

## Ban admits removed S. Arabia from child-killer list due to extortion

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon publicly acknowledged Thursday that he removed the Saudi-led coalition currently bombing Yemen from a blacklist of child killers — 72 hours after it was published — due to a financial threat to defund United Nations programs.

Ban said that Saudi Arabia had exerted “unacceptable” undue pressure on the world body after a UN report blacklisted a Saudi-led military coalition for killing children in Yemen.

Riyadh had threatened to cut its funding of UN programs in response to the blacklisting last week and suggested a fatwa - an Islamic legal opinion - could be placed on the world body, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

The UN announced on Monday it had removed the coalition from its annual child rights blacklist pending a joint review by the organization and the coalition of child deaths and injuries during the year-long war in Yemen.

Ban described the decision as one of his most painful and difficult and said millions of other children likely would suffer if funding for UN programs was cut off.

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# Tehran, Moscow, Damascus join anti-terrorism hands

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — It seems that Iran, Russia and Syria are becoming more determined to fight terrorist groups in Syria.

This was the main theme of the tripartite

meeting held in Tehran on Thursday where defense ministers of Iran, Russia, and Syrian exchanged ideas on the latest developments in Syria and the region in general.

The meeting was arranged on the initiative

of the Iranian side.

“We made decisions for what must be done on the regional and operational levels in an agreed-upon and coordinated manner,” said Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan.



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## Baedinejad: Iran will not give up until all financial restrictions lifted

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Hamid Baedinejad, the Foreign Ministry director for political and international affairs, said on Friday that Iran will not give up until all financial restrictions against the country are removed following the conclusion of the nuclear agreement.

However, Baedinejad said the goals of the nuclear deal should not be lowered to economic benefits.

Writing on his telegram, Baedinejad said, “Iran has enough tools to put pressure on the other side. However, this should not cause us to ignore the important achievements of nuclear enrichment and other important nuclear programs. Secondly, we should not lower objectives of the JCPOA to economic benefits. And thirdly, by lowering the values of important economic and commercial steps following the JCPOA, which has led to important openings for our country and the cancellation of tens of sanctions in transport, shipping, insurance, ..., oil export and petrochemical products...” it is not acceptable to “announce that the JCPOA has not resulted.” He added, “It is enough not to forget the situation in the past. Be sure that nobody denies the achievements.”

## Damascus envoy in Russia calls for backing Syrian army in war on terror

The Syrian ambassador to Moscow said the entire world has to join the Syrian people and armed forces in the fight against terrorism, describing the Syrian army as the “safety valve” against extremism.

Riyad Haddad, who was addressing the extensive meeting of the Committee for Protecting Christian Values at the Russian State Duma, urged international organizations to do their job in preserving international peace and security and to take a firm line against countries supporting terrorism in Syria.

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## ‘Trump’s support base is complicated to assess’

**INTERVIEW**  
By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Gautam Adhikari, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington DC, says it is difficult to assess Donald Trump’s “support base”.

Adhikari tells the Tehran Times that Trump is “attracting wide support from white males, religious conservatives as well as independents some of whom are libertarians.”

However, he says, “Metropolitan America leans towards Democrats.”

Barack Obama launched a coordinated push to unify Democrats against Trump on Thursday, formally endorsing Hillary Clinton for



the first time after a conciliatory meeting with her primary opponent Bernie Sanders.

In a rapid sequence of events in Washington that contrasted with renewed rancor among Republicans, Sanders emerged from the Oval Office peace talks with the president to say he was now prepared to meet Clinton and work with her after losing Tuesday’s primary elections.

Following is the full text of the interview with Adhikari:

**■ Which social classes mostly support Democrats in the presidential race?**

A: Democrats tend to draw good support from all ideologically liberal and progressive sections of the U.S. electorate: from ethnic minorities and from most immigrants, particularly those who have come into this country after immigration restrictions were eased in 1965. Hillary Clinton seems to be getting a clear majority of women on her side plus almost the entire African-American community as well as significantly wide support from Latino-Americans and Asian-Americans. Her weak spot in the electorate this time is the white male vote.

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## “Wednesday, May 9” competing in Sydney filmfest

**ART** **TEHRAN** — “Wednesday, May 9” by Iranian filmmaker Vahid Jalilvand is competing in the 63rd Sydney Film Festival, which is currently underway in the Australian city.

The 102-minute social drama starring Niki Karimi and Amir Aqai tells the story of Jalal, a man who publishes an unusual advertisement in one of Tehran’s morning papers to donate \$10,000 to a needy person.

“Wednesday, May 9” won a FIPRESCI Prize at the 72nd Venice International Film Festival.



A scene from “Wednesday, May 9”

It also gained the Golden Puffin for best film at the Reykjavik International Film Festival (RIFF) in Iceland in October 2015.

The festival, which will come to an end on June 19, will also screen “Sonita”, a joint production of Iran, Germany and Switzerland.

Directed by Iranian filmmaker Rokhsareh Qaem-Maqami, the documentary is about Sonita, an Afghan refugee living in Iran who fights to keep her dream of becoming a rapper alive, while her family attempts to sell her as a bride.

