

TEHRAN TIMES

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No military
solution to Syria
crisis: Zarif

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Rouhani greets new ambassadors, calls for stronger ties with Paris

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani received on Tuesday credentials of new ambassadors to

Tehran of France, Slovakia, Azerbaijan, and Indonesia with calls for expansion of ties with the countries.

The newly appointed figures will certainly have more demanding missions compared to their outgoing comrades considering that Teh-

ran is emerging from the shadows of international trade sanctions.

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Opportunity for Iran to deepen integration into global economy is coming: IMF

David Lipton, the first deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund says the opportunity for Iran to deepen integration into global economy is coming.

The IMF published the full text of Lipton's planned speech in Tehran on its website on Tuesday. Parts of the speech cover issues relating to the situation of the Iranian economy before and after the lifting of sanctions, opportunities and challenges ahead for its reintegration into the global economy.

Excerpts of the IMF official's quotations are as follow:

With important sanctions lifted, Iran has a new opportunity to deepen its integration into the global economy. That process has the potential over time to support faster growth and rising living standards for Iranians.

But positive results depend on overcoming two major obstacles as well. The first is navigating a difficult global economic situation. And the second is building a competitive and flexible domestic economy that will serve as a suitably strong platform for growth.

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New director of IRIB says change in news programs high on agenda

ART **TEHRAN** — The new director of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Abdol-Ali Ali-Asgari, has said that making a couple of major changes to new programs is high on the agenda.

Speaking to the reporter after his inauguration on Tuesday, he also said that IRIB will turn its main focus on producing educative programs.

"Paying attention to the national economy and production is also high on the agenda; you will see it on TV," he noted.

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S. Korea, Iran sign MOU for cooperation on environment

SEOUL (Yonhap) — South Korea and Iran signed an agreement Tuesday to jointly tackle their environmental issues, further expanding their bilateral cooperation to social issues in the latest sign of their improving relations.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) for cooperation on environment was signed here by South Korea's Environment Minister Yoon Seong-kyu and his Iranian counterpart Masoumeh Ebtakar, who is double-hatted as vice president of Iran.

Under the signed agreement, the countries will exchange information on waste management and preservation of wetlands, as well as hold joint seminars that will further promote exchange of information and cooperation, according to South Korea's environment ministry.

"I hope the signing of the MOU for cooperation will be our first step toward improving the countries' environment and boosting their cooperation and exchange of information on their environment-related technologies and policies," Yoon was quoted as saying.

The agreement will resume the countries' joint efforts to tackle their national and global environment issues six years after their 2010 agreement expired. The MOU also follows a series of business deals signed earlier in the month during South Korean President Park Geun-hye's visit to the Middle Eastern country, said to be worth billions of dollars.

In a summit with Park, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also expressed hope to more than quadruple the countries' bilateral trade from \$6.1 billion in 2015 to over \$30 billion in five years.

Tehran greets Croatian president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic who arrived in Tehran on Tuesday afternoon for a three-day visit was welcomed at Imam Khomeini International Airport by Industries and Trade Minister Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh.

On Wednesday, Grabar-Kitarovic will be officially welcomed by President Hassan Rouhani at Saadabad presidential palace.

A number of agreements and memorandums of understanding will be signed between Iran and Croatia at the presence of Rouhani and Grabar-Kitarovic on Wednesday. Later the two presidents will hold a joint press conference.

Grabar-Kitarovic will also par-



ticipate at the meetings arranged between economic officials and private sectors of the two countries.

She will also hold talks with some senior Iranian officials on Wednesday.

For Thursday, some cul-

tural activities have been arranged for the female president. She leaves Tehran on the same day.

Grabar-Kitarovic, who become the first female president of Croatia in January 2015, visited Tehran upon an invitation by President Rouhani.

Grabar-Kitarovic's trip follows a series of visits to Iran by world leaders after the Islamic Republic and the great powers signed a landmark nuclear deal in July 2015. The nuclear agreement, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into effect on January 16.

The Croatian president's visit comes two weeks after the female Korean President Park Geun-hye's trip to Tehran.

Russia may counter NATO by deploying ballistic missiles near Romania: analyst

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — A senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington DC tells the Tehran Times that Russia may deploy short range ballistic missiles near the Romanian border as the U.S. activated a land-based missile defense station in Romania on May 12.

"Russia, of course, may take this opportunity as an excuse to boost 'counter-measures', maybe by placing short range ballistic missiles near the Romanian border," Gautam Adhikari says.

NATO claims the interceptor station will help defend against the threat of short and medi-

um-range ballistic missiles, particularly from the Middle East. However, Russia has said it is aimed at containing Russia and President Vladimir Putin has said Moscow will "neutralize emerging threats".

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ **What is the purpose of the U.S. in deploying missile defense shield in Romania? Isn't it an expansion of NATO to the East?**

A: The U.S. has officially said making the missile defense system operational in Romania is to protect Europe from aggressive activity of "rogue states", such as Iran. Russia sees it differently. It has called the system destabilizing and part of a plan to contain Russia militarily and

politically. It may be worth noting that another such NATO installation will be operating in Poland early next year, as plans currently stand. The full system includes NATO's command and control center in Germany as well as U.S. warships in the region which are equipped to launch interceptor missiles. The U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary, Robert Work, has said this strengthening of NATO's missile defense system is not about Russia and that the U.S. would openly say so if it were meant to deter Russia. What it has said this time about the installation in Romania is that it is meant to defend against attacks from other players in the region.

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Iran's railway sector exciting with huge potential for foreigners

By Mahnaz Abdi

Iran's railway sector is exciting with a lot of potentials for foreign exhibitors participating in Iran's 4th International Exhibition of Rail Transportation, Related Industries and Equipment, dubbed RAILEX-PO 2016 (running from May 15 to 18 in Tehran).

The following is what some of them told the Tehran Times in the exhibit.

■ **'Sanctions removal to facilitate business in Iran'**

Firdavsi Nuraliev, the export sales manager of Lukoil Lubricants Middle East, the branch of Russian Lukoil Lubricants Company for the Middle East market, believes that

the removal of sanctions will facilitate everything for business in Iran.

"We have always wanted to enter the Iranian market as it is one of the main markets in the Middle East," he stated.

"We want to enter the Iranian market in several stages. The first stage is to have a specific part of

Iranian market on which we could trust. It will be achieved through producing the high quality of our products to the Iranian customers so that the demand will be increased, and then in the next stage we want to produce our products inside Iran," the manager explained.

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PERSPECTIVE

By Harun Yahya
political expert

Iraq in the midst of crisis

On May 11, Iraqis woke up to another series of blasts around Baghdad in Shia populated areas including the city of Sadr, named after Ayatollah Mohammed al-Sadr, leaving almost 100 people dead and more injured. Such explosions have somehow become ordinary and don't even get any headline anymore in local or even international news reports. This kind of violence among Muslims, that is Sunnis attacking Shias or vice versa is something beyond comprehension and I receive it with disturbance and regret.

Despite that Syria has been in an intense civil war for five years and is considered to be in a severe crisis, Iraq is in at least the same condition if not worse. Iraq has not seen a break in violence since the moment it was invaded by the U.S. in 2003. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis lost their lives and 1.5 million left homeless. The casus belli of this invasion was the false presumption that Iraq had supplies of WMD and was an imminent global threat, which later proved to be false and fabricated. Surprisingly some of the leaders apologized for the wrong intelligence. Tony Blair expressed it in an interview he gave to CNN with these statements: "I apologise for the fact that the intelligence we received was wrong... I also apologise for some of the mistakes in planning and, certainly, our mistake in our understanding of what would happen once you removed the regime." Yet, the damage was done and it was once more another Muslim country with a Muslim population who suffered extensively. In the following years car bombs, suicide bombers, and market blasts have turned into a routine set of incidents. The gap between Shias and Sunnis has widened and both initiated to perpetrate incessant violence against each other, which has not ceased up even until today.

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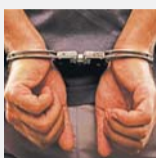
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MEDIA MONITOR



Assembly of Experts to start new term

TEHRAN — The Assembly of Experts will start its new term on Wednesday. The inauguration will commence with a message from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The day's session will also include the appointment of the presiding board members, the YJC reported on Tuesday.



Interpol arrests bomber linked to 1981 Iran bombing

TEHRAN — Iranian police announced on Monday that a suspect terrorist linked to a 1981 deadly bomb attack on the building of the Islamic Republic Party of Iran had been arrested in Albania.

The operation was carried out through a collaboration with Interpol, the police said, according to Nasim.



Indian PM to visit Iran on Sunday

TEHRAN — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Iran on Sunday, Presidential Press Secretary Parviz Esmaili announced on Tuesday. Modi will be heading a political, economic, and cultural delegation for a two-day visit, Esmaili told IRNA.



Security body OKs taking assets seizure case to ICJ

TEHRAN — Iran's Supreme National Security Council has approved a proposal to file a complaint with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Washington over a U.S. court ruling on the confiscation of the Central Bank of Iran's assets, the justice minister announced on Tuesday.

Mostafa Pourmohammadi said that Iran will also try other options, including "overt and covert political ways," to pursue the case.

Rouhani greets new ambassadors, calls for stronger ties with Paris



President says new chapter opening in Paris-Tehran relations

Receiving credentials from Francois Senemaud, the new French ambassador, Rouhani said a new chapter is opening in relations between Tehran and Paris and expeditious implementation of joint agreements signed during his January visit to Paris can deepen partnership.

In January, the Elysee presidential palace rolled out the red carpet for President Rouhani, who signed billions of euros worth of deals at a special ceremony at the palace. At a press conference, President Francois Hollande declared, "A new chapter of our relations is opening today."

Referring to numerous grounds for cooperation, Rouhani called for upgrading the level of economic, cultural, political, and regional exchanges.

Rouhani also noted with Tehran and Paris growingly unified, it will be more possible to restore stability in the region as a peaceful Syria and Iraq will be in the interest of France and Iran both.

Also, Senemaud expressed France's determination to deepen relations with Tehran in all fields, saying, "France will spare no effort in quick implementation of the deals reached between the two sides."

Pointing to Rouhani's visit to Paris, Senemaud underscored that "new dynamics have emerged in Tehran-Paris ties as a result of the visit which need to be preserved and strengthened."

It takes time to indicate how capable the newly appointed French ambassador to Tehran is in reconstructing his country's image in Iran after Paris took a hard line during the Iran nuclear talks.

Rouhani backs opening joint commerce chamber with Slovakia

In a separate meeting, President Rouhani shook hand with Lubomir Golian, Slovakia's new ambassador to Tehran, saying opening a joint chamber of commerce between the two countries will help beef up bilateral trade.

Noting that Slovakia will preside over the next Council of the European Union, Rouhani added the opportunity can be a catalyst for expediting Tehran and EU relations.

Golian, for his part, went over his priorities during his mission in Iran, emphasizing "Slovakia is determined to promote multilateral partnership with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

As the next president of the EU council, Slovakia will take whatsoever measures to uplift bonds between Iran and the EU, Golian remarked.



Rouhani calls for 'serious boost' in relations with Azerbaijan

Tehran and Baku should give a serious boost to bilateral relations, President Rouhani told the new Azerbaijani Ambassador to Tehran Bonyad Hoseinov.

Rouhani also said the post-sanctions situation in Iran should be grabbed to enhance bilateral cooperation more than ever.

"There are many bilateral agreements and projects whose implementation can mark a positive change in improving relations," he stated.

Submitting his credentials to Rouhani earlier in the meeting, Hoseinov stressed his country has never doubted Iran's friendly approach.

He underlined that boosting bilateral, regional, and international cooperation will benefit the nations and governments of the two neighboring countries.

Iranian and Azerbaijani officials signed 11 memoran-

dums of understanding (MOUs) on the sidelines of a meeting between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Rouhani in Tehran on Feb. 23.

Tehran ready to expand ties with Indonesia: Rouhani

On the hectic day, the president also accepted credentials from Kata Venu Alimudin, new Indonesian ambassador to Tehran, drawing attention to opportunities for Iran and Indonesia to develop ties particularly in the economic sector.

"Iran is ready to boost ties with Indonesia in technical-engineering services and joint investment in other sectors including energy, dam construction, and refinery," the president was quoted as saying.

For his part, Alimudin referred to historical and friendly relations between Tehran and Jakarta, saying his country is interested in benefiting from Iran's know-how in engineering fields.

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NEWS

Venezuela takes control of food, energy sources to tackle crisis

The Venezuelan government has given itself sweeping powers to control food and energy supplies and enhance security measures under a state of emergency to tackle an acute economic crisis.

The government published in its official gazette a set of measures that are to be taken under the 60-day state of emergency declared by President Nicolas Maduro earlier on Friday.

The measures give the government and security forces broad authorization to maintain order and supply basic food and services for people.

Maduro says the state of emergency is necessary "to tend to our country and, more importantly, to prepare to denounce, neutralize and overcome the external and foreign aggression against our country."

The government is now allowed to conduct "necessary and urgent means" to restore and maintain sources of energy.

