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## Majlis obliges govt. to seek reparations from U.S.

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Majlis (parliament) ratified a two-starred urgency on Sunday by 181 votes to 6, with 8 abstentions, requiring the Rouhani admin-

istration to sue the U.S. for any damage made to Iran and its nationals. After a short enmity hiatus brought about by the nuclear deal, this is the first tit-for-tat between Tehran and Washington after

the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Iran must pay \$2 billion to families of marines who died in the Beirut 1983 barracks attack, allegedly blamed on Iran. According to the bill ratified by the Irani-

an parliament, the government should takes whatsoever steps to sue the U.S. for its role in the 1953 Iranian coup, known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup and the Nojeh coup plot. **→2**

## Intl. rail expo, conference kicks off

By Mahnaz Abdi

**TEHRAN** — The 4th International Exhibition of Rail Transportation, Related Industries and Equipment of Iran, dubbed RAILEXPO 2016, and the first international conference titled "Rail-Ports and Rail-Oil" opened in Tehran on Sunday.

Representatives from many international bodies in the rail industry such as the International Union of Railways and the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail are participating in the two-day conference.

Meanwhile, the RAILEXPO 2016 will run until May 18.

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## Tehran to host Algerian-Iranian business forum

The second Algerian-Iranian business forum will be held today in Tehran with the aim to examine investment opportunities and partnership between the two countries. In this context, the Algerian Minister of Industry and Mines, Abdesalem Bouchouareb, leads a delegation of more than 80 heads of public and private companies (energy, agriculture, food processing, textile, mechanical and pharmaceutical industries) as well as representatives of the Algerian chamber of commerce and industry and the national Agency for investment development.

Co-chaired by Bouchouareb and the Iranian Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh, this forum will be held after the one held in December in Algiers.

The meeting will pave the way to Algeria to intensify economic cooperation with Iran, which does not reflect at present important potentialities both countries. For example, trade between Algeria and Iran doesn't exceed \$10 million, while investment projects and partnerships are minimal with a weak presence of Iranian companies in Algeria. (Source: ennaharonline.com)

## Iran negotiating purchase of navy equipment from Russia

Tehran is negotiating the purchase of equipment for its Navy from Russia, Navy Lieutenant Commander Admiral Gholam Reza Biqam said Sunday.

Iran is interested in the purchase of naval equipment for marine rescue and relief, the official told the local Tasnim news agency. The negotiations are being carried out in the framework of contacts between the Russian and Iranian defense ministries.

He added that Iran was negotiating with other Caspian states on holding joint military drills. (Source: Sputnik)

## Suhrawardi promoted philosophical methodology that gave central place to divine illumination: philosopher

**INTERVIEW**  
By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Professor Charles Taliaferro calls Suhrawardi a "brilliant" philosopher who promoted a "philosophical methodology that gave central place to divine illumination."

Taliaferro, professor of philosophy at St. Olaf College, tells the Tehran Times that "Suhrawardi's meditative, poetic treatments of light and enlightenment pose a sharp contrast to the comparatively drier, sometimes arid tone of analytic philosophy."

Following is the text of the interview:

**■ What is the status of Suhrawardi in the history of philosophical thoughts?**

A: He is a brilliant, 12th century Persian philosopher who promoted a philosophical methodology that gave central place to divine illumination. He has been called the master of illumination. Despite his life being cut short at only 38 years old, he produced over fifty works in Persian and Arabic. He is philosophically interesting to compare with Christian thinkers such as Augustine, Bonaventura, and Henry of Ghent, each of whom developed a robust conception of divine illumination. Suhrawardi is a fascinating example of a philosopher who contributed to epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion in a fashion that gave an important role to revelation and experience.

**■ What is the importance of his**

**thoughts in Western philosophy?**

A: Because Suhrawardi's work was not translated into Latin, he was only encountered tangentially or indirectly, sometimes in the context of the Western treatments of the sufi tradition, until the 20th century in Europe and throughout the English speaking world. We are all in debt for the late Iranologist Henry Corbin who worked hard to promote translations of his work and to disseminate his ideas. Corbin did much to enrich our appreciation for the richness and diversity of Islamic philosophy.

**■ Can it be said that Suhrawardi's work was a turning point in Islamic thought?**

A: Yes. In a sense, Suhrawardi secured a philosophical tradition

that was and is deeply affective that gives a high role for revelation and imagination as opposed to the Aristotelian tradition with its stress on rationalism.

**■ Do the Western philosophers know about Suhrawardi's philosophical thoughts?**

A: As I suggested, he is not widely known due to his works not having circulated in translation until recently. But his work is now increasingly available. I have used a wonderful translation of The Shape of Light in philosophy seminars to great effect. Suhrawardi's meditative, poetic treatments of light and enlightenment pose a sharp contrast to the comparatively drier, sometimes arid tone of analytic philosophy.

## Iran's "Hero" tops Asian cinema at Taiwanese festival

**ART** **TEHRAN** — Iranian film "Hero and the Cloak" won the Grand Prize in the Asian Vision Competition at the 10th Taiwan International Documentary Festival (TIDF), the organizers announced on Saturday.

Directed by Arash Lahuti, the

documentary is the story of a middle-aged man who stages street performances in order to find his ancestor's cloak.

The Merit Prize in this section was awarded to "Cities of Sleep" by Shaunak Sen from India.

In addition, the Grand Prize in the international competition

went to "Brothers" by Norwegian filmmaker Aslaug Holm while "Drought" by Brazilian director Maria Ramos received the Merit Prize.

Founded in 1998, the TIDF is one of the major professional platforms for documentaries in Asia.



Director Arash Lahuti holds the Grand Prize in the Asian Vision Competition that he received for "Hero and the Cloak" at the TIDF on May 14, 2016.

## Humor therapy by theatrical group in Kahrizak Hospice

By Marjan Golpira

**TEHRAN** — Khodkar-e Asemani theatrical group brightened up patients' day in Kahrizak Hospice, one of the great medical institutions in southern Tehran on Thursday.

A number of senior citizens at the hospice were convened to watch a Siah-Bazi, a type of Iranian folk performing art that features a blackface, mischievous and forthright harlequin that does improvisations to stir laughter.

With their presence and performance, the group selflessly cheered up the sick people, who desperately needed to take their minds off their health condition and great pain.

Mehdi Baqeri, who was leading the group, said he was overjoyed "seeing the joy and wonderment in the face of so many of patients."

**■ Still awaiting his son's arrival**

At the hospice, an old man would mistakenly call one of the

male performers by his son's name. His nurse confirmed that he perceives any male walking into the ward as his son, anticipating for him to arrive.

Although laughter wiped away the old man's tears and soon he forgot his anguish, his eyes were still glued to the nursing home's door.

**■ Awaiting to go home**

Elsewhere as one of the performers took the shaky hand of an older woman to guide her to her

room, she turned and said, "Dear, are we going back home to my children?"

Baqeri said everyone choked up instantly. "Tears welled up in our eyes, thinking about how on earth children of senior citizens could abandon their parents in old age when they need them most."

The day ended with bitter-sweet memories of patients of the hospice, where injecting healing humor should be considered seriously.

## Rouhani says Iran is world's reliable partner

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani told a gathering of Iranian ambassadors that Iran is the international community's reliable partner.

Rouhani called on diplomats to seize the opportunity created by the nuclear deal to introduce to foreign investors Iran's capacities and opportunities and facilitate interactions between private-run businesses at home and abroad.

"Iranian ambassadors outside the country should precisely explain the country's capacities and opportunities to foreign investors," remarked Rouhani, the chief initiator and architect of the nuclear deal with great powers which removed sanctions against Iran in exchange for a limited nuclear program.

Rouhani said constructive interaction with the world was a response to Iranophobia project, adding, "Relations and economic interaction with the world is one way of countering Iranophobia."

**■ Economic flourishing is dependent on competition**

Rouhani told ambassadors that pillars of resistance economy are dependent on competition, saying Iran cannot resolve its problems if it cannot compete economically in the world.

**→2**

## TPO chief elaborates on Iran's strategic trade policies

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Rouhani government is resolved to provide activists in Iranian state-run and private sectors with a new and endogenous business environment, in which banks set proper cushions for export-oriented production.

In an interview with IRIB news, Valiollah Afkhamirad, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) explained the incumbent Iranian government's strategic trade policies embracing all tactics and programs of the country's ministry of industry to hit the pre-planned targets in domestic and international trade sector and also to improve domestic business environment by the end of the current Iranian calendar year of 1395 (ends on March 20, 2017):

**■ Improving the business environment**

In a bid to lure Iranian economic activists, Rouhani government seeks to improve business environment; in a way that entering domestic production sector and making investments in it would bring Iranian activities more profit than saving their financial assets in banks in a hope for receiving interests.

**■ Significant role of banks**

After the implementation of the nuclear deal with P5+1 in January a proper bed has been set for cooperation between Iranian banks and their foreign counterparts. Getting re-connected to international brokerage relations, Iranian banks can assist economic activists compete their foreign rivals through reducing the costs of money transfer and soothing investment procedures.

**■ Making endeavors to forge bonds with prominent foreign traders**

Unfortunately, the private sector has a long way to meet all the required structural and infrastructure standards to have negotiations about imports, exports, and investments with eminent foreign trade companies in large scales.

**→4**

MEDIA MONITOR



Syrian crisis should be settled politically, Iran insists

**TEHRAN** — On Saturday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari reiterated the Islamic Republic's position that there is no military solution to the Syrian crisis, noting the conflict should be settled politically.

Ansari made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony held in Tehran on Saturday to commemorate the top Hezbollah commander Mustafa Badreddine who was martyred at a base near Damascus airport on Friday by artillery shells.

He also said foreign interference in Syria runs contrary to the Syrians' interests.

The official added Iran provides Syria with advisory help upon the country's request.



'People will push aside officials with no good performance'

**TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Expediency Council, said on Saturday that people, through elections, will push aside any official who leaves no good record of himself.

During a meeting with student unions, Rafsanjani said the officials' performance and the country's political structure are totally separate issues.

Through election, Rafsanjani said, the people stop supporting an official whose performance is not acceptable.

"The structure of the system is devised in a way that all the system's officials, even the leader, are elected by the people's direct and indirect vote," he pointed out.



'Major European banks have not started interaction with Iran yet'

**TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi confirmed on Saturday that major European banks have not started interactions with Iran yet.

However, some small and mediocre European banks have entered transactions with Iran, he said in a televised interview.

The leading nuclear negotiator added, "Extremist lobbies inside the U.S., the Zionist regime of Israel and some countries like Saudi Arabia are making efforts to prevent Iran from reaping the fruits of the JCPOA through leverage of Iranophobia."

He also said that Iran has enough heavy water and export the extra amount.

The top diplomat said the fact that the U.S. in buying Iran's heavy water indicates that Iran's nuclear activities are internationally recognized.



Intelligence minister meets top Iraqi officials

**TEHRAN** — Iran's Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi has exchanged views with senior Iraqi officials about the latest political and security developments in the region, including ways of fighting terrorism.

In a visit to Baghdad on Saturday, Alavi met with Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari, Parliament Speaker Salim al-Jabouri, and State of Law Coalition chief Nouri al-Maliki, Press TV reported.

In the meeting with Jafari, Alavi discussed the bilateral relations with the neighboring country and the regional and international developments. He also insisted on the necessity of an international coordination to eliminate the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.



Commander: Islam's enemies wage proxy wars in the region

**TEHRAN** — The deputy chief of the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces has said enemies of Islam have waged proxy wars in the region by takfiri groups, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

Mohammad Bagheri said enemies have brought together takfiri groups on the one hand and continue to back Saudis in their war on the Yemeni people. Major General predicted that takfiri backers "will suffer from the same fate Saddam Hossein suffered from."



Minoos Khaleghi summoned to court

**TEHRAN** — Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi, the prosecutor general of Tehran, said on Sunday that Minoos Khaleghi, Isfahan's controversial lawmaker-elect, has been summoned to the court to explain about charges against her.

Khaleghi is a reformist who secured a seat in parliament in elections on February 26. However, the Guardian Council has said she is not qualified as she has been photographed in a meeting without wearing headscarf.

# Top judge: Palestine is gauge for human rights claims

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Iranian Judiciary chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani said on Sunday that the Palestine issue is a criterion to gauge claims being made about human rights.

The top judge made the remarks in an address to an international conference on solidarity with the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Calling Palestine the first priority of the world of Islam, Amoli Larijani said the Palestinian issue should not be restricted to the war between Palestinian people and the Zionist regime of Israel.

The current situation in Palestine is a "big laboratory" to see if the domineering powers' claims on the human rights are "true", he noted.

He added Iran has always supported Palestine's "oppressed people" in their struggle against the Zionist regime.

Senior officials in some countries in the Middle East region have turned countering the Zionist regime into countering Iran, he added.

Elsewhere, the ayatollah said Western countries have no right to impose their interpretation of human rights on other countries.

The arrogant powers use human rights as a tool to achieve their anti-human rights' objectives, he noted.

'Palestine is issue of humanity'

The director of the Leader's office for international affairs also told the conference that Palestine has turned into an issue of all divine religions and humanity as a whole.

"The issue of Palestine is the most important issue for the world of Islam, and also the joint problem in all divine religions, in other words it is an issue of the entire humanity," Hajtoleslam Mohsen Qomi remarked.



Palestine has turned into a scene of fight between resistance and occupation.

He went on to say when the Arab nationalism receded, the United States breathed a sigh of relief and prior to the Islamic revolution the shah regime was an ally of Israel and in that situation the Americans imagined that the Palestinian issue has been forgotten.

However, with the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran the Americans found out that there was no alternative other than being engaged in a full-scale war against the resistance movement.

He said Israel is the "representative" of the hegemonic system in the region.

To counter the resistance front the U.S. has not stood idle by, he pointed out.