## S. Korea’s condensate imports from Iran to soar in June, squeeze out Qatar

South Korea, Asia’s largest buyer of condensate, will step up purchases of the ultra-light oil from Iran by more than 50 percent in June, two sources said, as competitive pricing squeezes out rival oil from Qatar.

Expected June shipments of condensate from Iran may reach at least six million barrels, or 200,000 barrels per day (bpd), said the sources. This would be a record level of imports, four times that in January when sanctions on Tehran were lifted, according to data from Korea National Oil Corp.

In contrast, condensate imports from Qatar in April have fallen to 5.32 million barrels, down 19 percent from January, KNOOC data showed.

Iranian condensate imports could gain further momentum in the fourth quarter, if Iran clinches

a deal with Hyundai Chemical to supply the company’s new splitter.

Talks between Hyundai Chemical and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) on a term supply deal are under way, a third source familiar with the matter said.

South Korea, the world’s fifth-largest crude buyer, has more than doubled its oil imports from Iran in the first four months of this year to about 248,000 bpd after Western sanctions on Iran were removed in January.

Iran has ramped up exports much faster than analysts had expected, using international tankers to help ship its oil.

Two South Korean buyers, refiners SK Energy and Hanwha Total Petrochemical Co, are set to lift at least six million barrels of Iranian South Pars condensate (SPC) in

June, up from about 3 million to 4 million barrels in April and May, two sources with knowledge of the matter said.

A Hanwha spokesman said the refiner planned to import about 2 million barrels of Iranian condensate in June, as it was cheaper than oil from Qatar and the company wanted to diversify its sources of supply.

SK Energy officials declined to comment.

Iran’s SPC was as much as \$5 a barrel cheaper than Qatar’s deodorized field condensate (DFC) at the start of the year, but the gap has since narrowed to \$2 to \$3, trade sources said. Both products are priced off Dubai crude.

“Compared with DFC, it’s (Iranian condensate) much cheaper. Naturally they’ll want to take as much as possible,” an oil trader

said.

Hyundai Chemical, a joint venture between Hyundai Oilbank Co and Lotte Chemical, could be Iran’s next customer as it is due to start trial runs at a new 110,000 bpd splitter in Daesan on the country’s west coast in August-September, trade sources said. SPC could make up more than half of the unit’s feedstock, one source said.

A Hyundai Oilbank spokesman said the facility, which splits condensate into fuels like naphtha for use in the petrochemicals industry, would be completed in the second half but declined to elaborate.

Qatari condensate exports are expected to drop from late in the third quarter as the oil will be used to supply a new splitter at Ras Laffan, north of Doha.

(Source: Reuters)

## Boeing in talks with Iran on big deal

Boeing is studying the passenger plane needs of Iranian airlines.

“We’re following the licensing process outlined by the U.S. government,” the company told Trend on June 8.

“Accordingly, we have applied for and received a license to assess the current commercial passenger airplane needs of U.S. Government-approved Iranian airlines,” Boeing’s representative told Trend.

The license permits the company to engage approved Iranian airlines to determine their actual fleet requirements.

“Our European competitor, Airbus, is advancing its interests in the market, and Canada recently indicated that it will permit Bombardier access to the Iranian market as well. We understand that the situation in the region is complicated and ever changing and we will continue to follow the U.S. government’s guidance as it relates to conducting business with Iran,” said the company.

Iran signed a major deal worth \$27 billion with Airbus in January to purchase 118 planes from the company. The deal with Airbus was sealed during a state visit to Paris by Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani.

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## EDITORIAL

By Hassan Lasjerdi  
Tehran Times editor-in-chief

## To Ban Ki-moon

Last month, the Saudi-led coalition was put on a blacklist over its role in the deaths of children in Yemen. The UN report, which annually shames the worst perpetrators, put the blame on the coalition for 60 percent of 1,953 children recorded as killed or maimed in the conflict in 2015.

However, one week after the UN report, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon decided to de-list Saudi Arabia, calling it “one of the most painful and difficult decisions I have had to make.”

The UN leader attributed his decision to the effects it would have on other UN programs.

“I also had to consider the very real prospect that millions of other children would suffer grievously if, as was suggested to me, countries would de-fund many UN programs. Children already at risk in Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen and so many other places would fall further into despair.

There are so many, so many much more serious issues. Because of this, you cannot burn down whole house.”

Ban accused Saudi Arabia and its military allies of placing “undue pressure” on the international organization for a changed decision as Saudis had threatened to cut their dollars to UN humanitarian agencies.

The decision has come under heavy criticism by human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

The HRW accused Ban of giving in to “political manipulation” in the wake of furious protests from Riyadh. It said the UN had executed a “shocking flip-flop.”

Amnesty International decried “blatant pandering”, which it said “damages the credibility of the UN as a whole” while Oxfam described the decision to retract its findings “a moral failure.”

Now that the UN chief has come clean with Saudis’ threatening mechanism gives rise to grave skepticism over the credibility of the international body.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Prayer leader urges cooperation to solve problems

**TEHRAN** — The interim Friday prayer leader of Tehran has advised the three branches of government should remain in cooperation to resolve problems facing the country, Mizan reported.