Under the guidelines, the military would be helped by ancillary security units to maintain potential public unrest.

Maduro said on Saturday that all businesses and factories closed by their owners would be seized and handed over to their workers in order to restart production in the country.

He accused the owners of the factories of intentionally sabotaging production in an effort to help topple the government amid the economic crisis.

Having taken effect on Monday, the new measures would have to be sent to the National Assembly and the Supreme Court for review in line with the Venezuelan constitution.

The opposition-dominated parliament is expected to oppose the state of emergency, but the Supreme Court is expected to support it.

The president has so far managed to successfully block previous bills against him in the National Assembly by appealing to the Supreme Court.

Maduro has also called for military exercises to take place next weekend to prepare for "any scenario," including a foreign invasion.

He also ordered the security to prevent "destabilizing actions that mean to disrupt life inside the country or its international relations."

The president has said previously that the opposition, with the support of the United States, attempts to bring about a coup d'état in the oil-rich country.

The opposition, which swept two thirds of the seats in the Venezuelan legislature in 2015, has vowed to oust Maduro. It has tried to call a direct referendum on whether to remove Maduro from office.

Vice President Aristobulo Istariz, however, ruled out the possibility of a recall referendum. "Maduro won't be ousted by a referendum because there will be no referendum," he said.

Istariz said the opposition had "acted too late" over the recall referendum, had "done it wrong and had committed fraud".

The new security measures will be put to a test on Wednesday, when nation-wide opposition rallies are scheduled to take place.

(Source: Press TV)

EU chief calls Boris Johnson's EU-Nazi comparison 'absurd'

European Union President Donald Tusk waded into the British debate on EU membership on Tuesday by deriding ex-London Mayor Boris Johnson for comparing the bloc's aims to those of Adolf Hitler.

Tusk said even though the EU had stayed on the sidelines of the British referendum campaign on whether it should leave the EU, "when I hear the EU being compared to the plans and projects of Adolf Hitler I cannot remain silent."

Johnson argued over the weekend that the 28-nation bloc was creating a superstate that mirrors the attempt of the Nazi leader to dominate the European continent.

"Such absurd arguments should be completely ignored if they hadn't been formulated by one of the most influential politicians of the ruling party," Tusk said in Copenhagen.

Britain holds a "leave or stay" referendum on June 23 on its always cantankerous relationship with the EU and the campaign has been getting increasingly edgy.

In Britain, the EU institutions and its leaders in Brussels have long been seen as the source of all things bad related to the bloc. Because of it, Tusk and others have taken a hands-off approach in a campaign that is also vital to the future of the EU itself.

That changed for Tusk when Johnson, the most prominent British politician on the "leave" side, said the past 2,000 years of European history have been dominated by doomed attempts to unify the continent, including those of Napoleon and Hitler.

"Boris Johnson crossed the boundaries of a rational discourse, demonstrating political amnesia," said Tusk.

Britain's "stay" camp described Johnson's comments as a desperate effort take the focus off the economic impact that such a rupture would create and shift it to the more populist theme of sovereignty issues.

By evoking World War II, Johnson reminded much of the country of its "finest hour" — the moment that Britain acted as the bulwark to halt Nazi tyranny — and he stressed the value of sovereignty over being part of a multinational effort to run Europe's affairs.

Tusk said, however, that "the EU still remains the most effective firewall against the ever-dangerous and often tragic conflicts among the nations of Europe."

"The only alternative for the Union is political chaos, the return to national egoisms," Tusk said.

(Source: AP)

World powers gather in Vienna to resume Syria talks

Top diplomats from 17 nations have resumed Vienna talks on the Syria conflict, hoping to reinvigorate a peace effort that has effectively collapsed.

United States Secretary of State John Kerry and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov were chairing the meeting of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) on Tuesday.

Powers attending the talks are Russia and Iran on the one hand, supporting Syrian President Bashar Assad, and the U.S., the House of Saud regime and European states on the other, trying to topple him with the help of militants.

Russia said Lavrov met Kerry ahead of the talks, discussing the need to cut off the supply routes benefiting terrorists "primarily those crossing the Syrian-Turkish border."

Lavrov also met Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who said Iran supported the truce and a peace dialog, but warned that a silence of arms might aid terrorist groups operating in Syria.

"We should not allow terrorists to use the cessation of hostilities for further terror operations," Zarif said.

"Unfortunately there seems to be a persistence by some that they want to pursue a military solution, that illusion has to come to an end and they should look for a political solution," he added.

The House of Saud regime is one of the most aggressive supporters of militant groups, represented in negotiations by the High Negotiation Committee (HNC), which was organized by the kingdom itself.

Riyadh has repeatedly stated that Assad will eventually be removed by either diplomatic or military means.

Saudi young Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir signaled that Riyadh is not pinning its hopes on the U.S. convincing Russia to remove Assad and suggested a push to make sure militants were better armed might be needed.

"The choice is Bashar al-Assad's," he told reporters in Paris last week. "He will be removed, either through a political process or through military force."

Arab and western officials involved said they do not expect significant achievements from the talks.

According to Reuters, the Obama administration's failure to convince Moscow that Assad must go is fueling European frustration.

UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva ended last month without any progress after the delegation of the opposition walked out, and declared a "new war" against the Syrian government.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Tuesday the foreign ministers were expected to explore ways to bring the opposition back to negotiations with the Assad government. Steinmeier said the participants want-



ed to help strengthen the truce and improve aid efforts.

The Russian Defense Ministry said it delivered 1.5 tons of humanitarian aid for residents in Syria's Latakia province.

Syrian State Minister for National Reconciliation Affairs Ali Haidar, meanwhile, held a meeting with representatives from besieged areas, including Madaya, Fouaa and Kefraya.

They discussed the possibility of lifting the sieges by exchanging the control rights of the besieged areas in the name of national reconciliation.

■ Children, woman killed in U.S. airstrikes in Syria

Meantime, three children and a woman have been killed in eastern Syria in airstrikes conducted by the U.S.-led coalition, purportedly targeting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists.

Media and local sources said the U.S. airstrikes hit al-Bukamal city in the province of Dayr al-Zawr near the border with Iraq on Monday, killing four and inflicting heavy losses on properties.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting air raids against what are alleged to be ISIL hideouts inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from Damascus or a United Nations mandate.

The coalition has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of realizing its declared objective of annihilating ISIL.

Also on Monday, ISIL terrorists fired rockets at al-Qusour and al-Joura neighborhoods in the same province, leaving three civilians, including a girl, dead and 14 others wounded.

Dayr al-Zawr Province links the ISIL stronghold in the city of Raqqah with territory controlled by the militant group in neighboring Iraq.

Separately, a woman was killed in Qamishli city of Hasakah province in a mortar attack launched from Turkey, local sources said.

Turkey's border guards also shot and injured a girl near her house in Ras al-Ain

city on the border with Turkey.

Turkey has time and again been accused of aiding and abetting militant groups operating in Syria.

Reports say Ankara actively trains and arms Takfiri militants there and facilitates their safe passage into Syria. Ankara has also been accused of buying smuggled oil from ISIL.

■ Thousands of bodies found in Syria mass grave: report

Elsewhere, thousands of bodies have reportedly been found in a mass grave in a northern Syrian town, which had been under ISIL's control for about a month.

Suluk, which lies less than a dozen miles away from the Turkish border, fell to ISIL in February. The Kurdish People's Protection Units drove the terrorists back in March.

"We discovered thousands of bodies of innocent victims in the ravine," the Kurdish forces' commander Mohamed Jirjis said, referring to a gorge where the bodies had been dumped, British paper Daily Express reported on Monday.

The victims, who comprise men, women, and children, had reportedly been tortured before their death.

Recounting the horror, resident Abdel Halif Al-Jasim said, "They would bring those still alive to the precipice, blindfold them and shoot above their heads to scare them. People would then start running and fall over the edge. They'd bring the bodies of others, covered in blankets, and throw them off."

The town was recaptured after Kurdish fighters cleared the town of Tal Abyad, about 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) south-east of Suluk, of ISIL presence last year.

Tal Abyad used to serve as a major lair for ISIL, given its proximity to the city of Raqqah, the group's so-called capital.

In early April, Syrian forces uncovered a mass grave bearing people killed by ISIL in the recently-liberated city of Palmyra in the Homs province.

Syria's official news agency SANA quoted a field source as saying that 25 corpses, including five women and three children, had been recovered from the mass grave.

■ ISIL blows up central Syrian gas field near Palmyra: monitor

The development follows as ISIL terrorist group has carried out massive bomb attacks against a key gas field in central Syria, setting off a minor earthquake in the nearby city of Palmyra, a monitoring group says.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a Britain-based monitoring group, said there were three huge blasts conducted by ISIL at the Shaer gas field on Monday.

The gas field -- one of the biggest in Homs province -- has been the scene of heavy clashes between ISIL elements and Syrian government forces. The terrorists captured the gas field on May 5.

Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the SOHR, said ISIL was thought to have blown up several of Shaer's pumping stations. He gave no details about possible casualties.

The blasts reportedly even shook the ancient city Palmyra, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) southeast of Shaer.

Syrian state news agency SANA said on Monday evening that government forces had recaptured a hilltop just west of the gas field. It did not mention the explosions.

ISIL captured the ruins of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the adjacent modern city in May 2015, destroying ancient monuments there, including the 2,000-year-old Temple of Bel and the iconic Arch of Triumph.

The Syrian army, backed by volunteer forces and Russian air cover, wrested back control of Palmyra on March 27 following four weeks of military operations against ISIL.

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

(Source: agencies)

At least 45 people killed in Baghdad bombings

At least 45 people are killed and some 90 others injured in three bomb attacks in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Iraqi officials said a blast in a marketplace in the northern district of al-Shaab on Tuesday killed at least 17 people and wounded 28.

A car bomb in the southern neighborhood of al-Rasheed left six people dead and another 21 wounded, they said.

A third bomb blast hit the Abu Ghraib area in western Baghdad, killing at least one person.

While the overall casualty numbers have been updated based on initial press reports, the figures for each district are yet to be specifically updated.

Responsibility for the attacks has not yet been claimed by any group or individual, but the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group has been engaged in a heightened terrorist campaign in the

Iraqi capital over the past days.

On Sunday, bomb attacks by ISIL killed at least 15 people in and around Baghdad.

The increase in the number of terrorist attacks has angered local populations, who blame the Iraqi government for failing to provide tighter security.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has said a political crisis sparked by his attempt to reshuffle the cabinet in an anti-corruption bid is hampering the fight against ISIL and is giving the terrorist group a freer hand to target the civilian population.

Some Iraqis say, however, ISIL is trying to make up for its loss of ground to Iraqi security forces over the past months.

New estimates by the government show that ISIL now controls only 14 percent of Iraqi territory, down from the 40 percent it held in 2014, with top officials vowing to clear the entire Iraqi soil from militants in 2016.



The Iraqi army along with Popular Mobilization forces has been engaged in battles with ISIL to remove it from the areas it has overrun in Iraq.

(Source: Press TV)

Libya to be equipped in fight against ISIL

World powers are ready to consider demands from Libya's new unity government for exemptions from a United Nations arms embargo and militarily equip it in its fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) and other groups.

The joint decision, announced by United States Secretary of State John Kerry on Monday followed a meeting in Vienna which was attended by diplomats from more than 20 countries.

The United States, four other permanent UN Security Council members and the more than 15 other nations participating in talks on Libya said that they were "ready to respond to the Libyan government's requests for training and

equipping" government forces.

"The Government of National Accord has voiced its intention to submit appropriate arms embargo exemption requests to the UN Libya Sanctions Committee to procure necessary lethal arms and materiel to counter UN-designated terrorist groups and to combat [ISIL] throughout the country," Kerry said.

"We will fully support these efforts while continuing to reinforce the UN arms embargo."

The conference was co-chaired by Kerry and his Italian counterpart Paolo Gentiloni.

While the joint statement spoke of intentions, the fact that all five permanent Security Council members back the plan



to arm the internationally backed government means that it is unlikely to face significant opposition from any quarter.

The Libyan unity government has said it will submit an arms embargo exemption request to the UN, to be able to gain the necessary arms to combat ISIL

throughout the country. The ban was put in place five years ago.

In February, Libya's Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Dairi asked the UN to end the embargo, telling the Security Council that the UN "shouldered a legal responsibility" to help in the rebuilding of Libya's army.

Libya descended into chaos after the toppling and death of Muammar Gaddafi five years ago and soon turned into a battleground of rival groups battling for powers.

The power vacuum has allowed ISIL to expand its presence. The group is estimated to have around 5,000 fighters in the country.

(Source: agencies)

JUMP

Iran's railway sector exciting with huge potential for foreigners

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He mentioned high tax and customs duties Iran set for the foreign products entering the country as a downside for business in the Islamic Republic, although he said that this barrier is temporary and will be resolved as the Iranian government plans to establish free trade zones in the country where taxes are exempted or lower.

Iranian workers require training on modern equipment

Wolfgang R. Fally, the CEO of Germany's Robel Company, a specialist for railway construction equipment and machinery, believes that there is no downside for activity in the Iranian market rather than local workers require some training to work with modern equipment.