"Their most important plot is fanning the flames of religious sectarianism and launching war between Shia and Sunni."

He also pointed to Saudi officials' ill-advised policy toward the resistance movement and Iran, saying, "Now Sau-

dis speak more bluntly... and instead of struggling against Israel they speak about animosity with Iran."

However, he said, Iran will not be dragged into the trap of religious war.

The cleric politician said now the U.S. is working hard to create a kind of interaction between certain mercenary regimes in the region with Israel with the aim of undermining the resistance movement.

He also said the enemies are seeking to destroy the infrastructure projects in Islamic countries and they have done this in Yemen and Syria.

"Today, those who are fighting against the Syrian people and Hezbollah are standing against Islam and serving the U.S."

He went on to say that the Palestinian issue must remain the first priority of Muslims in the world and in this campaign the non-governmental organizations should also come to the help of Palestinians.

Also the Palestinians' military power

should be increased because they are facing an enemy who "only understands the language of force."

"Today in Gaza people are producing their weapons for struggling against Israelis and Hezbollah and Hamas are also very active in military activities."

Hezbollah chief: Israel is greatest threat to region

In a message to the conference Hezbollah Secretary General Seyed Hassan Nasrallah also said Israel is still the main danger threatening the region and the Muslim world.

"Certain people feel that Israel is merely a threat to the Palestinians and poses no danger to other governments and nations," Nasrallah said in a message to the conference, according to Fars news agency.

Although Israel is not as strong as the past thanks to the resistance movements' sacrifices and victories, he said, the Tel Aviv regime still enjoys power in that region and threatens the regional nations.

"All of us should strive to say to the nations that Israel, its goals and threats are still a danger," Nasrallah said.

Speaking on the same conference, Zahra Mostafavi, the secretary general of the NGO Union for Supporting the Palestinian Rights, said half of the Palestinians are displaced while the other half are being oppressed by Zionists in their homeland.

Palestine must be the most important issue for the Muslim world but it is not, Mostafavi lamented.

She pointed to a recent OIC summit in Istanbul in which Hezbollah, which has been struggling against the Zionist regime, was condemned.

"It is now the right time for all Muslim countries to stand up in support of Palestinian people," she added.

## Rouhani: Iran is world's reliable partner



"An economy that cannot compete in the international scene cannot resolve its problems in the long run and if in economy we aren't able to compete with the world qualitatively and quantifiably, we will not succeed."

Reducing unemployment is top priority

The president also said reducing unemployment and creating jobs for

the youth have been among most important priorities of his administration. He said since he took over as president he was facing economic recession, inflation, and unemployment which through planning succeeded to single digit the inflation.

While regional countries faced a devaluation of their currency due to sharp fall in oil prices, Iran succeeded to prevent currency devaluation, the president went on to say.



## Takhttravanchi: Kerry's banking talks important if they produce practical outcomes

**POLITICAL TEHRAN** — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for European and American Affairs Majid Takhttravanchi said it is important to see whether assurances by U.S. Secretary of State to European banks that there is no room for concern over trade with Iran makes a difference in practice.

"Reportedly, the negotiations weren't overall bad, but the important thing is

what happens in practice," IRNA quoted Takhttravanchi as saying on Sunday.

Visiting representatives of top European banks during his recent trip to London, John Kerry said, "We want to make it clear that legitimate business, which is clear under the definition of the (nuclear) agreement, is available to banks."

While the signing of the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehen-

sive Plan of Action, resulted in the removal of sanctions, including banking transactions, against Tehran, foreign banks, particularly European ones, are skeptical it is now safe for them to restore trade ties with the country.

On whether European banks have spoken of any preconditions for resuming ties with Iranian partners, Takhttravanchi said, "It is nonsensical to talk about pre-

quisites in banking transactions."

Some Iranian media outlets have claimed European banks had conditioned resumption of banking ties upon Iran paying U.S.-imposed fines of European banks by Washington.

Also, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi confirmed on Saturday that major European banks have not started interactions with Iran yet.

## Jahangiri says economy is atop agenda

**POLITICAL THERAN** — First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri has said economy is the first priority of the country, stressing the importance of resistance economy to achieve goals.

Jahangiri made the remarks on Saturday in a gathering of Iranian ambassadors and representatives to foreign countries, Tasnim reported.

"For all state-run bodies, a short-term, prioritized plan has been worked out in line with principles of resistance economy," Jahangiri said.

However, Jahangiri stated, the government has not enough resources to achieve depicted goals, making it quite necessary to attract foreign investment.

"The budget crunch means the government will not be able to play a big role in greasing the wheels of economy," the vice president remarked, referring to this year's budget.



Accordingly, a priority of the government is to attract as much as \$17 billion in the current Iranian calendar year (which started on March 21), \$7 billion in the form of direct investment and \$10 billion financing,

Jahangiri added.

"Without foreign resources, we will not be able to achieve economic growth at the pace we wish."

Iranian officials hope to rebuild the economy through attracting foreign investment to the country now that it is emerging from years of international sanctions.

It is likely that Tehran succeeds in actualizing its economic agenda considering that the country's oil output reached 3.56 million barrels a day in April, the highest since November 2011, and exports soared to 2 million barrels a day, just shy of the level before the trade restrictions.

Besides, there has been a surge of foreign investors to the country in pursuit of winning trade opportunities over the past few months.

In one recent case, the country agreed to triple its trade with South Korea from the current \$6 billion.

## Majlis obliges govt. to seek reparations from U.S.



The 1953 coup overthrew Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq.

Also, the Nojeh coup plot was an aborted attempt to overthrow the newly established Islamic Republic more than 30 years ago.

The bill also seeks for reparations from the U.S. for the Iran-Iraq war, which left more than 223,000 deaths, as well as the U.S.-backed assassination of more than

17,000 Iranians in terrorist attacks.

The bill also covers all damage by the U.S.-involved espionage as well as the U.S.-backed activities of Israel against Iran and its nationals.

This is the first legal measure taken by the parliament to look into the U.S. High Court ruling.

Prior to the act, senior Iranian officials had branded the \$2 billion seizure of the Central Bank of Iran as "international theft."

On Saturday, Iran's prosecutor general Montazeri 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.

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.



# UN must pressure Israel on Palestinians right to return: PLO

**Nakba Day: A 'clear challenge' to Israeli establishment**

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has called on the United Nations to implement a resolution adopted in 1948 giving Palestinian refugees the right to return to the occupied territories as they are gearing up to commemorate the 68th anniversary of Nakba Day (the Day of Catastrophe).

PLO's legislative body, the Palestinian National Council (PNC), said in a statement released on Saturday that all refugees must be entitled to the right to come back to their homes as stipulated in the General Assembly Resolution 194, emphasizing that the right is non-negotiable and can never be compromised.

It also censured the crimes and atrocities perpetrated by the Tel Aviv regime against Palestinians, making reference to the extra-judicial killings and torture of Palestinian prisoners as Israel's consistent hegemonic policy.

Every year on May 15, Palestinians all over the world hold demonstrations to commemorate Nakba Day, which marks the anniversary of the forcible eviction of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland by Israelis in 1948.

More than 760,000 Palestinians - now



estimated to number nearly five million with their descendants - were driven out of their homes on May 14, 1948.

On Saturday, hundreds of Palestinians staged a "March of Return" in the northern Israeli port city of Haifa toward the site of a Palestinian village, which Israeli military forces razed in 1948.

Arab members of the Israeli Knesset

(parliament), activists and local Palestinians made their way to the village of al-Tira, where dozens of Palestinians were slaughtered by Israeli troopers and a large number of houses completely destroyed. Only a few buildings remain in the area, which are either vacant or occupied by illegal Israeli settlers.

Since 1948, the Israeli regime has de-

nied Palestinian refugees the right to return, despite United Nations resolutions and international law that uphold their right to return to their homelands.

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

The Hebrew-language daily Yedioth Ahronoth reported that Regev had instructed the ministry's Director General Yossi Sharabi to develop an initiative aimed at the action. Her proposal needs to be debated and approved by the Knesset.

What became known as the Nakba Law introduced a new condition to the criteria for eligibility for state funding, stipulating that funding could be denied if the body in question - such as a Palestinian municipality - marked Israel's Independence Day as a day of mourning.

In 2012, Israel's Supreme Court rejected a petition against the Nakba Law, saying that it was too early to assess the impact of the legislation.

(Source: agencies)

## Syria forces take back hospital from ISIL in Dayr al-Zawr

Syrian government forces have managed to take back a hospital in the eastern city of Dayr al-Zawr from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists after thwarting the group's major offensive on the city.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group, said on Saturday that the government troops wrested control over the Assad Hospital after several hours of fierce fighting with the ISIL militants.

Russia's RIA state news agency also quoted a source in the Dayr al-Zawr airport as saying that the ISIL raid on the hospital had been repelled.

Meanwhile, a military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told China's Xinhua news agency that the

Syrian army freed all doctors and nurses taken hostage by the terrorists inside the health care institution.

The recapture came on the same day that ISIL carried out a "major offensive" on the southwestern edge of Dayr al-Zawr, stormed the Assad Hospital and cut the supply route between a Syrian army base and the city's airport.

The observatory said the militants killed at least 35 members of the Syrian armed forces and detained some medical staff from the hospital. Two dozen ISIL terrorists were slain in clashes in and around the medical center.

In their Saturday attack, the terrorists also took control of a checkpoint, a fire station, university accommo-

dation, grain silos and some territory near the Tayyam oil fields.

ISIL's Amaq news agency said the group also took control of a checkpoint, a fire station and university accommodation in the city close to Syria's eastern border with Iraq.

Amaq also said the fighters had taken territory near to the state-held military airport.

ISIL controls about 60 percent of Dayr al-Zawr, including the centre and the north of the city.

It has imposed a siege on government-held districts in the south and the east where about 200,000 civilians have been trapped since March 2014.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## 11 dead, 21 wounded in bomb attacks targeting Iraqi gas factory

By staff & agencies

Nearly a dozen people have lost their lives and many more sustained injuries when bomb attacks ripped through a state-run cooking gas factory near the capital, Baghdad.

Security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said at least 11 people, including policemen, were killed and 21 others wounded when an explosive-laden car went off at the entrance of the facility in the town of Taji, located 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of Baghdad, at around 6 a.m. local time (0300 GMT) on Sunday.

Six assailants clad in explosive vests later made their way into the factory, triggering a heavy exchange of gunfire with the security personnel inside the facility. Three of the facility's gas storages reportedly went up in flames amid the violence.

Lieutenant General Abdul Amir al-Shammari, a commander for Baghdad Operations Command, told Arabic-language al-Baghdadia satellite television network that security forces are now in control of the gas factory, and civil defense teams are trying to put out the intense blaze.

No group or individual has so far claimed responsibility for the attacks, but Iraqi officials usually blame such incidents on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group, which has been wreaking havoc on Iraq's northern and western parts since 2014.

Also on Sunday, a civilian was killed and eight others injured when an improvised explosive device detonated near an outdoor market in the town of Yusufiyah, situated 40 kilometers (24 miles) south of Baghdad.

Elsewhere in Baghdad's northern neighborhood of Hussainiyah, an improvised explosive device claimed a civilian life and left six others wounded.

### ■ ISIL drone downed

Meanwhile, Iraqi security forces have shot down a surveillance drone operated by the ISIL terrorists north of Ramadi, located about 110 kilometers (68 miles) west of Baghdad.

The unmanned aerial vehicle was reportedly used to monitor military units deployed in Albu Dhiyab region.

The development came on the day that Major General Ali Ibrahim Daboun, commander of al-Jazeera and al-Baadia

Operations, said Iraqi security forces together with tribal fighters from pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (al-Hashd al-Shaabi) have retaken al-Rabi' village from ISIL terrorists and raised the national Iraqi flag over a building in the area.

Major General Ismail al-Mahlawi, commander of the Anbar Operation, announced in a statement on Saturday that army soldiers backed by allied tribal fighters had purged the city of Amiriyat Fallujah, located about 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) south of Fallujah, of ISIL terrorists.

### ■ ISIL claims Iraq's Ameriyat Fallujah attack

Elsewhere, ISIL has claimed responsibility for killing 70 Iraqi soldiers and a policeman in Ameriyat Fallujah, just west of the capital Baghdad.

The fighters stormed a compound in the city on Saturday with armored vehicles. About 22 suicide bombers wearing explosive vests carried out the attacks.

The attack began around 4am (01:00 GMT) when at least nine ISIL terrorists, including four suicide attackers, infiltrated the town, police sources said.

The fighters took up positions in a disused residential complex and exchanged fire with army, police and Sunni tribal fighters charged with holding areas retaken from ISIL.

A police colonel said the attack was aimed at distracting security forces from closing in on Fallujah, which Iraqi forces have ringed for more than six months.

Police sources said all the assailants were killed in a battle lasting about three hours, but Shakir al-Essawi, the mayor, told Reuters news agency that security forces were searching for one fighter they suspected was still hiding out.

### ■ ISIL uses chemical arms against Kurds in Iraq: Kurdish source

The development follows as ISIL terrorist group has employed chemical weapons in its latest attack on Kurdish Peshmerga forces in northern Iraq, says a military source.

Local Peshmerga Commander Gwer-Makhmour Sirwan Barzani told the Kurdish media network Rudaw that the ISIL chemical raid on Saturday wounded at least 14 Kurdish soldiers.



Peshmerga fighters launched a counterattack and used heavy equipment to diffuse the poisonous gas.

"The state of those injured Peshmerga troops is stable," Barzani said, adding, "After a counterattack by Kurdish forces, the situation at the battlefield has stabilized."

Last week, Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Ahmet Uzumcu said fact-finding teams from The Hague-based watchdog have discovered traces of sulfur mustard, commonly known as mustard gas, in attacks carried out by ISIL.

