

TEHRAN TIMES



Victory over China boosted our confidence, Iran libero Zarif says

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Yildirim announces Turkey's new cabinet

Ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) leader Binali Yildirim has announced the new cabinet of Turkey's 65th government, after he was given the mandate to form a new government by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The new cabinet will hold its first meeting at the presidential palace in Ankara on May 25 under President Erdogan.

The deputy prime ministers have been named as Nurettin Canikli, Mehmet Simsek, Tugrul Turkes, Veysi Kaynak and Numan Kurtulmus.

Yalcin Akdogan, who held the deputy prime minister's post in Davutoglu's cabinet and who was closely involved in the collapsed Kurdish peace process, is not included in the new list. The economy administration has been mostly left unchanged, with Simsek expected to resume his duties overseeing the economy.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Energy Minister Berat Albayrak and Justice Minister Bekir Bozdogan have all resumed their posts.

Omer Celik has been appointed as the EU minister, replacing Volkan Bozkir.

Nihat Zeybekci has been appointed as the new economy minister, replacing Mustafa Elitas. →9

Ayatollah Jannati elected Assembly of Experts chief

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati was elected on Tuesday as chairman of the new Assembly of Experts, securing 51 votes.

Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini and Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi also ran for the post, garnering 21 and 13 votes, respectively.

The 88-member body changes chairman

every two years. Also, Ayatollah Mohammad-Ali Movahedi Kermani, a Friday prayer leader of Tehran, was elected as the first deputy chief of the assembly and Ayatollah Hashemi Shahroudi as the second.



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Iran's inflation to drop to single-digit in summer: central banker

ECONOMY TEHRAN — "Iran d e s k will experience a single-digit inflation rate this summer," Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Valiollah Seif said in the 26th Conference on Monetary and Exchange Policies on Tuesday.

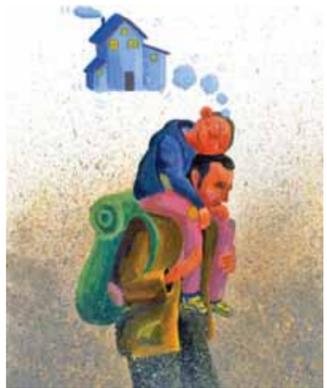
IRNA quoted the senior banking official, "by applying effective monetary policies, the government has been successful to curtail the rampant inflation rate from 40 percent in Iranian calendar year 1392 (March 2013-2014) to 11.2 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (which started on March 20, 2016)."

Meanwhile, the Statistical Center of Iran, on Monday, announced that the inflation rate for the 12-month period ended in the last day of the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht (May 20) compared to the same period in the previous year hit 10.2 percent.

Admitting that the one-digit inflation would provide investors with a stable and secure environment, Seif highlighted that "curbing price oscillations is the important monetary policy of the incumbent administration and to hit this target it is crucial to pay a specific attention to domestic economic growth and balancing the external sector." →4

Iranian cartoonist tops at Luxembourgian contest

ART TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k cartoonist Mohammad Habibi has won first prize at the 9th International Contest of Caricature and Cartoon in Vianden, Luxembourg.



This cartoon by Iranian artist Mohammad Habibi won first prize at the 9th International Contest of Caricature and Cartoon in Vianden, Luxembourg.

The theme of the contest was "My Home Is My Castle", which focused on refugees in the world. Angel Boligan from Mexico and Klaus Pitter Austria received the second and third prizes. The winning works and a selection of entries are currently on display at the Museum of Caricature and Cartoon in Vianden in an exhibition, which runs until May 29.

Great powers seeking to court Iran as a valuable partner: expert

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — In view of distrust between major powers Iran is economically and geographically in a position to improve its influence in the world, a political scholar says.

"Iran is well positioned to improve its influence with all of the great powers as they grow more mistrustful of one another," Robert R. Bianchi, professor of Shanghai International Studies University, tells the Tehran Times.

Bianchi says, "Iran's economic and geographic importance makes it a valuable partner that American, European, Russian, and Chinese leaders are eager to win over."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ What is the purpose of United States' decision to establish the missile defense shield in Romania? Can we see this event as NATO's expansion into the East?

A: The U.S. missile defense base in Romania is part of the more intense arm wrestling between Washington and Moscow in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Both sides are flexing their muscles and jostling for posi-

tion. Putin is reasserting Russian power and Obama is pushing back, but neither wants to threaten the mutual nuclear deterrence that undergirds their relationship. Russia and the U.S. will accuse one another of aggressive intentions and grasp every opportunity to upgrade their fighting abilities. Putin will force Obama to invest greater resources in defending Europe and the Middle East instead of shifting his attention to the East Asian-Pacific theater.

■ What will be the impact of the defense shield on Iranian security?

A: These developments provide China a double benefit—stalling the American return to the Pacific and making Russia more

"The U.S. missile defense base in Romania is part of the more intense arm wrestling between Washington and Moscow in Eastern Europe and the Middle East."

dependent on Beijing's assistance to break Western economic sanctions. Iran is well positioned to improve its influence with all of the great powers as they grow more mistrustful of one another. Iran's economic and geographic importance makes it a valuable partner that American, European, Russian, and Chinese leaders are eager to win over. As long as Tehran is neither too hostile toward nor too dependent upon a single world power, it should be able to benefit from all of them.

■ Do you think NATO will become weak if Britain exits the European Union?

A: Uncertainty over the EU does not necessarily weaken NATO. With or without the UK, the EU will struggle with nationalist and protectionist divisions for many years. NATO survives because Russia is still the dominant military power in the eastern hemisphere and because its current rulers are ardent nationalists who frighten their neighbors. In this context, a weaker EU is likely to generate more desire for a stronger NATO that holds an American shield against renewed pressures from Moscow.

Chinese FM: Iran has long-standing ties with us

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has described the relationship between China and Iran as very old.

"Iran has long-standing ties with us," Wang said in an interview with Al Jazeera ahead of the seventh ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Doha.

The chief Chinese diplomat also said the landmark nuclear deal between Iran and the six major powers (China, Russia, Germany, the U.S., Britain, and France) is "very helpful" as it has allayed possible concerns about Iran's nuclear activities and can contribute to "peace in the Middle East".

The following is a summary of the interview:

■ China has followed the question of Palestine for years. Why don't you urge Israel to lift its blockade in Gaza and treat the Palestinian people humanely?

A: We firmly support the just

cause of the Palestinian people to restore their national rights and oppose to the prolonged blockade in the Gaza Strip. When outlining China's policy on the Palestinian issue, President Xi Jinping publicly called for the lifting of the blockade in Gaza. The Gaza issue is part of the Palestinian question. We support the effort to address it in the process of resolving the Palestinian question as a whole.

The pressing task at the moment is to focus on the hu-

manitarian crisis there and offer necessary support and help to the local people who are suffering. At the same time, new ideas should be explored for ultimately resolving the issue. Recently I met the Palestinian Foreign Minister in China. He raised some very important ideas. He said that the Palestinian refugees should not be forgotten when everybody is talking about the refugee issue. Next year will mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Pales-



If all countries, big and small, strong and weak, abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the world will be more peaceful and stable. That is the goal and philosophy of China's diplomacy.

tine Partition Plan. Seventy years have passed, but the just propositions and national aspirations the Palestinian people are yet to be realized. The international community should place high importance on it and further pool together energy to solve the Palestinian question at an early date.

This issue is at the core of the Middle East question. It bears on the conscience and justice of mankind and we cannot afford to let it drag on. Neither can we allow our brothers and sisters to remain displaced. Palestine and France are now having discussions on expanding the international mechanism to solve the issue and China's attitude is open and supportive. We do believe that more countries should care about and participate in the settlement of the Palestinian issue. If such a new and broader mechanism is in place, China is ready to take an active part in it and play a constructive role. →7

Pakistan working on 'alternate plan' to implement IP pipeline

Islamabad (The Nation) — "International sanctions against Iran are still hindering the execution of \$2 billion Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, said Federal Minister for Petroleum Khaqan Abbasi on Monday.



Addressing the seminar on 'LNG Market Analysis and Trends' here, the minister said international sanctions against Iran were still intact, which stopped Pakistan from going ahead with the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project.

However he said that Pakistan and Iran were closely collaborating on all the subjects, including IP gas project, and as soon as sanctions were lifted, work on the project would resume.

He assured that Pakistan was committed to the IP gas project, but was facing two main issues in its implementation.

"The project requires a huge investment of \$2 billion, but the investors are reluctant to invest due to two reasons: dollar transactions and 'snap back' clause. For IP, the transaction in dollars has not been allowed and due to snap back clause, investors are unwilling to invest as it allows the imposition of sanctions on the projects," he explained.

Reiterating that Pakistan was committed to the project, Abbasi disclosed that the government was working on an alternate plan.

Referring to LNG, the minister termed it a sustainable solution to the energy crisis of Pakistan in the current scenario. "LNG is short, medium and long-term solution to the gas crisis, as it reduces the oil import bill and also accelerates economic growth," Abbasi said, adding, "LNG is cheaper than gas obtained through IP and TAPI pipeline projects."

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MEDIA MONITOR



Iran sends a team to S. Arabia for dialogue on Hajj

TEHRAN — The head of Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization said on Tuesday that a six-member Iranian delegation was to depart Tehran for Saudi Arabia later in the day for a second round of talks with Saudi officials on performing the annual Hajj.

Speaking with IRNA, Saeed Ohadi said that the visit to Saudi Arabia by the Iranian delegation is taking place upon an official invitation by the new Saudi Hajj minister.

Iranian pilgrims should be able to receive consular services and they should be given their visas inside Iran, the official stressed.



Inclusive parliamentary group to meet Friday

TEHRAN — The inclusive principlist parliamentary group will meet on Friday to decide on their favorites for the speakership of the Majlis.

Announcing the news, Hossein Naqavi Hosseini said the meeting is called by Ali Larijani, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

Also on Wednesday and Thursday the Hope parliamentary group, led by Mohammad Reza Aref, will also meet to choose their representatives.



Israel responsible for the missing of four Iranian diplomats: Dehqan

TEHRAN — Iran's defense minister has once again reiterated that Israel is responsible for the disappearance of four Iranian diplomats in Lebanon in 1982.

"They should either give evidence that they have not killed these people, or if they have killed them they should assume the responsibility," Hossein Dehqan said on Tuesday, Shahid News website reported.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony inaugurating several production lines for making proximity fuses that are used in rockets and missiles.



Abutorabi Fard calls on Majlis to safeguard jurist guardianship

TEHRAN — Whatever you do, safeguard the maxim of the jurist guardianship, Mohammad Hassan Abutorabi Fard told the members of the new parliament who start their work on May 28.

Addressing the last session of the 9th parliament which ended its work on Tuesday, Abutorabi Fard also said the nation's representatives should approve laws in a way to strengthen religious democracy, ISNA reported.

Majlis Deputy Speaker was deputy speaker in the ninth parliament.



Araqchi: Israel's WMDs are serious threat to the region

TEHRAN — Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs has warned that mass destruction arsenals of Israel are a serious threat to the region.

Abbas Araqchi told the 14th conference of the Asian member states of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) that Iran condemns any use of chemical weapons, ILNA reported on Tuesday.



SWIFT not that open yet: deputy minister

TEHRAN — Iran's deputy minister of economy has said Iran's access to SWIFT is not quite open yet, Tasnim reported.

"So far the progress of opening the SWIFTS has not been as our friends at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have said," Mohammad Khazaei said on Monday.



7th World Islamic Forum kicks off in Yazd

TEHRAN — The 7th World Islamic Forum started work in Yazd on Tuesday.

About 100 guests from 35 countries have attended the two-day international event, ISNA reported.

The theme of the forum is "Strategic Communications: Reference Values, Institutions and Individuals."

The forum is being supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Leader pens opening letter to new Expert Assembly, outlines duties



POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — The 5th Assembly of Experts kicked off on Tuesday morning with new members in attendance.

On the occasion, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei penned an opening message, saying the new assembly has the mission to "carefully and comprehensively guard the Islamic and revolutionary identity of the ruling establishment and direct intertwined apparatuses of the establishment toward lofty and sublime goals."

The Leader also outlined four key responsibilities of the influential body as follows: "Getting to know the status of the Islamic Revolution in the contemporary world, paying heed to the enticing phenomenon of religious democracy as standing among different governance approaches in which either spirituality and religion, people or both have been victimized, paying heed to unique role of faith and beliefs originating from Islamic teachings in people's choices, and paying heed to the impact of individual and political piety of the Leader on maintaining people's trust and on the ruling establishment's strength and stability."

In the morning session, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati was elected as the chairman of the body of the 88-member assembly with 51 votes against two other contenders, namely former Judiciary chief Ayatollah Mahmoud Shahroudi and another prominent cleric Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini.

Modi compliments Iranian leadership on JCPOA

Iran and India issued a joint statement on Monday in which Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi complimented the Iranian leadership for succeeding to broker a landmark nuclear deal, officially called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with great powers.

The JCPOA represents "the triumph of diplomacy and sagacity", Modi said.

The full text of the statement, published by the Indian Foreign Ministry, is posted on the Tehran Times website.

Following is the first five paragraphs of the statement:

1. At the invitation of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi paid a state visit to Iran on 22-23 May 2016.
2. Prime Minister Modi called on the Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei on 23 May and held talks with President Rouhani following his official welcome in an impressive ceremony. President Rouhani hosted a lunch in honour of Prime Minister Modi.
3. Prime Minister Modi and President Rouhani witnessed the signing of the following cooperation documents and jointly addressed media:
 - i. India-Iran Cultural Exchange Programme
 - ii. MoU between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran on Policy Dialogue between Governments and Interaction between Think Tanks
 - iii. MoU between Foreign Service Institute, MEA and the School of International Relations, Iran's MoFA
 - iv. Implementation Protocol between Department of



Science and Technology, Ministry of S&T and Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology on cooperation in the fields of science and technology

v. MoU between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

vi. Bilateral contract on Chabahar Port for port development and operations between IPGPL [India Ports Global Private Limited] and Arya Banader of Iran

vii. MoU between EXIM Bank and Iran's Ports and Maritime Organisation [PMO] specifying the current terms of credit line for Chabahar Port Project

viii. Confirmation Statement between EXIM Bank and Central Bank of Iran on Projects in Iran

ix. MoU between ECGC [Export Credit Guarantee Corporation] Limited of India and the Export Guarantee

Fund of Iran [EGFI]

x. MoU between National Aluminium Company Limited [NALCO] and the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organisation [IMIDRO]

xi. MoU between IRCON and Construction, Development of Transport and Infrastructure Company [CDTIC] of Iran

xii. MoU for cooperation between the National Archives of India and the National Library and Archives Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

4. In their friendly, cordial and wide-ranging discussions, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations, the evolving regional situation as well as global issues of mutual interest. They recalled the principles on development of bilateral relations articulated in the "New Delhi Declaration" of 23 January 2003.

