gratitude from Iranians and foreign environmentalists alike, expressing their appreciation towards the Oscar winning actor who took notice of the problem in Iran.

Famous Twitter reactions came from local TV stations, the UN and even from some government agencies in Iran.

Now there is an ongoing environmental revolution in Iran, and the National Lake Urmia Restoration Program (NLURP) has the actor to thank. According to Iran's Mehr News Agency, DiCaprio is invited by NLURP to personally visit Lake Urmia.

Eurasia Review quoted Hadi Baha-

dori, the head of the Committee for the Restoration of Lake Urmia, when he said "We now have cooperation from Japan, Switzerland and Australia in our efforts to save the lake and we hope that these kinds of social movements will trigger a dramatic rise in sensitivity and awareness among people all over the world regarding the state of Lake Urmia."

The Iranian government hasn't received a reply on whether or not DiCaprio has accepted the offer, but if in case Leonardo decides to fly to Iran; it will mean more exposure and awareness raised for the restoration of the shrinking Lake Urmia.

*(Source: Nature World News)*

Susannah Mushatt Jones, world’s oldest person, dies at 116

Susannah Mushatt Jones, the world's oldest person, has died in New York, a Guinness World Records spokesman confirmed Friday. She was 116.

Jones, who attributed her longevity to sleep, clean living and positive energy, died at 8:26 p.m. Thursday after being ill and in and out of the hospital for 10 days, said her niece, Dr. Lavilla Watson. She died in her sleep.

Jones was the last American born in the 1800s, according to Robert Young, senior consultant for gerontology for Guinness World Records and director of the Los Angeles-based Gerontology Research Group's Supercentenarian Research and Database Division.

The presumptive oldest person in the world is Emma Morano of Italy, who was born on November 29, 1899, according to Young. The oldest man is Israel

Kristal of Israel, who is 112.

Jones was born on July 6, 1899, in Lowndes County, Alabama, and her life spanned three centuries, according to Guinness World Records. Her father was a share-cropper who supported his family by picking cotton.

The Brooklyn, New York, woman lived through 20 U.S. presidents, two world wars and the birth of the automobile, the airplane, TV and the Internet.

Guinness officially recognized Jones as the oldest recorded person on the planet last year after 116-year-old Jeralean Talley died in suburban Detroit. The oldest living person ever recorded was Jeanne Calment of France, who died in 1997 at 122.

Jones attended the Calhoun Colored School in Calhoun, Alabama, where Booker T. Washington was an original member of the school's board of trustees, ac-

cording to the New York City Housing Authority.

In 1923, Jones moved north to New York, where she worked as a live-in housekeeper and child-care provider.

Jones said she was determined to give the first-born girl in her family the gift of a college education. Despite her \$50 weekly salary, she said she single-handedly put her first three nieces through college.

The third oldest of 10 children, Jones had 100 nieces and nephews.

Jones had said she did not smoke or drink and cited loving relationships as a secret to her longevity.

"I surround myself with love and positive energy," she told the New York City Housing Authority in 2005. "That's the key to long life and happiness."

*(Source: CNN)*

IN FOCUS Mehr/Amin Sedaqati



Kakan village with exquisite beauty is located in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, south-west Iran.

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

5 illegally constructed restaurants demolished in Tehran

Five illegally constructed restaurants stretching over 20,000 square meters of land in Hesar-ak neighborhood, northern Tehran, were demolished on Monday, IRIB reported.

Unfortunately, due to mismanagement, some opportunists have taken advantage of the situation and built the restaurants and gazebos in the gardens in this district, said an official with Tehran's district 5 municipality.

“Regarding the fact that we needed a warrant for demolishing these illegally constructed buildings it took us three years to obtain the document,” Mehdi Haq-Badri regretted.

On Monday, with police and municipality forces in attendance, “we finally succeeded in demolishing these restaurants,” Haq-Badri noted.

تخریب پنج رستوران غیرمجاز در تهران

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما روز دوشنبه پنج رستوران غیرمجاز به وسعت ۲۰ هزار مترمربع در محله حصارک، شمال تهران، تخریب شد.