Ayatollah Mohammad-Ali Movahedi Kermani said, "The revolution is a trust for you and me today; be careful not to be threatened by ignorance or injustice."

He said all officials in charge should be bent on turning the wheels of economy to reach the phase of resistance economy.



Embassy warns Iranians in Turkey against terror acts

**TEHRAN** — The Iranian embassy in Ankara has urged Iranians who are visiting or residing in Turkey to avoid attending crowded sites and events because of the high probability of terror acts in recent days.

"Consular sections of Iran's embassy in Ankara, Istanbul, Erzurum and Trabzon are ready to help Iranian nationals if necessary," read part of the announcement, ILNA reported.



Zarif planning visit to Germany: envoy

**TEHRAN** — Zarif is slated to travel to Germany on June 15. While there, he will meet with his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steimeier.

The announcement was made by Iranian Ambassador to Berlin Ali Majedi in a Friday interview with ISNA.

Majedi also said Germany's Vice Chancellor and Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Sigmar Gabriel is going to visit Iran in October.



Croatian president praises Iran in visit review

**TEHRAN** — The Croatian president has praised Iran and emphasized ties with the Islamic Republic in a review of her recent trip to Tehran published in the Zagreb-based Vecernji list daily newspaper on Thursday.

Iran is an important and powerful country in its region and the Islamic world, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic wrote.

"Honesty and respect are above all contracts, and Iranians revere these two things," she wrote in part of her review.

"After the successful experience of Iran, I believed more than ever in the banality of our quarrels, realizing that we do not need any tug-of-war or political craft."



Iranian Navy to unveil new watercraft soon

**TEHRAN** — The Iranian Navy will unveil a number of surface and sub-surface watercraft in the near future, according to Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari.

Sayyari also pointed to the Navy's operations, stating that it has so far escorted 2,500 commercial ships through the Gulf of Aden, Nasim reported on Friday.



'Iran has no clandestine missile program'

**TEHRAN** — The IRGC's deputy commander in cultural affairs has said Iran has no clandestine missile programs and if there is any program, it will be publicized.

"Improving missile and defense power is a strategy with the Islamic Republic of Iran, therefore we will never abandon it," Hossein Nejat told Fars on Friday.



Hope parliamentary faction to finalize charter next week

**TEHRAN** — The Hope parliamentary faction will finalize its charter next week, according to spokesman Mahmoud Sadeqi.

Sadeqi also said that the members of the permanent board of directors of the faction will be selected in a meeting in the near future, ICANA reported on Friday.

# Tehran, Moscow, Damascus join anti-terrorism hands



There has been close cooperation among the three countries in the Syrian battlefield, where the Russian airpower has played a vital role in fighting terrorist groups, helping the Syrian army to gain ground against them.

Dehqan noted that "The terrorists and their supporters must know that the group fighting against them is determined to continue this route until the end and will do so."

Also, the Iranian defense minister strongly reprimanded Washington and Riyadh's support for what they call "moderate rebels" as further proof of the falsehood of their anti-terror slogans.

Unlike Iran and Russia, the U.S. and its regional allied have been training and supporting specific terrorist groups which they prioritize over other fighting forces in Syria. How the groups are different from other terrorist groups is ambiguous yet.

The Iranian defense chief went on to say that the three countries were determined to deliver a "decisive" battle against "all terrorist groups" wreaking havoc in Syria and elsewhere in the region.

On the root causes of the regional crises, Dehqan said "The aggressive policy based on hegemony, which is being pursued by the United States, Israel and some other countries, which patronize terrorism, stands behind the current regional crises."

"Iran has always been and remains a reliable anchor of regional security that has always been opposed to violence,

aggression, terror and terrorism," Dehqan added.

**Tehran backs ceasefire in Syria if it does not strengthen terrorists**

During the trilateral talks, Dehqan reiterated Iran's support for talks between the Syrian government and opposition groups.

Tehran welcomes any cessation of hostilities in Syria provided that it doesn't allow for a reinforcement of terrorists in the war-torn country, he pointed out.

"We agree to a guaranteed ceasefire that doesn't lead to the strengthening of terrorists in this country," Dehqan noted. "The first step toward restoring security to the region is comprehensive ceasefire."

**Syrian defense minister: No success in anti-terror campaign without Iran**

Also, during the meeting, Syrian Defense Minister Fahd Jassem al-Frej said Syria is bent on striking terrorism everywhere on its land "with valor and determination", backed by friends and allies.

"For over five years Syria has been confronting Takfiri terrorism led by the U.S. which exerted immense efforts to fight Syria, making it imperative for us to confront terrorism," he explained.

He offered gratitude to Iran and Russia as "friends" for their supports, voicing confidence in Syria's victory over terrorism which will mark an end to terrorism in the entire region.

Al-Frej described the results of an earlier meeting he held with his Russian counterpart Sergey Shoygu as "excellent", adding that a recent array of measures is

**Iranian defense chief says Tehran welcomes any cessation of hostilities in Syria provided that it doesn't allow for a reinforcement of terrorists in the war-torn country.**

## Economic situation is improving, Araqchi says

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Deputy Foreign Minister **d e s k** Abbas Araqchi said on Thursday that the economic situation in Iran is improving since the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into force.