On May 9, Kurdish sources said the terrorists launched several mortar rounds containing chlorine gas at the village of Bashir in Kirkuk Province. Scores of Peshmerga fighters suffered temporary respiratory problems and nausea in the assault.

Back in March, ISIL terrorists launched two chemical attacks near the northern city of Kirkuk, killing a three-year-old girl and wounding hundreds of people.

### ■ Iraqi forces kill ISIL cmdr. behind 2014 Speicher massacre

Fighters from Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units have reportedly killed a commander of ISIL terrorist group wanted for the June 2014 massacre of hundreds of military recruits in the central city of Tikrit.

A security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Sumaria satellite television

network that Iraqi forces engaged ISIL terrorists close to the Hamrin Mountains, situated 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, on Saturday, killing the high-profile militant commander, identified as Ali Salaman but better known by the nom de guerre, al-Azirah, and three of his aides in the process.

The source further noted that Azirah was also responsible for orchestrating the execution of a number of youths from the town of al-Alam, north of Tikrit.

On June 12, 2014, ISIL terrorists killed around 1,700 Iraqi Air Force cadets in an attack on Camp Speicher, a former United States base. There were reportedly around 4,000 unarmed cadets in the camp at the time of the attack.

An investigation committee later revealed that 57 members of the former dictator Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party aided ISIL terrorists in massacring the Iraqi troopers.

Gruesome violence has plagued the northern and western parts of Iraq ever since ISIL terrorists launched an offensive in June 2014, and took control of portions of Iraqi territory.

The terrorists have been committing heinous crimes against all ethnic and religious communities in Iraq, including Shias, Sunnis, Kurds, Christians and others.

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

## NEWS

### Bombing hits Yemen's Mukalla, leaves 25 police recruits dead

At least 25 Yemeni police recruits loyal to the former Saudi-backed government have been killed in a bomb attack in the southern port city of Mukalla.

Security sources said the attacker set off his explosives as the recruits were lining up at a military base in Mukalla's Foua suburb on Sunday.

Sixty people were also wounded in the attack, which has been claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group, a medical source said.

The incident came a few days after three bombings rocked army bases near the city and left at least 15 Yemeni troops dead. The ISIL terrorist group claimed responsibility for one of the attacks, which was a car bombing.

On April 24, forces loyal to the resigned fugitive Yemeni President, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, backed by Emirati (UAE) troops, retook Mukalla, the capital of the vast desert province of Hadhramaut, from the al-Qaeda militants, who had occupied the city for a year.

The alleged recapture of Mukalla came three days after the United Nations-brokered peace talks started in Kuwait City between Ansarullah (Houthi) movement fighters and their allies in one side and loyalists to Hadi on the other side.

The talks came against the backdrop of an open-ended shaky ceasefire that began at midnight on April 10 in Yemen.

(Source: Press TV)

### Kerry in Saudi Arabia for talks on Syria, Libya, Yemen



United States Secretary of State John Kerry met on Sunday with the House of Saud regime's King Salman for talks on the conflicts in Syria, Libya and Yemen ahead of larger meetings on those crises in Europe this week.

Kerry was also scheduled to meet Saudi crown prince, deputy crown prince and the young Saudi foreign minister. His visit comes at a critical time in efforts to rein in fighting and encourage political dialogue in all three countries that have been wracked by violence for years.

Kerry is trying to shore up the shaky truce in Syria, which has been fraught with violations on both sides. While the U.S. and its partners accuse the government of the vast majority of breaches, they have also acknowledged violations by the opposition.

The situation has been further complicated by the intermingling of some western and Arab-backed rebels with groups such as the al-Qaeda affiliate, known as the al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra), which the United Nations has designated a terrorist organization and therefore not covered by the truce. The House of Saud regime and the U.S. have rejected attempts by Russia to get those rebels placed on the UN terrorist list.

Kerry traveled later on Sunday to Vienna where he will co-host group talks on Libya with Italy's foreign minister and then on Syria with his Russian counterpart.

He will then visit Brussels for a meeting of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) foreign ministers before flying on to Asia to meet President Barack Obama in Vietnam.

(Source: AP)

### Russian officials: North Korea released detained yacht

A Russian yacht detained by North Korean coast guards was released on Sunday and has set sail for the far-eastern city of Vladivostok, Russian officials said.

"The Russian yacht Elfin today left the North Korean port of Kimchaek headed for Vladivostok," Denis Samsonov, a spokesman for the Russian embassy in Pyongyang told Russian state television on Sunday.

Yury Bokharev, Russia's consul in the city of Chongjin, told Russia's RIA Novosti news agency that local North Korean officials had said the boat's detention was a "misunderstanding".

Another diplomatic official in Vladivostok, Igor Agafonov, told the RIA Novosti agency that the five-member crew of the yacht had been in contact and confirmed that they were sailing home.

The Russian sailboat was detained by North Korean coast guards late on Friday as it sailed through the Sea of Japan from a competition in the South Korean city of Busan to its home city of Vladivostok.

Russia's foreign ministry said on Saturday that a note was sent to the North Korean authorities seeking an explanation for the boat's detention.

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

(Source: AFP)

## NEWS

## IMF delegation in Tehran for a 3-day visit

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The first deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, David Lipton, leading a delegation, arrived in Tehran on Sunday, IRNA reported.

According to the report, the delegation which includes five senior directors of the IMF, will meet and conduct negotiations with Iranian senior officials including head of the presidential office, governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), chairman of the Management and Planning Organization, and oil minister.

In line with the scheduled meetings for this visit, Lipton will hold talks with Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, Iran's oil minister, on Monday and then he will deliver a speech on "Iran on the way to achieve its proper place in the global economy" among the country's economists at the CBI building on Tuesday.

Based on the schedule, during his visit, Lipton will have also some meetings with economic experts, bankers and entrepreneurs in the private sector.

IMF delegation's three-day visit to Iran is a good opportunity to introduce the country's economic potentials and rebuilding trust for international trade, a chance for a reunion with the global economy.

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

## Iran offers joint water, wastewater projects worth \$9.89b to Japan

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Hamid-Reza Tashayoei, the deputy managing director for supervision and operation in Iran's Water & Wastewater Engineering Company known as ABFA, announced that Iran has offered \$9.89 billion worth of possible joint projects in water and wastewater sector to the Japanese companies.

"The projects will especially be in the areas of improving treatment plants, desalination systems and sludge management", IRNA quoted Tashayoei as saying on Sunday.

Addressing the press on the sidelines of the 2nd Conference on Iran-Japan Water and Wastewater Industry Joint Cooperation in Tehran, Tashayoei added, "Japan is one of the leading countries in the field of wastewater management".

"Ten renowned Japanese companies are attending this conference to hold a series of meetings with the private sector and entrepreneurs in Iran's water and wastewater industry" he said.

Tashayoei also noted, "We will try to use the agreed credit line between Iran and Japan for the implementation of the mentioned projects."

## Intl. rail expo, conference kicks off

1→

## Iran's rail transportation up 100%

Addressing the conference, Mohsen Pour Seyed Aqaei, the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (IRIR), said transportation through railway rose 100 percent in Iran over the past Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016) from its previous year and also in 1393 from its preceding year.

Iran's railway network is stretched over 10,500 kilometers at the moment, while building another 9,000 kilometers of new railroads has been planned, Aqaei stated, adding that contracts have been signed and building operations have been started for over 5,000 kilometers of the projected network.

He also announced, "We have planned to raise the number of passengers who are transported by rail annually to 40 million from the current 27 million and the volume of cargo which are transported to 92 million tons from the current 34 million tons by the end of 2020."

Iran's railway should account for 30 percent of cargo transportation and 18 percent of passenger transportation in the country by the end of 2025, the official added.

Being located en route the Silk Road,



*Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhoundi addressing the first international conference of Iran on "Rail-Ports and Rail-Oil" in Tehran on Sunday*

Iran has had a strategic role in transportation since 3,000 years ago, the head of IRIR further highlighted.

Railway connects the Caspian Sea in the north of Iran to the Persian Gulf in the south, Pour Seyed Aqaei mentioned, stressing, "We should connect our railway network to those of our neighboring countries as well."

## Connecting countries, a main policy

During the same event, Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhoundi said "Making connectivity between other countries via air, road and rail is one of our main policies in the ministry."

"We should connect our railway to China, Moscow in Russia and Helsinki in

Europe," the minister added.

"Railway is a sector in which we could have a very fast growth," the official asserted.

Many noticeable measures have been taken recently in Iran in all parts of the railway sector, including signaling and also launching high-speed trains, Akhoundi announced.

## Sanctions removal, best opportunity for intl. co-op

Addressing the same conference, Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammadreza Ne'matzadeh said the removal of sanctions provides the country with the best opportunity to boost its international cooperation.

The minister emphasized the need for joining the global chain of business given the new environment created in Iran in the post-sanction time and which has led to the presence of more foreign companies in the country under these circumstances.

At the end of the event, Akhoundi inaugurated RAILEXPO 2016, which is participated by 150 Iranian and 130 foreign exhibitors from 17 countries including Russia, Germany, Britain, Switzerland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, China, the Czech Republic, Bangladesh, and India.

## TPO chief elaborates on Iran's strategic trade policies

1→

Iranian private companies should create departments specialized in conducting negotiations with foreign business companies and marketing to become able to open their branches and after-sale offices in the determined countries.

## Marketing need for boosting exports

Iranian private sector should take advantage of professional marketers, whether Iranian or foreigner, to help them compete foreign brands in the international market.

## Deregulation

Removing or reducing state regulations would improve Iran's business with the world, since impeding commercial rules increase the transaction costs as well as their time duration.

## Eliminating bureaucratic barriers to ease trade

Major steps have been taken to cut cumbersome bureaucracy to facilitate both imports and exports, including setting up "sabtareh" website, where the applicants can register their orders for imports.

## Equal trade opportunities for every one

No individual or entity is determined by the government to keep either imports or exports of specified goods exclusively.

## Government backs leading exporters

Leading and experienced exporters would be provided with incentives to help them find their proper destination markets and to make durable transactions with their foreign partners.

## Adjusting luxury imports

Imports of luxury goods are regulated via setting tariffs.

## Import tariffs on 7,000 luxury goods doubled

The government has levied 200-percent tariffs on 7,000 luxury goods and plans to consume the earned income on job creation and investments in industry, mining, and agriculture sector.

The government can make the exports volume continually surpass that of imports via controlling the price of intermediate materials and capital goods, supporting and facilitating investments in production sector, and permitting exporters to consume their income in a comparative domestic market.

## Knowledge transfer high priority in transactions with foreigners

Iran should not be converted into a market for foreign brands, instead, for famous foreign brands to make joint investments here and have Iranians acquainted with the latest technologies.

When trains and tracks connect provinces and horizons.

And Parisa's family is always close to her and to Tehran.

That's ingenuity for life.

The most important connections are the ones between people and specially families. They need to be close to each other, no matter the distance. And every minute counts. That's why it matters that Siemens trains and transportation systems are designed to be fast, reliable and efficient. And they are custom made in Iran for Iran. Because they do not just connect places. They connect businesses and families. Like Parisa and her parents in Yazd. That's ingenuity for life.

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Shahrood Mashhad

Tehran Sari Zanjan

SIEMENS  
Ingenuity for life

# ICOM president to celebrate Intl. Museum Day in Tehran

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — The president of desk the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Hans-Martin Hinz will attend a ceremony to mark the International Museum Day, which will be held at the National Museum of Iran on May 18.

On this occasion, Hinz will send a message to ICOM national committees and member museums from Tehran this year, secretary of the event Ahmad Mohit-Tabatabaei announced.

The official website Iran's ICOM national committee will be officially launched and the country's best museum will be introduced during a meeting on May 18 at the National Museum of Iran, he said.

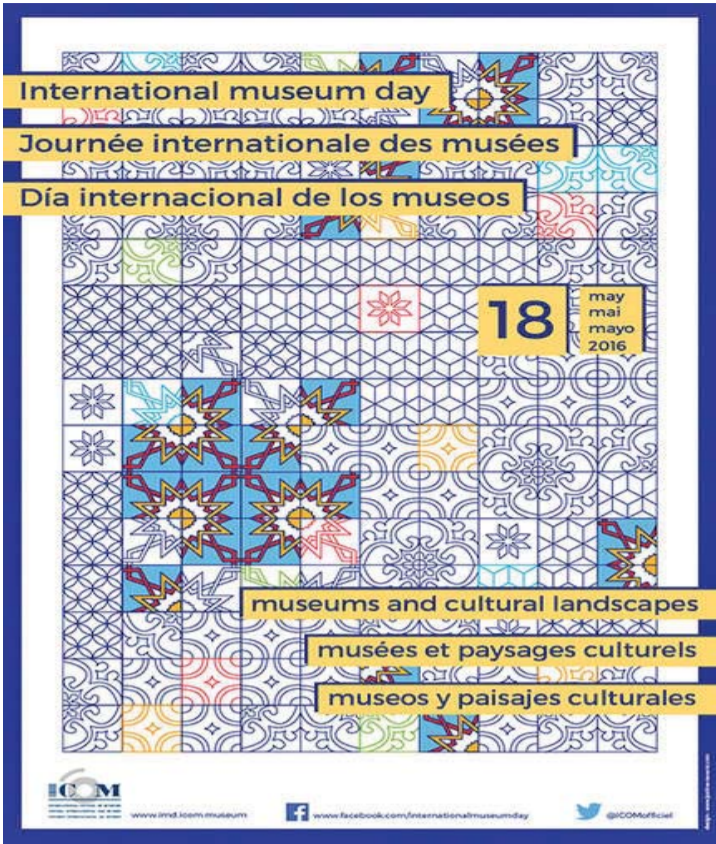
He also said that an ICOM office will be

opened in the city of Shiraz during Hinz's stay in Iran.

The National Museum of Iran will also arrange meetings on museums and disabled people, museums and children, museums and documents, and museums and architecture on May 23 and 24 in other museums of Tehran, he added.