"Experience of the workers here with the machines is a bit different from that of European ones. Maybe that is something that modern equipments are getting more complicated. You need the skill in the future to work with them. So it's on us to provide more service and education and training to the operators of the machines," he explained.

Speaking about the upside of business in Iran, the German manager stated, "As we have a long-term partnership with our agent here, for many years we are in close contact with the Iranian market. It is a huge market. Of course, that is very good for us. Especially in the urban areas I think there is a lot of potential, because you have big cities here."

Asked if his company has any plan for transfer of technology to Iran, he said, "At this moment it should be convinced that our products are the right ones [for the Iranian market] and if the volume [of sales] gets bigger and if there is interest from the customers' perspective, it's an option of course to localize something here with our partner."

Iranian market exciting with many upcoming projects

Thierry Metrat, the product manager in Spain's Pfisterer Company, a provider of solutions for railway electrification, said, "The Iranian market is very exciting, because there is big potential especially for railway electrification. There are many projects for the next years, so we are very happy to be here."

"The political situation [in Iran] is now very good. It's much better than before because countries are more open regarding what happened in the last months [sanctions removal]," the Italian manager noted.

Iran's railway sector awaits lots of investment

Fabrizio Maggioni, the sales manager of the Italian railway company Mont-Ele, highlighted, "We believe Iranian market is attractive because we know that in the future there would be a lot of investment in the sector, both for railway and also for urban transportation system."

Opportunity for Iran to deepen integration into global economy is coming: IMF

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The outlook for the Iranian economy

I suggest that while Iran will gain from pursuing integration with the global economy, your ultimate success depends on what you do at home: strengthening macro-economic policies in the short run and forging ahead now with deep structural reforms for the long run. It is time for a plan of action on the economy.

Iran has already taken important measures to secure macroeconomic stability, including an important decline in the rate of inflation. That was done despite an episode of increased costs of trade and financial transactions, and limited access to foreign exchange assets that caused inflation to jump and the rial to depreciate significantly. That achievement will serve Iran well as its implementation the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action continues.

With the oil sector regaining access to export markets, with businesses and banks facing lower transaction costs as they reintegrate into global trade and financial systems, both the oil and non-oil economy will gain.

But the global economy poses challenges that could eat into those gains.

To sustain the recent success in the battle against in-



David Lipton, the first deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund

flation, liquidity growth needs to be contained. This can anchor inflation in single digits, reduce potential pressure on the exchange rate, and help maintain the competitiveness of the non-oil sector. In addition, Iran's commitment to exchange rate unification will be critical to entrenching economic stability.

- The banking system needs to be able to effectively

channel credit to the private sector. This will require addressing the high levels of nonperforming loans, bolstering bank capital, restructuring weak institutions, dealing with unlicensed financial institutions, and strengthening risk management systems and bank supervision.

• And fiscal policy also has an important role to play. Iran's fiscal policy would be most effective by focusing on a gradual reduction of the non-oil deficit. But instead of cutting spending, it might be better to mobilize more non-oil tax revenue. That would create space for increased public investment in infrastructure and human capital.

Structural reform, a crucial element

We have highlighted structural reforms for all countries as a crucial element in the quest to boost growth and create jobs. Some of these structural reforms would likely benefit Iran. They are, in essence, built around the principles of liberalization and privatization.

• Opening up product and services markets can be particularly effective because they bring short-term gains. They can spur more competition, and increase integration with the world economy. They can help create high-quality jobs for the younger generation of Iranians.

→9

Tehran, Algiers to boost economic ties

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Algerian Minister of Industry and Mining Abdesslem Bouchouareb expressed his country's interest in boosting ties with Iran in various spheres, IRNA reported.

During his two-day visit at the head of a strong trade delegation, Bouchouareb met with Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Abbas Akhoundi and also the Minister of Oil Bijan Namdar Zanganeh.

In the meeting with Akhoundi on Monday, Bouchouareb emphasized the need for expansion of banking relationships and noted, "Algeria is willing to cooperate with Iran in various fields such as automotive industry and its after-sales service and also pharmaceutical, petrochemical and agricultural industries".

Akhoundi, for his part, proposed a

tripartite company between Iran, Algeria and a European country with high technology in rail construction and equipment for cooperation in Algeria's five-year plan to construct 6,000 kilometers of railway in the country.

"Algeria has offered the construction of 8,000 residential units to Iranian companies and the Iranian sides announced their readiness in this regard," according to Akhoundi.

Bouchouareb also had a meeting with Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Monday during which Zanganeh noted that the situation is ripe for Iran and Algeria to enhance their cooperation.

Saying that Iran and Algeria's economies can be complementary, Zanganeh expressed hope for expanding of economic relations between the two countries.

Iran, Cyprus sign MOU on aviation, maritime co-op

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and Cyprus's Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at the first Iran-Cyprus joint meeting on transport cooperation on Monday, ISNA news agency reported.

The MOU which was signed by Abbas Akhoundi, Iran's minister of roads and urban development, and Marios Demetriades, Cyprus's minister of transport, communications and works, covered the fields of aviation, ports and maritime.

According to ISNA's report, development of ports, maritime educational cooperation, investment of the private sectors of the two countries in ports and hinterlands, shipping Cyprus's

cargos to ports in Iran and around the world by Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and making new aviation agreements between the two countries were among the subjects mentioned in the MOU.

Cyprus shares a long history of good relations with Iran, including bilateral agreements dating decades back. Worth noting among the more recent ones are the agreements on promoting and protecting investments, merchant shipping, medical science, tourism, education and culture.

Additionally, in September 2014, The Chambers of Commerce of Iran and Cyprus proceeded to the signing of a memorandum of cooperation, thus offering a new momentum to the business connections of the two countries.

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Private sector outpaces government in running museums in Iran

By Setareh Behroozi

Privately-owned museums in Iran have been developed more than state-run museums during the past two years, the director of Iran's Museums and Historical Properties Office, Mohammad Reza Kargar, announced.

About 40 museums were established by the private sector during this period, he said during a ceremony held at the National Museum of Iran on Tuesday.

The number of private museums increased by 50 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2015-March 2016) compared to its preceding year, he added.

"'One Family, One Museum' is our motto, which we hope the goal would be realized," Kargar noted.

He also talked about an increase in the number of people who visited museums during last Iranian calendar year.

"According to statistics, over 25 million visitors went to museums last year," he said, adding that several antiquities, which had been kept at the treasure house of the National Museum of Iran, were rearranged by the experts.

"All these developments indicate that enthusiasm is more important than capital in preservation of cultural heritage and people should be aware of the value of their heritage themselves," he concluded.



The director of Iran's Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti makes speech during a ceremony, which was held at the National Museum of Iran on May 17

Officials put a high value on preservation of cultural heritage

"Preservation of cultural heritage and cultural identity is now considered as a value by Iranian officials," Iran's tourism chief Masoud Soltanifar said during the event.

"I considered this view as the main achievement of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization during past two years," he announced.

He noted that several museums were established and renovated by the organization during the past year.

He referred to the reopening of the Islamic Era Museum after nine years and establishment of Khorasan regional museum as achievements of the organization.

Exhibitions and exchanges between museums increased

The number of exhibitions showcasing antiquities increased during past two years, indicating close cooperation between Iranian and foreign museums, the deputy director of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization Mohammad Hassan Talebian said.

"Holding such exhibitions leads to the exchange of different cultures and civilizations by people who live in different parts of the world," he added.

"Nowadays, museums are focusing on visitors rather than artifacts and this is why that they can attract more people," Talebian mentioned.

Cultural landscape is necessary to understand a civilization

"Without having a cultural landscape, no artifact can convey cultural messages to visitors," the director of Iran's Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, said.

Artifacts, which are kept at the museums, are mirror to cultural identity of a country and without consideration of cultural landscape, they don't have any value, he said.

The main aim of a museum is to remind people of what they had in the past, but without a cultural landscape, it turns into a place for forgotten things, he concluded. The International Museum Day, which is celebrated annually on May 18, is held this year with the theme of Museums and Cultural Landscapes. The National Museum of Iran will celebrate the International Museum Day and its centennial today during a ceremony will be attended by the president of the International Council of Museums, Hans-Martin Hinz.

A CLOSER LOOK

Spring celebration: Wild poppy festival in Semnan

By Edalat Abedini

Blogger and adventurer

Traditional rituals and celebrations are intact legacies from the distant past. By them, a community or a country can protect its intact identity and defend its original culture.

Like people of other countries, Iranians celebrate traditional festivals in various occasions. Some of them refer to Persian identity and some others to their Islamic culture.



The wild poppy festival, which is annually held on the last Friday of the second month of the Iranian calendar Ordibehsht (which falls mid May) at Hossein Abad Kalpoush Village, Miamey County, Semnan Province is one of these traditional celebrations.

The festival names wild poppy, due to existence of wild poppy fields around this village at the time.

Local people and tourists come together to hold the festival in a great area, an amazing place on the high mountain and among forests.

This festival consists of different sections. It includes serving local cuisines, local bread, and performing traditional show of wooden horse, traditional dance and local music. The festival, which falls on May 20 this year, is held in the morning and lasts until noon.

This startup is bringing travel agents back from the grave!

Difficult as it may be to remember now, there was a time when planning a vacation meant calling a travel agent. These professionals served as an intermediary between travelers and hotels, airlines and so on, taking vague notions ("We'd like to do two weeks across Europe") and turning them into itineraries. But over the past 15 years or so, do-it-yourself websites like Orbitz and Airbnb have empowered vacationers to pick their own accommodations, making travel agents increasingly unnecessary.

The U.S. Department of Labor warns that the employment of travel agents is set to drop 12% by 2024, thanks

largely to "the ability of travelers to use the Internet to research vacations and book their own trip."

Those DIY sites have given rise to a new problem: too much choice. For the novice traveler, selecting from the myriad flight, hotel and other options offered on these sites can be maddening. Should you go with the cheapest flight, or opt for a more convenient departure time? Is that hotel actually good, or is it paying professional review-leavers to artificially juice its ranking? And what the heck is a "code share," anyway?

Now, one of the people responsible for the rise of

those sites is seeking to address this problem. Paul English, the co-founder and former chief technology officer of booking site Kayak.com, has co-founded a new travel startup called Lola, which provides on-demand access to a team of travel agents supported by artificial intelligence software.

While Lola is currently free for a small group of invited users, it will cost a not-yet-determined fee later on in an effort to grab a piece of the \$35 billion online travel industry.

(Source: Time)

Americans traveling to North Korea risk 'unduly harsh sentences': U.S.

Americans who travel to North Korea despite ongoing warnings risk "unduly harsh sentences" for actions that would not be considered a crime in the United States, the U.S. State Department said in its latest travel warning on Monday.

The department, in a detailed warning against such travel, cautioned that at least 14 U.S. citizens have been detained in North Korea in the past 10 years and that American travelers should be aware that possessing any media criticizing the country could be considered a crime.

Its strong advice came after two Americans were sentenced in recent weeks in North Korea and when international tensions are increasingly high with the reclusive country over its nuclear weapons program.

Last month, North Korea's Supreme Court sentenced Korean-American Kim Dong Chul, 62, to 10 years hard labor after he admitted to committing "unpardonable espionage" including stealing military secrets, according to North Korean media.

American student Otto Warmbier was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor in March for trying to steal an item with a

propaganda slogan, North Korean media reported.

Washington has condemned the punishments, saying North Korea is using U.S. citizens to push its own political agenda. In the past, North Korea has used detained Americans to push for high-profile visits from the United States, with which it has no formal diplomatic relations.

U.S. officials have long warned Americans against traveling to North Korea, and on Monday it outlined a dozen specific actions that "whether done knowingly or unknowingly - 'have been treated as crimes' in an attempt to further caution travelers.

Showing disrespect toward North Korean leader Kim Jong Un or former leaders, criticizing the government, having an unauthorized interaction with residents, taking unapproved photographs and shopping at certain stores have all been considered crimes, the department said.

Americans traveling there should not expect protection from tour groups or guides or have expectation of privacy, it added.

(Source: Reuters)

PICTURE OF THE DAY  Mehr/Mohammad Khademosheikh



Gahar Lake is a beautiful tourist resort in the slopes of the Oshoran Kooch Mount of Lorestan province, western Iran. The lake is fed by melting snows of the mountain. The area abounds by multiplicity of flora and fauna, making the scene stunning



Renewed call for quality assessment of bidders

Arvand Free Zone Organization intends to delegate the following project through bidding to the qualified contractor. Therefore applicants are invited to apply from May 21, 2016 until June 01, 2016 to receive tender documents and until June 26, 2016 to deliver tender documents according to the following conditions.

Row	Project Name	The amount of Initial estimate	Contract duration (month)	Tender type	Field and minimum required foundation
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2	Renewed quality assessment for the bid of Purchasing two sets of passenger (baggage) X-Ray inspection system to be installed and used in Shalamchah border terminal	-	3 months	Two-stage	***

*** A) manufacturer's or producer's Licence of relocatable and baggage X-Ray inspection system. B) License or certificate of the sale agent of relocatable and baggage X-Ray inspection system manufacturer.