However, he said it takes time for the people to see the results of the nuclear deal, because of negative consequences of sanctions.

The government is moving based on the resistance economy and policies set by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei to lessen effects of the sanctions, the deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs noted in a ceremony in the city of Sorkheh, Semnan province.

He also noted that the nuclear negotiating team up-

held the Iranian people's rights under the Leader's guidance.

Protection of the country's "glory" and "independence" were the most important achievements of the nuclear talks, said Araqchi who was a lead negotiator in nuclear talks with great powers.

He also said that the country's power brought the major powers into the negotiating table.

Araqchi called "the people's resistance" and "the country's scientific capability" the elements of Iranian power.

Iran and the 5+1 group - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany - finalized the text of the JCPOA in Vienna in July 2015. The deal took effect in January 2016.



## Iran, Russia and Syria determined to fight terrorism: Shamkhani

It is necessary that inter-Syrian dialogue replace "war and bloodletting" in the country, Iran insists

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Supreme **d e s k** National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani said on Thursday that Iran, Russia and Syria are strongly determined to fight Takfiri terrorism.

During a meeting with Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu in Tehran, Shamkhani praised Russian President Vladimir Putin for supporting the fight against terrorism in Syria.

An increase in political, security and military complexities of the Syrian crisis will lead to more killings and sufferings by the Syrian people, the top security official noted.

The U.S. and its allies' approach towards the Syrian crisis shows that they seek to create a "margin of security" for the Zionist regime of Israel and influence the public opinion to achieve their political objectives, he said.

Shamkhani, a former defense minister, also highlighted the need to maintain the Syrian territorial integrity and national unity.

Condemning open interference in the Syrian internal affairs, he noted it

is the Syrian people who should decide on the competency of their governing system.

Elsewhere, he urged the international community to help Iran, Russia and Syria in their fight on terrorism.

It is necessary that inter-Syrian dialogue replace "war and bloodletting" in the country.

**'International duty'**

For his part, Shoygu said fighting terrorism is an "international duty".

Shoygu expressed hope that meeting of the Iranian, Russian and Syrian defense chiefs would increase cooperation in fighting terrorism and helping establish security in Syria.

**'Iran, Russia and Syria to activate political maneuvering'**

During a separate meeting with Syrian Defense Minister Fahd Jassem al-Frej on Friday, Shamkhani also said Iran, Russia and Syria will activate their "political capacity" to reach a strategy in order to end the war in Syria.

He reiterated the position by the Islamic Republic that Iran will continue supporting Syria in campaign against



Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu (L) and Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani shake hands during a meeting in Tehran, June 10, 2016.

terrorism.

Shamkhani also said that "counter-constructive and political" view of the U.S. and its allies toward the Syrian crisis has greatly exacerbated the situation on the ground.

He described the inter-Syrian dialogue as the only way to put an end to the conflict in the country.

Frej, for his part, thanked Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Iranian government and people for supporting Syria in war against terrorists.

General al-Frej said the Syrian government and people keep fighting terrorism till the phenomenon is eradicated.

## Iran condemns terrorist attack in Kazakhstan

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign **d e s k** Ministry spokesman condemned on Thursday a terrorist attack in the Kazakh city of Aktobe and offered condolences to the Kazakh government and families of victims.

Hossein Jaber Ansari highlighted the importance of countering extremism and its ideological origins.

He said the incident indicates vulnerability of the Central Asian region to the terrorist activities.

On June 5, unidentified gunmen attacked two gun shops and a military unit in Aktobe, killing seven people and injuring 37 others, most of them servicemen. Thirteen assailants were killed, nine were arrested in a counter-terror operation

in the city, with six criminals still at large, Press TV reported.

According to Reuters, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said on Wednesday that armed attacks in the city of Aktobe had been orchestrated from abroad and pledged to use the toughest measures to "suppress extremists and terrorists".



# Iraqi troops enter southern Fallujah for first time in 2 years

A column of black Humvees carrying Iraqi special forces rolled into southern Fallujah, the first time in more than two years that government troops have entered the western city held by the ISIL terrorist group.

The counterterrorism troops fought house-to-house battles with the militants in the Shuhada neighborhood, and the operation to retake the city is expected to be one of the most difficult yet.

"Daesh (ISIL) are concentrating all their forces in this direction," said Gen. Haider Fadel, one of the commanders of the counterterrorism forces, using the Arabic acronym for the ISIL militants.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi promised a swift victory when he announced the start of the operation on May 22 to liberate Fallujah, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Baghdad. But the complexity of the task quickly became apparent.

Although other security forces from the federal and provincial police, government-sanctioned Shia volunteers and the Iraqi military have surrounded the city, only the elite counterterrorism troops are fighting inside Fallujah at this stage of the operation. And they are doing so under the close cover of U.S.-led coalition airpower.

"We expect to face more resistance, especially because we are the only forces entering the city," Fadel said.