یکی از مسوولین منطقه ۵ شهرداری تهران گفت: متأسفانه به دلیل خلاء مدیریتی در چند سال گذشته در محله حصارک عده ای سودجو اقدام به ساخت رستوران و آلاچیق در فضای سبز و باغهای این محله کرده بودند

مهدی حق بدری گفت: با توجه به اینکه تخریب این فضاهای غیرقانونی و حضور در محل نیاز به مجوز قضایی دارد بنابراین حدود سه سال دریافت مجوز برای تخریب طول کشید.

حق بدری خاطرنشان کرد: در نهایت روز دوشنبه با حضور پلیس و مأموران شهرداری توانستیم این پنج رستوران را تخریب کنیم.

# Conceding a lot of goals cost us the title, Branko says

**T I S P O R T S** Branko Ivankovic believes that Persepolis' defenders' and goalkeeper's poor performances cost them the title as it finished in second place behind Esteghlal Khuzestan on goal difference.

"I would like to thank all of our fans who supported us from the very first until the end of the season. We didn't win the title but we feel like champions because we shared the title with Esteghlal Khuzestan and lost it on goal difference," Branko told reporters.

"A team who wants to win the league title must be strong in each post. We were the best team in offence as we scored 50 goals but we had a poor performance in defence. We conceded a lot of easy goals, for example the game against Gostaresh Foolad which we won 4-2; we conceded two goals while they didn't have even one chance," the Croatian coach added.

"I've signed a contract with the ultimate aim of winning the AFC Champions League. We will definitely improve our squad and bring new faces in order to improve the team's performance. We will fight in three different tournaments next season so we need a large and strong group of players," the 62-year-old coach added.

"I will promise our fans we will be stronger next season and will do whatever to make them happy," he added.

Esteghlal Khuzestan and Persepolis finished the season with 57 points but Ahvaz based club win the title on a superior goal average.



## Iran wins title at AVC Beach Volleyball Continental Cup



**T I S P O R T S** Formidable Iran finished in first place on Saturday at the AVC Beach Volleyball Continental Cup Phase 3 held in Kalasin, Thailand.

In the final matches, Iran 1's Bahman Salemi/Rahman Raoufi duo defeated China 1's Li Jian/Li Zhouxin 21-18 18-21 15-11.

Iran 2's Bahman Gholipoury/Aadol-

hamed Mirzaali also beat China 2's Bao Jian/Ha Likejiang 15-21 21-19 17-15.

Iran and China secured their spots in the Australia Finals.

Japan and Indonesia advanced to the final which will be held Sunday. However, both teams have already qualified for the next month's AVC Continental Cup Finals in Australia.

## Iran football 5 ready to upset World's elite



**T I S P O R T S** Wildcards Iran burst onto the football 5 scene at London 2012 with a win over host Great Britain.

Two years later, Iran claimed the Asian Para Games football 5 title to qualify for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Iran's Behzad Zadaliasghari was the top-scorer of the competition with four goals.

The Asian team expects those previous results to serve as a platform for Rio 2016 success.

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

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

## Iranian football fans to commemorate fifth anniversary of Hejazi

**T I S P O R T S** Nasser Hejazi's family is planning to mark the five year anniversary of the death of the legendary goalkeeper in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra cemetery next Sunday.

Hejazi died on May 23, 2011 at the age of 62 after a long battle with lung cancer.

He played for Iran as a goalkeeper in late 1960s and 1970s. Hejazi won the AFC Asian Cup twice for Iran and also played for the Persians in the 1976 Olympic Games and the 1978 FIFA World Cup.

In 2000, the Asian Football Confederation ranked



him the second best Asian goalkeeper of the 20th century behind former Saudi Arabia keeper Mohamed Al-Deayea.

In his coaching career, he led Esteghlal from 1996 to 1999 and later in 2007.

The Iranian giant finished runner-up in the AFC Champions League in 1999 under tutelage of Hejazi.

Hejazi earned 62 caps for Iran from 1968 to 1980. He received an offer from Manchester United after the 1978 FIFA World Cup, and trained with them for a month, appearing in a reserve match against Stoke City.

## Former Persepolis midfielder Sadeghian set to join Thai club

**T I S P O R T S** Former Persepolis and Team Melli midfielder Payam Sadeghian is going to join Thai side Buriram United, according to reports in Iranian media.