5. President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi expressed their satisfaction at the progress in bilateral ties since their meeting in July 2015 in Ufa. Prime Minister Modi complimented the leadership of Iran on Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and subsequent developments, including lifting of certain sanctions, which represent the triumph of diplomacy and sagacity. The President of The Islamic Republic of Iran, appreciated India's stance and support for close cooperation extended to the Government of The Islamic Republic of Iran during the period of imposed sanction and expressed the view that the Iranian people never forget the positive role India played in that period.

(Source: mfa.gov.ir)

Ayatollah Jannati elected as Assembly of Experts chief

TEHRAN — Ayatollah Hashemi Shahroudi was the country's point man on Judiciary from 1999 to 2009.

Assembly of Experts is constitutionally tasked with supervising and electing leader of the Islamic Revolution.

The new members of the assembly were elected on February 26, simultaneously with parliamentary elections.

---Assembly should abide by the rule of

supreme jurisprudence'

After securing a landslide victory for the chairmanship of the assembly, Jannati said the members of the assembly should abide by the rule of the supreme jurisprudence (Velayat-e Faqih) in order to fulfill their duties properly.

"The people will be revolutionary if the Assembly of Experts members and seminary schools are revolutionary," he told the 88-member assembly.

The Islamic system cannot carry out its mis-

sion without supreme jurisprudence, noted Jannati who is also the chairman of the oversight Guardian Council.

In an interview with the IRIB, he also highlighted the importance of national unity, saying the Assembly of Experts should maintain unity.

Jannati said that the assembly's duties revolve around the axis of the supreme jurisprudence.

Following the election of assembly's new chief and two vice chairmen, messages from senior officials, including President Rouhani and

Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani poured in.

"The Assembly of Experts has the duty to elect the Leader as stipulated by the Constitution and introduce him to the nation," the president was quoted as saying, wishing longevity for the incumbent Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Also, Ayatollah Rafsanjani said that electing the Assembly of Experts' presiding board was done in a "peaceful atmosphere" and without any argument.

Leader tells Modi: Tehran is serious in fight on terror

'Unlike America and England, Iran has always respected Afghanistan'

In a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tehran on Monday afternoon Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Iran is serious in the campaign against terrorism.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is serious in its fight against terrorism and it will utilize all its resources to counter terrorism," the Leader noted.

"It is possible to counter and curb terrorism, just as it is possible to curb any contagious disease," the Leader said, according khemenei.ir.

Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had visited Iran to sign a three-way transit agreement on the Iranian port of Chabahar on the shores of the Sea of Oman.

The Leader also said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes expansion of ties with India, which is one of the emerging and progressive economies in the world. Iran seriously pursues implementation of bilateral agreements and it will not be influenced by any politics in this regard."

Referring to India's good economic prospects and

Iran's vast oil and gas reserves, he added, "Besides oil and gas, as you pointed out, Chabahar is an important region that connects the East to the West and the North to the South, which can prepare the ground for deep, long-lasting and valuable cooperation."

For his part, Modi stressed Ayatollah Khamenei's statements regarding the threat that terrorism poses and the need to seriously fight terrorism.

"Unfortunately, certain countries have categorized terrorism into 'good' and 'bad' and they only pay lip service to fighting terrorism," the Indian prime minister remarked.

He added, "It is necessary that the countries which are serious in their fight against terror come together and cooperate closely with one another."

'Unlike America and England, Iran has always respected Afghanistan'

During a separate meeting with President Ghani, the Leader said, "Unlike some countries such as America and

England, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always behaved towards the people of Afghanistan in a polite, brotherly and hospitable manner and it will do its best to help Afghanistan in technical, engineering and infrastructural areas so that it can benefit from its natural resources."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always paid serious attention to the interests and security of Afghanistan and it will continue to do so. It considers the progress of this country, in all areas, to be its own progress," the Leader stated.

Expressing satisfaction over his negotiations in Tehran — in particular, the agreement that allows Afghanistan to transit its goods to India through Chabahar — the Afghan president said, "We will always be grateful to the people of Iran for their hospitality and to you because of your positive attitude towards the people of Afghanistan. We hope that with these negotiations in Tehran, the ground will be prepared, more than ever, to expand our relations."

(Source: leader.ir)

Iran, Poland sign agreement on fighting organized crime

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli and his Polish counterpart Mariusz Blaszczak signed an agreement on Tuesday on fighting organized crimes.

The two countries will cooperate in fighting terrorist crimes, drug and human trafficking, money laundering

and crimes against the environment, the two officials insisted.

According to the agreement, the two countries will cooperate in exchanging information related to crimes and also in exchanging experiences and experts.

Rahmani Fazli said that Iran and Poland will expand cooperation in transfer of technology.

Poland's private and state-run sectors are interested in investing in Iran and transfer technology to the country, the interior minister added.

Blaszczak called for expansion of ties in various areas.

Pan-Asian political club SCO may consider Iran as potential candidate

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov plans to raise the question of Iran's accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) during the upcoming SCO foreign ministerial meeting, Russian Presidential Envoy for the SCO Bakhtier Khakimov said Tuesday.

"There is a general understanding that Iran is an actual

candidate in joining the SCO as an official full-fledged member and considering that sanctions are being lifted, we don't see any obstacles. I know that our [foreign] minister will voice this and this topic is being discussed. Our minister will propose this," Khakimov added," Khakimov said.

The SCO is a political, economic and military alliance founded in 2001 by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Belarus, Mongolia, Iran, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan hold observer status in the organization.

(Source: Sputnik)

IRNA

MEHR

MEHR

ISNA

ILNA

TASNIM

ISNA

Syria civil war: Russia calls for 'regime of calm'

Russia has called for a temporary truce to begin in two towns in the Damascus countryside after multiple terrorist attacks in northwestern Syria killed at least 150 people.

The Russian defense ministry wants the truce in the towns of Daraya and Eastern Ghouta to begin on Tuesday and last for 72 hours.

Announcement came as the United States continued to urge Russia to pressure President Bashar al-Assad's government to stop bombing opposition forces and civilians in Damascus and Aleppo.

John Kerry, the U.S. secretary of state, spoke to his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, by phone and urged him to press the Syrian government to halt its attacks on Aleppo in the north and Daraya near Damascus.

The attacks were claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

ISIL said it was also behind Monday's twin bombings in Yemen's second city, Aden, which killed at least 45 people.

At least 150 people were killed on Monday in seven near-simultaneous explosions targeting bus stations, hospitals and other civilian sites in the seaside cities of Jableh and Tartus, which are Assad strongholds.

WHO's statement

The deadliest attack occurred in Ja-



bleh, where 43 people were killed when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives at the Jableh National Hospital.

Most of those killed were patients and visiting family members, WHO said on Tuesday, adding that three doctors and nurses were also among the dead.

Jableh National Hospital, which was taking in victims from at least three other blasts in the city earlier on Monday (including one at a crowded bus station), was badly damaged and is no longer operational, WHO said.

The surge in violence comes as ISIL

faces mounting pressure in Syria and neighboring Iraq, where a major government offensive to retake the city of Fallujah from the group is under way.

The early morning attacks began at a bus station in Tartus, where Russia has long maintained a naval facility.

The bombings drew condemnation from around the world, with Human Rights Watch saying that targeting civilians "would appear to constitute war crimes".

Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations secretary-general, denounced the "terrorist

attacks" while France called the bombing heinous.

In Washington DC, Mark Toner, state department spokesman, accused the Syrian government of using air strikes and attacks on civilians to gain tactical advantage and said Russia "has a special responsibility" to rein in Syrian government forces.

He said that the U.S. is looking to Russia to provide the pressure needed to get the government "to reconsider the fact that if this keeps up, we may be looking at a complete breakdown of the cessation", referring to a faltering truce approved in February.

The Kremlin said the attacks "demonstrate yet again how fragile the situation is in Syria and the need to take energetic measures to relaunch peace talks".

World powers have struggled to rekindle UN-brokered peace negotiations which collapsed in April when Syria's opposition walked away in frustration at halting progress on the country's dire humanitarian situation.

Syria's conflict has evolved from a popular uprising to a multi-faceted war that has killed more than 270,000 people and displaced millions.

ISIL has claimed deadly attacks in the West and throughout the Middle East.

(Source: agencies)

Greece begins Idomeni refugee camp evacuation

Greek authorities began an operation at dawn to evacuate the country's largest informal refugee camp of Idomeni on the Macedonian border, blocking access to the area and sending in more than 400 riot police.

The government's spokesman for the refugee crisis, Giorgos Kyritsis, said that police would not use force on Tuesday and that the operation was expected to last about a week to 10 days.

The camp, which sprung up at an informal pedestrian border crossing for refugees heading north to Europe, is home to an at least 8,400 people - including hundreds of children - mostly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

At its peak, when Macedonia shut its border in March, it housed more than 14,000, but the numbers have declined as people realized the border was shut and began accepting authorities' offers of alternative places to stay. In Idomeni, most have been living in small camping tents pitched in fields and along rail tracks, while aid agencies have set up large marquee-style tents to help house people.

Greek authorities have been sending in cleaning crews regularly and have provided portable toilets, but conditions have been precarious at best, with heavy rain creating muddy ponds.

In recent weeks, the camp had begun taking on an image of semi-permanence, with refugees setting up small makeshift shops selling everything from cooking utensils to falafel and bread.

Police and government authorities say the residents

will be moved to newly completed official camps.

More than 54,000 refugees and migrants have been trapped in financially struggling Greece since Balkan and European countries shut their land borders to a massive flow of people escaping war and poverty at home.

Nearly a million people have passed through Greece, the vast majority arriving on islands from the nearby Turkish coast.

In March, the European Union reached an agreement with Turkey meant to stem the flow and reduce the number of people undertaking the short but perilous sea crossing to Greece, where many have died after their overcrowded, unseaworthy boats sank.

Under the deal, anyone arriving "illegally" on Greek islands from the Turkish coast after March 18 faces deportation back to Turkey, unless they successfully apply for asylum in Greece.

But few want to request asylum in the country, which has been struggling with a six-year deep financial crisis that has left unemployment hovering at around 24 percent.

Journalists were barred from the camp during the evacuation operation, stopped at a police roadblock a few kilometers away.

Twenty buses carrying various riot police units were seen heading to the area while a police helicopter observed from above. An estimated 700 police were participating in the operation.



Greek authorities are also eager to re-open a railway line - the country's main freight train line to the Balkans - that runs through the camp and has been blocked by protesting camp residents since March 20.

The government has been trying to persuade people staying in Idomeni to leave the area and head to organized camps.

This week it said its campaign of voluntary evacuations was already working, with police reporting that eight buses carrying about 400 people left Idomeni on Sunday. Others took taxis heading to the country's main northern city of Thessaloniki or a nearby town of Polycastro.

(Source: agencies)

Pakistan says can't confirm Taliban leader killed in U.S. drone strike

Pakistan's interior minister said on Tuesday he could not confirm that Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour had been killed in a U.S. drone strike, saying that the body recovered from

near the Afghan border was charred beyond recognition.

Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan told reporters that DNA samples had been collected from the remains and would be tested

against a relative who came forward to claim the body.

"The government of Pakistan cannot announce this without a scientific and legal basis," he said.

He did not identify the relative who came forward or say whether he or she claimed to be related to the Taliban leader or someone else.

(Source: Reuters)

Forensic official: EgyptAir 804 human remains suggest blast

Human remains retrieved from the crash site of EgyptAir Flight 804 suggest there was an explosion on board that may have brought down the aircraft in the east Mediterranean, a senior Egyptian forensics official said on Tuesday.

"The logical explanation is that an explosion brought it down," the official told The Associated Press.

The official, who is part of the Egyptian team investigating the crash that killed all 66 people on board the flight from Paris to Cairo early last Thursday, has personally examined the remains at a Cairo morgue. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information.

All 80 pieces that have been brought to Cairo so far are small. "There isn't even a whole body part, like an arm or a head," said the official, adding that one piece was the left part of a head.

"But I cannot say what caused the blast," he said.

Egyptian authorities have said they believe terrorism is a more likely explanation than equipment failure, and some aviation experts have said the erratic flight reported by the Greek defense minister suggests a bomb blast or a struggle in the cockpit. But so far no hard evidence has emerged.

An independent Cairo daily, al-Watan, quoted an unnamed forensics official in its Tuesday edition as saying the plane blew up in midair but that it has yet to be determined whether the blast was caused by the explosive device or something else. The official further said the remains retrieved so far are "no larger than the size of a hand".

An Egyptian military search boat takes part in a search operation for the EgyptAir plane that disappeared in the Mediterranean Sea

It has been reported that smoke was detected inside the cabin of EgyptAir flight MS804 minutes before it disappeared from radar. According to messages relayed by ACARS (Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System), smoke detectors went off in the toilet and the aircraft electrical systems.

Body parts and wreckage, including passengers' belongings, seats and luggage have also been found from the missing aircraft according to the Egyptian officials.

The Egyptian military revealed that debris was found around 290km (180 miles) north of Alexandria. The European Space Agency satellites have spotted an oil slick

near the site, but it has not been confirmed if it was from the missing plane.

EgyptAir flight MS804 disappeared from radar early on May 19 shortly after leaving Greek airspace according to Greek air traffic controllers.