The ISIL terrorist group has suffered setbacks on several fronts in the region where it captured large swaths of territory two years ago. In northern Syria, U.S.-backed rebels made a final push Wednesday in the town of Manbij — a key waypoint on the ISIL supply line to the Turkish border and its self-styled capital of Raqqa. And in Libya, forces loyal to a UN-brokered government have advanced deep inside the coastal city of Sirte, the main stronghold of the ISIS group's local affiliate.

Fallujah is one of the last ISIL strongholds in Iraq. Government forces have



slowly won back territory, although ISIL still controls parts of the north and west, as well as the second-largest city of Mosul.

The sky above Fallujah's Shuhada neighborhood on Wednesday filled with fine dust and thick gray smoke obscuring minarets and communication towers as artillery rounds and volleys of airstrikes cleared the way for Iraqi ground forces.

At a makeshift command center, Iraqi forces coordinated the operation via hand-held radios, with Australian coalition troops stationed at a nearby base. One of the Australians listed the casualties among the militants.

"Two KIA (killed in action), one wounded with a missing arm — his right arm," the unidentified Australian radioed after calling in an airstrike on ISIL fighters.

A frontier city on the easternmost edge of Anbar province, Fallujah has long been a bastion of support among its mostly Sunni population for anti-government militants following the 2003

U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

It is symbolically important to both sides: Many of the Iraqi forces fought al-Qaeda in Iraq — the predecessor to ISIL — in this same territory, and the city was the scene of some of the bloodiest urban combat with U.S. forces in 2004.

Its high value is one of the reasons ISIL has deployed well-trained snipers and built extensive networks of tunnels to defend it.

"We are having to fight two battles — one above the ground and one below," said Iraqi Maj. Ali Hamel of the military's intelligence wing.

While Fallujah's sparsely populated northern outskirts were recaptured quickly by Iraqi forces, ISIL used the initial days of the operation to pull the majority of its fighters into the city center, taking about 50,000 civilians with them for use as human shields.

Once Iraq's special forces began trying to punch inside the city limits, the pace of operations slowed.

In past battles with ISIL in places like Ramadi, Fadel said, one of the signs that the militants were losing their grip on territory was when civilians begin fleeing the city center.

"So far, we haven't seen that" in Fallujah, he said. "Once we do, it will only be a matter of time."

The ISIL militants "had chosen their battle space," a counterterrorism officer said, explaining how the group set up many defensive positions in the southern outskirts to try to bog down the Iraqi forces before they even had a chance to enter.

That southern neighborhood of Nay-miyah, which was secured by Iraqi forces on Sunday, bears the scars of a protracted fight, a now-common sight in Iraqi territory that has been won back from ISIL.

Walls stood shredded by artillery fire, with almost every home either partially collapsed or pancaked. Craters from airstrikes left many main roads unusable. Convoys of armored Humvees were forced to use the neighborhood's unpaved side streets instead, churning up the soft sand beneath their treads.

"We're expecting another big fight like this one before Fallujah falls," the officer said, explaining that he anticipated Iraqi forces would encounter another heavily fortified neighborhood. The officer spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief reporters.

On Wednesday evening, the prime minister visited the recently retaken territory.

Al-Abadi was joined by Lt. Gen. Abdel Wahab al-Saadi, the counterterrorism commander of the Fallujah operation.

It was al-Abadi's fourth trip to the area since the operation began. Despite territorial victories against ISIL, the Iraqi leader continues to grapple with a deepening political crisis and growing social unrest in Baghdad.

(Source: Time)

## Israel revokes Ramadan permits for Palestinians after attack

Israel suspended most special permits for Palestinians to visit occupied territories during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and beefed up police patrols in Tel Aviv, after two Palestinians carried out a shooting in Tel Aviv Wednesday night that killed four Israelis.

COGAT, an Israeli defense body, said 83,000 permits for Palestinians in the West Bank to visit relatives in Israel during Ramadan had been frozen. Israel considers the Ramadan permits a goodwill gesture toward Palestinians.

The special Ramadan permits were also suspended for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including permits to visit relatives in Israel, travel abroad and attend prayers at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, COGAT said.

In addition, the military has frozen Israeli work permits for 204 of the attackers' relatives, and is preventing Palestinians from leaving and entering the West Bank village of Yatta, the attackers' home village. COGAT said entering or leaving will only be permitted for humanitarian and medical cases.

In Tel Aviv, extra police units have been mobilized,

mainly around the city's central bus station and train stations, said police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld. Israelis quickly returned to routine: the outdoor cafe area where the shooting took place was open to customers on Thursday morning.

Two Palestinians opened fire near a popular open-air market in central Tel Aviv on Wednesday night, killing four Israelis and wounding nine others, in one of the deadliest attacks in an eight-month wave of violence.

The shooting occurred at the Saron market, a series of restored buildings that have been transformed into a popular tourist spot filled with crowded shops and restaurants. The complex is across the street from Israel's military headquarters and is often filled with tourists and young soldiers in uniform.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with his defense minister and security leaders shortly after the attack and then traveled to the scene. He called the attack a "cold blooded murder by despicable terrorists," according to a statement from his office.