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3. Other related information and details are contained in the assessment documents.
4. The advert printing cost is the responsibility of the winning bidder
5. All envelopes must be in a sealed envelope and placed in an appropriate packaging and must be delivered on time.
6. Any official notices for extending the date of bidding, changes to the time of the opening of envelopes, document modifications, any news related to the call and bidders, are available for the participants on the bidders section of Arvand Free zone organization website. www.arvandfreezone.com
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Handicapping Saudi Arabia's audacious plan to save itself

When Saudi Arabia's King Salman replaced his oil minister and reshuffled his cabinet last Saturday, he did so with the goal of executing an audacious plan to transform the country's economy. "Saudi Vision 2030," the brainchild of Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, seeks to end the Kingdom's oil addiction and improve government transparency and efficiency.

Highlights of the plan include listing 5 percent of Saudi ARAMCO on the Saudi stock exchange and internationally in New York, London and Hong Kong; reducing unemployment from 11 percent to 7 percent; increasing the role of women in the work force; privatizing huge swaths of Saudi Arabia's economy so as to increase the private sector's share of GDP; and creating a military industrial holding company that will supply half of Saudi Arabia's weapons, thereby reducing the government's yearly defense spending.

If even half of these milestones are achieved, it will be the Saudi equivalent of the moon landing. Saudi Arabia has been dependent on oil for its survival since its inception. Its vast petroleum reserves have brought it leverage abroad and stability at home. Vision 2030 seeks to upend that tradition and seemingly transform Saudi society overnight into a 21st century economy.

Can he deliver?

Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's plan faces many obstacles, least of which is political stability in the kingdom. He is the deputy ruler and technically second in line to the throne, yet he wields enormous power from being the son of King Salman and his influence is tied to his father's reign. He holds the title of defense minister and in that capacity has overseen a disastrous war in Yemen, described by the UN as "a humanitarian catastrophe." He also chairs a powerful council that manages the economy.

When King Salman passes away, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Nayef will assume the throne and he could remove Prince Mohammad from the line of succession.

This is exactly what King Salman did when his predecessor King Abdullah died in January 2015. Unless King Salman elevates his son to crown prince, it is not clear if Mohammad Bin Nayef will bring to fruition many of the policies that Prince Mohammad Bin Salman has initiated. Under the current plan of succession, the end of King Salman's reign could also mean the end of Saudi Vision 2030.

Taking on the establishment

Prince Mohammad has taken aim at the Wahhabi



religious establishment, something that the royal family has been reticent to do in the past. He is aligning himself with the country's youth, which represent 70 percent of the population. Recently, he was believed to be behind the new law forbidding the religious police from questioning, harassing or arresting Saudi citizens. Many young citizens, hungry for greater social freedom, took to social media to celebrate the new law.

By passing a law that undermines the authority of

Under the current plan of succession, the end of King Salman's reign could also mean the end of Saudi Vision 2030.

religious elite, Prince Mohammad risks inspiring resentment among a key constituency that has long held vast sway over Saudi Arabia's government and society. Part of Saudi Vision 2030 is reforming the Saudi education system to focus more on the skill sets needed for a modern economy and less on austere religious teaching. How Prince Mohammad navigates his relationship with a religious establishment that gives the royal family legitimacy in mosques and schools will be vital to the stability of the Kingdom.

Prince Mohammad Bin Salman will need to carefully manage the palace intrigue and forces in Riyadh that do not want the old order disturbed. Many will view Vision 2030 with deep suspicion for fear that it could bring social unrest and economic uncertainty to Saudi society. Nevertheless, it may be the Kingdom's last best chance at transforming itself into a healthy, functional country. (Source: Reuters)

COMMENT

Republicans would fight Bill Clinton if Hillary names him economic overlord

Former two-term U.S. president Bill Clinton will find it impossible to win the support of Republican lawmakers in the U.S. Congress if his wife Hillary is elected president of the United States and then appoints him as her economic policy overlord, analysts told Sputnik.

"When Bill Clinton was president, he lost the House of Representatives to the Republicans in the 1994 midterm elections, and was forced to adopt their successful economic policies, which he later took credit for," Eurasian Business Coalition Vice President Ralph Winnie said on Monday.

Bill Clinton had to cooperate with Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich on a strong economic policy of tax cuts and low interest rates. But then, the economic recovery over the next six years allowed Clinton to take primary credit for the economic policies he had been forced into, Winnie recalled.

"If Hillary Clinton is elected, however, the policy and interpersonal dynamics will be very different this time. The key is that she doesn't want Bill to overshadow her on the economy or on anything else. She wants to be the one calling the shots," Winnie pointed out.

If Hillary Clinton did appoint her husband as some kind of economic master-strategist he would certainly try to engage Republicans, but the dynamic would be very different from what it was after 1994, Winnie predicted.

"This is a completely different generation and they will not be willing to trust Bill Clinton, or work cooperatively with him the way their predecessors did. They don't respect him and they don't trust him," Winnie warned.

Clinton would be trying to work with Republicans in Congress under the cumulative effect of nearly a quarter century of scandals about his private life and alleged financial improprieties, especially about how he has treated women, Winnie observed.

Bill Clinton "would have a very difficult problem dealing with the conservative wing of the Republican Party with its emphasis on family values, especially among its congressional members from the South. The rank and file of the GOP is very much opposed to both Hillary and Bill," Winnie explained.

Clinton might also advocate more conservative economic policies to restore conditions for economic growth, Independent Institute Center on Peace and Liberty Director Ivan Eland said on Monday.

"His policy after the election would probably to reduce the debt by cutting spending, increasing taxes and running budget surpluses. He knew that deficits and debt drag economic growth," Eland pointed out. (Source: Sputnik)

EU to work with Sudan to keep refugees out

By Jürgen Dahlkamp and Maximilian Popp

In an effort to help keep refugees from Africa at bay, the EU is planning to deliver personal registration equipment to Sudan, whose president is wanted on war crimes charges. Germany is leading the way.

The ambassadors of the 28 European Union member states had agreed to secrecy. "Under no circumstances" should the public learn what was said at the talks that took place on March 23rd, the European Commission warned during the meeting of the Permanent Representatives Committee. A staff member of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini even warned that Europe's reputation could be at stake.

Under the heading "TOP 37: Country fiches," the leading diplomats that day discussed a plan that the EU member states had agreed to: They would work together with dictatorships around the Horn of Africa in order to stop the refugee flows to Europe -- under Germany's leadership.

When it comes to taking action to counter the root causes of flight in the region, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said, "I strongly believe that we must improve peoples' living conditions." The EU's new action plan for the Horn of Africa provides the first concrete outlines: For three years, 40 million (\$45 million) is to be paid out to eight African countries from the Emergency Trust Fund, including Sudan.

Minutes from the March 23 meetings and additional classified documents obtained by SPIEGEL and the German public television station ARD show "Report Mainz" show that the focus of the project is border protection. To that end, equipment is to be provided to the countries in question.

War crimes and torture

The International Criminal Court in The Hague has issued an arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on charges relating to his alleged role in genocide and crimes against humanity in the Darfur conflict. Amnesty International also claims that the Sudanese secret service has tortured members of the opposition. And the United States ac-



Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir

cuses the country of providing financial support to terrorists.

Nevertheless, documents relating to the project indicate that Europe want to send cameras, scanners and servers for registering refugees to the Sudanese regime in addition to training their border police and assisting with the construction of two camps with detention rooms for migrants. The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has confirmed that action plan is binding, although no concrete decisions have yet been made regarding its implementation.

The German development agency GIZ is expected to coordinate the project. The organization, which is a government enterprise, has experience working with authoritarian countries. In Saudi Arabia, for example, German federal police are providing their Saudi colleagues with training in German high-tech border installations. The money for the training comes not directly from the federal budget but rather from GIZ. When it comes to questions of finance, the organization has become a vehicle the government can use to be less transparent, a government official confirms.

Important route

An important refugee route runs through Sudan, Africa's third largest country. Migrants from Eritrea, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic all seek to make their way via Khartoum to Libya, where they catch boats to Europe. The United Nations says that

there are currently 4 million people in flight in the area.

In recent years, Europe has delegated responsibility for those seeking protection to third countries, like Morocco, Ukraine and, more recently, Turkey. Now, with al-Bashir, the job of controlling migration is being turned over to a suspected war criminal. "A regime that destabilized the region and drove hundreds of thousands of people to flee is now supposed to stem the refugee problem for the EU," criticizes Marina Peter, an expert on the Horn of Africa region at the German relief organization Bread for the World.

The plan is also controversial within the EU. The "risks" listed in the action plan includes the fact that equipment financed by the Emergency Trust Fund could be abused by repressive regimes and used in the oppression of the civilian population. A general with Sudan's Interior Ministry told SPIEGEL and ARD that technology would not just be used to register refugees, but also all Sudanese. The regime's goal appears to be the absolute surveillance of its people.

Can Sudan be a serious partner?

Experts like Peter also express doubts about whether Sudanese leader al-Bashir is prepared to take serious action against migrant smugglers. Human Rights Watch has claimed in reports that the Sudanese regime itself works together with criminal networks. The report alleges that the police and military have sold refugees to human traffickers. The European Commission, meanwhile, has warned EU ambassadors in a classified memo that Sudan is primarily interested in polishing its image abroad.

Germany and the other EU member states nevertheless seem determined to push ahead with their pact with Sudan. Sudanese authorities say there have been numerous visitors from Germany in recent weeks who were there to discuss the construction of closed camps. When questioned about its role, Germany's GIZ issued a written reply that there were no concrete plans in the country yet. (Source: Spiegel)

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iSocket 3G power outlet that sends texts when power goes out

The power outlet called as "iSocket 3G" is useful for people whose homes are frequently at risk of an outage.



In an example of new technological innovation, a company called iSocket Systems has unveiled a power outlet that sends a text when the power goes out.

The power outlet called as "iSocket 3G" uses a small battery backup, a cellular radio, and an SIM card and with the help of these, the socket stays powered for a long duration.

The device is useful for people whose homes are frequently at risk of an outage.

The device can also be used for power monitoring of fridge/freezers or vaccine storage aggregates and monitoring of power during the cold season to avoid frozen pipes, the Verge reports.

(Source: dnaindia.com)

Scientists discover why some miscarriages may occur

Scientists are a step closer to a better understanding of the factors that may be at play when a miscarriage occurs. In a new study, researchers identified a potential new pathway that may influence a woman's risk of having a miscarriage.

Miscarriage is one of the most common pregnancy complications, with some estimates suggesting that possibly even half of all pregnancies result in miscarriage, since many likely happen before a woman realizes she is pregnant.

Recurrent miscarriages is also common, and doctors in a new study have identified a possible target to prevent them.

In a study published in the journal Human Reproduction, researchers at the University of Sheffield report that by studying donated embryos, they have discovered that a protein called Syncytin-1, which is involved in placenta development, may also play a role in helping embryos thrive in the womb.

"Recurrent miscarriages may be due to the embryo being unable to form the early implantation stage, and the levels of Syncytin may play a role," says study author Harry Moore, co-director of the University's Centre for Stem Cell Biology.

The "significance of this is that the very earliest aspects of embryo development can affect what happens later in the pregnancy."

While still early, the researchers think that their findings add to the understanding of early embryo development which could bolster knowledge of how to best promote successful pregnancies and improve treatments for complications like miscarriages and preeclampsia.

Though more research is needed, the study authors suggest that one day a blood test could be developed that may help doctors identify pregnancies that may be at risk.

(Source: Time)

This machine 3D prints metal structures in midair by lasering nanoparticles

One limitation of run-of-the-mill 3D printers is that the structure must essentially be built as a series of layers, each one supporting the next. A new device from Harvard's Wyss Institute allows metal filaments to essentially be drawn in midair with no support whatsoever.



There's no fancy name for the technology yet (unless laser-assisted direct ink writing counts), but the gist of it is this: A nozzle moves along a preset path sending out a thin stream of silver nanoparticles, while at the same time a laser follows its progress, heating the particles and solidifying them into a freestanding filament thinner than a human hair.

Inside the nozzle, the flow of nanoparticles has to be precisely controlled to keep

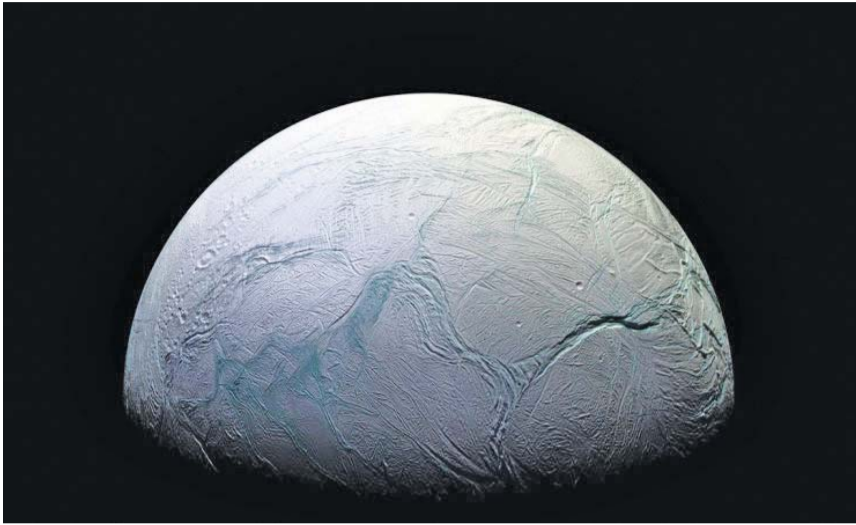
the metal thread's width uniform, and the laser must adjust as well so as not to leave any particles un-annealed, or apply too much heat and solidify the ink inside the extruder.