Sadeghian, who joined Naft Tehran from Persepolis last summer, couldn't re-

gain his top form and after falling out with the management at Naft he signed with Saba and reunited with former coach Ali Daei in January 2016.

He has stated on his official Instagram account that he has lost his motivation in Iranian football and he is eager

to move abroad.

It is reported that he has received a lucrative \$1m offer from Buriram United and also an offer from unknown Bundesliga 2 side.

Sadeghian, who has played in all of Iran's youth ranks, has scored one goal in five appearances for Iran national team.



## Rafa Benitez to decide on Newcastle United stay within two weeks

Rafa Benitez has confirmed he is considering staying on at Newcastle United despite the club dropping into the Championship and said he will make a decision within the next two weeks.

Benitez took over from Steve McClaren at Newcastle with 10 games of the season remaining but was not able to guide the club out of the relegation zone, and their demotion was confirmed when Sunderland beat Everton on Wednesday.

Benitez, who was sacked as Real Madrid boss in January, inserted a break clause into his Newcastle contract allowing him to leave if the club failed to beat the drop, but he has confirmed he is talking to managing director Lee Charnley about the prospect of staying on.

"We have a good relationship," he told a news conference on Saturday. "He is professional and so I am. We first have analysed what went wrong, but the meetings were quite positive. We will continue.

"If I decide to come here it's because it's a massive club and we have the fans. I am flattered with them. There will be more meetings."

Benitez added: "We have to talk and we have more meetings then we will see what happens. If I'm here and discussing it, it's because there is a chance. We have to keep talking.

"We need a structure to allow the club to compete. I am happy to discuss all of these things. I am pleased with the first conversation."

On when he expects to make his decision, he said: "It could take a couple of weeks, maximum."

The former Valencia, Liverpool, Chelsea and Napoli boss said he is eager to see that Newcastle lay the foundations to ensure success.

"I want the same as the fans -- a successful team, a strong team and to get promoted to the Premier League as soon as possible," he said.

(Source: Soccermet)

## Chelsea's Cesc Fabregas says return to Barcelona impossible

Cesc Fabregas has said that it would be unlikely he would ever return to play for Barcelona.

The Spanish playmaker left the Catalan club in the summer of 2014 for Chelsea, who signed him for a fee estimated at €38 million.

He helped the club win a Premier League title, and although the current campaign with the Blues has been less than optimum, he said he is looking forward to working with new coach Antonio Conte.

"A return to Barcelona would no longer be possible, even if I wanted to," he told Marca in London. "The Barcelona stage of my career is over, it is closed."

Chelsea's season has been one to forget with the club falling from title winners to a mid-table position. Jose Mourinho left Stamford Bridge for the second time in December, having presided over a disastrous first half of the season. Fabregas admitted the

team had struggled.

"It was a very irregular season in which we did not feel comfortable," he said during a promotional appearance in London on Friday. "However we improved and went 12 league games without losing and proved we were harder to beat.

"In any case it has been a very disappointing season. Jose [Mourinho] gave us a longer holiday because he knew that it would be very difficult to retain the title," he said.

"We returned from preseason in the United States two days before the Super Cup, the preparation was not ideal. We were not strong enough to follow the demands of the coach, who is a demanding person and someone who wants the best of his players. Maybe we failed to give it."

Fabregas said he is looking forward to next season. Conte is expected to be very active in the transfer market.

(Source: Soccermet)

## FOOTBALL

### Carlo Ancelotti: I'd put my hand in the fire for Antonio Conte

Carlo Ancelotti has hailed Claudio Ranieri's outstanding job at Leicester and backed Antonio Conte to be a success at Chelsea.

The future Bayern Munich manager discussed the Italian takeover of the Premier League and was clearly impressed by the efforts of his countryman to take Leicester to the title.

"Ranieri had a tough time in his last job with Greece. Leicester had a tough season, almost relegated. But put them together and see what happens," Ancelotti told The Times.

"You can tell it's this relationship between Claudio and his players that has made it possible."

Ancelotti, who will replace Pep Guardiola in Germany after taking time out from the game following his sacking by Real Madrid in 2015, also insists that Chelsea have made a smart move by hiring the current Italy coach Conte for next season.

"He's very tough, very focused on strategy. Antonio is not so diplomatic. He's really direct. I think the owner will appreciate the intensity of his work."