The worldwide community of museums will celebrate International Museum Day with the theme of Museums and Cultural Landscapes.

Advisory Committee of ICOM, the only organization of museums and museum professionals with a global scope, organizes the theme of this event that, given the high number of countries involved, lasts a day, a weekend, a week or even a month.



## A CLOSER LOOK

### How tomb raiders are stealing our history

The lady in the striped wig with the staring eyes lies on a brightly lit table as the professor hovers a palm's breadth from her face. "Still in remarkable condition ... extremely well preserved," the professor murmurs. As her gaze glides down the victim's body, painted on the lid of her coffin, she points out a fresh cut across the upper thighs, and symbols of the god Amun, an ibis, and magic spells from the "Book of the Dead". "And here is her name and title: Shesep-amun-tayes-her, Mistress of the House. By reading it aloud, I fulfill her wish to be remembered in the afterlife."

The Egyptian noblewoman has been dead some 2,600 years. Sarah Parcak, an Egyptologist at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, is examining her inner sarcophagus, one of three wooden cases that, nested like Russian dolls, once cradled her mummified body, the odor of which lingers in the coffin. Looters sawed this sarcophagus into four pieces and shipped it by airmail to the United States, where an antiques restorer put it back together. Months later customs agents discovered the coffin stashed at the home of a Brooklyn antiques dealer. It lies in a warehouse at a secret location in New York City, where federal authorities hold seized artifacts from around the world: a huge stone Buddha from India, terra-cotta horsemen from China, reliefs from Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. All are orphans of the illegal antiquities trade, victims of the international battle over cultural heritage.

Paddling into the afterlife, Nile boatmen once accompanied an Egyptian on death's long voyage. The artifacts were looted from a grave around 2009 and began a clandestine journey from Egypt to Dubai, then on to New York and Virginia, where they were seized by federal agents and eventually returned to Egypt.

From murderous temple thieves in India to church pillagers in Bolivia to hundred-man bands of tomb raiders in China's Liaoning Province, looters are strip-mining our past. Like most illegal activities, looting is hard to quantify. But satellite imagery, police seizures, and witness reports from the field all indicate that the trade in stolen treasures is booming around the world.

In Egypt, Parcak has pioneered the use of satellite imagery to measure looting and site-encroachment damage. Her research tells a grim tale: A quarter of the country's 1,100 known archaeological areas have sustained major damage. "At the current rate of destruction, all known sites in Egypt will be seriously compromised by 2040," she says. "It's heartbreaking."

Over the past two decades a series of high-profile court cases and repatriations have exposed the dark side of the antiquities trade, bringing to light criminal networks of diggers and traffickers who sell looted artifacts to Madison Avenue galleries and renowned museums.

In 2002 Frederick Schultz, a prominent Manhattan dealer in ancient art, was sentenced to 33 months in federal prison for conspiring to receive stolen Egyptian objects. In 2006 the Metropolitan Museum of Art, under pressure from the Italian government, agreed to return the famous Euphronios krater—a wine-mixing bowl looted from an Etruscan tomb near Rome. And in recent years the drumbeat of war and turmoil in many antiquities-rich countries, culminating in the sack of ancient Mesopotamia by the Islamic State (ISIS), has sparked concern that the antiquities trade is helping fund terrorism.

Yet the debate about how to halt looting has reached an impasse. Archaeologists blame the antiquities trade for looting, claiming that many artifacts on the market were stolen. Collectors, dealers, and many museum curators counter that most antiquities sales are legal. Some argue that the ultimate goal of safeguarding humankind's artistic heritage obliges them to "rescue" antiquities from unstable countries—even if it means buying from looters.

(Source: National Geography)

### Guide to be a responsible traveler

■ Be considerate – of the communities and environment you visit.

■ Don't litter. Try to carry your own shopping bag to avoid contributing to the plastic problem in many countries of the world.

■ Try to avoid excessive waste and the use of plastic bottles (in many countries there is no way of disposing of these, therefore creating plastic mountains due to tourism) – bring your own and consider purifying your own water & remove all packaging before leaving home.

■ Reduce energy consumption. Unplug your mobile phone charger, turn off the lights...

■ Conserve water. Take shorter showers... the average hotel guest uses over 300 litres of water per night! In a luxury hotel it is approx. 1800 litres!

Always ask before taking photographs. If someone says no, respect their wishes.

■ Educate yourself about the place you are visiting and the people.

Respect cultural differences – and learn from it! People in different places do things differently – don't try little boyo change them – enjoy them.

■ Dress respectfully. Cover up away from the beach. Cover your head in religious places. Notice local dress codes and adhere to them.

■ Do not purchase or eat endangered species (e.g. turtle egg soup, crocodile handbags). Choose sustainable seafood

■ Support the local economy. Buy locally made souvenirs, eat at local restaurants – enjoy the local culture!

■ Do not give pens, candy or other gifts to local children – it fosters a begging economy. If you wish to donate, contact a local school or tour operator who can ensure the gifts are distributed fairly and properly.

(Source: Sustainable Tourism)

## Shiraz to Yazd: A bike touring route

Home for the night? Cycling from Shiraz to Yazd takes you past some of the finest archaeological sites in Iran, if not the entire the Middle East.

There's also the Abarkuh desert to enjoy before you reach the relaxed city of Yazd with its wonderful budget hotels, Zoroastrian culture and one of Iran's largest mosques. Yazd is also a great place to buy that Persian silk carpet or kilim you've had your eye on...

### ■ Shiraz to Persepolis (60km)

Head north out of Shiraz on the main highway towards Marvdasht. This stretch is busy but there are few alternatives. You may be tempted by a long loop towards Persepolis via Dariyan but local cyclists warned against this route. Apparently a cycle tourist was robbed of his camera on this road last year. Although it's busy, the road to Marvdasht has a decent shoulder most of the way and the vehicles tend to give you plenty of space.

Take the exit marked for Marvdasht and follow the signs to Persepolis, which goes directly through the town center. As you come up the tree-lined boulevard to Persepolis you'll pass a "tourist complex" which offers camping and beds for the night but there's no need to pay for accommodation. The security guards at Pardis Garden (directly to the right as you reach the Persepolis entrance) are more than happy to let you camp in the grounds where the Shah used to hold his parties.

### ■ Persepolis to Sa'adat Shahr (75km)

Leaving Persepolis, you don't need to return to the main road. Instead, take the road directly opposite Pardis Garden (to the left if facing Persepolis), cycle through the parking lot and out the far corner. You're then on a small road which soon rejoins the old road to Esfahan. The traffic here is still steady but less than the main highway and downright quiet in parts.

As you join the old road, you'll notice a gated area and ticket office on your right. This is Naqsh-e-Rajab (entry 2,000 Rials)



The city of Yazd

and features a few rock reliefs. Directly across from this site is the road leading to the much more interesting Naqsh-e-Rustam (entry 3,000 Rials) where the tombs of Darius II, Artaxerxes I and Darius the Great are carved high into the rock face.

### ■ Sa'adat Shahr to Safa Shahr (90km)

Unfortunately the main road rejoins the old road at Sa'adat Shahr so you have a stretch of heavy traffic but the shoulder here is wide and in good condition for riding. About 20km outside Sa'adat Shahr several signs mark the turn-off for Pasargadae, one of Iran's top archaeological sites next to Persepolis.

There is a restaurant at the turn-off. Another nice idea is to pick up food from one of the many shops as you approach the site and then picnic under the trees at Pasargadae itself. The site doesn't have as much to see as Persepolis but it is quite widespread so allow over an hour to wander around. There are clean toilets and drinking water at the entrance.

Shortly after returning to the main road and continuing on your way, you come to the turn-off for Qader Abad (spelled Gaderabad on some signs). On our map this turn-off is marked as the

main road but in fact it's the opposite. Both roads involve a fair bit of climbing so you might as well take the right bearing fork into Qader Abad and enjoy some relief from the trucks. After filling your panniers and water bottles in Qader Abad, it's about 30km before you rejoin the main road.

There are no villages or even houses for most of the way. With the desolate landscape it shouldn't be hard to find a place for your tent but we found a good spot just 2km before you return to the main highway.

### ■ Safa Shahr to Surmaq (70km)

Sassan and family Leaving Safa Shahr, there's the choice of a dirt road leading via Heneshk and towards Abarkuh – shorter but condition unknown – or the busy main road. We took the second option and here a series of ups and downs takes you steadily higher to a peak of 2,500 meters about 30km on from Safa Shahr. A Red Crescent station at the top can refill your water bottles and then it's a stonking downhill run towards Surmaq, with plenty of ridges and old castles to pull behind for the night if you wish.

There are two appealing options if you continue on. The first comes about 2km before Surmaq and the turn-off to Yazd. Look for an extensive farm of grape vines and fruit and nut trees on your right, before the large silo. The main yard of the farm is walled with a blue gate and "welcome" painted on the wall.

### ■ Surmaq to Deh Shir (110km)

Traffic dies down once you take the turn-off towards Yazd, although the trucks still rumble by reasonably often. After a downhill stretch you reach Abarkuh, the only town of any size for quite some time. It can't offer accommodation but there are plenty of shops here and some interesting architecture. Look for the beehive structures as you enter the town. Water was let into them at night in the winter to freeze into ice and then be packed away in straw for use in warmer weather. Going straight through Abarkuh, the villages slowly trickle out until you enter the flat and empty road through the desert.

Ensure you have lots of water and food as there is nothing for a good 50km and very little shade if you're cycling in hot weather. Only the odd abandoned castle breaks up the long stony plain.

### ■ Deh Shir to Yazd (100km)

The road climbs steadily out of Deh Shir until you reach the peak about 22km later. After that it's an all downhill ride to Yazd so sit back and enjoy. There's little to see, although the mountain scenery is nice enough. If you want to spend the night on this stretch, one option is an abandoned castle on your left with a stream running nearby about 5km out of Deh Shir.

Coming into Yazd, follow the well marked signs to the city center. When you pass the bazaar in the old city, take a left on the corner where a large Melli Bank stands and go down the small street towards the imposing Jameh Mosque.

(Source: Travelling Two)

## How long have people used prosthetic limbs?

A 3,000-year-old, wood-and-leather toe found on an Egyptian mummy – and the discovery in Italy of an artificial leg dating back to 300 BC – show that manufacturing prosthetic limbs was already possible in the ancient world.

In the fifth century BC, Greek historian Herodotus wrote of a Persian soldier who had replaced his lost foot with a wooden version.

Then 500 years later, Pliny the Elder gives the earliest record of a prosthetic hand in his account of Roman general Marcus Sergius, who replaced a lost hand with one made of iron in order to grasp his shield.

These early prosthetics were of obvious value to those injured in battle.

Centuries of war saw technological advancements into the early modern era, including improved devices for adjustment and articulation of joints, and the use of lighter materials such as leather.

(Source: History Extra)

### PICTURE OF THE DAY ISNA/Hamid Amlashi



Farmers harvest the tender leaves at tea fields in Lahijan, northern Gilan Province

# The inner dimensions of global corruption

As more money from corruption flows across borders – raising popular anger – global solutions are needed. But which solutions will strike at the heart of corruption?

John Kerry may now be the most traveled U.S. secretary of State in history, touching down in dozens of countries a year and feeling the pulse of humanity. What is he finding? People are angry over what they feel is a rigged system, he told a global conference on corruption in London on Thursday. "And the anger is going to grow," he said.

The global reach of corruption – which is the abuse of public office for private gain – now requires global solutions. Kerry said corruption "is as much of an enemy" as extremist terrorism.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said it lies at the heart of economic uncertainty and endemic poverty. And in a report for the conference, the International Monetary Fund said corruption undermines trust in elected leaders and erodes ethical standards.

The IMF estimates the annual cost of bribery to be at least 2 percent of the global gross domestic product. That feeds the desperation and anger that Kerry finds. But corruption is more than bribery. It is also the wholesale theft of a nation's resources, such as oil revenues, and the secret transfer of these stolen assets to other countries.

## Political upheavals

Such theft is driving the political upheavals now seen in countries such as Ukraine, Brazil, and the Philippines.



British Prime Minister David Cameron (center), joined by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, left, and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, at the international anti-corruption summit May 12 in London.

The conference focused on exposing and curbing these illicit transfers, mainly with calls to bring transparency to financial flows and to the real ownership of "shell" companies in tax havens. A number of countries agreed to set up public registries of firms in order to track their activities.

But as Kerry pointed out, tackling corruption requires more than changes in practices and procedures. A country's culture must also change.

→9

# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

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### Super luxury apt. in Jordan

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### Apt. in Zafranieh

1<sup>st</sup> Fl., 160 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn, **Diplomatic**, 2700 USD  
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**Diba: 09128103206**

### Apt. in Jordan

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# Noam Chomsky on U.S. military presence in Europe and the case of Edward Snowden

By Zain Raza

In this interview with MIT professor, anarchist, philosopher and renowned linguist Noam Chomsky, we discuss U.S. military presence in Europe and the case of Edward Snowden.

**Q:** According to a report by the U.S. Department of Defense, dated June 2015, there are 44,660 U.S. troops stationed in Germany. It is estimated that there's circa -- and reports vary, but let me just point this out -- 170 military installations, the most vital being Ramstein, where drone operations, as you know, are conducted from. What do you think is the view of the U.S. political and military establishment towards Germany today? Is there any significant change since what you've described before?