The results are beautiful and flexible single-piece structures that can take almost any form — useful for creating structural elements like tiny springs and buttresses, as well as circuits.

"I am truly excited by this latest advance from our lab, which allows one to 3D print and anneal flexible metal electrodes and complex architectures 'on-the-fly,'" said lead researcher Jennifer Lewis in a news release. "This sophisticated use of laser technology to enhance 3D printing capabilities not only inspires new kinds of products, it moves the frontier of solid free-form fabrication into an exciting new realm."

(Source: techcrunch.com)

Solar System could remain habitable long after Earth is destroyed



Our sun, for instance, will expand outward into a red giant in about five billion years, burning everything this side of Mars to a cinder.

In a few billion years, the oceans will boil away and the atmosphere will burn up as our sun expands into a red giant. It'll be game-over for life on Earth, but in the outer Solar System, the party will just be getting started. Europa and Enceladus will melt into ocean moons, offering a refuge for any post humanoid life forms fleeing their lava-soaked homeland.

That, at least, is one possible fate for our species and our Solar System, according to new models developed by astronomers Ramses Ramirez and Lisa Kaltenegger.

A key finding of the study — that frozen outer Solar System moons may become habitable as our sun ages and expands — has profound implications for where else in the galaxy we might discover life.

"We know that in the future, our sun will become too hot and bright for life on Earth," Kaltenegger told Gizmodo. "Science fiction often plays with the idea that people will move to Mars and further out. Now we know where to go."

■ More distant orbits

Not only does the study support the

romantic idea of humans migrating into

more distant orbits as the sun ages, but

Exercise may cut risk of 13 cancers, study suggests

Exercise may significantly reduce your risk for many types of cancer, including some of the most lethal forms of the disease, a large review suggests.

Working out for even a couple of hours a week appears to shrink the risk of breast, colon and lung cancer, said researchers who looked at 1.4 million adults.

"Those are three of the four major cancers that affect Americans today," said Marilee Gammon. She is a professor of epidemiology with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Public Health.

And fitness buffs, take heart -- your cancer risk appears to continue to decline as you rack up hours of physical activity, with no apparent upper plateau, said study lead author Steven Moore, an investigator with the U.S. National Cancer Institute.

The "more activity, the more the benefit," Moore said. "As people did more, their risk continued to lower."

It should be noted, however, that the study only found an association between exercise and reduced



cancer risk; it did not prove a cause-and-effect relationship.

■ Regular exercises

In the study, regular exercise wound up being linked to a reduced risk of 13 cancers in all, the researchers said. The others were leukemia, myeloma and cancers of the esophagus, liver, kidney, stomach, endometrium, rectum, bladder, and head and neck.

Current federal guidelines for exercise -- 150 min-

utes of moderate-intensity activity a week, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity -- are aimed at heart health but also serve well for cancer prevention, Moore said.

Moderate-intensity exercise involves pursuits such as brisk walking or tennis, while vigorous intensity exercise involves heart-pumping activities such as jogging or swimming laps, according to the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

For this study, Moore and his colleagues focused on leisure-time physical activity performed outside work or household chores. "This is voluntary physical activity typically done to improve health," he said.

About half of all American adults don't meet the federal minimum recommendation for exercise, the study authors said in background information.

Prior research has linked exercise to reduced risk of breast and colon cancer, but no study has attempted to look at the effect of physical activity on many different types of cancer, Moore said.

(Source: HealthDay News)

Lab-grown blood vessels appear a safe alternative to synthetic implants

We've seen human tissue grown in labs before, and even made the first steps towards 3D-printing it, but now researchers have tested a new type of lab-grown blood vessel implant. The results are encouraging, with the bioengineered vessels proving more durable and just as safe as commonly used synthetic grafts when implanted into patients undergoing kidney dialysis.

Due to the frequent needles involved, ongoing dialysis can damage a patient's blood vessels, and grafts are often necessary. The problem is that existing techniques, including synthetic and other bioengineered grafts, are often prone to infection or being rejected by the body. And there is also a waiting period for bioengineered vessels tailor made using a patient's own cells.

A team, made up of researchers at Duke University, Yale University and the tissue engineering company Humacyte, grew bioengineered vessels in the lab that contain no living cells, then implanted them into 60 patients who require dialysis due to kidney failure, with results suggesting they perform better than synthetic alternatives.

■ Lab-grown vessels

The key is that these lab-grown vessels are acellular, which means they contain no living cells and therefore don't contain the components that can cause tissue rejection. As a result, a supply of these acellular blood vessels can be kept on hand



and implanted on short notice, reducing time patients spend on the waiting list.

The "bioengineered blood vessel represents a critical step in tissue engineering," says Jeffrey Lawson, professor of surgery and pathology at Duke and the chief medical officer of Humacyte. "Because these vessels contain no living cells, patients have access to off-the-shelf engineered grafts that can be used without any waiting period associated with tailor-made products."

The vessels are created from human vascular cells grown in tissue culture and placed over a blood vessel-shaped scaffold. Under the right conditions, the tissue grows and acquires the properties of real blood vessels. After eight weeks, the scaffold degrades away, and what's left is lab-grown tissue with the structure of the blood vessel, ready to be washed with a special solution to remove the last of the cells, and then implanted.

(Source: Gizmag)

Almost half of all heart attacks are 'silent'

Every 43 seconds, an American has a heart attack. Most people immediately recognize chest pain as a symptom of heart attack, but only 27% of Americans are aware of all the major symptoms -- and that means many are missing the signs of an actual heart attack.

A new study in the journal Circulation finds that almost half of all heart attacks may actually be silent. And while men are more likely to experience them than women, women are more likely to die from these silent attacks.

The study tracked more than 9,000 men and women from 1987 to 2013 and evaluated their medical records. Nine years after the study began, 386 people were reported to have had a heart attack, but another 317 of the participants turned out to have experienced a silent heart attack.

Having a silent heart attack increased the chances of dying from heart disease threefold and increased chances of dying from any cause by 34%, the study found.

Signs of a silent heart attack can include unexplained fatigue and discomfort in the jaw, upper back or arms. Pain can even be mistaken for indigestion.

■ Silent heart attack

The "outcome of a silent heart attack is as bad as a heart attack that is recognized while it is happening," said Dr. Elsayed Z. Soliman, study author



and director of the epidemiological cardiology research center at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. "And because patients don't know they have had a silent heart attack, they may not receive the treatment they need to prevent another one."

This is a particular issue for women, said Dr. Nieca Goldberg, a cardiologist with the NYU Langone Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health. When women come in for visits, signs of heart attack can often be mistaken, and that can be a missed opportunity to treat heart disease.

Women are more likely to die of silent heart attacks, said Goldberg, because women are more likely than men to have the symptoms of heart attack be mistaken for symptoms of other chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

(Source: CNN)

Polluted dust can impact ocean life thousands of miles away: says

As climatologists closely monitor the impact of human activity on the world's oceans, researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology have found yet another worrying trend impacting the health of the Pacific Ocean.

A new modeling study conducted by researchers in Georgia Tech's School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences shows that for decades, air pollution drifting from East Asia out over the world's largest ocean has kicked off a chain reaction that contributed to oxygen levels falling in tropical waters thousands of miles away.

"There's a growing awareness that oxygen levels in the ocean may be changing over time," said Taka Ito, an associate professor at Georgia Tech. "One reason for that is the warming environment - warm water holds less gas.

But in the tropical Pacific, the oxygen level has been falling at a much faster rate than the temperature change can explain."

The study, published in Nature Geoscience, was sponsored by the National Science Foundation, a Georgia Power Faculty Scholar Chair and a Cullen-Peck Faculty Fellowship.

■ Levels of iron and nitrogen

In the report, the researchers describe how air pollution from industrial activities had raised levels of iron and nitrogen - key nutrients for marine life - in the ocean off the coast of East Asia.

But while the tropical phytoplankton may have released more oxygen into the atmosphere, their consumption of the excess nutrients had a negative effect

on the dissolved oxygen levels deeper in the ocean.

"If you have more active photosynthesis at the surface, it produces more organic matter, and some of that sinks down," Ito said. "And as it sinks down, there's bacteria that consume that organic matter. Like us breathing in oxygen and exhaling CO2, the bacteria consume oxygen in the subsurface ocean, and there is a tendency to deplete more oxygen."

Athanasios Nenes, a professor in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at Georgia Tech who worked with Ito on the study, said the research is the first to describe just how far reaching the impact of human industrial activity can be.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Presumptive Republican nominee for the United States presidential election Donald Trump has attacked former British Prime Minister Tony Blair for the Iraq War “disaster,” saying he did a “terrible job” by invading.

In an interview with ITV, Trump warned that the Chilcot Inquiry into the 2003 invasion, which will finally be published on July 6, will not look good for the former Labor PM. “I don’t see it as war crimes. I just think he goes down as somebody who did a terrible job.”

“[President George W.] Bush got us into it, that’s a terrible, terrible thing that happened,” he said.

“Tony Blair made a mistake. You can’t just go in haphazardly. You folks got involved in that mess just as we did and now look at it.”

Trump said British leaders should put the needs of their own country before that of America, and would get more respect if they stood up to U.S. presidents.

“I’m surprised somebody would see the Bush relationship as being that important.”

Trump also criticized Lord Alan Sugar, who hosts Brit-

Trump blasts Blair for Iraq War ‘disaster,’ says Britain should stand up to U.S. presidents



ish version of the Apprentice, but is critical of the Republican’s campaign.

No military solution to Syria crisis: Zarif

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday reiterated Iran’s position that the crisis in Syria should be settled politically, noting there is no military solution to the conflict which has been raging for more than five years.

Speaking to reporters in Vienna, where he arrived to participate in the fresh round of talks on Syria, the minister also said, “It is essential to counter the terrorist groups and not to let the terrorist groups take more ter-

rorist actions through using the ceasefire.”

Iran, Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia as well as representatives from the European Union and the Arab League are among the countries participating in the International Syria Support Group meeting on Tuesday. The 17-nation ISSG aims to discuss the stalled negotiations, challenges in maintaining the February ceasefire and the delivery of UN humanitarian aid to various areas across the war-ravaged country, Press TV reported.

“He’s small time. Don’t forget that Sugar works for me. Every time he makes money from that show he pays me.” Trump also denied claims he saw Princess Diana as the “ultimate trophy wife” or had any interest in wooing her despite once claiming he could have “nailed” her.

His comments come a day after he said he is unlikely to have a “very good relationship” with Prime Minister David Cameron.

He also called newly elected London Mayor Sadiq Khan “ignorant” and in need of an IQ test because he criticized Trump’s proposal to ban Muslims from entering the U.S. In response, Khan has invited Trump to London to meet his wife and teenage daughters.

The capital’s first Muslim mayor is standing by his attack on “ignorant” Trump, but has now offered the Republican an olive branch.

“Are you doing the job of Daesh and the extremists for them by saying the West hates Islam? I am the West!” he said, using an Arabic pejorative term for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). (Source: RT)

Zarif said the conference has provided an opportunity to highlight the importance of observing the ceasefire.

Zarif also met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, discussing the latest developments in Syria.

He also held a separate meeting with UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura.

Sending humanitarian aid to Syria was discussed in the meeting with de Mistura.

➡ ■ What will be the probable response of Russia to this move?

A: If it is officially described by the U.S. to be a defense system against Iran’s shorter-range ballistic missiles, then it clearly is that regardless of whether any other motive to guard against Russia exists or not. It is a defense shield to deter Iranian missiles and won’t be active unless Iran in the indeterminable future actually launches an attack on a European country or maybe Israel. As a defense system it will of course be a strategic deterrent to Iran. Notably, the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, has specifically said that the installation in Romania is not technically capable of knocking out incoming Russian missiles and that Moscow, in his view, is fully aware of this.

■ What is the future step of NATO to get closer to Russian borders?

A: It has been reported that one idea being discussed is the deployment of small battalions of ground troops in the Baltic nations and Poland. NATO, however, with a small addition of ground troops will not have the capacity to stop a major Russian attack. These battalions, if they are deployed at all, may at best serve as hurdles in the way of a Russian offensive. Any larger scale deployment of troops plus armored brigades appears unlikely. Russia, of course, may take this opportunity as an excuse to boost ‘coun-

ter-measures’, maybe by placing shorter range ballistic missiles near the Romanian border.