Hamas, the Islamic resistance group that rules Gaza,



welcomed the attack but did not claim responsibility for it. Hamas official Mushir al-Masri called the shootings a "heroic operation" and the group later issued an official statement promising the "Zionists" more "surprises" during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

(Source: AP)

## White House OKs expanded Afghanistan airstrikes

After months of debate, the White House has approved plans to expand the military's authority to conduct airstrikes against the Taliban when necessary, as the violence in Afghanistan escalates, senior U.S. and defense officials said.

Several officials said the decision was made in recent days to expand the authority of U.S. commanders to strike the Taliban and better support and assist the Afghan forces when needed in critical operations, using the U.S. troops already in the country. There is a broad desire across the Obama administration to give the military greater ability to help the Afghans fight and win the war.

The 9,800 U.S. troops still in Afghanistan, however, would still not be involved in direct combat.

The officials were not authorized to talk publicly about the discussions so spoke on condition of anonymity.

The decision comes as the Afghans struggle with a resurgent Taliban, particularly in the south. But it is fraught with political sensitivities because President Barack Obama had made clear his commitment to get U.S. forces out of Afghanistan. That effort, however, has been stalled by the slow pace of the development of the Afghan military and the resilience of the Taliban.

The decision will give U.S. forces greater flexibility in how they partner with Afghan forces, but the new authorities must be used in selective operations that are deemed to have a strategic and important effect on the fight.

The Taliban are refocusing their attention mostly on the southern provinces of Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan, according to U.S. and Afghan military officials, although the insurgents also have struck elsewhere, such as in Kunduz province in the north, where they overran and held the provincial capital for a few days last fall.

The results have been daunting: The UN says 3,545 Afghan civilians were killed and 7,457 wounded in 2015, most of them by the Taliban.

The U.S. has continued to conduct counterterrorism strikes against al-Qaeda and ISIL terrorist group in Afghanistan. But strikes against the Taliban were largely halted at the end of 2014, when the U.S.-led coalition's combat role ended. Limited strikes have been allowed in cases of self-defense or when Afghan forces were in danger of being overrun.

Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, has discussed with Defense Secretary Ash Carter his recommendations for moves

the U.S. can make to further assist the Afghans. And there have been repeated conversations with the White House in recent weeks.

Pentagon press secretary Peter Cook, asked whether the administration was looking at expanding the U.S. military's authorities to strike the Taliban more broadly, said: "In every step of our review of Afghanistan, the question of what's the best way to use our forces is something we're constantly looking at. It's also in the same sense that we're looking at the number of troops. We are always looking at the authorities question and the best use of our troops."

Nicholson's predecessor, Gen. John Campbell, made it known before he left Kabul in March that he believed Carter should consider expanding U.S. military authorities to take on the Taliban.

As an example, U.S. troops are able to partner with Afghan special operations forces, but this new decision would allow commanders to have U.S. troops work more closely with conventional Afghan units in critical battles, including providing close air support or helping to call in strikes. Officials stressed that this will not allow routine U.S. airstrikes against the Taliban, just provide authority to take those actions when commanders believe

they are vital to the fight.

Also under discussion is whether the U.S. should reduce the number of American troops in Afghanistan to 5,500 as planned by the end of this year, or if a higher number is needed. Campbell favored keeping the troop level at the current total of 9,800 into next year.

U.S. officials have insisted they are encouraged by the Afghan forces' resilience, despite their high rate of battlefield casualties. And they point to the Taliban's loss of its leader, Mullah Mohammed Akhtar Mansour, who was killed by a U.S. drone strike in late May in Pakistan.

The U.S. and NATO formally ended their combat mission in Afghanistan at the end of 2014, but have continued to provide support and assistance as the Afghan forces struggle to grow and gain greater capabilities, including in their air operations.

Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland said last week that Nicholson was sending his assessment of the ongoing security threat there and the needs of the Afghan military to U.S. Central Command and to the Pentagon, and was expected to brief senior military leaders soon afterward.

(Source: AP)

## NEWS

### Ban admits he removed S. Arabia from child-killer list due to extortion



"Children already at risk in Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen and so many other places would fall further into despair," he told reporters. "It is unacceptable for member states to exert undue pressure."

Ban did not specifically say the Saudis had threatened to cut off funding.

Saudi UN ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi also reiterated his denials that Riyadh threatened Ban over the blacklist.

"It is not in our style, it is not in our genes, it is not in our culture to use threats and intimidation. We have the greatest respect for the United Nations institution," Mouallimi told reporters shortly after Ban spoke.

Diplomatic sources said Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir had called UN political affairs chief Jeffrey Feltman several times to complain about the report, which names states and armed groups accused of violating the rights of children during conflicts.

Mouallimi then met with Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson on Monday.

The UN said Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh also contacted Ban's office to protest the listing of the coalition. Diplomats said Egypt, Kuwait and Qatar did likewise.

The Saudi-led coalition includes UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Senegal and Sudan.

One senior UN official described Ban's choice as between the "plague and cholera."

The United States backed Ban's remarks on Thursday and said the UN chief had invited the Saudis and coalition members to discuss the report in New York on June 17.