**A:** If you go back to the early '50s, there was always concern that Europe might move in a direction independent of U.S. power. It might become what was called at the time a "third force" in international affairs. The dominant force was the United States; the second force was the junior super-power Russia/Soviet Union, and there was concern that Europe was, of course, a rich, developed, advanced area that might just move in an independent direction. There were various proposals for this, like de Gaulle advocated what he called a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals," including the major developed parts of Russia. Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik [German for "new eastern policy"], was another move in that direction. And the U.S. was always concerned with [this]. In fact, one of the functions of NATO, as is generally understood, was to ensure that Europe would remain under the U.S. aegis, but not move towards an independent direction. Now those concerns still exist, and in some ways are even greater. Europe does have the capacity, under German initiative, to move in an independent direction. There's some steps in that direction -- it's very current, in fact. Take, say, the Iran nuclear deal



that was just made. The European powers -- Germany, France -- are very enthusiastic about it. They're moving directly to try to re-establish commercial and other relations with Iran. European ministers of the government, corporation executives are flocking to Tehran to try to set up deals and arrangements. It's not happening from the United States; on the contrary. It's even possible that the U.S. might undermine the agreement, not the executive, but Congress might find ways to undermine the agreement. In fact, if you take a look at the Republican primaries taking place right now, just about every leading candidate has said that when he's elected he's going to cancel the agreement. In fact, several of them said, "When we are elected, we are going to bomb Iran." That's quite different from the European attitude. And it's one of a number of ways, quite a few, in which Europe and the dominant elements in the United States have followed different paths. This kind of conflict

has existed for a long time, as I say, it goes back to the early '50s, and it takes different forms at different times. With U.S. power declining in the world, relatively to others, it's still overwhelmingly dominant, but it is declining. The options for Europe increase to might move in that direction. Now, of course, Europe means primarily Germany.

**Q:** I want to talk about some single examples and [work towards] to the greater mechanisms that are at work here. So, Germany recently dropped a case that was investigating abuses of the NSA, which was revealed by Edward Snowden's whistleblowing actions. Details included such as eavesdropping on our chancellor's cellphone, even collecting metadata of 20 to 30 million German citizens on a regular basis, and this investigation was dropped. And if you look back a decade, [Khalid] El Masri, a German national, was detained in a holiday in Macedonia by the CIA and extradited to Egypt, where he was tortured extensively and it was later determined

that he's innocent. Now, in both cases, our prosecution went after it, but at the federal level, it [the case] was dropped at some point. And we've come to know that U.S. is at play here. So what mechanisms are at play here, that always align German policy to U.S. interest?

**A:** Germany and France and other European countries -- their governments -- have made the decision to subordinate themselves to U.S. power. Shows up in these ways and many others. You recall when the president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, happened to fly to Moscow, and was flying back to Bolivia on a plane that had diplomatic immunity, of course, the European countries, including Germany and France, just wouldn't let him go through their airspace, obviously on U.S. orders. U.S. thought that maybe Snowden was on board, so they wouldn't let him enter the airspace, the plane finally had to land in Austria, where it was invaded by Austrian police at violation of every imaginable diplomatic conventions, to find out if Snowden was on it. All of this is kind of pitiful. It's a revelation of real cowardice in the face of power that the European elites are unwilling to confront, a sign of subordination and real lack of dignity and integrity, in my view. And the cases you mentioned are examples. There are, I think, by now four Latin American countries that offer Asylum to Snowden, not one European country -- in fact, they won't even let him cross their borders. Why? Because the master in Washington tells them "we don't want him to." And Snowden, it's important to recall, performed an enormous service, a patriotic service in fact, to the people of the United States and the world. He revealed to the population what your government is doing to you. That's just what he should have done. That's the responsibility of a decent citizen. The idea that you should be punished for this is really grotesque, and that Europe participates in it is even worse. Same is true for [Julian] Assange.

(Source: truth-out.org)

**Germany and France and other European countries -- their governments -- have made the decision to subordinate themselves to U.S. power.**

## Canadians are not so sure about Hillary Clinton

By Annalisa Merelli

Outside America, Hillary Clinton is winning the 2016 presidential election.

The democratic presidential hopeful enjoys great popularity abroad, and a recent survey of 18,000 people in nine countries by consumer comparison site Finder.com supported that. Germany, France, Japan, Australia, UK, Spain, Mexico, Brazil: Clinton would get them all. In Germany (50%), France (50%), Japan (63%), and Mexico (54%), the absolute majority of people interviewed said they would vote for her.

Not so much in Canada.

One third of Canadians (31%), residents of a country where socialism is not so radical a concept, would vote for Bernie Sanders—who's been called America's Justin Trudeau by Canadian press. Sanders wouldn't get the absolute majority, nor have a large margin over Clinton (who'd get 29% of

the vote), but he would still win.

According to the survey's findings, older people in any country were more likely to prefer Hillary Clinton, while millennials and women were the most likely to be tepid towards all candidates and select "other" as an option.

In any case, Republicans would have tough luck: In every country surveyed, people were more likely to vote "other" than for any of the GOP's candidates. Trump would get the least votes—surprise!—in Mexico (5%), where he would tie with Ted Cruz, otherwise the world's least favorite candidate. Interestingly, Canada is the country most favorable to Trump (14%). The second most favorable group would be French men: 12.5% of them would vote for the Republican candidate, 2.5% more than the world average, and twice as likely as the remaining demographics in their country (6.5% on average).

(Source: Quartz)

## Erdogan dreaming to 'revive new Ottoman caliphate'... in Europe

Angela Merkel cannot transform Turkish President Erdogan from an 'oriental despot' into a respectable member of the European family, Deena Stryker writes, warning that Europe may fall into the neo-Ottoman trap.

All German Chancellor Angela Merkel got for enlisting Turkish President Erdogan's help in coping with the European refugee crisis is a dramatic drop in poll numbers, renowned international expert, author and journalist Deena Stryker writes in her article for New Eastern Outlook entitled "was a united Europe a mirage?".

"That glazed look that regularly comes upon the face of Recep Tayyip Erdogan should have warned her that he has a severe case of Ottomanosis," Stryker remarks.

### Removing Ahmet Davutoglu

She notes that Erdogan had not hesitated to remove Ahmet Davutoglu, a capable foreign minister who advocated a pragmatic well-balanced policy toward the European refugee issue.

Furthermore, having sacked Davutoglu the Turkish president claimed that he is not ready to meet all the EU's demands, covering in particular a loosening of Ankara's controversial anti-terror law, in exchange for implementing visa-free travel for the Turks.

"Make no mistake, Erdogan will not blink if the West resorts to pressure tactics. He will never agree to certain key 'preconditions' of the EU deal that Davutoglu negotiated whereby Turkey is required to change its anti-terror legisla-



tion in line with the European acquis and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights," Ambassador M. K. Bhadrakumar wrote in his article for the Indian Punchline blog, commenting on the matter.

Indeed, over the past several months Erdogan has expressed disdain to all European norms and values.

"History is a powerful motivator, and when the Turkish President, who until recently had been begging to be admitted into the European Union, flouts its basic rules of behavior, it's clear that he sees himself completing the Ottoman domination of Europe," Stryker stresses.

Journalist and geopolitical analyst Martin Berger echoes Stryker, asking whether there is "any backbone left in the EU" in the face of Erdogan's sheer blackmail in his analysis for New Eastern Outlook.

### New migration policies

He cites President of the European Council Donald Tusk who published an opinion article in late April 2016 urging the EU nations to adopt new migration policies.

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(Source: Sputnik)

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Climate change could be shrinking these Arctic birds

The red knot, a species of bird that breeds in the Arctic, is rapidly changing. These birds have become noticeably smaller with passing generations, a change researchers attribute to warming conditions in the region.

Red knots incubate their eggs in Arctic snow so that their offspring will hatch just as the insect population peaks.

Chicks normally grow up on a steady diet of insects before migrating to their wintering grounds in West Africa. Once there, first-year birds use their bills to dig out burrowed shellfish, which is their main food source.



But due to warming conditions in the Arctic, red knot hatchlings are missing the insect peak. As a result of limited food availability, the average chick simply doesn't grow as large as was typical in previous decades. Smaller birds mean smaller beaks, so migrating juveniles struggle to reach their usual food and often settle for less-nutritious seagrass.

"I had never (known) body shrinkage was a becoming a universal response to climate change until we found that our study species was doing so," Jan van Gils, who co-authored the study, tells The Christian Science Monitor in an interview. "Then I started digging in the literature and found that many species were shrinking."

Dr. van Gils, who is a senior scientist with NIOZ Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, was part of an international effort to investigate this trend.

Until now, researchers have not found overwhelmingly negative consequences of body shrinkage. In fact, some scientists have argued that smaller-bodied animals might dissipate heat more effectively due to a larger surface to volume ratio.

(Source: The CSM)

## Coral bleaching can affect how fish learn to avoid predators: study

In the middle of the prevailing threat of coral bleaching and deaths, researchers have planned to study massive changes in the fish population that occurred simultaneously with the phenomenon. They have found that the degradation can directly affect the learning ability of fish in terms of avoiding predators.

The journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B has recently carried a study wherein a team of scientists has found that the smell



caused by dead coral has an impact on the fish's ability to sense the presence of a danger.

One of the strongest recorded El Niños has raised the temperatures of the waters in the ocean, as a result of which once lively reefs have now got vanished almost completely. It was disclosed previous month that coral bleaching has impacted 93% of the Great Barrier Reef.

The occurrence of coral bleaching takes place when coral feels pressurized by alterations in their living conditions like exposure to light extreme low tides, temperature, or a tweak in nutrients within ocean. They wash out the symbiotic algae present in their tissue, which as a result turns them white.

The scientists have split their faux reef into lifeless coral and living coral and have taken help of the young damselfish for study how the coral affected the ability of the fish to smell predators.

In a release, James Cook University professor Mark McCormick said, "Baby fish use chemical alarm signals released from skin of attacked individuals to identify new predators."

(Source: Maine News Online)

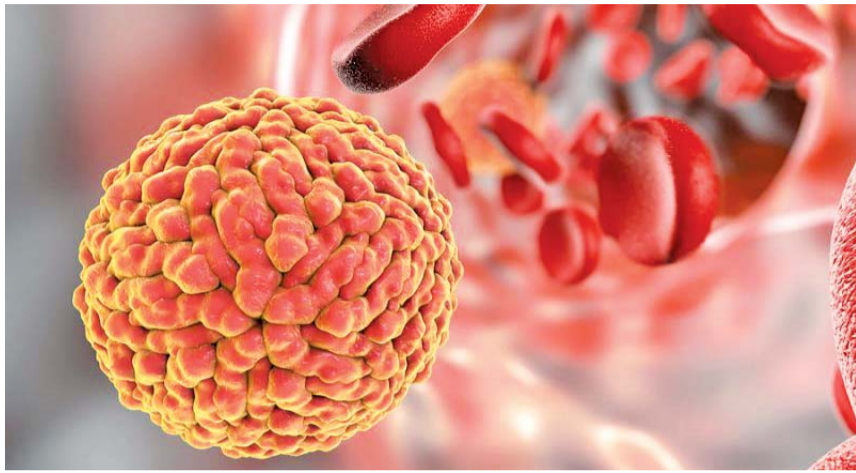
## IBM helped develop a 'magic bullet' that might kill Zika, Ebola and other viruses

IBM isn't just a computer company anymore. The IBM Research arm partnered up with the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN) in Singapore to create a chemical macromolecule that acts as a "magic bullet" capable of killing all sorts of viral infections. The substance could be used in the future to stave off a wide range of diseases, including Ebola, Zika, herpes, influenza and other viral threats.

This new chemical may be used to create medications that target virus cells and stop them from reproducing. The compound can seemingly also kill viruses on contact when used in soaps and other cleaning products.

"It's almost a daunting task to design any kind of therapeutic for a virus," James Hedrick, one of the lead researchers, told FastCompany. That's because these viruses are varied and they constantly mutate. But IBM and IBN worked on creating a chemical that targets the one thing that doesn't change when a virus mutates.

"We began to think, how can we move forward and kind of attack the virus in a very different way," Hedrick said.



**The macromolecule can attach to the substances on the exterior of the virus. That way, it blocks the virus from hooking onto a cell in the body and prevents infection.**

"Instead of going after its RNA or DNA, we looked at the glycoproteins that surround ... the virus."

The macromolecule can attach to the substances on the exterior of the virus. That way, it blocks the virus from hooking onto

a cell in the body and prevents infection.

## ■ Fighting viral infection

The macromolecule also has receptors that can bind to immune cells such as macrophages, blocking the spot where a virus would attach itself. That's another way it fights viral infections.

Finally, if the virus somehow bypasses the first two hurdles, the macromolecule has one more trick up its sleeve: it's basic rather than acidic. That means it can neutralize the acidity in a human cell, diminishing a virus's ability to replicate.

"If you went to, say, Southeast Asia where dengue runs amok ... you could basically get a temporary kind of vaccine," Hedrick said about the medicine, which can be used both to prevent infection and to cure existing illnesses.

IBM's role is pretty obvious. The macromolecule was designed using a computer, and it was tested successfully in lab tests against Ebola, dengue, Marburg, influenza, chikungunya, Enterovirus 71 and herpes simplex, representing all major viruses.

(Source: bgr.com)

## Honeybees continue to lose numbers

If there's any animal that can't seem to catch a break, it's the honeybee.

Thanks to what scientists believe is a combination of disease, parasites, pesticides and other environmental stressors, honeybee colonies have experienced significant losses over the past decade or so -- a phenomenon that's troubling to say the least, given the insect's immense importance when it comes to pollinating food crops and other plants.

But despite recent efforts to increase protections for the honeybee, new surveys suggest that the insect is still suffering -- perhaps now more than ever.

A survey released last week by the Bee Informed Partnership, a collaborative organization of honeybee researchers around the country, revealed that beekeepers in the U.S. lost 44 percent of their colonies in the



past year -- the second highest annual loss reported in the past 10 years.

## ■ Bee losses during summer

Notably, the survey indicated that bee losses during the summer were just as high as bee losses during the winter

-- an alarming finding, considering summer is the time of year when bees should be at their healthiest.

The "summer is boom time for bees -- lots of forage," said Dennis VanEngelsdorp, the survey's project director and an entomologist at the University of Maryland. "We usually think of this as a very good time for bees. When we first started this [survey] 10 years ago, we didn't even monitor summer losses because we didn't think this would be significant."