France's aviation accident investigation agency would not comment on anything involving the bodies or say whether any information has surfaced in the investigation to indicate an explosion.

In a search for clues, family members of the victims arrived on Tuesday at the Cairo morgue forensics department to give DNA samples to help identify the remains of their kin, a security official said. The official also spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

Egypt has dispatched a submarine to search for the flight's black boxes and a French ship joined the international effort to locate the wreckage and search for the plane's data recorders.

Ships and planes from Britain, Cyprus, France, Greece and the United States are also taking part in the search for the debris from the aircraft, including the black boxes.

(Source: AP)

Russia ready to coordinate with Kurds and U.S. on Raqqa offensive

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday said Moscow was ready to coordinate with a Kurd-

ish-Arab alliance and the U.S.-led coalition in an assault on ISIL's Syrian bastion of Raqqa.

"I say with all authority that we are ready for such coordination," Lavrov said at a summit in Uzbek-

istan, quoted by TASS state news agency.

(Source: AFP)

NEWS

Obama in Vietnam backs peaceful South China Sea



The United States is not trying to impose its form of government on Vietnam and territorial disputes in the South China Sea have to be "resolved peacefully", President Barack Obama has said during a three-day visit to the country.

In a speech at the National Convention Centre in Hanoi on Tuesday, Obama also called for better human rights that would boost the country's economy, stability and regional power, for opening a new chapter in their relations and for helping both countries to move on from a history of war four decades ago.

"Big nations should not bully smaller ones, disputes should be resolved peacefully," he said, referring to the disputed maritime region.

The U.S. and Vietnam have drawn closer together through their mutual concern at China's increasing assertiveness in the sea.

China claims almost all the South China Sea and has upset neighbors with a series of reclamation and construction projects - including airstrips - on reefs and islets.

Vietnam and four other countries also have claims to parts of the sea.

The U.S. takes no position on the competing territorial claims but asserts freedom of navigation and flights in the sea and has sent warships near Chinese-held islets.

"As we go forward the United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows and we will support the right of all countries to do the same," Obama said.

Al Jazeera's Adrian Brown, reporting from Beijing, quoted the Chinese media as accusing Obama of engaging in a strategy to try to contain China.

Arms embargo lifted

On Monday, Obama announced that he was removing a Cold War-era ban on weapons sales to Vietnam, seen as a major boost for Hanoi as it tries to bolster its defenses against its giant northern neighbor.

"Vietnam will have greater access to the military equipment you need to ensure your security," he told delegates.

He said the U.S. would continue to train Vietnam's coast-guard to "enhance maritime capabilities".

Obama spoke to 10 activists on Tuesday, including advocates for the disabled, sexual minorities, a pastor and advocates for freedom of speech, press and the internet, but he said that several others were prevented from coming.

"Vietnam has made remarkable strides in many ways," Obama said, but "there are still areas of significant concern".

During a Monday news conference with Vietnam's president, Obama traced the arc of the U.S.-Vietnamese relationship through cooperation, conflict, "painful separation" and a long reconciliation.

"If you consider where we have been and where we are now, the transformation in the relations between our two countries is remarkable," Obama said.

(Source: agencies)

Independent candidate wins Austrian presidential polls

Independent candidate Alexander van der Bellen has won Austria's presidential election after far-right leader Norbert Hofer conceded defeat.

The interior minister said on Monday that Alexander Van der Bellen won 50.3 percent of the vote in Sunday's knife-edge election, compared to 49.7 percent for Hofer, presented as the friendly and moderate face of the anti-immigration, populist Freedom Party (FPÖ).

"Of course I am sad," Hofer said on Facebook as he conceded defeat. "I would have loved to have looked after this wonderful country for you as president."

"Please don't be disheartened. The effort in this election campaign is not wasted, but is an investment for the future."

Preliminary results late on Sunday had put Hofer 3.8 percentage points ahead in the runoff for the largely ceremonial but bitterly fought-over post of Austrian head of state, but postal ballots, which account for about 12 percent of eligible votes, swayed the result in Van der Bellen's favour.

A record 700,000 postal ballots were counted during Monday, dramatically putting Van der Bellen ahead by just over 31,000 votes in the final tally.

(Source: Al Jazeera)



NEWS

Iranian, S. Korean companies ink two MOUs on co-op in South Pars gas field

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Industrial Projects Management of Iran (IPMI) and South Korea's JS signed two memoranda of understanding (MOUs) on cooperation in South Pars gas field, Shana news agency reported on Tuesday.



"The MOUs cover the fields of management and operation as well as providing financial resources for launching Phase 14 of the gas field", Shana quoted Hamidreza Jalal Jalali, the market development director of IPMI, as saying.

Jalali announced a construction progress of 40 percent and the overall development of 65 percent for phase 14 of South Pars gas field and added, "Provided that the finance for this phase is funded, the first train of this phase's refineries could become operational in the end of Iranian calendar year of 1396 (2017-2018)."

He also pointed to IPMI negotiation with foreign partners for the implementation of Phase 11 of South Pars and said, "The Company also plans to co-participate with a foreign company in the tender for construction of phase 11 of South Pars."

According to Shana, Phase 14 of South Pars gas field is aimed to produce 56.5 million cubic meters of sour gas and 75000 barrels of gas condensate daily, is under development in Pars Special Economic Energy Zone, also an annual production of over one million tons of liquefied gas, one million tons of Ethan as the feedstock of petrochemical plants and a daily production of 400 tons of sulfur are among other products of this phase.

South Pars field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas and condensate, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves.

The huge offshore field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

EU trade with Iran up 22% in 1Q

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Trade between Iran and the European Union stood at €1.998 billion in the first three months of 2016 following the execution of nuclear deal with P5+1, Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.



According to Eurostat, the figure registered a 22 percent growth from €1.634 billion in the same period in 2015.

As reported, EU exports to Iran hit €1,602 billion in the first three months of the current year, which shows a 16-percent rise from €1,374 billion in the same period last year.

At the same time, EU's imports from the Islamic Republic increased 52 percent and stood at €396 million, while the amount was €260 million in the same months in 2015.

Petchem industry meets Europe's modern tech

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The first conference of Iran on advanced European technology in process furnaces was held on Tuesday in Tehran, Shana news agency reported.



According to the report, the conference attended by petrochemical industry entrepreneurs aimed to familiarize the participants with the world's new technologies and knowledge in order to raise efficiency, reduce maintenance costs and upgrade the technology in the field of process furnaces.

On the sidelines of the conference, the secretary, Vahid Hazrati told Shana that the conference attended by the five of the largest oilfield equipment manufacturers of Europe was held with the aim of familiarizing the industry actors with the most recent experiences and technologies in the field.

Hazrati noted, "Haldor Topsoe" from Denmark and "Heurtey" and "Manoir" from France are among the companies attending this conference, adding that these companies' new knowledge and technologies could be used in the country's projects.

Inflation to drop to single-digit in summer: central banker

1→

He also underscored that CBI has always pursued to adopt monetary policies complied with the ongoing requirements.

"Thanks to withdrawal of the financial embargo against Iran following the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and also the enforcement of policies to struggle with bouts of recession, economic growth is expected to witness a rapid acceleration."

The CBI announced that the inflation rate in the past Iranian calendar



year, which ended on March 19, 2016, compared to its previous year stood at 11.9 percent.

On February 20, Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ali Tayyebnia said that the country's budget plan for the current Iranian calendar year has envisaged an inflation rate of 11.3 percent.

Curbing inflation was one of the major promises by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani during his presidential campaign. Under the previous administration, inflation skyrocketed to cross 44 percent.

Completing Iran's semi-finished water, electricity projects requires \$46b

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Minister of Energy Sattar Mahmoudi announced that completion of semi-finished projects in water and electricity sector needs 1.6 quadrillion rials (about \$46.189 billion) of finance, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Addressing a conference in Tehran, the energy official said that although a large amount of investments have been made in this sector during the past years, a number of projects are still unfinished due to dearth of financial resources.

"Renovation of water and electricity installations, repair and maintenance operations, and reduction

of power dissipation and water losses in distribution networks are examples of the sectors in need for investments," Sattari said.

He, elsewhere, named lack of sufficient financial resources and modern technology as the main concerns that domestic power sector is faced with and said that removal of such obstacles would pave the country's way to international markets.

Sattari also noted that annulment of financial sanctions after the implementation of the nuclear agreement with the world powers can be an opportunity to overcome the mentioned barriers.

S. Korea's Jan.-Apr. crude oil imports from Iran up 113.5%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — South Korea's January-April crude oil imports from Iran rose 113.5 percent compared to the same period a year earlier, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

According to the report, the data from state-run Korea National Oil Corp (KNOC) showed that Seoul brought in 29.963 million barrels of Iranian crude oil during January-April in 2016, versus 14.033 million barrels in the same period last year.

In April 2016, the world's fifth-largest crude importer shipped in 7,114 million barrels of crude from Iran, which shows 88.15 percent rise compared to 3,781 million barrels of the same period in 2015, the data shows.



Under sanctions, South Korea and other major Iranian crude buyers were required to ship in no more crude than levels imported in 2014.

Iran has increased production and exports more quickly than expected. Output has reached some 3.56 million bpd, up 300,000 bpd and the highest since late 2011, prior to the introduction of sanctions, the IEA said.

Iran fulfils pledge to raise oil production

Iran is fulfilling its pledge to raise oil production and exports almost six months after western sanctions on the sector were lifted, surprising many analysts and commentators.

Oilfields pumped almost 3.6m barrels a day in April, a level last reached in November 2011 before sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program were tightened, said the International Energy Agency. Crude exports surged to 2m b/d in last month, just 200,000 b/d below late 2011 levels.

Iran is engaged in a battle for market share with Saudi Arabia and other regional rivals in its efforts to regain customers after years of curbed oil sales that crippled its economy.

Mike Wittner, oil analyst at Société Générale, said: "Most people felt the Iranians were talking a big game ahead of the lifting of sanctions. This was an oil market wild card and they have surpassed our expectations."

Although some of April's crude sales could be due to loadings carried over from March, this month should see a further increase as Iran releases more barrels just as the



oil market glut begins to subside.

Rokneddin Javadi, head of Iran's state oil company, said at the weekend there were no plans to join any output freeze — a potential deal was thwarted last month in Doha — as it is still raising exports to pre-sanctions levels, to at least 2.2m b/d.

"Under the present circumstances, the government and the oil ministry have not issued any policy or plan to the National Iranian Oil Company towards halting the increase in the production and exports of oil," Mr. Javadi told a domestic news agency.

The comments suggest the prospects of a deal to curb production at next week's OPEC ministers' meeting in Vienna are slim.

Iranian politicians have made a commitment to their people to rebuild production and exports almost halved by the western sanctions, say analysts. This has made any moves towards a deal with OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia impossible. Pressure to strike a deal urgently has eased as the price of Brent crude has rebounded 70 per cent from its January lows.

Tensions between the regional rivals were evident last month when a plan for countries of the cartel and other big producers to freeze output unraveled after Tehran rejected Riyadh's demands that it join in.

(Source: Financial Times)

Oil prices fall as dollar gains, but possible stock drawdown supports

Oil prices fell in thin trade on Tuesday as the U.S. dollar strengthened, but losses were curbed by a likely drawdown in U.S. crude and gasoline stockpiles.

Brent futures had declined 24 cents to \$48.11 a barrel by 0447 GMT, after closing down 37 cents in the previous session.

U.S. crude futures dropped 20 cents to \$47.88 a barrel, having settled down 33 cents the day before.

Both contracts had finished with modest losses for a fourth straight session.

The dollar index rose against a basket of currencies on Tuesday, as investors continued to factor in an increased chance of a near-term U.S. interest rate rise.

A stronger greenback makes dollar-priced commodities more expensive for

holders of other currencies.

"There's a face-off between investors and traders," said Mike McCarthy, chief market strategist at Sydney's CMC Markets.

"Investors see value in the market. They are met by traders who see the market at the top of the trading range."

That led to volatile plays in the previous session with oil falling by around \$1 before retracing much of the day's losses.

"That intra-day volatility has led to a quieter day today," he said, describing trading as "anaemic".

U.S. commercial crude oil stocks likely fell by around 2.5 million barrels to 538.8 million in the week ended May 20, a preliminary Reuters analysts' poll taken ahead of weekly industry and official inventory data showed on Monday.

(Source: Reuters)

SWIFT to unveil new security plan after hackers' heists

The SWIFT secure messaging service that underpins international banking said it plans to launch a new security program as it fights to rebuild its reputation in the wake of the Bangladesh Bank heist.

The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT)'s chief executive, Gottfried Leibbrandt will tell a financial services conference in Brussels that SWIFT will launch a five-point plan later this week.

Banks send payment instructions to one another via SWIFT messages. In February thieves hacked into the SWIFT system of the Bangladesh central bank, sending messages to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York allowing them to steal \$81 million.

The attack follows a similar but little noticed theft from Banco del Austro

in Ecuador last year that netted thieves over \$12 million and a previously undisclosed attack on Vietnam's Tien Phong Bank that was not successful.

The crimes have dented the banking industry's faith in SWIFT, a Belgium-based co-operative owned by its users.

The Bangladesh Bank hack was a "watershed event for the banking industry", Leibbrandt will say.

"There will be a before and an after Bangladesh. The Bangladesh fraud is not an isolated incident ... this is a big deal. And it gets to the heart of banking."

SWIFT wants banks to "drastically" improve information sharing, to toughen up security procedures around SWIFT and to increase their use of software that could spot fraudulent payments.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Toyota recalls 1.6 million U.S. vehicles for Takata air bags

Toyota Motor Corp said on Monday it will recall almost 1.6 million additional U.S. vehicles for front passenger side Takata air bag inflators that could rupture.

Earlier this month, Takata Corp said it was declaring another 35 million to 40 million U.S. inflators defective at the urging of U.S. regulators, a move that more than doubles the number of inflators recalled. Faulty Takata inflators have been linked to more than 100 injuries and 13 deaths worldwide.

Toyota said the new recall includes some but not all Corolla, Matrix, Yaris, 4Runner, Sienna, Scion xB, Lexus ES, GX and IS vehicles built between 2006 and 2011.