■ Don’t you think that NATO will become weak if Britain exits the EU?

A: If the UK exits from the EU, there might be several negative outcomes for the world in economic and strategic terms, in my careful opinion, despite the conviction of Brexit supporters in the UK that it’ll be good for Britain to restore a sovereignty which they see as lost in the EU. But whether it will weaken NATO is difficult to surmise at this point. Britain’s exit will free up Germany and France to

“NATO... with a small addition of ground troops will not have the capacity to stop a major Russian attack.”

Opportunity for Iran to deepen integration into global economy is coming: IMF

➡ • Labor market reforms can be particularly effective in drawing people into the workforce. This approach could be considered in Iran, where unemployment remains high, and demographic pressures will continue to bring large numbers of new entrants to the labor market in the coming years. But it is important that some measures—tax cuts and training programs—that have fiscal implications are able to fit within the broad fiscal framework.

• Another area of structural reform is the policy mix that can help to foster innovation. This can be achieved by removing barriers to competition and foreign investment, reducing the hold of monopolies and special interests, cutting red tape, and increasing investment in education and research. Countries are finding that increased openness to foreign investment can facilitate technology transfers and enhance access to foreign

markets. They are trying to reduce the cost of doing business, address vulnerabilities in the corporate and banking sectors, advance privatization, and foster financial transparency and a level playing field for all investors and entrepreneurs.

Iran faces a unique set of issues related to the reintegration of its banks to the international financial system. The Iranian authorities have made recent progress in the establishing of a framework aimed at combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. This is a critical element for reconnecting with the international financial system. The IMF will continue to support the Iranian authorities’ efforts in this area.

■ IMF looks forward to working with Iran

The opportunity for Iran to deepen integration into global economy is coming. Development that builds on

the economic stabilization already achieved, combined with new reforms, can unleash creativity and entrepreneurship that hold great promise. By continuing to strengthen its economy, Iran can change the lives of its own people, particularly the younger generation, and build a legacy for the future. That is a challenge befitting a country with a heritage like Iran’s.

A more prosperous Iran also can help to put the global economy on a sounder footing. The process of reintegrating with the global economy will not be without its challenges, but the potential rewards are worth the effort.

Iran has been a respected voice of economic cooperation at the IMF for many years. Its voice can only be enhanced by taking the steps now to build strong, sustainable and inclusive growth. The IMF looks forward to working with Iran on this endeavor.

“Resistance Economy” considered main topic of “Intl. Urban Economy Seminar”

ECONOMY **d e s k** Objectives of “Resistance Economy, Action and Implementation” will be materialized when existing potentials and capabilities of the country are taken into serious consideration.

Head of Intl. Urban Economy Seminar Dr. Hossein Mohammad Pourzarandi announced the above statement and said: “Presently, 70 percent of country’s total population live in urban areas, expandable to 80 percent in the next 10 years.”

Urban economy is of the most important topic that should be addressed in an expert-level session, he maintained. Turning to the current year’s motto named after by supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution as “Resistance Economy, Action and Implementation”, he placed special emphasis on the significance of “urban economy” which will

be held in current year with the aim of exchanging views with other countries in this field.

He, who is the Chief Executive of Bank-e Shahr (City Bank), pointed to the other topics of this seminar such as “banking systems, social banking and urban economy” and said: “Given the significance of the said issue, the subject of banking is taken into serious consideration as a driving force of economy in the country.”

It should be noted that Intl. Urban Economy Seminar will be held on Thursday May 19 in Central Building of Bank-e Shahr in the presence of distinguished guests from 15 world countries, senior directors and managers of top municipalities across the country as well as top neighborhoods, focusing on 10 main pivots in the field of urban economy, he ended.

who was involved in major investments in Iran, describing the Iranian workforce as “high on education, and low on training”.

Many participants disputed this view, however, maintaining that US banking sanctions remained the biggest unresolved barrier to the opening of the economy.

Despite the challenges raised, the overall mood remained positive and extremely upbeat, with one senior European business leader speaking at the conference describing the Iran opportunity as the “fastest new market opening I have ever seen”.

JUMP Iraq in the midst of crisis

➡ On the other hand, Muslims had to endure severe psychological pressure during those years of invasion. The people in charge, members of the occupying forces humiliated the Muslims by ill-treatment, massacred them and treated them with disrespect for years; they dealt with them through a manner of atrocity and mercilessness. Thus, many Muslims lost any sanity in their minds and have turned into killing machines, exacerbated further with a conceptual misunderstanding of Islam which is divorced from the authentic teachings of the Qur’an. The country has turned into a complete disaster which it cannot recover from even now. What we witnessed afterwards was the reaction to the disgrace the Muslims were exposed to. The occupational forces were cutting their fingers or ears, drying them and taking them to America and making them necklaces. The disclosure of the Abu Ghraib prison and the inconceivable oppression Muslims were exposed to are still fresh in our minds. They were maltreated beyond belief and were subjected to all sorts of severe torture. I’m sure most of you remember the horrible footage of Linnie England’s pulling the leash of an Iraqi prisoner around his neck. Regretfully, this video was only one small clue of the actual tortures experienced there.

Colonel Janis Karpinski, the former head of Abu Ghraib, stated that the prison was run by military intelligence and all those abuses implied on Iraqi prisoners were in compliance with the U.S. official policy and that CIA agents participated in interrogations. Such cruelty certainly not only affected the victims but also those in charge of implementing these brutalities. With regards to this, it is strikingly important to see the remarks of Eric Fair, one of the interrogators in 2004: “I am not [someone to be proud of]. I was an interrogator at Abu Ghraib. I tortured.” Haunted by his memories, Fair also reminded the following in terms of the torture techniques applied in that notorious prison: “[T]he Senate released its torture report. Many people were surprised by what it contained: accounts of waterboarding far more frequent than what had previously been reported, weeklong sleep deprivation, a horrific and humiliating procedure.” I’m not surprised. I assure you there is more; much remains redacted. Most Americans haven’t read the report. Most never will. But it stands as a permanent reminder of the country we once were.”

I encountered thousands of photos related to the tortures in Abu Ghraib all over Facebook accounts of Muslim youth. Either their brothers or their fathers were tortured, or their wives and sisters were raped. Misery lies all over the place in the Islamic world and this pain made some young Muslims aggressive, so much that they became radicalized and also resorted to recruiting others to radical groups to take their revenge. Moreover, many analysts believe the rise of ISIS was the repercussion of the U.S. invasion. Consequently, the Middle East has become a boiling cauldron. However, it is the responsibility of Muslims not to fall into this trap and be forgiving as a command of God and continue to form a peaceful unity to protect the entire Islamic world. Such unity would be a deterrent and the rest of the world would then think twice about whether to harm even one single Muslim. This would also put an end to radicalism and pave the way for a global peace.

These days Iraqis in deep political, economic, and military crisis. The sole reason for this predicament is not the weak administration or even corruption. There are many other factors such as the dramatic plunge in oil prices, internal migration, etc. Iraq has an economy largely dependent on oil. The decline in oil revenues is not only a result of the decrease in prices but also from the serious damage to important oil pipelines and their infrastructures. As a result, crude oil production does not exceed 4.5 million barrels per day. In terms of politics, the government is in urgent need of radical reforms to make the government functional. This cannot be done overnight due to some sectarian conflicts and Sadr’s peaceful protests which some consider as a “white coup-d’etat.” All are indications that some actions need to be taken at once. The primary action would be to abolish the sectarian quota system and form a transition government that gives voice to Sunnis, Shias and Kurds in an equal respect. It would be a good step for Abadi to take the call of Sadr and collaborate with him as they both denounced the sectarian quota system. Additionally, two of its neighbors, Turkey and Iran are always ready to support to fix Iraq’s defective government systems, while at the same time raised concerns over sectarian divisions and its effects in the Islamic world. In conjunction with this, Iran’s spokesperson for Foreign Ministry, Hossein Jaber Ansari, has already expressed Iran’s readiness to use its entire network in line with paving the way for Iraqi talks. After this transition government starts to function in healthy way by embracing all the sects within, they can then call for free and fair elections in Iraq. Only when a functional, corrupt-free government is formed with members represented equally from all ethnic and religious groups, then international investors will feel at ease and begin investing to make the country flourish economically.

IKCO to Return to Belarus

ECONOMY **d e s k** Leading Iranian vehicle manufacturer Iran Khodro Company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Belarusian car assembly company Unison.

The MoU is part of IKCO’s strategy to expand its export markets. It came after Unison expressed its interest in restoring ties with IKCO. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Commission in Tehran. Given the membership of Belarus in the Eurasian Customs Union, the MoU is of great importance for IKCO and can help it to market its products in the region at competitive prices.

With earning the required certificates and standards for exporting vehicles to the member states of the Eurasian Customs Union as well as restoring its cooperation with Unison, IKCO can regain its share of CIS markets in the near future.

Unison is among the main car assembly companies in Belarus which has been involved in assembling IKCO products in the country. IKCO established its site in Belarus’s capital Minsk back in 2006 with the partnership of Unison. Now the Iranian car company is intended to take advantage of the site as a regional hub for exporting its vehicles to the CIS markets.

BSI Managing Director: Activists in Public Relations and Communications Dept. shouldering great responsibilities

ECONOMY **d e s k** 16, which marks “National Public Relations and Communications Day”, Chief Executive of Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) Esmaeil Lalehghani congratulated the auspicious occasion to the industrious activists and said: “Managers of Public Relations Department burden the sensitive and great responsibilities at any organization.”

Turning to the significance of special status of public relations in any organization, he said: “Considering the ever increasing developments in the field of technologies, concerned activists should make their utmost efforts to take advantage of state-of-the-art technical know-how for invigoration of pertinent activities.”

Establishing interaction with media circles and making effort to boost synergy especially in economic issues at the

current condition is of paramount importance to clarify the relevant services, he maintained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior official of the bank appreciated and extolled unflinching endeavors of activists of public relations and media companions in dissemination of achievements of banking system of country especially Bank Saderat Iran (BSI). In the end, Chief Executive of Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) Esmaeil Lalehghani diagrammed a rosy and bright future for banking system of the country under the auspices and sublime recommendations of supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution in current year named after “Resistance Economy, Action and Implementation” and advised managers of Public Relations Department to take effective steps in line with materializing objectives of resistance economy in the country.

Europe’s business leaders meet to discuss Iran entry strategy

ECONOMY **d e s k** Attracting and retaining employees with the right skills a key challenge facing foreign companies in Iran

As the race to enter the newly opened Iran market gains momentum, European multi-nationals are starting to grapple with the practical realities of setting up and operating profitably in the country, according to speakers attending a major Iran business conference held in Zurich. The 3rd Europe-Iran Forum, attended by over 400 senior executives, heard from the leadership of major European firms as well as Iranian state-owned

and private sector firms. The speakers alluded to the practical challenges faced as Iran re-enters the global economy, notably in the area of human capital. “When we started our business 13 years ago, 80 percent of our clients were multinational companies, but now most left Iran due to sanctions,” said Aseyeh Hatami, founder and CEO of IranTalent.com, the largest online recruitment firm in Iran. Hatami suggested that to succeed in Iran, international firms have no choice but to invest heavily in training, skills transfers and capacity building.

Jeroen van der Veer, former CEO of Royal Dutch Shell

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them. *Desmond Tutu*

LEARN ENGLISH

A Publicity Stunt

Hank: What's that for?
Svetlana: This **costume**? I'm planning a **publicity stunt** to get our store more business.
Hank: You think that **dressing up** as a giant banana will get our store more business?
Svetlana: We need to get **media coverage** for the **grand opening** of our store and attract as much attention as possible. I'll be **on hand** to give **sound bites** and organize **photo ops**.
Hank: How does a giant banana **tie into** our store?
Svetlana: It doesn't directly, but trust me, it'll get noticed.
Hank: I was thinking of a traditional **marketing campaign**, more **along the lines of** holding a **contest** or a **giveaway**. And I don't see how a giant banana is going to get media attention.
Svetlana: The person in the giant banana costume will **sky-dive** into the parking lot of the store.
Hank: What idiot have you convinced to do that?
Svetlana: Well, that's actually why I'm here...

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

costume: a set of clothes worn by an actor or by someone to make them look like something such as an animal, famous person etc.
publicity stunt: a planned event designed to attract the public's attention to the event's organizers or their cause
dress up: to wear special clothes for fun, or to put special clothes on someone
media coverage: when a subject or event is reported on television or radio, or in newspapers
grand: big and very impressive
opening: the time when a new building, road etc. is used for the first time, or when a public event begins, especially when it involves a special ceremony
on hand: close by and ready when needed
sound bite: a very short part of a speech or statement, especially one made by a politician, that is broadcast on a radio or television news program
photo ops: informal term for photo opportunity, occasion on which famous people pose for photographers by arrangement
tie into: connect
marketing campaign: a coordinated series of steps that can include promotion of a product through different mediums (television, radio, print, online) using a variety of different types of advertisements
along the lines of: similar to something else
contest: a competition or a situation in which two or more people or groups are competing with each other
giveaway: something that is given away free, especially something that a shop gives you when you buy a product
skydive: the sport of jumping from a plane and falling through the sky before opening a parachute

QUIZ OF THE DAY

155) What does the idiom mean?
Turn a deaf ear.
a) turn away from something
b) do not look at the ear
c) ignore a request from someone
(Quiz No. 154 answer: b)

PHRASAL VERB

Sort out

■ **Meaning**: organize, resolve a problem
■ **For example**: Students should sort out their books at the end of the school year.