Few know Conte's personality better than Ancelotti, as they go way back.

"He was my captain at Juventus. He was always really serious, really focused, really concentrated. As a manager he's the same.

"He has really good experience, starting in the second division. So he won titles with Bari and Siena before Juventus. He's really focused on the little details. I'm sure he will do a good job.

"Chelsea understand that this is a new cycle. One period stops and another starts. They have to replace Terry, Lampard, not just as the players but the personality, the image.

"Every club has this moment, Milan when they lost Maldini and Gattuso. It takes time to replace the structure. It makes it a really big challenge.

"But I spoke with Antonio and he's really excited."

There is the issue of a match-fixing trial from 2011 when he was accused of not reporting a potential fix while at Siena.

"His case will be solved without problem for him. He won't come with a stain.

"In Italy, they make a big case because it's him. But with Antonio, I can put my hand in the fire for him. He's really serious, really honest, a really, really good man."

(Source: FootballItalia)

## United States, Mexico in talks for joint 2026 World Cup bid, supported by FIFA

The United States and Mexico are considering a joint bid for the 2026 World Cup and have already won early support from FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

Football officials from both countries told ESPN FC that initial discussions were held on the sidelines of the FIFA Congress taking place in Mexico City this week, with further meetings expected to take place over the coming months.

John Motta, a board member of the United States Soccer Federation, said: "We have spoken to our Mexican counterparts and are very open to the idea of a joint bid.

"It could be a positive move for the game in both countries, and it's also a very exciting proposition for FIFA. We will now go away and formulate a timetable for further discussions.

"But whatever happens, we will bid for the 2026 World Cup -- either jointly or we will go it alone."

Mexican Football Federation president Decio de Maria told ESPN FC that he had a private meeting with Infantino on Sunday in which he raised the possibility of a joint bid with the United States.

Two days later, the FIFA Council said in announcing a new process on how the 2026 World Cup will be awarded that it was once again open to the idea of joint bids. A final decision on who stages the tournament will be made in May 2020.

Since the 2002 World Cup, hosted by Japan and South Korea, world football's governing body has not entertained joint bids.

"Mr Infantino was very enthusiastic about my idea for a joint bid and wants me to pursue this further," De Maria said.

"We are committed to becoming the first country to have staged a World Cup three times, and we will do all we can to make this happen, either with the United States or independently."

Part of Infantino's enthusiasm may stem from the financial potential of a jointed United States-Mexico World Cup, given the lucrative television and commercial deals that could be on offer.

FIFA's finances have been dented by the corruption scandal with its congress told that the organisation made a loss of \$122 million last year. A number of high-profile sponsors have also ended their association with the body.

"Given the size of the domestic television audience in both countries and the commercial deals this could generate, FIFA probably sees a United States-Mexico World Cup as an ideal way to improve its financial situation," Motta said.

Also at the Congress on Friday, FIFA broke new ground by appointing Senegalese United Nations official Fatma Samoura as its first female and first non-European secretary general.

Gibraltar and Kosovo were also admitted, increasing FIFA's membership to 211.

(Source: ESPN)





## NEWS IN BRIEF



### Cologne Iranian film festival to open next week

**T A R T** **TEHRAN** — The 3rd Iranian Film Festival in Germany will be held in Cologne from May 26 to 29.

The festival will screen a lineup of the latest works by Iranian filmmakers, including "Lanturi" by Reza Dormishian, "For a Rainy Day" by Faezeh Azizkhani, "A Very Ordinary Citizen" by Majid Barzegar, "A Risk of Acid Rain" by Behtash Sanai, "Barcode" by Mostafa Kiai, "Immortal" by Hadi Mohaqeq, "Absolute Rest" by Abdorreza Kahani and "A Dragon Arrives" by Mani Haqiqi.

In addition, "Valderama" by Abbas Amini, "The Last Days of Winter" and "Starless Dreams" by Mehrdad Oskui, and "From Tehran to Tehran" by Reza Khanlari will compete in the documentary section of the event.

Iranian directors Abdolreza Kahani and Majid Barzegar will be the special guests of the festival.