Nissan mulls sale of stake in auto parts supplier Calsonic Kansei

Nissan Motor Co is considering selling its 41 percent stake in auto parts supplier Calsonic Kansei Corp to raise cash for research and development in electric cars and artificial intelligence, the Nikkei newspaper reported.

Nissan, Japan's second-biggest automaker, plans to seek a first round of bids in June, the paper said, without citing its sources. Major foreign parts makers and U.S. and European investment funds appear to be interested in the stake, the Nikkei said.

Based on Calsonic Kansei's market value on Monday, the sale could raise more than 100 billion yen (\$915 million).



Fiat Chrysler Automobiles in diesel-powered trouble in Germany

Shares of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles fell sharply on Monday morning after a report that the German government may have found evidence that some of FCA's diesel engines may be programmed to shut off their emissions controls after a pre-set period of time.

According to the report in Germany's Bild am Sonntag newspaper, several tests by the German government's motor vehicle authority KBA found evidence that the emissions control systems in some of FCA's products would switch themselves off after 22 minutes of operation. The newspaper noted that government emissions tests typically run for about 20 minutes.

The unconventional adventures of an Italian in Iran

By Angela Corrias*

The beginning of 1394 according to Persian calendar, still haftseen (Nowruz-set tables) enlivening restaurants and hotel halls all over the country, marked my third trip to the Islamic Republic.

The first few days of this recent trip I stayed in Tehran to finally tour around the capital, and my wanderings brought me to the opulent and extravagant mansions where the Pahlavi family liked to boast their wealth. While walking along the beautiful tree-lined boulevard leading to the Green Palace, I stumbled on a greatly gifted disabled painter whose nature-filled paintings caught my attention straight away. I was choosing which painting to buy and when I was finally about to grab mine, a guy arrived and literally snatched it from under my nose. No problem, I said, I'll take another one. As he didn't have any ready, he told me that by the time I would go visit the palace and come back, the painting would be finished.

We set the deal, I did my sightseeing, came back and the painting was ready. "It will dry in one day!" he told me.

Ten days, three cities and three provinces later, the painting was still wet. This, I reckon, is the perfect prelude to what I like to call the unconventional adventures of an Italian in Iran. The Italian would be me, and my adventures are likely to make you understand why I go to Iran so often.

I've written about the glorious history of ancient Persia, the mesmerizing Islamic art, kaleidoscopic mosques and Zoroastrian fire, romance and poetry Iranian style, my favorite dish and also my favorite cafes (well, not all of them), but let's face it, with already three Iran trips on my resume (and counting), could my expeditions be always serious and research-oriented? As it happens, they were actually quite the opposite.

Traveling is always an unlimited source of quirky events, and, as it turned out, roaming around Iran's different provinces offers such a bottomless supply of bizarre and worth-remembering experiences



Enjoying my daily cup of tea at Firouz cafe in Isfahan's Armenian district Jolfa

that taken altogether make for the perfect adventures of an Italian in Iran!

I was constantly mistaken for a local, and this was probably root cause of many funny and also awkward situations, of which, some of my very favorite are related to the wonderful world of ta'arof. I might have mentioned this, too, but not thoroughly as it deserves. Ta'arof is Persian incredibly elaborate courtesy policy. These polite manners are usually kept among Iranians, but since nobody could spot I wasn't a local, I fell victim more than once. Quite proudly, I must say.

When it comes to payments, for example taxis or stores, the receiver usually refuses the money saying something of the likes "you don't need to pay! you'll pay me next year!" This is why they don't do it with tourists, simply to avoid the risk of seeing them leave really without paying, while Iranians know they need to keep thanking and insisting until the interlocutor finally accepts the money.

The first time I got "ta'arofed" was in Lahijan, in the northern province of Gilan. I wanted to buy a manteau, one of those long dresses women have to wear according to the Islamic Republic dress code, and after trying a couple of dif-

ferent colors and models, I finally chose mine. When I was going to pay, the lady, who clearly understood I was a foreigner, couldn't resist and left me with a glittering "May your flowery hands not be too sore" [for giving her the money].

That, as a first ta'arof experience, went pretty smoothly, definitely more than the second one. I was shopping (again) for a pair of jeans, and I found them in central Tehran. After trying them out, overcoming the decision process and paying, I needed them to be shortened.

Fortunately enough, the shop had their tailor in-house. I brought them to him and in ten minutes sharp the job was done.

He hadn't heard me talk so, not understanding I wasn't Iranian, at the moment of paying him, the inevitable ta'arof scene started with the awkward moments of me lending the money, him not accepting it and slightly swinging his head in disapproval, me forgetting for a moment about ta'arof and trying to get my jeans back, him refusing to release my trousers, me looking puzzled on what to do, him desperately waiting for the right answer from my part so he could finally get the money and, in all this, my friend Madi, the Iranian one of our traveling duo,

giggling shamelessly and quite enjoying the catch-22 situation I had gotten myself into. Naturally, being ta'arofed and mistaken for a local were not the only ingredients that made my Iranian adventures somehow unconventional. Let's say that these are just tasty starters.

During my recent trip, I took the bus from Isfahan to Yazd and the team in charge (not sure why there is always a whole team on Iranian buses, instead of just a driver) allowed my friend and I to sit in the front since the two seats were empty (they later regretted their choice). As history goes, behind me was sitting a friendly and chatty woman who, as soon as she learned I was a foreigner, decided I was a perfect fit for her son. It didn't matter that he was a college student and I was some 10+ years older, the leitmotif of my bus trip immediately became getting married with a 23-year-old student: if I wanted we could talk over the phone straight away, if I wanted he could even come pick us up at the bus station, if I wanted we could even go to dinner as soon as we arrived.

If I only wanted! Just say the word and he would have arrived. Thankfully, I somehow managed to convince her that her certainly great son was too young and needed to enjoy his student life.

The simple act of traveling is already an adventure, but when you happen in countries that by nature are colorful both in landscape and society, it goes without saying that your trip will be memorable.

Jumping on and off airplanes, extra-urban coaches, taxis where our suitcases never fit, and regularly recollecting myself after being prompted to fix my hijab constitute the picturesque sidebar of my Iranian adventures, an amusing corollary without which tours and sightseeing in the long run can become just something to tick off your bucket list. To me, colorful is what best defines Iranian society and folklore, so much that my ongoing adventures in the Islamic Republic are likely to be the main subject of a future book!

* Italian travel blogger, writer

(Source: chasingtheunexpected.com)

A CLOSER LOOK

Why travel light? Some reasons to pack less

Packing and traveling light is packing the bare essentials, essentially. Many people assume that the more time we will travel, the more things we will need to bring. This is a bit of a myth, but a 7-day trip almost always requires at least a little bit more than an overnight jaunt. Pack what you know you will need and use. Just because you want to bring something, it does not mean that it's necessary. Traveling light should mean that your luggage weighs little to nothing.

■ Economy – Traveling light will save you money, mostly from the fees that most airlines charge for checked baggage nowadays. Domestic flights can charge up to \$100 per bag, depending on the airline, to check it; even some international flights now charge for checking luggage.

To make lugging the luggage around the airport easier, most people who have more bags than they can handle often rent a dolly/cart or hire a porter to assist them, costing only a little extra, but adding up nonetheless.

■ Convenience – Not checking a luggage in is quite convenient. Not only will you not have to wait (sometimes up to an hour) at the baggage carousel, but there will not need to be the hassle that sometimes appears during certain connecting flights.

Although some might argue that if a flight is connecting (layover), it is more convenient if they don't have to take a carry-on and walk it all around the airport to the connecting flight's gate.

■ Preparation – Packing light allows you to prepare your belongings in less time, both before you leave for the airport and when you check out of your room to go back home. In another sense of the word, you will be prepared in the event that you decide to purchase extra souvenirs to carry back home; packing light to begin with affords you more opportunity to do so.

Finally, you will be prepared in case something happens to a connecting flight, forcing you to sleep in a cramped room; checked baggage may have went a different route to your intended destination, and this scenario could require that you spend a night with none of your belongings.

■ Health – This seems to be a bit of a stretch, but I am throwing it in there because most experts on the topic do. Heavy baggage requires some heavy lifting, and heavy lifting may lead to injuries, like strained muscles and herniated discs.

■ Environment – Though I am pretty liberal, I am a bit too cynical to put much stock in this argument, but at least the airlines aren't promoting it for this reason. To round off the benefits of traveling light, I felt compelled to include this. Planes weighing more (thanks to your heavy bag) require more fuel, hurting the environment.

(Source: dauntlessjaunter.com)

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Turning children of war into children of peace

The surprise recovery of a girl abducted by Boko Haram points to progress in a global focus on children caught up in conflicts, and how to help them embrace their innocence.

An estimated 19 million children have been caught up in world conflicts, but perhaps the most famous may be Amina Ali Nkeki. She was one of 219 girls abducted by Boko Haram militants in 2014 at the Chibok School in Nigeria, and the only one to be rescued so far.

After meeting with Nigerian President Mu-

hammadu Buhari on Thursday, the 19-year-old was promised assistance in reintegrating back into society.

Her rescue and recovery should set an example in helping all the other "war children" who have been either kidnapped, abused, forced to flee, or conscripted to act as soldiers.

Focusing on the most vulnerable in a conflict is a way to end a conflict. Combatants in a war often find it difficult to ignore pleas to save the young and innocent.

Child soldiers

In 2014, for example, the United Nations was able to convince some forces in Yemen's war on a plan to end recruitment of child soldiers.

(The war has since intensified, putting the plan on hold.) In Colombia, the government and the largest rebel group, known as FARC, agreed this month to release child soldiers and provide them assistance to restart their lives. And in the Central African Republic, the UN



President Muhammadu Buhari, third right, receives Amina Ali Nkeki, left, the rescued Chibok School girl, and her 4 month-old baby at the presidential palace.

made a deal last year between several warring factions to release thousands of children trapped in an interethnic and religious war.

Rehabilitating such children requires special skills and resources, especially if they have been trained to be violent.

A number of groups working in post-conflict areas have shown good results in this effort, such as War Child, Enfants Sans Frontières, the Children and War Foundation, as well as UNICEF.

→9

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Chinese FM: Iran has long-standing ties with us

1→

Q: Can the Palestinian people expect China to take further measures on pushing for the lifting of the blockade?

A: We will continue to call for an early lifting of the blockade in Gaza on various international and multilateral occasions. We will call on the international community to pay greater attention to the sufferings of the Palestinian people and urge more countries to support Palestine in fulfilling its long-held dream of statehood as soon as possible. This is what we have all along been doing and we will continue to do so in future. China will always stand side by side with the Palestinian people.

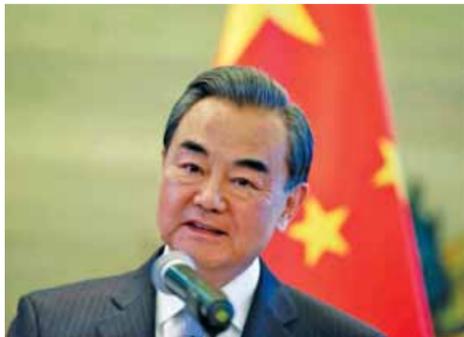
Q: The governments of Russia and Syria have launched a war in Aleppo and millions of Syrians are displaced as a result. What's your take on this issue?

A: We have all along supported the Syrian people in determining the future of Syria on their own and we support a political settlement of the issue of Syria. That is why the Chinese side voted for the UN Security Council's resolution calling for a political solution to the Syrian issue.

We see that many countries have been involved in the issue to various degrees. To our knowledge, Russia has been officially invited by the Syrian government to join in the process of solving the Syrian issue and to fight the extremist and terrorist forces in Syria. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to have this new round of peace talks or to conduct any humanitarian assistance. The peace talks are in difficulty recently and the ceasefire has been challenged by various factors. Under such circumstances, it is all the more necessary to stay firm in pushing forward the peace talks and encourage all countries outside this region to play a positive role. China's position has been consistent and clear, namely, it is important to follow the path of political settlement, because only a political solution can serve the fundamental interests of the people and nation of Syria.

Q: With millions of refugees in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, what efforts is China making to help resolve humanitarian crises in the world?

A: China is a responsible major country and a friend of the Arab people. We care deeply about the refugees and try to help them as much as we can. China itself has provided several batches of humanitarian assistance. In the past two years, we have provided 680 million yuan of emergency supplies to help refugees in Syria and else-



where. Early this year, President Xi Jinping announced a new aid package of 230 million yuan. We must find the underlying causes of the refugee issue in order to fundamentally remove its breeding ground. You have countries in chaos, governments in disarray, wars and conflicts breaking out, and the rise of extremism and terrorism. People suffer immensely and have no choice but to flee their homes. Only when normal governance and sound state institutions are in place, will it be possible for the refugee issue to be thoroughly resolved with the help of the international community.

Q: China is on good terms with Arab states and the (Persian) Gulf states (Arab states bordering the Persian Gulf). What does China's relationship with Iran look like?

A: China desires normal and friendly ties with all countries. Arab states are our good friends and, of course, Iran has long-standing ties with us. The comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue is very helpful, as it has addressed international concerns about Iran's possible nuclear program. It is a good deal

China's position has been consistent and clear, namely, it is important to follow the path of political settlement, because only a political solution can serve the fundamental interests of the people and nation of Syria.

for peace in the Middle East and for the international non-proliferation regime. With the implementation of the agreement, Iran could have normal interactions with other countries. Between China and Iran, we have state-to-state relations based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. With the lifting of sanctions, there will be more interactions between our two countries. We will encourage and support efforts by Iran to improve relations and work with its neighbors and to be a positive force for regional peace and stability, including contributing to the settlement of various hotspot issues. China will continue to work along this line.

Q: The 20th century was the American century. Can we expect the 21st century to be the Chinese century?