"The UN should be permitted to carry out its mandate, carry out its responsibilities, without fear of money being cut off," State Department spokesman Mark Turner told reporters.

#### ■ Rights groups angry

The Saudi-led coalition began a military campaign in Yemen in March last year with the aim of preventing revolutionaries and forces loyal to Yemen's ex-President Ali Abdullah Saleh from taking power.

Some 6,000 people, about half of them civilians, have been killed there since last March, according to the UN.

Ban, who is in the final year of his second term and seen as a possible presidential candidate in his native South Korea, said a key concern of the Saudi-led coalition was that it had been listed alongside terrorist and extremist groups.

Human rights groups accused the UN chief of caving to pressure from powerful countries and said he risked harming his U.N. legacy.

Rights groups say the blacklist pressures warring parties to comply with international law, and that over the past 15 years some 20 governments and armed groups had taken steps to end violations of child rights in a bid to be removed from it.

The latest report blamed the Saudi-led coalition for 60 percent of the 510 child deaths and 667 injuries in Yemen in 2015. Ban said he stands by those figures, while Mouallimi has described them as "wildly exaggerated."

The annual report is produced at the request of the UN Security Council.

The 15-member council has not intervened in the controversy. It did not get involved last year when Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas were left off the blacklist after being included in an earlier draft.

Ban took a veiled swipe at the council on Thursday.

"When UN reports come under fire for raising difficult issues or documenting violations of law or human rights, member states should defend the mechanisms and mandates that they themselves have established," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

### Belgium arrests new Brussels attacks suspect

Belgian police investigating the Brussels airport and metro attacks arrested a man in connection with "terrorist murders", the federal prosecutor said Friday.

The man, identified only as Ali E.H.A., aged 31, was detained during a house search in the Schaerbeek area of the capital on Thursday, the prosecutor's office said.

(Source: AFP)

### Erdogan cuts short U.S. trip, to skip Ali funeral

Turkey's President has cut short his trip to the U.S. and will not attend the funeral of boxer Muhammad Ali, his office said Friday, amid reports of a rift with the ceremony's organizers.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan had specially flown to Louisville in the southern U.S. state of Kentucky to say farewell to Ali, who the Turkish president is known to have admired hugely as a committed Muslim and civil rights campaigner.

Erdogan Thursday attended a prayer ceremony for Ali and had been due to attend the funeral Friday along with several other high profile political leaders.

But the president's office said that Erdogan left the United States for Turkey late Thursday after attending the prayer ceremony and joining a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner with the U.S. diaspora of Meskhetian Turks who were expelled from their homeland by Stalin in the 1940s.

(Source: Daily star)



## Shell follows Total in buying Iranian crude after sanctions end

Royal Dutch Shell Plc is set to ship a cargo of Iranian crude to Europe next month, becoming the second major oil company in the region after Total SA to resume oil trade after some sanctions on the Persian nation's nuclear program were lifted in January.



Shell booked the Delta Hellas tanker to carry one million barrels of Iranian crude to Europe, loading July 1, according to lists of charters compiled by Bloomberg. Shell declined to comment on the booking.

Among oil majors, Total was the first to resume purchases of Iranian crude after the French oil company chartered a cargo in February. The first shipment to arrive in Europe was for the independent Spanish refiner

Cia. Espanola de Petroleos, which unloaded on March 6.

Iran has vowed to recover its lost market share following a nuclear deal that loosened sanctions on oil exports and financial transactions in January. The flow of crude oil from Iran to European countries other than Turkey, which was exempt from the most recent sanctions, rose from zero in January to at least 290,000 barrels a day last month, according to tanker-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg.

Another three Suezmax tankers, each able to carry around 1 million barrels of crude, that are currently heading through the Red Sea towards the Mediterranean may also be destined for ports in Europe, the data show. They would raise the volume of Iranian oil exported to Europe last month to nearly 390,000 barrels a day.

The vessel booked by Shell, which was first reported by Reuters, is scheduled to load from Kharg Island, Iran's biggest export terminal.

Despite the loosening of sanctions, some European companies remain wary of resuming business with Iran. Some U.S. restrictions on the country are still in place, preventing companies from doing deals with the nation using dollars. Some Greek refiners initially struggled to resume purchases of crude from the country due to banking restrictions.

Shell, which owed money to the National Iranian Oil Company for crude purchases before sanctions were imposed in 2012, was able to repay 1.7 billion euros (\$1.9 billion) to the National Iranian Oil Corp., the company said in March.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## India begins settling Iran oil dues via Germany's EIH bank: sources

Indian refiners have turned to State Bank of India and Germany-based bank Europaeisch-Iranische Handelsbank AG (EIH) to speed payment of billions of Iranian oil dues they still owe to Tehran, after delays in another money route.

Refiners in India, Iran's top oil buyer after China, last month resumed settling their back debt of about \$6.6 billion after the lifting earlier this year of some of the sanctions against Tehran had opened up oil trade and banking channels.

The first payments were handled in May by state-run Union Bank of India via Turkey's Halkbank, which had previously handled payments before tougher European sanctions were put in place in February 2013.