### Tehran Intl. Book Fair wraps up

**T A R T** **TEHRAN** — The 29th Tehran International Book Fair with the motto of "Tomorrow Is Too Late to Read" came to an end on Saturday.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Ali Jan-nati, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, Tehran Mayor Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, and a number of cultural officials and publishers attended a closing ceremony held at Shahre Aftab.

The organizers relocated the fair this year from Imam Khomeini Mosalla to Shahre Aftab, a huge fair-ground newly constructed in southern Tehran.

The venue was warmly received by visitors and publishers negating experts' predictions that the relocation might result a drop in the number of visitors.

Russia was the guest of honor at the 10-day book fair, which also hosted distributors of approximately 6000 world publishers.



### DEFC to review doc on Orson Welles

**T A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Nima Qolizadegan's "Orson Welles Speaking" will be reviewed at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) this evening.

The 108-minute documentary chronicles the life story and career of the prolific American actor, director, writer and producer George Orson Welles (1915-1985).

In "The Fabulous Orson Welles", Peter Noble's biography of Welles, he is described as "a magnificent figure of a man, over six feet tall, handsome, with flashing eyes and a gloriously resonant speaking-voice."



### University of Malayer displaying photos by Sebastiao Salgado

**T A R T** **TEHRAN** — An exhibition of photos by the renowned Brazilian social documentary photographer and photojournalist Sebastiao Salgado opened Saturday at the University of Malayer.

Forty photos depicting workers in sugarcane fields, a shipyard and a gold mine in Brazil are on display at the exhibition.

Iranian photo expert Hassan Ghaffari is scheduled to review Salgado's works during a session on Tuesday.

The exhibit organized under the auspices of the Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) runs until May 20 at the university, which is located in the city of Malayer, Hamedan Province.

Salgado has traveled extensively in about 120 countries to implement his photographic projects. He was awarded the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Fund Grant in 1982 and the Foreign Honorary Membership of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1992.



### Literati to discuss common worldwide sayings on women

**T A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Book City Institute plans to spotlight proverbs concerning woman used in various cultures worldwide during a session, which will be held on Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

Dutch author Mineke Schipper best known for her studies on women's literature along with Iranian literary expert Nasrin Faqihmalek-Marzban will speak at the meeting.

# 2nd Intl. Holocaust Cartoons Contest opens in Tehran

**T A R T** **TEHRAN** — The 2nd International Holocaust Cartoons Contest opened at Tehran's Art Bureau on Saturday.

A selection of 150 cartoons from 50 different countries inducing France has been put on display in the exhibit, secretary of the contest Masud Shojaei-Tabatabai said in a press release published on Saturday.

"We do not mean to approve or deny the Holocaust; however, the main question is why is there no permission to talk about the Holocaust despite their (the West) belief in freedom of speech," Shojaei-Tabatabai said.

"Moreover, why should the oppressed people of Palestine pay the price for the Holocaust?" he added.

The first edition of the contest was held in 2006 in protest against the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo's publication of cartoons insulting Prophet Muhammad (S), he said.

"And the second edition is being held 10 years later to show that we do not seek to deny the Holocaust but mean to portray the oppression of the Palestinians and say that we believe the Zionist regime has been the root of all the difficulties the Palestinians have been through," he explained.

The contest is composed of the two sections of cartoon and caricature, he said, adding that the portraits of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Adolf Hitler have been highlighted in the caricature section.

The first place winner in the cartoon section will receive a cash prize of \$12,000, with those in second



Art fans visit the 2nd International Holocaust Cartoons Contest opened at Tehran's Art Bureau on May 14, 2016. (Mehr/Asghar Khamseh)

and third place taking home \$8,000 and \$5,000 respectively.

In the caricature section, the first place winner will have a cash prize of \$7,000, the second \$5,000 and the third \$3,000.

Iran's House of Cartoon and the Sarcheshmeh Cultural Complex have organized the second edition of the festival.

The exhibit will be running until May 30 at the bureau located on Hafez Ave, near Taleqani St.

## Master miniaturist Mahmud Farshchian unveils new works in Tehran

**T A R T** **TERHAN** — "Simorgh" and "Environment, Man and Nature", two works by Iranian master miniaturist Mahmud Farshchian, were unveiled Saturday at the Farshchian Museum of Tehran's Sadabad Cultural Historical Complex.