A: It's not China's preference to describe any century as one belonging to a certain country. We believe that affairs of a country should be handled by its own people, and likewise the affairs of the world should be handled through discussion by all countries, instead of being dominated or monopolized by any single country. In this sense, China has all along supported the current international system with the United Nations at its core. The UN is the most authoritative inter-governmental organization with the broadest representation, whose Charter is endorsed by people across the world. In fact, many problems in our world, turbulence, chaos and wars, all result from the failure to fully implement the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the very essence of which is respect for sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes and international cooperation. If all countries, big and small, strong and weak, abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the world will be more peaceful and stable, and countries will prosper together. That is the goal and philosophy of China's diplomacy.

Q: What do you see of the future of China-Arab relations?

A: Our approach is very clear. No matter what happens, we will stick to political settlement and will encourage and support Arab states in solving their problems through their own efforts. Be it the Syria issue, the Libya issue or Yemen issue, as long as all the relevant political forces in the country can sit down and have serious talk, there will be no grievance that cannot be resolved.

We believe and are confident that the people of Arab states will surmount the current difficulties and usher in a new future for the region. In this process, China will be your best friend and most reliable partner.

COMMENT

Bin Laden's home country faces growing Daesh and al-Qaeda "menace"

The home country of Osama bin Laden has largely remained secure at a time when al-Qaeda and Daesh have wreaked havoc in the Middle East and beyond, but recent developments indicate that radical groups will become more active in Saudi Arabia, fueling fears that authorities will not be able to contain the terrorist threat.

"Aside from a failed 2006 assault on the Abqaiq oil collection and processing facility, an amateurish attack in 2007 that killed three French citizens, and a foiled assassination attempt against Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Nayef in 2009, Saudi Arabia has been eerily quiet," Texas-based think tank Stratfor detailed.

It all changed in 2015 when terrorists affiliated with Daesh launched a bombing campaign in the kingdom's Eastern Province, mostly populated by the Shia. Since then, attacks have become more frequent and their geography is expanding, with many taking place in the capital and Sunni-populated areas.

The terrorist threat will likely become even worse as Daesh and al-Qaeda's affiliates lose ground in Syria. Seasoned fighters, many of whom hail from Saudi Arabia, could return home.

Like al-Qaeda militants, Daesh "fighters could use their honed skills to conduct more complex and strategic attacks. Both groups have a history of attacking tourist attractions in Egypt and Tunisia to undermine those nations' economies. A more sophisticated Daesh campaign might echo previous al-Qaeda initiatives, targeting expatriates to impair the Saudi economy," the analysts warned.

Growing menace

Daesh presents a "growing menace" to Saudi Arabia, but there is an additional challenge – al-Qaeda's deadliest offshoot, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). This is the group that claimed responsibility for the January 2015 attack on the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo.

AQAP and Riyadh declared an unofficial truce when the Saudis launched a campaign against the Houthis in Yemen. The terrorist group "benefited greatly from this arrangement, seizing the opportunity afforded by the chaos to snatch up large quantities of money, weapons and manpower," Stratfor explained.

The truce between Riyadh and AQAP collapsed in late April, fueling concerns that the group that is primarily active in Yemen and Saudi Arabia could launch a terrorist attack in the oil kingdom.

AQAP, according to the analysts, "could draw on its increased might to relaunch efforts to export terrorism to Saudi Arabia. Since Saudis have always constituted an important component of AQAP, the group could try to use its ties in the kingdom to facilitate new attacks." (Source: Sputnik)



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1st Building Services Emergency Center Inaugurated in Tehran



■ Aramis Technical Services Company bearing "Doctor Achar" brand name has managed to offer quality repair and maintenance services to all citizens living in capital Tehran round-the-clock (24-hr) in the shortest time possible.

■ The Center offers very high quality services to the noble citizens in capital Tehran as follows: repair and maintenance services of elevator, electrical and lighting system, installations and engine room, piping and central heating services, industrial electricity, cooling and heating system, duct split, water-evaporated and air-conditioning system, chiller, installation of visual speakerphone, central antenna system, swimming pool (s/p), sauna & Jacuzzi, remote control door opener, electric shutters, welding building, general technical services, Closed Circuit TV (CCTV), carpentry, tile works, etc.

■ With offering a comprehensive plan named "Assistant Manager", "Doctor Achar" embarked on concluding annual contracts with residential, administrative and trade complexes within the framework of a disciplined and organized calendar round-the-clock (24-hr) with regard to repairing and maintaining technical services of building periodically and even cleaning joint ownership spaces, providing parts and equipment needed in building, etc.

We have thus far heard that some centers offering round-the-clock and non-stop emergency services across the city for several times. For instance, medical, firefighting, car emergency centers, etc.

Given the above issue, all of us have faced with technical problems in buildings, urban life and also living in apartments and high rises for many times frequently. However, this issue has been turned into a serious problem to all of us. Certainly, you have faced with a breakdown elevator, damaged water pipe and electric cable, power outage, water heater or air conditioner on a holiday. In this line, accessing technician and serviceman may be very difficult to you especially on a holiday. Sometimes, you have to wait until tomorrow in order to call a serviceman to fix problem facing building. In some occasions, you may face some other problems such as different wages and fees as servicemen adopt for themselves in order to remove problem in building. When problem of building is removed, they [servicemen] do not guarantee for the carried out work correctly.

To get rid of the said problem, Aramis Technical Services Company with "Doctor Achar" brand name has launched building technical services emergency center for the first time in Iran. Since its establishment, the company has thus far managed to offer quality repair and maintenance services to the noble citizens living in capital Tehran in the shortest time possible immediately. However, the company offers quality repair and maintenance services to buildings and premises round-the-clock (24-hr) as fol-

lows: : repair and maintenance services of elevator, electrical and lighting system, installations and engine room, piping and central heating services, industrial electricity, cooling and heating system, duct split, water-evaporated and air-conditioning system, chiller, installation of visual speakerphone, central antenna system, swimming pool (s/p), sauna & Jacuzzi, remote control door opener, electric shutters, welding building, general technical services, Closed Circuit TV (CCTV), carpentry, tile works, etc.

It should be noted that Aramis Technical Services Company started its activity in 2012 and it has thus far presented quality repair and maintenance services to buildings based in capital Tehran.

Benefited from skilled and the most experienced manpower, owners of the company have launched widespread research activities in related field and came to this conclusion that almost major portion of services related to buildings is followed with numerous problems. Given the above issue, they [owners of the company] made up their mind to set up the company for the first time in Iran, licensed by Tehran Governor-Generalship and Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare. Basically, training expert and competent manpower is of paramount importance and for this reason, the company has set up technical and specialized training courses for

approx. 100 manpower to offer quality services to the noble citizens of metropolis Tehran in related field.

■ **No Vacation in Doctor Achar Calendar!**

After a phone call, Aramis Technical Services Company's technicians will attend your residence in less than 40 minutes in order to fix problem facing building. More interestingly, all services done by the company have certain and fixed tariff rate in a way that pertinent services are guaranteed by the company from the earliest stage up to the final

stage. We have learnt to get in touch with phone number 117 in the field of urban problems and/or 115 for medical emergency but it should be kept in mind that you have to get in touch with Doctor Achar at: 88 550 819 when you faced any problem in building. By calling this phone number, technicians and servicemen of the company will attend the location in the shortest time possible in order to fix relevant problem. It should be noted that the company benefitted from competent, skilled and the most experienced manpower, clothed in uniform bearing valid identity card. In addition, Central Office of the company monitors all behaviors and services done by repairmen continuously and incessantly.

■ **Servicing, Repairing and Guaranteeing Building in Assistant Manager Plan**

We all know that managing residential, administrative and trade complexes are of paramount importance especially for residents. Accepting management of complexes shoulders great responsibility to manager. Despite the issue, accessing cheap, reasonable, fast and quality technical services in metropolises like Tehran is completely tangible for managers and small-scale complexes.

For example, a building manager should be responsive with different residents in various technical problems and each of them may have their

own specific problems. In most cases, we have observed that many of them have learnt most of technical issues experimentally. Since they [building managers] have not been covered by an organized and disciplined company, many problems may take place, details of which will be dissatisfied by residents. Moreover, some managers of residential, administrative and trade complexes may face problems in the field of insurance, legal affairs, etc.

With offering a comprehensive plan named "Assistant Manager", "Doctor Achar" embarked on concluding annual contracts with residential, administrative and trade complexes within the framework of a disciplined and organized calendar round-the-clock (24-hr) with regard to repairing and maintaining technical services of building periodically and even cleaning joint ownership spaces, providing parts and equipment needed in building, etc.

In these contracts, Doctor Achar offers special services for guaranteeing and insuring building. For example, Doctor Achar guarantees removal of building defects up to 40,000,000 rials within the framework of repair and maintenance services including provision of relevant materials and wage and does not receive any expense with regard to repairing and purchasing building materials according to the mentioned cost. Of the other salient specifications of the company, it should be referred to offering fair and reasonable prices with special controlled services.

It should be noted that branches of "Doctor Achar" will be set up across the country in the very near future.



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Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is reviving some of the ugliest political chapters of the 1990s with escalating personal attacks on Bill Clinton's character, part of a concerted effort to smother Hillary Clinton's campaign message with the weight of decades of controversy.

Trump's latest shot came on Monday when he released an incendiary Instagram video that includes the voices of two women who accused the former president of sexual assault, underscoring the presumptive Republican nominee's willingness to go far beyond political norms in his attacks on his likely Democratic rival.

The real estate mogul has said in recent interviews that a range of Clinton-related controversies, including those that are unsubstantiated or widely discredited, will be at the center of his case against Hillary Clinton.

"They said things about me which were very nasty. And I don't want to play that game at all. I don't want to play it -- at all. But they said things about me that were very nasty," Trump said. "And, you know, as long as they do that, you know, I will play at whatever level I have to play at. I think I've proven that."

Clinton's campaign has largely refused to engage the recent attacks directly, instead focusing -- as Clinton did on Monday during an appearance in Detroit -- on Trump's demeanor and job qualifications.

Clinton campaign spokesman Brian Fallon said on Monday on Bloomberg TV that Trump's attacks were part of a "strategy to try to distract from an issues-based campaign, which is what we intend to run... To me, every day he spends in this type of stuff is a missed opportunity by him in terms of doing the outreach he needs to do to improve his numbers."

The race already appears to be teed up as a referendum on the two candidates' pasts rather than their visions for the country's future. Clinton has increasingly directed fire at Trump's long history

Trump revives controversies around Bill Clinton



of derogatory statements about women, his bankruptcies and other controversies to argue he is unfit for office.

Trump, meanwhile, has sought to brand the former secretary of state as "Crooked Hillary," pointing to such issues as the Whitewater real estate controversy in the 1990s and foreign donations to her family's philanthropic organization over the past decade. Trump also regularly accuses the Clintons of hypocrisy on women's issues and argues that Hillary Clinton has been an "enabler" of her husband's infidelities by attempting to discredit the women in question.

In one recent interview, Trump said another topic of potential concern is the suicide of former White House aide Vincent Foster, which remains the focus of intense and far-fetched conspiracy theories on the Internet.

"It's the one thing with her, whether it's Whitewater or whether it's Vince Foster or whether it's Benghazi. It's always a mess with Hillary," Trump said in the interview.

The real estate mogul and his allies hope that his tactics will bring fresh scrutiny to the Clintons' long record in public life, which conservatives characterize as defined by scandals that her allies view as witch hunts. Through social media and Trump's ability to garner unfiltered attention on the Internet and the airwaves, political strategists believe he could revitalize the controversies among voters who do not remember them well or are too young to have lived through them.

At the same time, Trump has often dismissed scrutiny of his own behavior, including his questionable treatment of women, which served as tabloid fodder in New York City in the 1980s and 1990s. He has regularly criticized the media for reporting on events from decades ago.

The video that Trump published on Monday on Instagram -- and blasted out to his 8 million Twitter followers -- marked a stark turn in a campaign that has already been particularly nasty. The clip includes audio from two well-known accusers, Juanita Broaddrick and Kath-

leen Willey, describing their allegations against Bill Clinton, who is shown smoking a cigar. Then the video switches to a picture of Hillary Clinton and the sound of her laughing loudly, with the final words: "Is Hillary really protecting women?"

Broaddrick accused Bill Clinton of assaulting her in 1978, when she worked on his Arkansas gubernatorial campaign. Willey said the former president tried to kiss and grope her in a private hallway in the White House when he was president. Clinton has denied the allegations.

Democratic-aligned groups called Trump's attacks a distraction from his own record.

"Donald Trump is a known misogynist who tears down women for fun. His credibility among women is shrinking by the day, and playing 'gender card' politics isn't helping either," said Marcy Stech, vice president of communications at Emily's List. "It's these types of attacks that only draw more attention from Trump's extreme and hateful worldview toward women."

Rep. Peter T. King, R-N.Y., a Long Island moderate who voted against impeaching Bill Clinton in 1998, is skeptical of Trump's aggressive approach. He noted that House Republicans tried to run on similar issues in 1998 amid the impeachment debate and lost seats.

One issue on Trump's radar is the 1993 death of Foster, which has been ruled a suicide by law enforcement officials and a subsequent federal investigation. But some voices on the far right have long argued that the Clintons may have been involved in a conspiracy that led to Foster's death.

When asked in an interview last week about the Foster case, Trump dealt with it as he has with many edgy topics -- raising doubts about the official version of events even as he says he does not plan to talk about it on the campaign trail.

He called theories of possible foul play "very serious" and the circumstances of Foster's death "very fishy."

(Source: The Boston Globe)

5 dead after skydiving tour plane crashes in Hawaii

Five people died after a skydiving tour plane crashed and caught fire in Hawaii, one of two plane crashes reported on Monday in the islands.

It happened about 9:30 a.m. on the island of Kauai, the county fire department said. The pilot, two skydive instructors and two tandem jumpers were believed to be on the plane.

Four of them were pronounced dead at the crash site, just outside Port Allen Airport. One man was taken to Wilcox Memorial Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Kauai firefighters said the identities of the dead haven't been released.

The National Transportation Safety Board will work with officials to determine

the cause of the crash. The Federal Aviation Administration will also investigate.

The plane was a single-engine Cessna 182H, FAA spokesman Ian Gregor said. It's unclear what led to the crash.