Scientists believe the losses stem from a variety of different factors, some of which may be more prevalent than others.

"What we think from other surveys is there are three major drivers," VanEngelsdorp said. "Pesticides, poor nutrition and most importantly parasites."

(Source: Providence Journal)

## Gluten-free, kid's health, gluten intolerance

Individuals with celiac disease are advised to veer away from foods with gluten because it causes gut problems for them. However, some individuals shift to gluten-free diet just because it is a popular choice or they think it is a healthier option.

Due to the growing popularity of gluten-free products, sales are expected to balloon to as much as \$24 billion by 2020.

The sense of being "healthy" is driving the industry, which concerns experts who believe that gluten-free diet when given to healthy kids may cause more harm than good.

Dr. Norelle Reilly, assistant professor of Pediatrics and director of Columbia University Medical Center's Pediatric Celiac Disease, wrote a commentary in the Journal of Pediatrics detailing the facts that must be considered before gluten is removed from a kid's diet.

Celiac disease affects 1 percent of the adult population, which warrants the shift to a gluten-free diet.

In kids, gluten has not been established to cause any intestinal problem. In fact, shifting to a gluten-free diet may even deprive kids of good nutrition.

## ■ Gluten-free foods

Reilly explained that gluten-free processed foods are fortified unevenly that they may be lacking in nutrients that children need, such as vitamin B complex, vitamin D, fiber, folate, calcium, magnesium and iron.

Kids may become vitamin deficient, and the lack of fiber in their diet could



even cause gastrointestinal problems. Giving them gluten-free cookie may not be a good choice over naturally gluten-free vegetables.

For kids to stay healthy, it is still best to follow a balanced diet with vegetables, fresh fruit, lean protein and carbohydrates.

Reilly is also concerned that a gluten-free diet may mask symptoms of more serious diseases. Relying on information that they get from the Internet alone, without consulting their healthcare provider may be problematic in the future.

"They were trying to treat some sort of condition or symptom, such as an abdominal pain, diarrhea, headaches, or problems with attention," Reilly said. "Kids will often improve no matter what you do. So it's often hard to tell if they're improved because of a dietary change."

Gluten-free diet does not only affect health because it may also become socially limiting for kids and expensive for parents.

(Source: Tech Times)

## Use of complementary, alternative medicine affects initiation of chemotherapy

Women with early-stage breast cancer for whom chemotherapy was indicated and who used dietary supplements and multiple types of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) were less likely to start chemotherapy than nonusers of alternative therapies, according to latest research led by Heather Greenlee, ND, PhD, associate professor of Epidemiology at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

This is one of the first studies to evaluate how complementary and alternative medicine use affects decisions regarding chemotherapy.

Dr. Greenlee and colleagues studied a group of 685 women with early-stage breast cancer who were recruited from Columbia University Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente Northern California, and Henry Ford Health System and enrolled 2006-2010. The women were younger than 70 with non-metastatic invasive breast cancer.

The study included five types of complementary therapies: the dietary supplement use of vitamins/minerals, herbs/botanicals, and other natural products, as well as mind-body self-practice, and mind-body practitioner-based.

## ■ Alternative therapies

Use of alternative therapies was reported by the large majority of the women studied -- 87 percent. By 12 months, chemotherapy was initiated by 89 percent of women for whom chemotherapy was indicated. The remaining group of



women for whom chemotherapy was discretionary had a much lower rate of initiation--at 36 percent. Nearly half (45 percent) were clinically indicated to receive chemotherapy per National Comprehensive Cancer Network guidelines.

Not all women initiate adjuvant treatment for breast cancer despite the survival benefits associated with it. The decision to start chemotherapy involves psychosocial factors, belief systems, and clinical, demographic and provider characteristics.

Complementary and alternative therapy use among patients with breast cancer has increased in the past two decades. The most commonly used complementary and alternative therapies were dietary supplements and mind-body practices. On average, the women used two such therapies, although nearly 40 percent of the women reported using three or more complementary and alternative therapies.

(Source: EurekAlert)

## Is organic agriculture really better for the environment?

The whole point of organic agriculture is soil. Farm in such a way that your soil stays healthy — rich in organic matter, nutrients and microbial activity — and you can grow crops without the synthetic fertilizers and pesticides used in conventional farming.

There are lots of techniques organic farmers employ to improve those things. They use compost and manure, rotate their crops and grow many kinds of plants. They do use pesticides, but only certain ones (mostly non-synthetic, with a few approved synthetics), and often only when other pest-control methods fail.

But plenty of conventional farmers do a lot of those things, too. When you pony up the extra money to buy organic produce, are you supporting environmental benefits? I wanted to know, and it was probably one of the most difficult questions I've tried to answer in this column.

We don't have data about soil health or environmental pollution (in the form of soil erosion, nutrient runoff or green-



house gases) that allows us to comprehensively assess all organic and conventional acreage and say whether one type or the other is doing better, but scientists all over the country are working on comparisons, so we do have something to go on.

## ■ Organic agriculture

Go on that, and you find that, yes, organic agriculture — which for purposes of this discussion means farming certified as adhering to rigorous standards defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture — has some important environmental benefits.

One of the scientists working on the comparison is Michel Cavigelli of the USDA. He runs something I'd call an organic-vs.-conventional smackdown if we weren't talking about the rarefied world of soil science. It's a long-running smackdown (okay, let's go with it), having begun in 1993.

The USDA's farm in Beltsville, Md., tests five kinds of agriculture: two conventional and three organic. (The differences involve crop rotations and types of tillage.)

Laborers pick chard at an organic farm in California. Organics are better for farmworkers because they don't become exposed to the high levels of pesticides often used in conventional farming operations. (Source: The Washington Post)

The European Union is pursuing a similar goal to Hitler in trying to create a powerful superstate, Boris Johnson, former mayor of London says.

In a dramatic interview with the Telegraph, he warns that while bureaucrats in Brussels are using "different methods" from the Nazi dictator, they share the aim of unifying Europe under one "authority".

But the EU's "disastrous" failures have fuelled tensions between member states and allowed Germany to grow in power, "take over" the Italian economy and "destroy" Greece, he warns.

Johnson invokes Winston Churchill's war-time defiance, urging the British people to be "the heroes of Europe" again, set the country free and save the EU from itself by voting to leave in the referendum next month.

The former mayor of London, who is a keen classical scholar, argues that the past 2,000 years of European history have been characterized by repeated attempts to unify Europe under a single government in order to recover the continent's lost "golden age" under the Romans.

"Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically," he says.

## Johnson: The EU wants a superstate, just as Hitler did



"The EU is an attempt to do this by different methods.

"But fundamentally what is lacking is the eternal problem, which is that there is no underlying loyalty to the idea of Europe. There is no single au-

thority that anybody respects or understands. That is causing this massive democratic void."

Johnson's potentially inflammatory comparison to Hitler comes at a critical time in the referendum cam-

paign, with senior Tories on either side publicly attacking each other in blunt terms.

Johnson was speaking as the referendum battle entered its most intense final six weeks.

With polls suggesting the contest is close; leaders of all the main political parties put aside their differences to join the Remain campaign in favor of continuing EU membership.

In what Downing Street sources described as an "unprecedented" moment, the leaders of the Conservative, Labor, Liberal Democrat and Green parties all attended some of the 1,000 Remain campaign events held across Britain on Saturday.

A Labor battle bus took to the streets to campaign for Remain, while the Prime Minister unveiled a new poster in his Oxfordshire constituency of Witney.

Cameron warned that a vote to leave the EU in the poll on June 23 would deliver an "immediate and sustained hit" to the economy that could tip Britain back into recession.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## Beijing blasts Pentagon report on Chinese military as damaging trust

China condemned the United States Defense Department's annual report on the Chinese military on Sunday, calling it deliberate distortion that has "severely damaged" mutual trust.

In its annual report to Congress on Chinese military activities, the U.S. Defense Department said on Friday that China is expected to add substantial military infrastructure, including communications and surveillance systems, to artificial islands in the South China Sea this year.

China's Defense Ministry spokesman Yang Yujun expressed "strong dissatisfaction" and "firm opposition" to the Pentagon report and said it has "severely damaged mutual trust," state news agency Xinhua reported.

The report "hyped up" China's military threat and lack of transparency, "deliberately distorted" Chinese defense policies and "unfairly" depicted Chinese activities in the East and South China seas, Yang was quoted as saying.

"China follows a national defense policy that is defensive in nature," Yang said, adding that the country's military build-up and reforms are aimed at maintaining sovereignty, security and territorial integrity and guaranteeing China's peaceful development.

It is the United States that has always been suspicious and flexing its military muscle by frequently sending military aircraft and warships to the region, Yang said.

Despite its calls for freedom of navigation and restraint for peace, the U.S.

has pushed forward militarization of the South China Sea with an "intention to exert hegemony," Yang added.

The Pentagon report said the planned addition of military infrastructure would give China long-term "civil-military bases" in the contested waters.

It estimated that China's reclamation work had added more than 3,200 acres (1,300 hectares) of land on seven features it occupied in the Spratly Islands in the space of two years.

The report said China had completed its major reclamation efforts in October, switching focus to infrastructure development, including three 9,800 foot-long (3,000 meter) airstrips that can accommodate advanced fighter jets.

Yang, the spokesman, defended the construction, saying it serves mostly civilian purposes and helps fulfill China's international responsibilities and obligations by providing more public goods.

The Pentagon report comes at a time of heightened tension over maritime territories claimed by China and disputed by several Asian nations. Washington has accused Beijing of militarizing the South China Sea while Beijing, in turn, has criticized increased U.S. naval patrols and exercises in Asia.

The U.S. report renewed accusations against China's government and military for cyber attacks against U.S. government computer systems, a charge Beijing denies. The Pentagon said attacks in 2015 appeared focused on intelligence collection.

(Source: Reuters)

## Turkish police seal off hotel to halt dissident opposition congress

Police sealed off a hotel in Ankara on Sunday, preventing dissidents in Turkey's nationalist opposition from holding a party congress that could jeopardize President Tayyip Erdogan's plans for more power.

Several hundred members of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP/ Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi) have launched a bid to oust Devlet Bahçeli, leader for much of the last two decades. To do so they need to change party rules at a special congress.

The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/AKP) needs the MHP's support to change the constitution to give Erdogan more powers. Bahçeli loyalists seem willing to do this, but dissident leaders, including former interior minister Meral Aksener, have said they will oppose the plan.

Dissident leaders issued a statement on Sunday accusing Erdogan's AK Party of intervening to try to block the congress.

"The executive branch staged a coup against the judiciary branch. The constitution and law are being suspended. A change in the MHP became the AK Party government's nightmare," the dissidents said in their statement.

Around 5,000 people gathered at police barricades near the hotel where the congress was scheduled to take place. Police sealed off the road leading to the hotel with barricades and wa-

ter cannon. "Bahçeli should resign," the crowd chanted.

"If the MHP gets stronger it will become an alternative to the AK Party," said Ibrahim Dızdar, previously the provincial head of Giresun, who was suspended by Bahçeli.

"The government is trying to prevent us because they are seeing our excitement here today."

Bahçeli's party won about 12 percent in last November's election, getting 40 seats in parliament, which the AK Party needs to call a referendum on changes to the constitution to grant the president greater power.

Aksener has vowed to defend Turkey's parliamentary system and oppose Erdogan's plan.

AK Party officials reject any suggestions that the MHP's leadership battle and their party's efforts to win its support on constitutional change are in any way linked.

Turkish courts on Friday gave conflicting rulings on whether the nationalist opposition can hold the congress.

Bahçeli's faction sought an injunction to block the meeting but an Ankara court upheld the dissidents' countersuit. State broadcaster TRT reported verdicts from two other local courts that would halt the congress.

An appeals court ruling is expected this month and will have the final say on the dispute.

(Source: Reuters)

## JUMP

### The inner dimensions of global corruption

➞ That is certainly the case for Nigeria, where a new president, Muhammadu Buhari, was elected last year on a promise to curb corruption. He has begun to change the rules for government procurement and the country's oil industry. He also asked Britain to crack down on Nigerians with

**As Kerry pointed out, tackling corruption requires more than changes in practices and procedures. A country's culture must also change.**

stolen money in London banks. But he's up against a deep cultural acceptance of corruption in his own country.

In a new book on Nigerian corruption, "This Present Darkness," the late British scholar Stephen Ellis writes that the best way to solve the problem is to delve into the spiritual dimensions of Nigerian life.

Unless Nigerians embrace rule of law and a social responsibility to others, he wrote, the organized crime behind corruption will persist.

That sounds like a cure for any country dealing with high levels of corruption. It may also be a cure for the anger that America's top diplomat finds around the world.

(Source: The CSM)

## Austrian Red Cross Delegation visited the Iranian Red Crescent Division

On Saturday, May 14th, 2016, an Austrian delegation headed by Prof. Dr. Gerald SCHÖPFER, President of the Austrian Red Cross (ARCS), visited the division for education, research, & technology of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS). In the course of this visit, Mr Michael OPRIESNIG, Deputy Secretary General, and Ms. Emilie GOLLER, Head of International Relations were accompanying the ARCS president.



During the visit, the delegation held talks with Dr. Jamaladini, IRCS Under Secretary General for the education, research, and technology and his deputies in different departments. The both sides exchanged views and reached consensus on some of the subject areas facilitating the future cooperation of the two National Societies of Red Cross & Red Crescent.

Having welcomed the delegation and wished them all the best during their stay in Iran, Dr. Jamaladini started by introducing the activities which are being done by his division focusing on common areas of cooperation as well as sharing information on humanitarian endeavors of both RC/RC National Societies. He stated that such cooperation can facilitate the process of exchanging best practices and products constructively, especially on public trainings. He also praised the various activities done by the ARCS volunteers.