Director of Cultural Heritage Tourism and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) Masud Soltanifar and CHTHO deputy director Bahman Namvar Motalq attended the ceremony, Persian media reported.

"Simorgh" proposed by grand Ayatollah Abdollah Javadi Amoli, is a symbol of the human being and shows that people are always after the truth," Farshchian said at the ceremony.

He added that the idea of his second tableau "Environ-



Master miniaturist Mahmud Farshchian (C) speaks during the unveiling ceremony of his new works at the Farshchian Museum of Tehran's Sadabad Cultural Historical Complex on May 14, 2016. (ISNA/Somayyeh Hassanlu)

ment, Man and Nature" was initiated last year by the head of Iran's Department of Environment, Masumeh Ebtekar.

"In one corner of the painting a monster is observed that has polluted everywhere, and on the other side there are angels who are cleaning up the environment," he explained.

"I believe protecting the environment is quite simple and I truly ask the citizens to love their environment and help preserve it," Farshchian said.

Namvar Motalq also said that Farshchian's painting would be very influential in environmental protection.

"Our nature has been hurt and we need to improve it in Iran and around the world," said Mohammad Mojabi, a top official at the Department of Environment.

### PICTURE OF THE DAY ISNA/Amir Hassanzadeh)



Kamaneh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor (L) performs a concert with santur players Ali Bahramifard (C), tar virtuoso Hadi Azarpira and tombak player Navid Afqah (not seen in the photo) from the Rahe Ruh band at Pardis Hall in the central Iranian city of Yazd on May 13, 2016.

## Children's stories from Persian classical literature published in Armenian

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — "Sinbad-nameh", "Qabusnameh" and "Marzban-Nameh" from Iranian children's book writer Mehdi Azar Yazdi's series "Good Stories for Good Children" have recently been published in Armenian.

The books were unveiled during a ceremony at the Khnko Aper Children's Library in the Armenian capital of Yerevan on Friday.

The Edit Print Publishing House has published the books in collaboration with the Iranian cultural attaché's office in Yerevan.

A group of Armenian schoolchildren performed a play based on a story from "Marzban-Nameh".

"Good Stories for Good Children" is composed of simplified tales from classical Persian works such as the Gulistan (The Rose Garden), the Masnavi-ye Manavi, the Marzban-Nameh, and some stories from the Holy Quran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and his Household (AS).

The collection won a UNESCO prize in 1966 and was selected as Iran's best book of the year in 1967.

## Art students displaying 3D paintings in Tehran gallery

**T A R T** **TEHRAN** — The Saba Art and Cultural Institute in Tehran is displaying 3D paintings by a group of Iranian students in an exhibition, which opened last Thursday.

Produced by the students studying visual communication, the images were made first on their computers, then printed on large stickers and later put on display in the Khiale No Gallery of the institute.

A large Tyrannosaurus trying to break into the room, a ladder heading toward the sky, a big shelf full of books, and a pond full of gold fish are all propped up here and there inside the gallery.

"One of the courses the students of visual communication are studying at the university is called 'Environmental Graph-

ic Design', which embraces many design disciplines including graphic, architecture and industrial design," curator Nezameddin Emami said in a press release published on Saturday.

"The current exhibit portrays the art-works the students have created in their university courses," he added.

"We also aim to commercialize this part of graphic design in the future, so we have concentrated on different types of works suitable for commercial spaces across the city," he explained.

Shima Aqai, the student who has produced Tyrannosaurus in her work, says she has tried to make the visitors feel excited by looking at the large dinosaur trying to break into the room.

"I aimed to thrill the visitors and make them experience a different type of excitement and surprise," she said.

"In my other work, a dinosaur is bringing his head out of the frame to take a glance at the world around him with great surprise," she noted.

Another student, Ali Mohammadi Feizabad, is attending the exhibit with his ladders, one coming out of a dark hole on the ground, and the other heading the sky.

Zahra Barekati-Rad, Bita Bahrami, Marisa Habibi, Hossein Sedqi and Babak Mehrparvar are among the students whose works are being shown.

The exhibition will run until May 19 at the institute located near the intersection of Taleqani and Vali-e Asr.



A woman poses with a 3D painting during an exhibition at the Khiale No Gallery of the Saba Art and Cultural Institute in Tehran on May 12, 2016. (Honaronline/Saeid Rabiei)