A few hours later on Monday off the coast of the island of Oahu, emergency responders took one person to a nearby hospital after a small aircraft crashed in the water off Makaha Beach Park.

County lifeguards brought two people to shore from a single engine aircraft that was about 30 yards off the coast, Honolulu Fire Department Capt. David Jenkins said.

The other person in the airplane wasn't injured, Honolulu Emergency Services Department spokeswoman Shayne Enright said. (Source: AP)

Yemen: Bomb attack near Sana'a University kills two

At least two people have been killed in an explosion near Sana'a University in Yemen, Al Jazeera has learned.

An improvised explosive device went off on Tuesday in Yemen's largest city, also injuring at least two people, the sources said.

A security official said the blast happened during an event commemorating the country's 1990 unification, adding that the death toll was expected to rise.

The event was organized by the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement, who has controlled the Sana'a since September 2014 despite a 14-month-old Saudi military intervention in support of former President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

The Ansarullah movement was com-

memorating the May 22, 1990, unification of Yemen after centuries of separation between the north and the south, where British colonial rule was followed by a Soviet-backed communist government.

There was no immediate claim for Tuesday's bombing but both al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group have carried out past bombings against the Ansarullah, whose faith they regard as heretical.

Suicide bombings claimed by ISIL in March killed 120 worshippers at mosques frequented by the Ansarullah movement members.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

School threats could be latest in school "swatting"

Threats made against schools across the United States led to the evacuation of students on Monday in what could be the latest example of so-called "swatting" against schools.

In recent months, hoaxers playing online games have allegedly used proxy servers and other high-tech identity-disguising tools to anonymously threaten schools online or in phone messages with electronic voices to trigger a huge police response, including SWAT teams (Special Weapons And Tactics).

The latest threats led to the evacuation of schools in Colorado, Utah, Delaware, Minnesota, New Hampshire and Wisconsin. Media outlets in Britain also reported

evacuations.

The threats were made against elementary, middle and high schools, with some schools choosing to continue classes and others to put buildings on lockdown rather than evacuate. Some schools resumed classes after sweeps by authorities failed to turn up explosives or other threats.

Some officials described Monday's threats as automated or robotic and at least two -- at Lakewood High School outside Denver and at Ben Franklin Elementary School in Rochester, Minnesota -- came in just before noon local time. Also in Minnesota, Forest Lake Elementary in the city of Forest Lake was evacuated after get-

ting a bomb-threat call around 12:15 p.m.

Meanwhile, students at Murray High School outside Salt Lake City were sent home and bomb-sniffing dogs were brought in. No explosives were found.

Two elementary schools were evacuated in Colorado -- Liberty Point Elementary School in Pueblo West and Cherokee Trail Elementary in the Denver suburb of Parker. Cherokee Trail is in the same district where two 16-year-old girls are accused of plotting an attack against their high school. No other schools in the district were evacuated, spokeswoman Paula Hans said.

(Source: AP)

Yildirim announces Turkey's new cabinet

➔ Ahmet Arslan has been named as the transport minister, replacing the newly-appointed prime minister Yildirim.

Fatma Betül Sayan has been appointed as the new family and social policies minister, replacing Sema Ramazanoglu as the only female minister in the new

cabinet.

The following are the remaining appointments: Interior Minister Ekan Ala; Finance Minister Naci Agbal; Defense Minister Fikri Isik; Education Minister Ismet Yilmaz; Youth and Sports Minister Akif Cagatay

Kilic; Environment and Urbanization Minister Mehmet Ozhasaki; Forestry and Water Affairs Minister Veysel Eroglu; Health Minister Recep Akdag; Science, Industry and Technology Minister Faruk Oozlu; Labor and Social Security Minister

Suleyman Soyly; Food, Agriculture and Livestock Minister Faruk Celik; Customs and Trade Minister Bulent Tufenkci; Development Minister Lutfi Elvan; and Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avci.

(Source: Hurriyet)

Italian economic delegation meets with BIM Chief Executive

ECONOMY An Italian economic delegation, headed by former Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini, met with Afkhami Chief Executive of Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM).

The meeting also was attended by Chief Executive of Capinvest Company Raffaele Minchione, Allen J Economids Manager of Intl. Affair of the company, BIM Director for Intl. Affairs Onsoni and Head of Risk Control Bureau Rahimnia.

While expressing his hope to amicable trade and economic relations between Iran and Italy, Lamberto Dini said: "Italy has lived up to its international commitments

and called on Iranian officials to take constructive steps to broaden industrial development and interaction with countries in world."

For his part, Chief Executive of BIM Afkhami expounded on economic potentials of Iran and called for more cooperation of Italian side in development of Iranian projects as joint venture.

The main topics of discussion include as follows: taking advantage of financial resources, setting up Iran International Investment Fund, attracting financial resources for the Fund, etc.

Portable relief valve test device designed by domestic engineers

ECONOMY Relying upon domestic technical know-how and knowledge, expert engineers in southeast oilfield managed to construct the first portable relief valve test device.

Official in charge of Naein Oil Transfer Center Operation Abolfazl Soltani announced the above statement and said: "Portable relief valve test device is designed and constructed to study, test and calibrate safety valves of centers tasked with transferring oil and the installations with vast geographical scattering."

The device observes requirements

of standards of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), he said, adding: "The relief valve device enjoys the capability of testing all relief valves up to 8-inch size and 2500 pound/inch square pressure."

The device is designed and constructed in cooperation with technical and telecommunication units, technical inspection bureau and expert engineers at Naein Oil Transfer Center using the existing capacities, he maintained. In the end, he pointed to the software capability of the device which includes a databank with storing relief valves' data and periodical tests.

NEWS

Turning children of war into children of peace

➔ Children traumatized by conflict can be taught peacemaking skills and social cohesion to counter negative feelings, such as hate.

Financial support

Many are given an education or financial support to start a business. They are taught to take control of their lives and insist on their rights. Most of all, they may learn to forgive or be forgiven.

Such services are especially needed for the estimated 5.5 million children displaced by the long war in Syria.

Many have missed years of school unless they live in refugee camps equipped to provide education.

Some children inside Syria have grown up amid regular violence. And in Iraq, according to a study published in the journal Surgery, war violence between 2003 and 2014 was directly responsible for 1 in 6 injuries suffered by children.

As a peacemaking tactic, intervening on behalf of children is a practical way to curb a conflict. It is also humane, a way to embrace not only the most innocent but the idea of innocence as something possible for all.

(Source: The CSM)

Vietnam finishes 14TH national Parliamentary elections

Just like the story of Iranian 14th Majlis two months ago, Vietnam's 14th National Assembly (parliament) elections have finished on May 22nd, Vietnam Embassy in Tehran informed TT.

Some 63.5 millions Vietnamese, which counts for 95.84% eligible voters, have casted their votes to elect 500 representatives to the new National Assembly and nearly 4,000 deputies to 63 provincial People's Councils. The results will be announced within three weeks.

The 13th NA of the country made outstanding achievements in constitutional and legislative activities, including passing a total of 107 laws and codes, in the last five years. The most note-worthy is the formation of the 2013 Constitution and nearly 70 bills ratified after its inception, spanning almost all socio-economic fields. Specially, the last session of 13th NA completed appointments of the country's leadership, including the positions of the new NA Chairperson - the first lady ever in its history - and her vices, the President and his vices, and the Chief of the Supreme People's Court. It also approved the appointments of the Prime Minister, three Deputy Prime Ministers and other cabinet members.

The 14th tenure of the Parliament now is expected to continue those achievements. One of crucial tasks of Vietnam's new parliament is to supervise the implementation of the 2016-2020 social-economic development plan of the country, which is much like Iranian 6th development plan for almost the same period. As stated by its new Chairwoman Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan referring to the Parliament's resolution on the socio-economic development plans for 2016-2020, "in the next 5 years, we aim to ensure macro-economic stability, push year-on-year economic growth, boost economic restructuring in combination with renewing growth models, and improve productivity and economic efficiency and competitiveness, ... to boost administrative reform, thrift and waste reduction, while defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity. We must further globally integrate and strive to develop Vietnam into a modern industrialized nation".

New Parliaments and Iran - Vietnam Relations

Regarding bilateral ties, Iran and Vietnam have been enjoying friendly parliamentary interaction. The two Groups of Parliamentary Friendship (GPF) in each country have paid often visits to one another in recent years. Iranian GPF visited Vietnam in November 2014 and the Vietnamese one also paid a trip to Iran last year to boost the bilateral understanding and cooperations. A delegation of Vietnam new Parliament was scheduled to visit Vietnam in July.

During the Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang visit to Iran on March 2016, the two sides were set the target to boost the volume of Iran-Vietnam trade exchange to \$2bn in a five-year horizon. Now when new parliaments have been elected in both countries, they are expected to contribute to bilateral relations and to materialize the target.

Up to now, Iran's share of Vietnam's 148 billion market is only \$347 million, while Hanoi's share of Tehran's \$78 billion market is mere \$14 million. Big opportunities, however, are facing both nations. As Head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture - Mr. Mohsen Jalalpour emphasized on March 16, Vietnam's membership in major economic blocks such as ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and TPP (the Trans-Pacific Agreement) provides a good opportunity for Iranian exports first to the 91-million-people market, and then to ASEAN, the US, Canada and South Americas with very low tariffs. Iran can be a good choice with reasonable prices in areas of contracting, engineering and industry for Vietnam's growing economy. Iranian firms can enjoy favorable conditions in marine, oil and gas, petrochemicals, urban development and water and drainage projects in Vietnam.

In addition, the unique economic position of Iran at the crossroads of global transportation provides valuable opportunities for Vietnamese to gain access to a huge market of 400 million in an affluent area. The Iranian needs can become one of motivations for Vietnamese manufacturing sectors as Iranian economy is getting back strongly after the JCPOA.

Getting to a \$2 billions bilateral trade is a long but promising journey, since much room is still available for the two countries to work it out with mutual efforts.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The best way to pay for a lovely moment is to enjoy it. Richard Bach

LEARN ENGLISH

Poor Road Conditions

Alice: I'm really glad I let you talk me into going for a bike ride. It's been years since I've been on a bicycle.
 Sam: This is the only way to travel. You get to really see the scenery and enjoy the fresh air.
 Alice: Hey, watch out! You almost dropped into that huge pothole. This asphalt is cracked and the road is all bumpy.
 Sam: Thanks for the warning. Yeah, this asphalt really needs to be repaired. I'd ride on the gravel path instead, but it's full of ruts. Oh, slow down! There's a big dip ahead.
 Alice: Whoa! I didn't see that coming. I almost lost control on that slippery section of road. Sorry, I nearly swerved into you. Are you okay?
 Sam: Yeah, I'm fine. When I suggested this route, I was sure it would be an easy ride since it's paved all the way. I didn't bargain for these lousy road conditions.
 Alice: We'll just have to keep our eyes open and be thankful for these crash helmets!
 Sam: You won't blame me if you go flying, will you?
 Alice: Not if you break my fall.

(Source: espod.com)

Words & phrases

- scenery:** the natural features of a particular part of a country that you can see, such as mountains, forests, deserts etc.
- pothole:** a large hole in the surface of a road, caused by traffic and bad weather, which makes driving difficult or dangerous
- cracked:** something that is cracked has one or more lines on the surface because it is damaged but not completely broken
- bumpy:** a bumpy surface is flat but has a lot of raised parts so it is difficult to walk or drive on it
- gravel:** small stones, used to make a surface for paths, roads etc.
- rut:** a deep narrow track left in soft ground by a wheel
- dip:** a place where the surface of something goes down suddenly, then goes up again
- slippery:** something that is slippery is difficult to hold, walk on etc. because it is wet or greasy
- swerve:** to make a sudden sideways movement while moving forwards, usually in order to avoid hitting something
- pave:** to cover a path, road, area etc. with a hard level surface such as blocks of stone or concrete
- bargain for something:** to expect that something will happen and make it part of your plans
- lousy:** of very bad quality; terrible, awful
- crash helmet:** a very strong hard hat that protects your head, and is worn by racing car drivers, people riding motorcycles etc.
- go flying:** in this case would mean to hit something while you're riding the bike and to be thrown from the bike and fly in the air off the bike and onto the ground
- break someone's fall:** prevent oneself from falling too quickly and hurting themselves

QUIZ OF THE DAY

157) What does the idiom mean?
 Do not pull my leg.
 a) try to fool someone
 b) try to stop someone from walking
 c) to stop someone
 (Quiz No. 156 answer: c)

PHRASAL VERB

Stick out

- Meaning:** come out
- For example:** His shirt was sticking out from his trousers.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Elbow grease is the best polish

- Explanation:** hard work gives the best results



Be kind to me!

First S. Korean exclusive expo kicks off in Tehran

SOCIAL TEHRAN — In line with desk policies to encourage technological cooperation between Iran and South Korea the first Korean exclusive exposition kicked off in Tehran on Monday.

Concurrent with the exposition a seminar on the investment opportunities in Iran will be held as well, ILNA news agency quoted Kim Seung-Ho, the Korean ambassador to Iran, as saying.

The Korean envoy made the remarks during a meeting with Sorena Sattari, the Iranian vice president for science and technology, and Jaehong Kim, the president and CEO of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA).

"Over this seminar Iranian companies can explain the market condition in the Islamic Republic," he said, adding, "We have also made arrangements for a Korean delegation to come to Iran to invest."

The ambassador, additionally, expressed hope that industrial cooperation would lead to more cooperation in other fields too.



The INNOTEX exposition held in Tehran on May 22 to 25, 2016.

80 knowledge-based Korean companies attend the expo

The KOTRA board director noted that 80 knowledge-based Korean companies in various fields attended the exposition

and that it is the first and biggest Korean exposition in Iran after their president Park Geun-hye trip to Iran.

The director also went on to say that "we know enough about Iran's industrial

market and we don't take it for granted." "We are inclined to cooperate in industrial, technological and scientific sector as well," the director added.

Less resource-based economy

The Iranian official, for his part, pointed that Iran's economy has become less resource-based for the past three years.

The current administration gravely emphasizes on the knowledge-based economy as oil and gas constitute to less than 25 percent of the country's earning, Sattari noted.