Prof. Dr. Gerald SCHÖPFER started by expressing his thanks for being received warmly by the Iranian Red Crescent Society. He referred to the Memorandum of Understanding signed with president of Iranian Red Crescent Society and expressed his hope that such an MoU would be a good start for future cooperation between of two National Red Cross Red Crescent.

Mr Michael OPRIESNIG, Deputy Secretary General referred to cooperation between ARCS and other institute, organizations and national Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies in the areas of research projects on disaster management, health and elderly people, led to a huge effective expertise and achievement. He also pointed to their experiences in online training and research projects. He expressed the ARCS' absolute readiness to link its expertise with the Iranian Red Crescent's.

Focusing on Austrian Red Cross Society' training activities and simulation exercises, Ms. Emilie GOLLER counted different services carried out by ARCS volunteers who are also benefiting from training courses as well as working together with the experts of different fields, particularly in First Aid and paramedics services. She also took the opportunity to refer to a training development project which is being working in close joint cooperation with French Red Cross.

Dr. Jamaladini went further by focusing on the common areas of concern by saying that the IRCS division for education, research, and technology is also ready for taking constructive steps in fulfillment of any possible project within the framework of the signed MoU.

Having welcomed the best knowledge and practices of the Austrian Red Cross, Dr. Jamaladini offered the following practical subjects which he called them steps forward in initiating, encouraging and stimulating near future cooperation in the best effective possible way:

- Organizing educational and training courses in cooperation with high validated universities of the two countries
- Exchanging the best evidence-based practices in education, research and virtual spaces.
- Organizing award-winning events on training and research subjects which can promote the effectiveness of both National societies' humanitarian service delivery
- Initiating bilateral cooperation in the areas of developing training projects

In conclusion, the two sides expressed their willingness in proceeding with the findings of the meeting in near future by taking practical step in nominating their focal points.

## Egypt sentences 101 protesters to 5 years in prison

Two Cairo courts have convicted and sentenced to five years in jail a total of 101 protesters for taking part in peaceful, anti-government demonstrations last month, officials said on Sunday.

They said the 101 were convicted of breaking a disputed 2013 law that effectively bans street protests. Of the 101, 79 were fined 100,000 pounds (about \$10,000) each and 54 were convicted and sentenced in absentia.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak to the media.

The sentences were passed late on Saturday, hours after another Cairo court sentenced another 51 protesters to two years in jail for their part in last month's demonstrations, which were called to protest Egypt's decision to hand over control of two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia as part of a demarcation deal.

## Bank Sarmayeh and DSEZ hold talks on co-op

**TEHRAN** — Senior managers of Bank Sarmayeh held talks with directors of Dogharoon Special Economic Zone (DSEZ) on opening rials and foreign currency branches in the zone, Bank Sarmayeh office of public relations reported.

According to the report, during a Visit to the zone, senior managers of Bank Sarmayeh negotiated the opening of rials-currency branches as well as launching joint activities.

It should be noted that DSEZ is one of border and vital hubs for exchanging goods between Iran and Afghanistan.

For his part, Vice Chairman of Bank Sarmayeh Dr. Bagheri pointed to the activities of bank's currency sector and said, "Structural revitalization of the bank strictly hinges on the activities of foreign currency sector"

Underlining the significance of Intl. and Foreign Currency Department in promotion of macro objectives of the bank Dr. Bagheri said, "During the sanctions, Iran's banking system lagged behind world's most modern banking developments."

"Now that the sanctions have been lifted, giant stride should be taken in order to compensate the shortfalls," He added. In the end, Dr. Bagheri called on executive officials of the bank to make their utmost efforts in line with gaining customers' satisfaction and realizing objectives of the bank"

## Refah Bank backs Intl. Seminar on Investment in health sector

**TEHRAN** — Iran's Refah Bank sponsored the largest International Seminar on Investment in health sector, the bank's office of public relations reported.

According to the report, this prestigious seminar was held on May 14-15 in Tehran and was attended by 70 foreign investment companies from Italy, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Poland, Denmark, New Zealand, Austria, France, South Korea, Japan, Turkey, Germany, China, and a number of domestic companies.

Given the above issue, Bank Refah will have an effective and constructive role in this seminar.

\*\*\*"2016 Health Mehr Plan" Launched by Refah Bank

"2016 Health Mehr Plan" was presented by Bank Refah in line with honoring unsparing and unflinching efforts of medical society.

The bank will offer financial facilities up to 8 billion rials to medical community of the country including highly-specialized physicians, surgeons, dentists, doctors of laboratory sciences, radiologists, general physicians, veterinarians, and activists of pertinent courses such as physiotherapist, optometrists, etc.

The "Health Mehr Plan" is planned to meet the financial demands of physicians, developing and promoting healthcare and medical services.

## SUNIR to construct 50-MW power plant in Kazakhstan

**TEHRAN** — A 500-MW wind power plant will be constructed in Kazakhstan, by Iran Power & Water Equipment & Service Export Company (SUNIR) in cooperation with Kazakh Euro Asia Invest Group Company.

The deal for the construction of this power plant was inked between CEO of SUNIR Bahman Salehi and Deputy Managing Director of Kazakh Euro Asia Invest Group.

This is the first contract concluded by SUNIR Company in current Iranian calendar year of 1395 (started March 20, 2016), valued at \$110 million.

This project will be constructed and delivered by Iran's SUNIR Company in 18 months and Kazakh government will finance the project, the report added.

Earlier, Iran's SUNIR Company had previously constructed and delivered four 2.6-MW wind power plants in Armenia's Pushkin city in 2014, totally with the production capacity of 10.4 megawatt.

In addition, feasibility studies for the construction of a 50-MW wind power plant in Pakistan's Sindh province are underway by the company.

Under the deal, it was agreed that SUNIR Company will construct the project as joint venture in cooperation with Euro Asia Invest Group Company as EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) basis.

Moreover, talks are underway for the construction of two 250-MW combined cycle power plants by the company in Silk Road, based in Kazakh capital Almaty.

IRAN'S WILDLIFE

Asiatic black bear

The Asiatic Black Bear with the scientific name of Ursus thibetanus gedrosianus, is a medium sized bear, smaller than the brown bear, with a body length of 140 to 165 centimeters and most weigh between 90 and 150 kilograms.

They are also known as the Baluchistan bear in Iran. They are normally black in color, with lighter muzzles and a distinct V-shaped patch of cream or white colored fur on the chest. This bear has a heavy, stocky body and the ears are large and set far apart.

Despite their relatively small claws, Asiatic Black Bears are highly efficient climbers and spend most of their time foraging high in the trees where they inadvertently build nests from the folding of branches caused by them reaching for fruits and hunting small animals.



In colder climates in the more northern regions of the natural range, Asiatic Black Bears also hibernate through the winter months and so spend the autumn months consuming foods such as acorns, beechnuts and walnuts that have a high fat content in order to build up a good layer of fat to keep them sustained throughout the winter.

Asiatic Black Bears are largely nocturnal animals that spend most of the day

time hours sleeping in nests or hollow trees or caves during the day, only coming out under the cover of night to forage for food. A recent study conducted in Thailand however has revealed that Asiatic Black Bears there are known to feed on 160 species of tree-borne fruits alone.

Asiatic Black Bears are able to breed when they are between 4 and 5 years old and do so during the warmer summer months of June and July. After a gestation period that lasts from between 6 to 8 months, 1 to 4 cubs (although usually 2) are born between March and April in the safety and warmth of the female Asiatic Black Bear's winter den.

Asiatic Black Bears often live to be 30 years old or more in captivity, they rarely exceed the age of 25 in the wild.

Diet

Asiatic black bears are more carnivorous than their American counterparts, although only a small part of their diet is made up of meat. This includes small mammals, birds, fish, mollusks and carcasses. They also feed on plants, berries, insects, fruit and honey. In autumn, they frequent nut-producing trees where they eat in self-constructed leaf and branch nests or platforms. Overall, the Asiatic Black Bear will eat anything that is edible!

Habitat

Asiatic Black Bears live in forests but they aren't picky about which type – they can be found in broad-leaf (deciduous) forests, conifer forests and even plantations. They live at lots of different altitudes too, from sea level, up to 4,300 meters.

Distribution



The Asiatic black bear occupies a narrow band from southeastern Iran, Birak mountain range in Baluchistan, Bashagard and Rodan mountains in Hormozgan, and mountainous areas in south of Kerman through Afghanistan and Pakistan, across the foothills of the Himalayas, to Myanmar. It occupies all countries in mainland Southeast Asia except Malaysia and has a patchy distribution in southern China. Another population cluster exists in north-

eastern China, the southern Russian Far East, and into North Korea. A small remnant population exists in South Korea. They also live on the southern islands of Japan (Honshu and Shikoku) and on Taiwan and Hainan. There are no accurate estimates of population size available.

Conservation

Threats: Asiatic Black Bears have their own enemies – leopards, packs of wolves and dholes (a species of wild dogs) can be threats to adult bears, and Eurasian lynx are a threat to cubs. In physical confrontations between black bears and leopards, the bears usually dominate in forests, while leopards tend to win in open areas.

Tigers prey on black bears, killing them for food. They are also threatened by packs of Wolves in some parts of their natural range. People however, have been and still remain, the biggest threat to the world's Asiatic Black Bear population as they are severely affected by the loss of their natural habitats to deforestation to either clear land for agriculture or increase the size of growing human settlements.

They are killed by farmers due to the threat they pose to livestock, and they are also unpopular for their habit of stripping valuable timber trees of bark and reducing the value. They are also severely threatened by the hunting of them for their body parts (their gall bladders and paws) that are highly prized in traditional medicines and despite the ban of their hunting in all countries with the exception of Japan, the trade still continues throughout their natural range today.

Conservation Status: The subspecies U.t.gedrosianus (Baluchistan) is listed by the IUCN as Critically Endangered, but other subspecies are classified as Vulnerable.

Human interaction

Although they are usually shy and cautious animals, Asiatic black bears are more aggressive toward humans than the brown bears. The majority of attacks tend to occur when black bears are encountered suddenly, and in close quarters. They are also likely to attack when protecting food. It is thought that this is because they live in the same places of tigers who may prey on them, and have evolved to be ready to fight when they are scared.

(Source: persianwildlife.com)

# They are not awaiting government to save their environment with a magic wand

By Parvin Telli

Bearing over seven billion people on its surface, the earth has already started sounding alarms through climate change, air and environment pollution, extinction of many animal species, soil erosion, and so on.

World leaders each year participate in costly summits, deliver long speeches, pose for smiling pictures and come up with pledges to bring the looming environmental crisis under control and set a deadline for that.

The climate change, however, continues to break its previous records and more wild animals are killed while air pollution claim more lives each year.

But, far from the spotlight, humble and determined, 100 men and women in the western province of Lorestan, came together in 2005 to fight for the same cause and officially registered their NGO as Talayedaran-e Zagros.

Talayedaran-e Zagros stands for the guardians of the Zagros Mountains which are famous for their oak trees; however, these trees have suffered major human-caused damage in the last decades.

The NGO, currently led by Mozaffar



© Photo: Zeinab Telli

Some of the members of the Talayedaran-e Zagros are seen in background with a little boy in foreground trying to dig a hole for putting sapling inside. The photo was taken at Sefidkooch Park in Lorestan on December 18, 2015.

Afshar, the father of Iranian oak trees, began contributing to environment protection in 2005 under the title of "Lovers of Nature and Environment".

However, the members of the organization seem to have started their activities unofficially long before as some of the trees

planted by the members now age 25 years.

Afshar, called the man of the year for his eco-friendly services through a public opinion poll conducted in March 2016, along with his team have become popular across the province where they are based.

They have also succeeded in building

## Efforts ongoing to keep orphaned cheetah cub alive

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Attempts to save the orphaned cheetah cub which lost its mother in a road accident on Wednesday are still ongoing, iewir website reported.

The cheetah cub was finally spotted on Saturday after searches made by the rangers and a group of volunteers from Shahroud, northeastern Iran.

In order to keep the cub from ending up with the same fate as its mother the rangers have gathered tires to make a fire to stop it from nearing the road.

Most probably after the dark the cub will try to approach the road to find its mother. The same thing happened to another orphaned cub in 2014 which sadly died.

The 10-month cub might not survive living alone and without its mother support and unfortunately the region is not very rich in food and water resources for the cub to live.

The best viable option is capturing the cheetah but unfortunately the baby animal might get injured or stress out in the process.

## WHO ranks Zabol as world's most polluted city based on outdated data: official

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — In response to a recent report released by the World Health Organization which ranked Zabol, southeastern Iran, as the world's most polluted city, the deputy director of Iran's Department of Environment deemed the report's data outdated.

Saeed Motesaddi explained that the data based on which the report was released belong to 2012 and they are dated, the Department of Environment website reported.

The WHO report is drawn up based on the annual PM 2.5 and PM 10 readings of 2012, Motesaddi said, adding, deciding the exact amount of PM 2.5 index in an area or a city is only possible through on-ground monitoring of the particles.

However, he pointed, Zabol ground monitoring station was first installed in 2014 and

in this regard it appears that WHO's report is based on projection models which are only reliable as much as a model.

Hamoun wetland has exacerbated the situation now that it has dried up and become a major source of dust in the air in the area, Motesaddi regretted.

The Department of Environment has been seeking to increase the amount of water entering Hamoun Lake for the past two years, but unfortunately due to recurrent and consistent droughts the lake didn't get enough water for two decades, he said.

Owing to the recent rainfalls and by removing border dykes, substantiate amount of water has entered the lake which can hopefully mitigate the occurrence of dust storms in the region, he added.

He finally expressed hope that international cooperation and approval of the

dust particles resolution by the United Nation constitute an improvement on the current situation.

**\$170m-\$340m needed to fight dust particles in Iran: Ebtekar**

On the relevant subject, chief of the Department of Environment, Masoumeh Ebtekar, noted that some \$170 million to \$340 million is needed to fight dust particles in Iran.