ENGLISH PROVERB

(The) early bird catches the worm

■ **Explanation**: act early, or before anyone else, if you want to have an advantage or be successful



Sustainable development, peace attainable only through innovation, says Ebtekar

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Sustainable development and peace are attainable only through spurring innovation and novelty, the chief of Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) said on Tuesday.

Masoumeh Ebtekar made the remarks during a speech in the Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) in Seoul, South Korea, IRNA news agency reported.

"Iran has always, before and after the nuclear deal, focused on innovation and succeeded in achieving clean sources of energy and regarding environmental challenges threatening Iran we have always tried to move towards sustainable development by using such sources of energy," she added.

Sad to say, extremism, wars, and terrorism have inflicted damages upon the environment which is a major obstacle in the path of restoring the natural ecosystem, she lamented.

Mentioning the climate change and



other environmental challenges she emphasized the importance of international

cooperation and interactions.

Media, political leaders, governments

Urologic robotic surgery tested on animal in Iran appears to be promising



SOCIETY TEHRAN — Urologic robotic surgery, which has been tested on an animal to remove its gallbladder in Iran, appears to be promising, said Nasser Simforoosh, urologist.

Robot-assisted surgery is almost common in the field of urology worldwide and Iranian scientist just recently succeeded in building such robots in Sharif University of Technology, Simforoosh explained.

"These assisting robots used to be exclusively produced in the U.S. and due to the imposed sanctions on Iran we were not able to benefit such technology in our country," he noted.

"We are going to screen a film of these domestically produced robots while performing a surgery in the 8th Iranian Endourology and UroLaparoscopy Congress 2016," he highlighted.

Simforoosh who is also the director of

the aforementioned congress went on to say that specialists from Europe, America and Asia will attend the congress too.

"Currently more than 100 surgeons are practicing as urologist in Iran and perform minimally invasive surgeries nationwide and that's what makes us one of the leading countries in this field in the region," he highlighted.

He also pointed that surgeons from neighboring countries also apply for taking training courses in Iran in the field of urology as well.

Iran is also a pioneer in kidney donation and mini-laparoscopic surgeries in the world as 50 out of 1,500 laparoscopic surgeries are done as mini-laparoscopic instead of the conventional laparoscopic surgeries, he added.

The 8th Iranian Endourology and UroLaparoscopy Congress 2016 is scheduled to be held on May 18 to 20.

Iran to join insulin producers club in four years



A view shows an insulin production line at Novo Nordisk's plant in Kalundborg November 4, 2013.

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran will join the five countries producing insulin once the Pars Novo Nordisk pharmaceutical company comes on stream in the next four years, said the vice president and general manager of Novo Nordisk, a Danish multinational pharmaceutical company and the world's top insulin supplier.

Cem Ozenc made the remarks in an international conference on foreign investment here on Sunday.

After the construction of the Pars Novo Nordisk in Iran, the country can supply its product both to the domestic market and to Western Asia, Mehr news agency quoted Ozenc as saying.

Pars Novo Nordisk is a pharmaceutical company that is mainly aim-

ing at producing insulin and will be built in Iran by the 70 million-euro investment of Novo Nordisk.

He stated that by time the company gets off the ground 100 million euros will be saved annually instead of being spent on importing medications to the country.

He further explained that the Danish company has maintained a staff of around 130 in Iran through the sanctions era and it now plans to more than double that, by adding 160 additional staff.

He highlighted that Pars Novo Nordisk has opened its office in Iran since 2006 and is the only international pharmaceutical company that has been working in Iran even through the sanctions era for almost 10 year.

Sand storm buries 16 villages in southeastern Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — 16 villages in Rigan, southeastern province of Kerman, were buried in sand and became completely deserted, IRIB reported.

Massive sand influx and consistent sand storms led to the complete disappearance of the villages under piles of sand, the Rigan governor, Amin Baqeri said.

Agriculture and livestock are totally ruined in this area and it suffered a loss of 320 billion rials (nearly \$9 million), Baqeri added.

The continuance of sand influx has already endangered 80 other villages and if not stopped timely they are subjected to be deserted too, the governor warned.

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ج

Iran, Japan discuss promoting medical co-op

Iran and Japan explored ways to boost medical cooperation, Mehr news agency reported. Equipping and constructing hospitals, initiating postgraduate exchange programs, and boosting pharmaceutical cooperation are of the most important fields the two countries can focus on, Iran's Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi said.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of a meeting with the chairperson of the Nippon Foundation Yohei Sasakawa in Tehran on Monday.

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

Mentioning Iran's strong health network the minister noted that all Iranian are provided with primary healthcare coverage and about 96 percent of the medications are being produced domestically.

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

همکاری ایران و ژاپن در ساخت بیمارستان و دارو

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر ایران و ژاپن راه های گسترش همکاری های پزشکی میان دو کشور را بررسی کردند. حسن قاضی زاده هاشمی وزیر بهداشت، مهمترین حوزه های همکاری متقابل دو کشور ایران و ژاپن را ساخت و تجهیز بیمارستان ها، تبادل دانشجو در مقطع PHD، و افزایش همکاری ها در حوزه دارو عنوان کرد.

وی روز دوشنبه در دیدار رئیس بنیاد صلح ساساکاوا ژاپن همچنین از سازمان های مردم نهادی که فارغ هر گونه باور سیاسی و مذهبی هستند و تنها با مقاصد انسان دوستانه فعالیت میکنند تقدیر کرد.

هاشمی با بیان اینکه در ایران شبکه بهداشت و درمانی قوی وجود دارد اظهارداشت: تمام ایرانیان تحت پوشش خدمات اولیه سلامت هستند و بیش از ۹۶ درصد از داروی مصرفی کشور ما نیز در داخل تولید می شود.

وی ادامه داد: علاوه بر عدم نیاز بیماران به خارج از کشور برای درمان، حتی توانسته ایم به بیماران خارجی از کشورهایی مانند آذربایجان، عراق و کویت خدمات درمانی ارائه دهیم.

Iranian wrestlers to meet USA in Times Square

SPORTS Team Iran takes on USA in six men's freestyle matches at the 2016 Beat the Streets "United In the Square" international wrestling event, which will be held in historic Times Square.

The competition will be taking place at 42nd Street in Times Square.

"I couldn't be more excited. We have Iran and the USA battling for wrestling supremacy in Times Square; united in the idea that sports can bring change in young men and women and even in countries sometimes. It's going to be pretty cool. An added plus is that Iran has the loudest and most passionate wrestling fans in the world. Don't miss it," said Beat the Streets Chairman of the Board Mike Novogratz, the founder of these Gala competitions.

It will be the second time that Iran has been featured as part of the Beat the Streets Gala competition.

In 2013, the event dubbed "The Rumble on the Rails," was hosted in historic Grand Central Terminal and featured dual meets between Team USA, Russia and Iran.

Playing an important role in the international Keep Olympic Wrestling effort, this historic wrestling event gained international media coverage and helped wrestling retain its status on the Olympic Games program.

■ Beat the Streets Matchups

Men's freestyle 74 kg – Jordan Burroughs (USA) vs. Peyman Yarahmadi (Iran)

Men's freestyle 86 kg – J'Den Cox (USA) vs. Meisam Mostafa Joukar (Iran)

Junior men's freestyle 55 kg– Daton Fix (USA) vs. Kheyrollah Ghahramani (Iran)

Junior men's freestyle 60 kg– Mitchell McKee (USA) vs. Peyman Biabani (Iran)

Junior men's freestyle 74 kg – Mark Hall (USA) vs. Ahmad Bazrighaleh (Iran)

Junior men's freestyle 84 kg– Zahid Valencia (USA) vs. Mojtaba Goleji (Iran)



Sepahan set to hire IPL winner coach Veisi

SPORTS Esteghlal Khuzestan head coach Abdollah Veisi is on the verge of signing a contract with Sepahan football club, according to the local media.

Veisi, who led Esteghlal Khuzestan to the 2015-16 Iran Professional League title, stated that he has received a couple of offers but he is close to Sepahan.

Sepahan who won the title last season had a poor performance this year and finished in 11th place.

"I had a meeting with Sepahan officials and we came to an agreement but we have to wait and see

what happens. After winning the IPL title I would like to win the AFC Champions League title, if I join Sepahan I want to prepare a great team who could win the ACL in two years," Veisi said.

Esteghlal Khuzestan narrowly escaped relegation last year.

Veisi built a team who won the league title for the first time in its history.

Esteghlal Khuzestan dubbed the Iranian Leicester City who won the English Premier League this season for the first time in history.

Naft Tehran keeper Beiranvand joins Persepolis

Naft Tehran international goalkeeper has joined Persepolis on Monday on a two-year contract.

The Iran Professional League (IPL) runner-up has signed the 24-year-old for an undisclosed fee.

Beiranvand, who started his goal-keeping career with Naft Tehran as a kid, has made four appearances for Iran national football team as well.

He made his debut in a friendly match against Iraq on 4 January 2015, just before the 2015 AFC Asian Cup.

fore the 2015 AFC Asian Cup.

"I am happy to join Persepolis and I think it eases my way to play for Team Melli. I like to stay in Persepolis for many years," he added.

(Source: Tasnim)



Carlo Ancelotti: Gareth Bale went behind my back to complain to Real Madrid president

Carlo Ancelotti has revealed that Gareth Bale asked to play in a central position during the Italian's final season in charge at Real Madrid - and went behind his back to do so.

Writing in his book 'Quiet leadership: Winning Hearts, Minds and Matches' the new Bayern Munich boss reveals that the Welshman's agent went behind his back to complain to president Florentino Perez during the 2014-15 season.

The relationship between player and manager deteriorated throughout the campaign as the 26-year-old failed to hit the heights of his debut season in La Liga, when he scored crucial goals in the finals of the Champions League and Copa del Rey.

"One morning in March I received a phone call from the Madrid general director saying that the president wanted to speak with me at the end of training that day. This was



very unusual. When I visited the president, he told me that Bale's agent had been to his office to speak about the 'Bale situation,' Ancelotti writes in his book 'Quiet Leadership: Winning Hearts, Minds and Matches'.

"In January, Bale's agent had been saying things and perhaps felt his position was strong because he had already spoken with the president. Now he was telling the president that Bale was unhappy in his position. He wanted to play more centrally.

"Bale had fantastic world-class qualities and all that I was trying to do was help him understand his core strengths so he could fulfil his potential and by the way, that I was more qualified than his agent or the president to help him with that.

"I told the president that I would speak with Bale myself the next day, which I did after training. I told him 'I know that your agent spoke to the president. Why didn't you come to speak with me about what you want?' He said 'Yes, OK, no problem:'"

(Source: EuroSport)

Loew opts for youth in German preliminary Euro 2016 squad

Germany coach Joachim Loew has named four talented youngsters, including three uncapped players, in his preliminary 27-man squad for Euro 2016.

Versatile midfielder Joshua Kimmich, striker Leroy Sane, Julian Weigl - another midfielder - and wide man Julian Brandt were all included when Loew announced his provisional squad on Tuesday.

Sane, 20, is the only one of the quartet to have earned a senior cap, making his national debut as a substitute against France in November 2015. He scored eight times this season and his explosive speed and skills were rare bright spots in Schalke's otherwise disappointing season.

Twenty-one-year-old Kimmich, who played at both centre back and as a holding midfielder for champions Bayern Munich, earned repeated praise from his coach, Pep Guardiola, during his first season at the club.

Borussia Dortmund's Julian Weigl enjoyed a superb Bundesliga debut season



as his club finished second, while fellow 20-year-old Julian Brandt's nine goals earned Bayer Leverkusen third spot.

Injured captain Bastian Schweinsteiger, who is racing to be fit for the tournament in France, was also included in Loew's provisional list.

The final squad will be announced later this month.

Germany face Ukraine, Poland and Northern Ireland in Group C of the competition, starting on June 10.

(Source: Reuters)

Costa, Mata, Torres left out of provisional Spain squad for Euro 2016

Chelsea striker Diego Costa is among a string of high-profile names left out of Spain's provisional squad for Euro 2016.

Costa, who scored 16 goals in 41 appearances for Chelsea this season, last played for Spain in the 2-0 friendly win over England in November last year, but has lost his place in Vicente del Bosque's initial 25-man squad for the tournament in France with Athletic Bilbao's Ariz Aduriz instead earning a call.

Costa missed Chelsea's final two Premier League games against Liverpool and Leicester with a hamstring injury and could still earn a call if he proves his fitness ahead of the May 31 deadline.