"Iran has one of the most diverse economies in the region and we have made great advancement in technology and science," he added.

"Iran has the most up to date ICT and nanotechnology companies which offer a great potential for the Korean companies to invest," he suggested.

The fifth INNOTEX exposition, May 22 to May 25, is being held in Tehran with an exclusive pavilion for the Korean exposition.

Over 680,000 foreign nationals acquire literacy in Iran in 27 years

SOCIETY TEHRAN — More than 680 thousand foreign nationals became literate in Iran from 1984 to 2011, Ali Baqerzadeh, director of the Literacy Movement Organization of Iran, said.

Therefore, Baqerzadeh said, the literacy rate among foreign nationals mounted up from 6 percent to 62 percent, Mehr news agency reported.

Over the past year, falling on March 21, 2015 to March 19, 2016, some 25,000 foreign nationals became literate, of them 78 percent were women and



the rest were men, he noted.

The \$1.8-million costs of the 27-year program were all covered by Iran, he said, adding, the international finances for the literacy plan were on average less than 5 percent of all the resources that the Islamic Republic of Iran has allocated to the program.

From 2011 to 2015, 52,351 foreign nationals were provided with the literacy program coverage at a cost of \$75 million and 6 percent of the expenses were covered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), he concluded.

Tortoise in a baby stroller a novelty even for New Yorkers

New York City is filled with oddities that can surprise even the most die-hard New Yorkers and when Henry the tortoise turned up in a stroller in Central Park this week for his daily outing it turned more than a few heads.

The 17 pound (7.7 kg) sulcata tortoise is the pet of 24-year-old Amanda Green who lives in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan. He led a reclusive existence until Green took to Craigslist to advertise for a tortoise walker.

New Yorkers are accustomed to dog walkers but no so much tortoise walkers, so Green expected only a few responses.

Instead, the listing went viral and hun-

dreds of people from all over the world applied for the \$10-an-hour job.

"Just like a person who has a dog would hire a dog walker, I figured why not a tortoise walker?" Green said in an interview with Reuters TV.

"It took on a life of its own ... I heard from about 500," said Green, a copywriter for a style and beauty website.

The job went to Amalia McCallister, who has experience from having worked in a pet store.

"You honestly do have to keep your eye on him," McCallister said, describing the job as fun and not too taxing. "I could, maybe, read a book, but you've

got to make sure he doesn't eat the wrong thing."

Sulcata tortoises are native to north central Africa but they adapt well to different environments. Land-dwelling reptiles with a shell, they are mainly herbivores. Henry, who is taken to the park by stroller and then allowed to roam free, particularly likes dandelions and grass.

He has amassed an online fan base with more than 5,000 Instagram followers and nearly 300 likes on Facebook for his profile: "The Notortoise BIG". The profile's name is a play on the stage name used by the late rapper Christopher Wallace, who called himself Biggie Smalls and The

Notorious B.I.G.

Green adopted Henry a couple of years ago from a woman who was unable to manage her growing family and the tortoise. She said Henry is friendly and curious but needs lots of attention.

Green said she knows that Henry will one day outgrow her apartment. Male sulcata tortoises can reach a length of more than 30 inches (76 cm) and tip the scales at up to 200 pounds (90 kg).

"Am I going to somehow get a backyard in New York City?" Green asked. "These animals do need exercise so it is really great that I have a walker now."

(Source: Reuters)

IN FOCUS Mehr/ Maryam Kamyab



Domestically produced medicine containing Iodofolic, a combination of iodine and acid folic which are prescribed as an essential nutrition supplement during pregnancy, was unveiled in a ceremony at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences on Tuesday.

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

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

TEHRAN — More than 18,000 passengers were transferred to the book fair per hour on the weekend, deputy for transport and mobility of Tehran's Municipality said. A great deal of the book fair visitors used public transportation, more specifically bus and subway, to get to the fair, IRIB quoted Ja'far Tashakkori-Hashemi as saying. On average every 10 to 15 minutes a train would transfer the passengers while the time decreased to six and a half minutes on Thursday and Friday, Tashakkori-Hashemi noted. Therefore, he noted, every 6 and a half minutes 2,000 passengers got off the subway at the Shahr-e-Aftab station and in other words more than 18,000 passengers were transferred to the book fair per hour.

انتقال ۱۸ هزار مسافر با مترو به نمایشگاه کتاب در هر ساعت در آخر هفته

معاون حمل و نقل و ترافیک شهرداری تهران گفت: در آخر هفته بیش از ۱۸ هزار مسافر در هر ساعت به نمایشگاه کتاب منتقل شدند. به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما جعفر تشکری هاشمی گفت: بخش اعظم جمعیت که از نمایشگاه بازدید کردند، با استفاده از ناوگان حمل و نقل عمومی به ویژه مترو و اتوبوس خود را به نمایشگاه رساندند. تشکری هاشمی خاطر نشان کرد: میانگین حرکت قطارهای مترو برای انتقال مسافران به نمایشگاه ۱۰ تا ۱۵ دقیقه بود این فاصله در روزهای پنج شنبه و جمعه به ۶ دقیقه و نیم کاهش یافت. وی افزود: به این ترتیب در هر ۶ و نیم دقیقه، دو هزار مسافر در ایستگاه شهر آفتاب پیاده شدند و به عبارتی در هر ساعت، قطار بیش از ۱۸ هزار مسافر را به «شهر آفتاب» منتقل کرد.

Spanish priest pleads for divine intervention to repair road

MADRID (AP) — A Spanish priest says he has given up hope that local authorities in his parish of Xestoso in the northwest of the country will fix the potholes in the roads so he has asked for divine intervention.

Luis Roldan Patino celebrated Mass on a pitted road Sunday and splashed holy water to bless it. Each pothole is now marked with a wooden cross on the roadside so drivers can slow down before hitting them, he said.

Roldan Patino told journalists that "just like we can pray to the Lord for rain" he is pleading for divine intervention to fix the road because "it's going to be the only way to do that."

He said the authorities are "blind to the situation and we feel totally abandoned."

Victory over China boosted our confidence, Iran libero Zarif says

S P O R T S Iranian libero Farhad Zarif says that victory over China has boosted the players' confidence ahead of the Olympic Qualifying Tournament.

The competition will be held in Tokyo, Japan from May 28 to June 5.

Iran suffered two defeats against France but defeated China in friendly.

Raul Lozano's men have been scheduled to meet Poland on Wednesday in a warm-up match.

"The victory over China helped us to gain our confidence. We suffered a couple of defeats in the World Cup and our spirits were damaged," Zarif said.

"We are going to make our dreams true after 52 years. We are training hard in Japan and I think the friendly matches will help us to increase our knowledge about the rivals," he added.

The men's tournament will see Japan welcome the top three ranked teams in Asia according to the FIVB men's world ranking - Australia, China and Iran.

Joining them will be France and Poland, who claimed second and third place at the European Olympic Qualification Tournament in 2015, Venezuela, who ranked second at the South American Olympic Qualification Tournament and Canada who finished as runner-up at the NORCECA Olympic Qualification Tournament.

The top ranked Asian team and the top three ranked teams from each tournament will all claim a ticket to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. If an Asian team is ranked among the top three, then the next ranked team will qualify.



Sardar ranked fifth in the Russian League MVP

S P O R T S Iranian international striker Sardar Azmoun has been selected as the fifth most valuable player of the 2015-16 Russian Premier League season.

Azmoun, who scored six goals in his last six games for Rostov, named the Russian Premier League Player of the Month for May.

FC Krasnodar striker Fyodor Smolov was named as the MVP player of the season, followed by Zaur Sadayev (FC

Terek Grozny), Moussa Doumbia (FC Rostov), Hulk (Zenit) and Sardar Azmoun (FC Rostov).

The 21-year old striker, who was on loan from Rubin Kazan, has been linked with a move to numerous clubs including Spartak Moscow and Zenit St Petersburg.

Azmoun is one of the key players of Carlos Queiroz team in the road to 2018 World Cup in Russia. He has scored 11 goals in 16 appearances for Team Melli.



Iran crowned Africa Para Open Champion

Iran claimed the title of the 1st African Para Taekwondo Championships in Port Said, Egypt.

The Iranian team won five gold medals, two silvers and one bronze medal.

Iran finished in first place with 42 points, followed by Morocco (29 points) and Spain (15 points).

The inaugural competition attracted 30 athletes from 11 different countries.

As at all Continental Para Taekwondo Championships, the event opened to participants all around the world as part of the World Taekwondo Federation's (WTF's) ongoing commitment to providing athletes with regular access to world-class competitions.

Results:

- Category: K42 Male A -61 - Competitors: 4
1st - SADEGHIANPOUR, SAEID (Iran)
- 2nd - MUHTOROV, SANJARBEK (Uzbekistan)
- 3rd - UKPERA, SAMSON SAAONDO (Nigeria)
- 3rd - ABDENNOUR, EL FEDAYNI (Morocco)



- Category: K42 Male A -75 - Competitors: 1
1st - JAFARZADEH, MAHMOUD (Iran)
- Category: K42 Male A +75 - Competitors: 1
1st - NARIMANI, AHMAD (Iran)

- Category: K43 Male A -75 - Competitors: 3
1st - MAHMOUD, JAFARZADEH (Iran)
- 2nd - SHVETS, ANTON (Ukraine)
- 3rd - ISMAILI ALAOU, RACHID (Morocco)

- Category: K44 Male A -61 - Competitors: 9
1st - SANTANA SANTANA, AYTHAMI (Spain)
- 2nd - JAVANBAKHT, SAJJAD (Iran)
- 3rd - ADOUICH, AYOUB (Morocco)
- 3rd - EL MOKHTAR, DAOUDI (Morocco)

- Category: K44 Male A -75 - Competitors: 5
1st - AZIZIAGHDAM, ASGHAR (Iran)
- 2nd - AATIF, MOHAMMED (Morocco)
- 3rd - AMADO GARAGARZA, GABRIEL (Spain)
- 3rd - AZEDDINE, ZOUINE (Morocco)

- Category: K44 Male A +75 - Competitors: 4
1st - CELIK, HASIM (Germany)
- 2nd - ABDI SARTANG, MOHSEN (Iran)
- 3rd - OBIDJONOV, SARVARJON (Uzbekistan)
- 3rd - NARIMANI, AHMAD (Iran)

Dragan Travica joins Shahr-dari Oroumiyeh volleyball team

Former Italy setter Dragan Travica joined Iranian volleyball club Shahr-dari Oroumiyeh on Tuesday.

The 29-year-old player has joined Shahr-dari on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

It means Shahr-dari's setter Saeid Marouf will not be a member of the team for the next season.

The son of Shahr-dari head coach Ljubomir Travica, Dragan was born in Zagreb, Croatia.

He started his career with Sisley Treviso's youth team and, after one year with Sira Cucine Falconara, he de-

buted in the Serie A1 (Italy's top division) in 2004 with Kerakoll Modena.

In 2005-2006 he played in the Serie A2 at Crema, obtaining the promotion to Serie A1 and winning the award as best Under-23 player in the category. The following year he again played in A2 in Milan, again obtaining the promotion and the A2 Italian Cup.

Travica debuted for Italy national team in 2007 at Forli.

(Source: Tasnim)



Liverpool, United fined by UEFA over fans' misconduct

Liverpool and Manchester United have been fined by UEFA over a variety of charges, including illicit chanting, during their Europa League last-16 tie.

The Premier League clubs were fined 40,000 euros (30,536 pounds) each for the chants by their fans, with half the sum suspended for a probationary period of two years, European football's governing body said on its website (www.uefa.org) on Tuesday.

Liverpool were fined an additional 17,000 euros for other incidents, including supporters setting off fireworks and throwing objects. United received an additional 18,000 euro fine for crowd disturbances, including fans blocking stairways.

Liverpool were ordered to contact United within 30 days for the settlement of damages caused by their supporters at Old Trafford.

The Europa League games were marred by chants about the 1958 Munich air crash, in which eight United players were killed, and the Hillsborough stadium disaster of 1989 in which 96 Liverpool supporters died during their FA Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest.

Liverpool were beaten 3-1 by Sevilla in the Europa League final in Basel last week and both clubs were charged by UEFA for crowd disturbances, including fans setting off fireworks.

(Source: Reuters)

Man United should have hired Pep Guardiola over Mourinho - Eric Cantona

Manchester United legend Eric Cantona insists that the club should have hired Pep Guardiola instead of Jose Mourinho, as they are widely expected to do after the sacking of Louis van Gaal.

Cantona, 50, is one of the best players to have ever passed through Old Trafford and won four Premier League titles and two FA Cups after signing from Leeds United in 1992. However, the Frenchman told the Guardian that he did not believe that former Chelsea boss Mourinho was the right person to take the club forward.

"I love Jose Mourinho, but in terms of the type of football he plays I don't think he is Manchester United," Cantona said. "I love his personality, I love the passion he has for the game, his humour. He is very

intelligent, he demands 100 percent of his players. And of course he wins things.

"But I don't think it's the type of football that the fans of Manchester United will love, even if they win. He can win with Manchester United. But do they expect that type of football, even if they win? I don't think so."

Cantona even went as far as to suggest that United should have hired the man who will take over from Manuel Pellegrini at Manchester City this summer.

"Guardiola was the one to take. He is the spiritual son of Johan Cruyff," he added. "I would have loved to have seen Guardiola in Manchester [United]. He is the only one to change Manchester. He is in Manchester, but at the wrong one."

(Source: Soccernet)

FOOTBALL

Cristiano Ronaldo limps out of Real Madrid training but Zidane optimistic

MADRID — Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo limped out of training on Tuesday to increase concerns over his fitness for Saturday's Champions League final against Atletico Madrid.

Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane had earlier admitted that Ronaldo was not at peak condition but was confident he would be in good shape by the weekend.

Ronaldo, 31, has been troubled by a thigh strain through recent weeks and missed the first leg of the semifinal against Manchester City.

He returned for the second leg against City and also played in the 2-0 win over Deportivo La Coruna on May 14, scoring both goals, but was substituted at half-time and has not played a full part in training sessions since then.