"Currently more than 20 provinces in Iran are struggling with this phenomenon and in case we don't take necessary measures soon enough it will spread to other provinces as well," she warned.

She pointed that [Hamoun-e] Jazmourian wetland, southeastern Iran, straddling the provinces of Kerman and Sistan-Baluchestan, is the main source of dust storms for the central and southern Iran.



The Hamoun wetland, pictured last year, which has almost disappeared due to drought and climate change.

It is vital to reconsider water management in the agriculture sector in the area and stop digging illegal wells and to accomplish that ministries of energy and agriculture have to cooperate, Ebtekar highlighted.

## Oman hikers plan to climb Mount Damavand in Iran to celebrate 46th National Day

A team of seven Omani hikers travelling in a group called 'Outward Bound Oman' is aiming to reach the summit of Mount Damavand, an extinct volcano in northern Iran, and the highest peak in West Asia and the Middle East, to mark the 46th National Day.

The team, consisting of four female and three male hikers reached Iran on Friday and intend to start their hike soon after getting acclimatized.

The choice of hiking this particular mountain stemmed from the idea of boosting the Oman-Iran ties, but also to set a record for climbing the highest peak in the Middle East, which stands at an elevation of 5610 meters. It is ex-

pected to take four days for the group to reach the summit.

"Last year we successfully climbed Mount Kilimanjaro to mark the 45th National Day of Oman," said Rumaitha al Busaidi, a member of the hiking team and an adventurer.

The group has hired a local company in Iran to guide them with the climb. "It is always advised to hire a good reputable local company whenever you set out for such ventures. They would know best about what you are set to embark on and are well more equipped to assist should you need any help and if any emergency occurs."

Outward Bound Oman's last hike was to Mount Kilimanjaro to mark the 45th National Day of Oman, but Mount

Damavand will be a little different from the past experience.

"Every mountain is different given its geographic location, its height, topography and so many other factors. Damavand is expected to be at a low of minus 20 at the peak with very windy conditions and there is the risk of inhaling sulfide fumes that are produced from the mountain."

Individually, Al Busaidi is planning for other adventures for this year, but is not entirely sure of what they would be, but she revealed the next mountain she intends to climb. "Mount Elbrus for sure is one I am aiming for as the next peak to climb, but I'm not sure if it's going to be this year or the next."

(Source: Times of Oman)

**IN FOCUS** **IRNA/Dana Azarian**



Thousands of migratory storks have flown to Zeribar, western Iran.

## Not-so-great escape: 2 tigers recaptured in Dutch sanctuary

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)** —

Two tigers escaped from their enclosure at a Dutch big cat sanctuary Saturday, prompting police to warn residents to stay indoors, but the animals were shot with tranquilizers and never got beyond the sanctuary's outer fence.

"The tigers are back from their adventure and indoors sleeping it off," tweeted the local Dutch municipality of Ooststellingwerf in Friesland province.

Police spokeswoman Nathalie Schubart said the animals had been cornered by officers and tranquilized by a veterinarian as the sanctuary's outer fence was not considered tiger-proof. Schubart said it was not immediately clear how the animals escaped, but a gate to their enclosure could have been left open.

The tigers, reportedly a brother and a sister, did not hurt anyone during their brief foray into the wooded grounds of the sanctuary, which cares for big cats from zoos, circuses and private owners.

# Iran volleyball team loses to France once again

**SPORTS** Iran was defeated against France in its second friendly series at Harnes on Saturday.

"I'm happy with the players' performance," France coach Laurent Tillie said. "We didn't have the right rhythm in the warm-up but the players were fine and they were able to show better form on their block. It is nice to see everyone is in tune and paying attention to the instructions before the game."

On Friday, Iran lost to France 3-1 (25-19, 25-27, 33-31, 27-25) in a beautiful game.

These two matches were part of preparation for the World Olympic Qualification Tournament in Tokyo Japan for the two teams.

Iran is preparing for the competition which will be held from May 28 to June 5.

Iran will have to compete with Australia, Canada, China, France, Japan, Poland and Venezuela for a spot in the Olympic Games. The top Asian team and the next three top teams will qualify for the Olympics.



## Sardar Azmoun most popular player at Rostov: poll

**SPORTS** Iranian international Sardar Azmoun has been elected as the most popular player of FC Rostov football club in the 2015-16 season in a poll conducted by the club's website.

The 21-year old Iranian who received his prize (a football player statue) stated that he will try his best in the remaining two games to and hopefully Rostov wins the league for the first time in its history.

Sardar has scored nine goals in 24 appearances for the

surprise of this season's Russian Premier League. They are currently in second place two points behind the leaders CSKA Moscow two weeks before the end of the season.

Azmoun has caught the eye of big European teams and is unlikely to remain at Rostov for the next season.

Azmoun, who is currently playing at Rostov on loan from Rubin Kazan, has a great goal scoring record in international games. He has scored 11 goals in just 16 matches for Carlos Queiroz team.

## Iran's Mahjoub wins bronze at Judo Grand Prix



**SPORTS** Javad Mahjoub from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the Judo Grand Prix 2016 at the Sport Palace Baluan Sholak in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Sunday.

In the -100kg weight category, Mahjoub defeated Jason Koster from New Zealand in his first match but lost to his Brazilian rival Rafael Buzacarini.

The Iranian judoka beat Anis Ben Khaled from Tunisia in his repechage and defeated Hungarian Miklos Cirjenics in the bronze medal match.

The competition has brought 399 judoka from the 84 nations together.

The Olympic qualification period ends after the World Judo Masters in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 27-29 May.

## Iran beaten by Japan in CFA Youth Football Tournament



Iran U-17 football team lost to Japan 4-1 in the Jiangyin Zhouzhuang Cup CFA International Youth Football Tournament 2016 on Saturday.

Hamid Alidoosti's boys started the competition with a 2-1 defeat against China but defeated Uzbekistan 2-1.

Jiangyin Zhouzhuang Cup CFA International Youth Football Tournament 2016'

was organized by Chinese Football Association.

The Iranian team is preparing for the 2016 AFC Championship which will be held in India from September 15 to October 2.

The tournament acts as the AFC qualifiers for the FIFA U-17 World Cup.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Russian sports minister apologizes over doping, pleads for Rio entry

Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko has issued a plea for Russia's athletes to be allowed to compete in the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games and apologized for the "deceptive" sportsmen caught doping in the past in an article he wrote for Britain's Sunday Times.

With less than three months before the Rio Games open in August, Moscow is seeking to have a global ban overturned to allow its track and field athletes to compete.

The All-Russia Athletic Federation (ARAF) was suspended from the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) after several high-profile Russian athletes were caught red-handed in using banned performance-enhanced substances.

"Serious mistakes have been made by the federation management, along with athletes and coaches... We are ashamed of them," Mutko said in his strongest comments over the doping scandal.

"We are very sorry that athletes who tried to deceive us, and the world, were not caught sooner. We are very sor-



ry because Russia is committed to upholding the highest standards in sport and is opposed to anything that threatens the Olympic values."

Russia, second behind the United States in the athletics

medal table at the 2012 London Olympics, is banned from all athletics after an independent commission of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) revealed widespread doping.

WADA President Craig Reedie told BBC radio in an interview on Saturday that it was "highly unlikely" that Russia's anti-doping authority would be declared compliant with world sports rules in time for Rio.

Russia has to convince the IAAF that it has put in place measures to show improvement in its anti-doping operation and a "change of culture".

"We have done everything that has been asked of us by the IAAF in order to be reinstated. It would be unjust to demand all these changes and measures, witness them happen and then still punish Russia's athletes. We believe passionately in the Olympic spirit and values," Mutko said.

Mutko's ministry and the Russian Olympic Committee were not available for immediate comment.

(Source: Reuters)

## Napoli star delighted after breaking goalscoring record

After helping Napoli past Frosinone and breaking Gunnar Nordahl's record of 35 goals in a Serie A campaign, Gonzalo Higuain was understandably overjoyed with his achievement.

The Argentine netted in the 52nd, 62nd and 71st minute to end the season with a tally of 36 goals, breaking the mark previously held by the AC Milan legend.

With Napoli also confirming their place in the Champions League for next season, Higuain had another reason to celebrate after the win against Frosinone.

"I am very proud of what I have done," Higuain told Premium Sport. "I was determined to break the record and I am so happy I have done so."

"For the team, it is great to be back



in the Champions League. That was our goal from the start of the season.

"It has been a great campaign for us and we are in a great place to build for the future."

Higuain will have a busy summer ahead as he is part of the Argentina squad for the Copa America.

(Source: Gazzetta World)

## Cristiano Ronaldo hits 50-goal mark for sixth year running at Real Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo became the first player ever to score 50 goals in all competitions for the sixth straight season on Saturday in Real Madrid's 2-0 win at Deportivo La Coruna.

The Portuguese star opened the scoring after seven minutes in the final La Liga game of the season, then added his 51st goal in the 25th minute of the 2-0 win, though the league title escaped Real Madrid.

The goals give him 35 in the league this season to go with 16 in the Champions League.

He will have one more game to add to his tally on May 28 as Real take on Atletico Madrid in the Champions League final in Milan.

The 31-year-old will have to overcome a knock suffered in Saturday's game. He left



at half-time and manager Zinedine Zidane said he took "a heavy blow to the foot"

Ronaldo has hit the 50-goal mark every season since 2010-11, his second at Real Madrid after moving from Manchester United.

He had 53 that year, then 60, 55 and 51 before hitting a high of 61 last season.

(Source: ESPN)

## FOOTBALL

### Dominant Barca deserve Liga title as Madrid leave it too late

The league table rarely lies. So even though Real Madrid pushed Barcelona all the way to the last day of the season in an exciting finale to La Liga, there is no denying that the right team won it in the end. The Blaugrana are worthy winners; Los Blancos left it too late. Barca led La Liga virtually from start to finish and ultimately deserve their 24th Primera Division crown. But Luis Enrique's men were made to work harder than expected for their title by a resurgent Real as Zinedine Zidane's side won their last 12 matches to push their rivals all the way to the tape.

That seemed so unlikely just two months ago. Ahead of the Clasico clash at Camp Nou on April 2, Barca were unbeaten in their previous 39 fixtures in all competitions and when Gerard Pique opened the scoring in the famous fixture, the Catalans were provisionally 13 points clear of Madrid. Goals from Karim Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo turned that game on its head and Barca's lead was cut to seven points. Subsequent defeats to Real Sociedad and Valencia then saw the champions let both Atletico and Madrid back into the race and after Diego Simeone's side lost at Levante in the penultimate round of matches, it was left for Spain's two biggest teams to dispute the title.

Zidane did all that he could to win what would have been a maiden trophy as Madrid coach. The Frenchman has led his side to 17 wins in his 20 Liga games in charge, with only one defeat and two draws in that time. In the end, however, it was not quite enough.

Barca have looked tired towards the end of this season and the Blaugrana were surprisingly beaten by Atletico in the quarter-finals of the Champions League. However, Luis Enrique's side stuck it out in La Liga, digging deep to win their final five fixtures in the Primera Division. Led by an inspired Luis Suarez, Barca thrashed Deportivo La Coruna 8-0 at Riazor, hit Sporting Gijon for six at Camp Nou, beat Betis 2-0 in Seville, made light work of Espanyol in a 5-0 derby win and claimed the title with ease on Saturday with a 3-0 success at Granada. Barca have now won six trophies since the arrival of Luis Enrique as coach in the summer of 2014: two Liga titles, one Champions League, one Copa del Rey, a Uefa Super Cup and a Club World Cup.

And that could be seven next Sunday as the Catalans face Sevilla in the final of the Copa at the Vicente Calderon as they seek a domestic double to add to the treble they picked up last season. So although they are lacking strength in depth and ended up winning La Liga by a single point from Madrid, this Barca team remain the dominant force in Spain and with some intelligent signings in the summer, Luis Enrique's side can avoid the fatigue that has hurt them at the end of this season.

With Zidane seemingly certain to stay in charge now and lead Madrid from day one next season, Los Blancos look likely to fight Barca for the title from the beginning next year instead of having to lift the team mid-term as he did upon arrival in January to replace the unpopular Rafa Benitez.

For Madrid, winning La Liga was always a big ask with a coaching change half way through the season, the team already behind in the title race and morale at a low, but Zidane's side deserve credit for chasing Barca all the way to the end in a race that reignited interest in a competition that had looked all but over in March.

In the end, however, the Blaugrana are worthy winners. Luis Enrique's men recovered from their dip in form last month to take the title like true champions and remain the team to beat in Spain. Congratulations, Barca!

(Source: Goal)

## Gotze confirms Ancelotti talks

Bayern Munich's Mario Gotze has held talks with incoming head coach Carlo Ancelotti about his future at the club, but the playmaker refused to confirm if he will be allowed to leave.

Recent reports suggested Gotze and Ancelotti spoke over the phone to discuss the Germany international's status at Allianz Arena amid claims he is on his way out, with Liverpool and former club Borussia Dortmund reportedly keen to sign him.

Ancelotti allegedly told Gotze he cannot guarantee him regular first-team football next season, but the 23-year-old opted against disclosing any details of the conversation.

"I don't know how someone found out about the phone call. I did not know anyone was listening in. There are only a few people who know what we discussed. They know what was said and that is enough. There's nothing more to it," Gotze told Bild after Bayern's Bundesliga title celebrations.

"We won the Bundesliga and I have won my fifth league title. I am mainly happy about that. I have a contract until June 2017 and we have an important game coming up against Borussia Dortmund. I can only vow to give my all in the DFB-Pokal final."

"I can't make any promises about next season. I have an ongoing contract and we will see what happens."

Gotze has netted three goals in 14 Bundesliga outings this campaign, having struggled with a groin injury for much of the season.

(Source: OmniSport)