Manchester United midfielder Juan Mata has also missed out despite playing in Spain's last six internationals, but Costa's Chelsea team-mates Cesc Fabregas, Pedro and Cesar Azpilicueta are included in a squad which must be trimmed to 23 players at the end of the month.

United keeper David de Gea and



Manchester City's David Silva have been named, but Arsenal midfielder Santi Cazorla, who made his first appearance since the end of November in Sunday's 4-0 win over Aston Villa after a long-term injury, has been omitted.

Former Chelsea and Liverpool striker Fernando Torres has also been unable to force his way into the squad, despite an impressive end to the season with Atletico Madrid.

Holders Spain are in Group D, along with Croatia, Czech Republic and Turkey.

(Source: SkySports)

FOOTBALL

Neymar could lose Brazil captaincy as Dunga hints at change

Brazil coach Dunga has suggested he could take the national captaincy from Neymar to allow the Barcelona forward to focus more on performing at his best on the pitch.

Neymar has been Brazil's leading star for some time and Pele recently told ESPN FC that the 24-year-old is the only player in the current squad who has the traditional flair known as "ginga."

He was named captain in September 2014, after the disappointment of their shock 7-1 World Cup semifinal defeat to Germany in the forward's absence, and Dunga said at the time: "We have to have a strong group so that Neymar can grow more each day, as a player, as a person, being an example to children."

However, the decision failed to pay dividends at the 2015 Copa America, when Neymar was sent off in a group-stage defeat to Colombia and subsequently hit with a four-match ban that ruled him out of the remainder of the tournament.

Speaking to SporTV, Dunga appeared to suggest that the captaincy had made Neymar more likely to take too much responsibility on the field and hold possession too long.

"I am going to change some things, and I must speak with Neymar," Dunga said. "His way of playing and dribbling, which is so liked in football, does take him into collisions. It is the same at Barcelona. It's not about the armband. At first I thought making him captain would give him more security and make him feel more important."

He added: "To give Neymar the armband or not is the easiest thing. We will speak with Neymar."

"At Barcelona he is not captain and the same happens, so it is not about the armband, but all that is around him is much bigger than normal. I don't mean to say that there have not been mistakes sometimes, and we have spoken with him to reach a common place that is good for him, the national team and Barcelona, but principally thinking about Brazil and Neymar"

Neymar will sit out the 2016 Copa America due to his participation in the Olympics later this summer.

(Source: SoccerNet)

IIOC says 31 athletes could miss Rio after positive Beijing drugs re-tests

Thirty one athletes from six sports could be banned from this year's Rio Olympics after failing dope tests when 454 samples were reexamined from the 2008 Beijing Games, the International Olympic Committee said on Tuesday.

The IOC also said it would start re-testing Sochi 2014 winter Games samples after allegations of tarnished samples were made last week by Russia's former top anti-doping scientist. Some 250 samples from the London Games will also be reexamined.

In an effort to crack down on cheats during the Olympics, the IOC said this was targeted re-testing on athletes likely to be at the Rio Games starting on Aug. 5, and those found to have tested positive would not compete.

An IOC official told Reuters no names would be made public at this stage until athletes had been informed and a second sample, or B-sample, tested as well.

"The aim is to stop any drugs cheats coming to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro," the IOC said. "The (IOC) Executive Board agreed unanimously to initiate proceedings immediately, with the 12 National Olympic Committees concerned informed in the coming days."

The re-tests, a regular procedure by the IOC as it looks to use newer methods or look for new substances, were carried out in conjunction with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and international federations.

The IOC said it had also called on WADA to launch a "fully fledged investigation" into allegations that testing during the Sochi 2014 winter Olympics by the on-site accredited laboratory had been subverted.

The former head of Russia's anti-doping agency Grigory Rodchenkov said last week that the Sochi lab had tampered with samples.

Russia is at the heart of the biggest drugs scandal in years, with the country's track and field athletes currently suspended and the Rio Games hopes in doubt, and their drugs testing lab and anti-doping agency undergoing complete overhaul.

"All these measures are a powerful strike against the cheats we do not allow to win. They show once again that dopers have no place to hide," said IOC President Thomas Bach.

"The re-tests from Beijing and London and the measures we are taking following the worrying allegations against the laboratory in Sochi are another major step to protect the clean athletes, irrespective of any sport or any nation."

Apart from tarnishing any competition, doping has also damaged the Olympics' reputation, with the IOC regularly stripping athletes of their medals, sometimes years after they competed, due to positive drugs tests.

"By stopping so many doped athletes from participating in Rio we are showing once more our determination to protect the integrity of the Olympic competitions, including the Rio anti-doping laboratory, so that the Olympic magic can unfold in Rio de Janeiro," Bach said.

The Rio Games run from Aug. 5-21.

(Source: Reuters)



Poem of the day

What though 'tis fair to view, this form of man,
I know not why the heavenly Artizan
Hath set these tulip cheeks and cypress forms
To deck the mournful halls of earth's divan.

Khayyam

Prayer Times

Noon:13:01 Evening: 20:25 Dawn: 4:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:56 (tomorrow)

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NEWS

Shahnameh Exhibition underway at Tehran gallery

T A R T **TEHRAN** — The Shahnameh Exhibition has brought together a number of living artists whose artworks have been inspired by Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece Shahnameh in Tehran's Laleh Gallery.

"Each participating artist has worked on the Shahanmeh through his/her personal style of work. Some have focused on Ferdowsi himself; some have concentrated on the stories in the Shahnameh," gallery director Amir-Hossein Salabi said in a press release published on Tuesday.

"The Shahnameh itself enjoys visual images hidden in the stories, making them useful for artists in their productions," he added.

"We believe the artists selected for this exhibit have lived with the Shahnameh, they have studied the book and have a deep understanding of the masterpiece," he noted.

Farah Osuli, Reza Bangiz, Saeed Khazai and Behzad Shishegaran are among the participating artists showcasing their paintings, sculptures and digital artworks.

The exhibit will be running until May 25 at the gallery located at the Laleh Park, on North Kargar St.

Kering, Cannes honor Iran's Ida Panahandeh

T A R T **TEHRAN** — Kering, a leading world company for apparel and accessories, and the Cannes Film Festival honored Iranian filmmaker Ida Panahandeh with the Women in Motion young talent award on Sunday.

The award is part of the Women in Motion program, which Cannes and Kering launched in 2015 to highlight

women's contribution to cinema.

The organizers also presented the award to filmmakers Gaya Jiji from Syria and Leyla Bouzid from Tunisia.

Panahandeh's widely-acclaimed social drama "Nahid" starring Sareh Bayay was also honored in the Un Certain Regard at the 68th Cannes Film Festival in 2015.



Play to explore love story between Afghan migrant, Iranian gypsy

T A R T **TEHRAN** — Director/actor Ayyub d e s k Aqakhani plans to stage a play about a love story between an Afghan migrant and an Iranian gypsy woman.

"Solar Eclipse" will be performed at the Qashqai Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex for a month from June 5, he informed the Persian service of MNA on Monday.

In "Solar Eclipse", a romance blooms between Meymand, a young Afghan who fled his native Afghanistan, and Sorayya, the daughter of an Iranian gypsy family.

Theatergoers gave a warm reception to play once in 2010, when Aqakhani and his troupe performed it at the same theater.



Hamidreza Azarang acts in a scene from "Solar Eclipse" at the Qashqai Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex in 2010. (Cinemapress.ir/Parizad Gudarzi)

"The play will go on stage with the same cast, i.e. Hamidreza Azarang, Nasim Adabi and myself," he said.

"In fact, it will be recollection of the memories of a play that we liked," he added.

Aqakhani said that the play has a deep humanistic view on Afghan migrants in Iran and added, "I want to evoke sympathy from the audience for Afghan migrants and the sad fate that awaited them."

He also said that his decision to stage the play resulted from feelings of sympathy for the family of Setayesh Qoreishi, a six-year-old girl, who was raped and killed, allegedly by a teenage Iranian neighbor, in the Tehran suburb of Varamin in April.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Turkmenistan, Iran culture ministers meet in Tehran

T A R T **TEHRAN** — Minister of Culture of Turkmenistan Annageldi Garajayev met with his Iranian counterpart Ali Jannati at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance on Tuesday.

The two held talks on expansion of cultural relations, and emphasized holding programs to promote the art and culture of the two countries.

Jannati called the meetings of Iranian and Turkmen officials a good sign of the close relations between the two nations. Annageldi Garajayev hoped for more cooperation between the two countries.

On Monday, Minister Garajayev attended the opening ceremony of Turkmenistan's Cultural Days, which opened at Tehran's Milad Tower.

The event running until May 20 offers a wide range of programs introducing the art and culture of Turkmenistan including an exhibition of handicrafts, paintings, live music performances and film screening sessions.



New director selected for Iranian Theater Forum

T A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian actor Asghar d e s k Hemmat has been selected as the new managing director of the Iranian Theater Forum, the Persian media reported on Monday.

The forum's Board of Directors picked Hemmat after accepting the resignation of former director Iraj Raad who held the position for about 15 years.

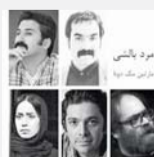


Tehran center hangs works by intl. cartoonists

T A R T **TEHRAN** — Iran's House of Cartoon is playing host to an exhibition of cartoons by 40 renowned artists from across the world.

Among the cartoonists are Vladimir Kazanevsky from Ukraine, Vladimir Abroyan from Armenia, Stefan Despodov from Bulgaria, Raed Khalil from Syria, Pavel Constantin from Romania, Paolo Dalponte from Italy, Oleg Dergachov from Canada, Necdet Yilmaz from the U.S., Dachuan Xia from China, and Agim Sulaj from Albania.

The exhibition opened to public Tuesday and will run until May 24.



"Pillowman" to raise funds for children with cancer

T A R T **TEHRAN** — Director Sanaz d e s k Bayan plans to stage a reading performance of Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's "The Pillowman" at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex on May 21 to raise funds for children suffering from cancer.

The performance will be held by a cast composed of Sajjad Afsharian, Vahid Aqapour, Amin Tabatabai, Hooman Kiai, and Ayeh Kianpur.

"The Pillowman" tells the story of a writer who is interrogated about her short stories and their similarities to a number of child murders occurring in his town.

PICTURE OF THE DAY

IRNA/Morteza Aminorroayai



A sculptor creates a bust of Omar Khayyam Neyshaburi (1048-1131) in the courtyard of his tomb in Neyshabur on May 17, 2016 to celebrate Khayyam National Day. The Persian mathematician, astronomer, and poet is chiefly known to English-speaking readers through the translation of a collection of his quatrains in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (1859) by the English writer Edward FitzGerald.

Khayyam National Day observed in Neyshabur

T A R T **TEHRAN** — A number of Persian scholars, poets and officials gathered at the mausoleum of Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) in Neyshabur on Tuesday to mark the national day of the great Iranian poet.

Experts on Khayyam including Hossein Sadeqi, Alireza Fuladi, Kavus Hassanli, Nasrollah Purjavadi and Abdollah Qanavat attended the seminar

held at the University of Neyshabur to review works by the poet, Persian media reported on Tuesday.

Prominent calligrapher Gholamhossein Amirkhani and filmmaker Abolfazl Jalili were honored at the ceremony later, while a book written by music composer and santur virtuoso Esmail Tehrani was also unveiled.

Also on the same day, the officials inaugurated the newly-established Neyshabur Museum of Archaeology. The

tomb of Khayyam also hosted a workshop on paintings, graphic designs and sculptures.

Khayyam, a Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet, was renowned in his own country and in his own lifetime for his scientific achievements, but is chiefly known to English-speaking readers through the translation by the English writer Edward Fitzgerald of a collection of his Rubaiyat ("quatrains") in "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" (1859).



Danish Arts and Cinema Corner to screen "Oblivion Season"

T A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian d e s k director Abbas Raifei's "Oblivion Season" is set to go on screen at the Arts and Cinema Corner of the 4th Women Deliver Global Conference, which opened in Copenhagen, Denmark on Monday.

The acclaimed social drama starring Sareh Bayat is about a woman who starts a new life by marrying her lover but leaving the shadow of her dark past turns out not to be as easy as it had seemed before.

"Oblivion Season" has been named best film at several international festivals such as the 16th Asiatica Film Mediale held in Rome last November, the Universal Film Festival in Kansas City last September, and the Brasov International Film Festival and Market in Romania last September.

The conference, which seeks to highlight maternal issues, gender equality, economic empowerment, health care and education, runs until May 19.

New director of IRIB says change in news programs high on agenda



"We will support light industries in order to help return closed factories to work, and also will urge people to buy Iranian goods in order to raise economic changes nationwide," he added.

Ali-Asgari was appointed as the new director of IRIB last Sunday after Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei accepted the resignation of former director Mohammad

Sarafraz, who held the position since November 2014.

Based on the Constitution of Iran, the managing director of IRIB is selected by the Leader.

"We also have plans to promote the national and resistance economy to better fulfill the Leader's wishes and advice," Ali-Asgari stated.

He said that he has no urgent plans to replace his assistants and executives of the IRIB.