At Tuesday's practice, Ronaldo limped out after a clash with Dani Carvajal and backup goalkeeper Kiko Casilla late in a mini training game.



"I had a small problem in the training session, a 'sandwich' [bocadillo] as they say in Spain. But tomorrow or the day after I will be fine," he told reporters.

Ronaldo also said he is at his "best level" ahead of this weekend's showdown with Atletico in Milan.

Zidane told a news conference at Madrid's media open day at their Valdebebas training ground ahead of Tuesday's session that he was not concerned over the Portugal captain's availability.

"There will be no problem with that," Zidane said. "We had a game among ourselves on Saturday and [Ronaldo] didn't play, but [only] as a precaution as he felt something small. He is preparing for the final and I think we'll be in good shape physically -- in the shape that we must be in."

Zidane confirmed he will be without France centre-back Raphael Varane on Saturday due to his thigh injury, but James Rodriguez and Alvaro Arbeloa are set to be available after minor knocks.

"Physically we are good," he said. "James is a bit better, Arbeloa too. The only serious problem we have is Varane, who will not be ready for Saturday. I don't believe it is as serious as we first thought. I hope he can play at the Euros with France. It is a big blow for him."

Zidane, who replaced Rafa Benitez as Madrid coach in January, is hoping to help the club become champions of Europe for the 11th time, but he stressed that defeat at the San Siro should not be viewed as failure.

"Failure is not doing our work, not giving our best," Zidane said. "In a final everything can happen, for both teams. We have to prepare the game as best we can. We have had a bit of time to prepare and then let's see what happens on Saturday."

Zidane said Madrid had changed since they were beaten 1-0 by Atletico in La Liga in February, and his team are now more balanced and less focused on simply attacking.

"We have had two months since we lost against Atletico," he said. "We have done good work since then. It's not enough just to have the ball."

"There are other things. This is a game in which everything will happen. It will be difficult. We're playing against a team that only defends well. People say [Atletico] defend well, it's hard to score goals, but I think they are a complete team. They can play, they can make things difficult for you."

Asked if Madrid were now a better team than two years ago, when he was assistant coach to Carlo Ancelotti as Atletico were beaten 4-1 in extra time in the Champions League final in Lisbon, Zidane said: "It's hard to say. The idea is try to be better on Saturday."

"The season has been good. The work we have done, the players have done phenomenal work. I don't want to compare. We're in good shape physically, but when the referee blows it's 50-50 and we will suffer until the end."

(Source: ESPN)

Flawless Nadal races into French Open second round

There were glimpses of the vintage Rafael Nadal as the Spaniard started his quest for a record-breaking 10th French Open title in merciless fashion, demolishing Australian Sam Groth 6-1 6-1 6-1 on Tuesday.

The fourth seed, who will play either Argentine Facundo Bagnis or French qualifier Kenny de Schepper in the second round, played flawless tennis, making only three unforced errors in a one-sided match.

Nadal, who turns 30 next week, has won two titles on clay this season, including the Monte Carlo Masters.

He ended his opponent's misery with a trademark crosscourt forehand winner on his second match point on Court Suzanne Lenglen.

"It's obvious that was a good start for me. The most important thing I had to do today was to return well and then I was playing with not many mistakes," Nadal, who his first French Open title in 2005, told a news conference.

"I think it's obvious that the opponent plays better on faster surfaces."

While he served 10 aces, Groth also made nine double faults as he failed to unsettle a rock-solid Nadal under threatening skies.

Nadal used his usual powerful top-spin to overwhelm his opponent who did not get a single break point.

"It was a fast match, fortunately I managed to break him very quickly," said Nadal, who last year was beaten in the quarter-finals by Novak Djokovic, whom he could face in the last-four this season.

"It was important because against such an opponent it's not easy to take his serve. He wanted to put pressure upon my shoulders," the Spaniard added.

"It was difficult for me to break him, but for him it was also difficult to break me. So I had to maintain some pressure. We could have reached 3-3, 4-4, and if it had been the case, things would have been made difficult for me."

(Source: reuters)



NEWS

Czech, Austrian duos to perform in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — Musicians from Czech and Austria will give two separate performances at Rudaki Hall in Tehran.

The first duet by pianist Eduard Kutrowatz and tenor Herbert Lippert from Austria will take place tonight, the Rudaki Foundation announced in a press release on Tuesday.



A repertoire highlighted with pieces by Richard Strauss, Ludwig van Beethoven, Hugo Wolf and several other composers is scheduled to be performed during the program entitled "Face to Face" song-recital.

Kutrowatz and Lippert performed pieces by Franz Schubert with other musicians at the Vienna Museum last Saturday.

The second concert entitled "Dreams of Violin" will be held next week on May 30 by violin virtuoso Jaroslav Sveceny and pianist Vaclav Macha from Czech.

The duo has previously performed in various concerts around the world, including the Lucie Stern Community Center in Palo Alto, California.

Tehran hosts intl. conference on civilizations of India and Iran

CULTURE TEHRAN — An international conference entitled "India, Iran, Two Great Civilizations: Retrospect and Prospect" was held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Tuesday.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Ali Jannati also attended the conference.

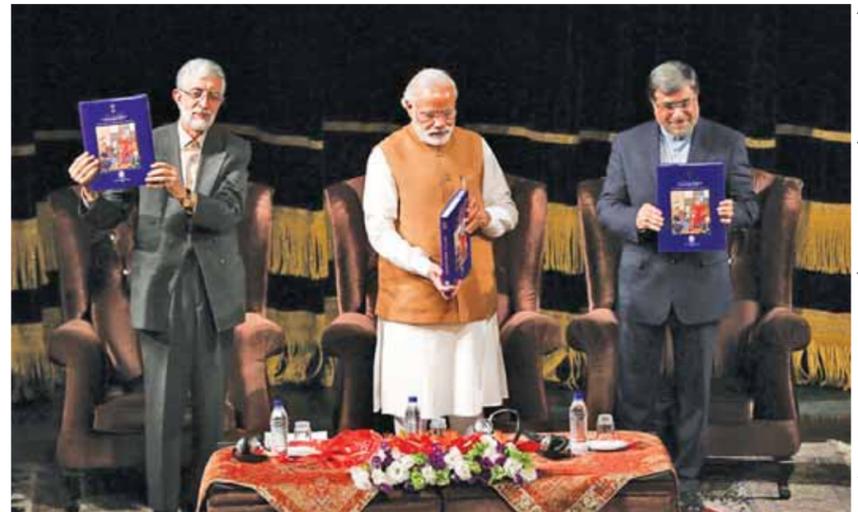
Speaking at the conference, Jannati called the relations between Iran and India very deep and said that the millions of copies of Persian manuscripts being preserved in Indian libraries are the sign of joint cultural commonalities between Iran and India, Persian media reported on Tuesday.

"There are prominent Indian literati and poets who have composed works in Persian, which indicates the deep cultural relations between the two countries," he added.

"Many Indian literary works have been translated in Iran and Iranian people are quite familiar with Indians and their great traditions," he added.

Pointing to the cultural agreement signed between Iran and India in 1956, Jannati said that there has been good cooperation between the two countries and hoped for further collaborations.

A Persian translation of the Kalilah and Dimnah, a book of animal fables from classical Persian literature, was unveiled at the end of the conference also attended



by Academy of Persian Language and Literature Director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel.
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Tehran at the head of a large delegation on Sunday. He is the very first Indian prime minister to visit Iran in 15 years.

Academy of Persian Language and Literature Director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel (L), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (C), and Culture Minister Ali Jannati (R) hold copies of a Persian version of the Kalilah and Dimnah after unveiling the book at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on May 24, 2016. (Mehr/Mohammad Moheimani)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Rastan to give concert in Tehran

CULTURE TEHRAN — Rastan, an all-female Iranian folk music ensemble, is scheduled to perform a wide repertoire of songs at the Persian Gulf Hall of the Art Bureau in Tehran on May 26.

The band led by tar virtuoso Azadeh Amiri will stage traditional pieces by renowned composers Abolhassan Saba, Aref Qazvini and Parviz Yahaqi, and some folk songs from the northern Iranian region of Mazandaran for an audience of females.

The ensemble also features Sara Hasti on kamancheh, Maryam Molla on tompak, Leila Zahiroddini on oud, Sheida Qazi on ney, Saba Ramezan on daf and vocalist Shahpar Zalzar.



Tehran exhibit displaying works by artists from nine countries

CULTURE TEHRAN — Paintings, photos, sculptures and sets of installation art by 17 artists from Iran and eight other countries are currently on display at Ace Gallery in Tehran.

Among the painters contributing to the showcase are Bertrand Peyrot from France, Hu Xing Yi from China, Maxim Santalov from Russia, Merijn Kavelaars from the Netherlands and Sam Samiei from Iran.

The weeklong exhibit that comes to end on Thursday also is showcasing works by photographers Julie Nymann from Denmark and Mattijn Franssen from the Netherlands as well as video arts by Ruben Cabenda from Suriname and Mitchell Gilbert Messina from South Africa.



Zlin festival to screen "Ranna Silence"

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian director Behzad Rafie's "Ranna Silence" will be screened at the 56th Zlin International Film Festival for Children and Youth, which will be held in Czech Republic from May 27 to June 3.

"Ranna Silence" tells the story of an Iranian village girl Ranna and her chicken, Kakoli.

The film won the award for best film at the 22nd Kikife International Children's Film Festival in Germany in 2015.



Iranian literati to review "Art as Experience"

CULTURE TEHRAN — A number of Iranian literati will come together in a session at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran today evening to review "Art as Experience", major writing on aesthetics by John Dewey (1859-1952), the U.S. philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer.

The translator of the book, Masud Olia, art expert Amir Maziar and several other literati and critics are scheduled to speak at the meeting.

Visual culture of Iranian children to go on show at Tehran museum

A R T TEHRAN — A new exhibition, reviewing three decades of visual creations for Iranian children, will open today at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

"The Karnameh Exhibition of Visual Culture of Iranian Children is a journey through the early illustrations of school books, documentaries and works produced by pioneers of illustrations in Iran specifically from 1950 to 1980," curator Ali Bakhtiari said in a press conference held at the museum on Tuesday.

"The huge collection of intersecting archive materials including copies of books, images of illustrations and posters along with a selection of short films and animations will survey the influence of the West, and the East on Iranian productions over those years," he said.

The collection, which includes over 2000 items, also contains copies of books published in the United States and the former Soviet Union in the Persian language for Iranian children, he added.

"This exhibit showcases how American illustrations have found their ways into Iranian images, followed by Russian and later European illustrations," Bakhtiari mentioned.



It also portrays the efforts made by Iranian artists who have tried to produce and introduce their own national illustrations, he added.

A film screening session has also been arranged on the side of the event to screen rarely-seen animations and short films made for or about children and provided by the National Film Archive of Iran.

"A Drop of Blood, A Drop of Oil" (1986) by Farshid Mesqali, "American Freedom" (1980) by Parviz Kalantari, and "Two Solutions for One" (1975) by Abbas Kia-

rostami and several more will be screened within the week-long screening sessions.

The early days of the victory of the (1979) Islamic Revolution as well as the beginning of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and the impression of those days on children have been showcased in photos by veterans Bahman Jalali, Rana Javadi, Maryam Zandi, Jasem Ghazbanpur and Seifollah Samadian in the photo section of the exhibit.

Among the highlights of the exhibit are works by prominent illustrators Sadeq Sandoqi and Ali-Akbar Sadeqi, famous for their illustrations of religiously-themed stories for school books.

Details of Iranian daily newspapers bearing images of posters of films on screen in world theaters are also being shown for interested visitors during the exhibit.

The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the National Film Archive of Iran and the Film Museum of Iran have collaborated in the project, which will be running until August 15.

The exhibit has been set up to avoid a repetition of unsuccessful projects of the past and opens a new window to the future of illustration, concluded art expert Ehsan Aqai, also attending the conference.

PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline/Gatha Ziatabari



Shahrdad Rohani conducts the Tehran Symphony Orchestra during a rehearsal at Tehran's Rudaki Hall on May 24, 2016. Rohani appointed to the orchestra on May 8.

Iran selects nominees for Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iran has announced its nominees for the 2017 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, a prestigious Swedish honor to promote children's and youths' literature in the world.

The nominees are author Farhad Hasanzadeh, illustrator Pejman Rahimzadeh and children's literature expert Turan Mirhadi.

A mobile library program initiated by Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) to promote reading in remote regions and villages has also been nominated for the award.

The nominees have been selected by the Children's Book Council of Iran, the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature, and the IIDCYA.

The prize worth SEK 5 million (about \$600,000) is the largest international children's and young adults' literature award in the world.

The award was established in 2002 by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs to commemorate writer Astrid Lindgren and to promote children's and youths' literature from around the world.

"Atlan" to compete in U.S. festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Moin Karimeddini's documentary "Atlan" will be screened at the Mammoth Lakes Film Festival (MLFF), which will be held in California from May 25 to 29.

"Atlan" is about the life story of an Iranian Turkmen horse-riding instructor.

The movie won the awards for best documentary at Cinéma Vérité, the Iranian international festival for documen-

taries, and at the Fajr International Film Festival.

The organizers of the MLFF also plan to screen Iranian filmmaker Rokhsareh Qaem-Maqami's acclaimed documentary "Sonita" during the closing ceremony of the festival.

"Sonita" is about an Afghan refugee living in Iran who fights to keep her dream of becoming a rap star alive, while her family attempts to sell her as a bride.

IAF displays silicone sculptures of legendary tar virtuosos

A R T TEHRAN — Realistically realistic silicon sculptures of three legendary Iranian tar virtuosos Jalil Shahnaz, Mohammadreza Lotfi and Gholamhossein Bigjehkhani are on display at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) during an exhibit, which opened to the public yesterday.

The statues delicately created by sculptor Alireza Khagani have been

placed in such a way that they appear to be performing a tar trio, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Monday.

Khagani has previously made several other sculptures of Iranian artists, literati and political individuals using the same technique.

To liven up the scene visitors may also listen to recorded sound tracks of the tar during the exhibit that will be running until June 7.