But Union Bank has asked the refiners to raise their credit limits or deposit money in rupees a day ahead of initiating payments, sources familiar with the matter said, and refiners were fearful of delays in working down their oil debt.

Timely payment of the Iranian dues is crucial not only for future crude supplies but also for winning investments in Iran that would strengthen trade ties between New Delhi and Tehran.

From June, refiners have been making payments through State Bank and EIH, said government and company sources with direct knowledge of the matter, which should be quicker since most of the refiners have their main accounts at SBI.

A senior official at the Union Bank of India confirmed that his bank was no longer handling Iran oil payments, declining to provide further details.

No comment was available from Turkey's Halkbank, and EIH did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

### ■ State refiners take lead

Last month, state-run Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemical, Indian Oil Corp and Hindustan Petroleum Corp together cleared \$770 million in euros via Union Bank and Halkbank to National Iranian Oil Co (NIOC).

So far state refiners are taking the lead in settling dues to Iran, aiming to wipe out their debt in three months after weekly limits were set by the Reserve Bank of India.

India has capped weekly dollar purchases by oil refiners at \$500 million as they pay off their Iran debts to avoid pressure on the rupee.

Accordingly, Essar Oil was in June to start clearing about \$260 million a week, followed by MRPL at about \$200 million and IOC at about \$30 million, with the rest coming from HPCL and its joint venture company HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL).

So far this month, MRPL and IOC have cleared about \$330 million through EIH, the refinery and government sources said. Essar Oil, however, Iran's biggest Indian client with about \$3 billion in debt, has settled only \$100 million, they said.

Essar and SBI did not respond to an email seeking comment.

(Source: Reuters)

# Boeing in talks with Iran on big deal



Iran has announced its need for about 400 passenger planes in the next decade to modernize its ageing fleet.

Iranian airlines are not interested in buying any more Russian planes. Their performance was unsatisfactory when flown in the country's aviation market during the sanctions period. Iran hopes to improve the relations with the world in the wake of the nuclear deal to renovate their fleet with western aircraft.

Iran's flag carrier, Iran Air recently announced that is discussing what is seen as a "historic aircraft purchase deal" with Boeing.

Confirming the negotiations, Boeing did not provide any details of the ongoing talks.

(Source: aviationpros.com)



## IP gas pipeline to be completed by June 2018: Pakistani min.

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Pakistan's Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project will be completed by June 2018, Pakistani news agencies reported on Friday.

The minister made the remarks while briefing the diplomats, civil society and the media on the government's performance and strategy at the Prime Minister Office on Thursday.

The project's capacity is estimated to be 0.25 – 0.75 billion cubic feet per day, he said.

Touching upon the relationships between the two countries, Abbasi said, the U.S. sanctions are still causing problems for economic and financial relations be-

tween Pakistan and Iran. However, talks between Tehran and Islamabad on completion of the gas pipeline project is going on, IRNA reported.

Abbasi also noted that two main obstacles in the way of completion of IP gas pipeline are unresolved issue of trade in dollar and also the possibility of sanctions against Iran being reversible.

"So far Pakistan has not been able to convince investors to invest on the gas pipeline project" he added.

Iran and Pakistan signed an agreement for the construction of the gas pipeline in 1995. Later, Iran made a proposal to extend the pipeline from Pakistan into India. In February 1999, an accord between Iran and India was signed.

## Interoil Italia Srl to cooperate on expansion of Iran's PSEEZ

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran's Pars Special Energy Economic Zone (PSEEZ) and the Iranian company of Petropars signed a cooperation agreement with the Italian InterOil Srl, as the foreign investor, on assessing the feasibility of expanding PSEEZ, Shana news agency reported on Thursday.

According to the Managing Director of Petropars Mohammad Javad Shams, the inked document supports explorations activities, offshore and in-shore production as well as exports of the products in South Pars gas field in south of Iran.

The official added that it would take the three partners around eight

months to conduct the required studies to examine the feasibility of the project.

As he continued, his company and InterOil had previously cooperated on expansion of the Phase 12 of South Pars field.

South Pars field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, 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.

## Iran to seek investors for \$3 billion refinery to serve Asia

Iran will seek international investors for a \$3 billion refinery project in the country's south as the Persian Gulf nation looks to boost sales of its oil and natural gas products in Asia.

The refining complex on Iran's Persian Gulf coast will seek to raise as much as 80 percent of the capital needed from international partners or financiers, Alireza Sadeghabadi, managing director of Siraf Refineries Infrastructure Co., said in an interview in Tehran. Siraf will issue a tender in two to three months to invite potential investors and partners, with companies and lenders in Japan and South Korea showing interest, he said.

Iran is ramping up its energy industry after international sanctions restricting its access to financing and global oil markets were lifted in January. Since then, the country has boosted oil output to near pre-sanctions levels and raised natural gas production at the South Pars gas field on the Persian Gulf coast. Siraf will produce naphtha, mainly used in chemical plants, from condensate, a liquid oil found in the vast offshore gas deposits.



"The project is based on a decision to turn condensate within the country to products with higher added value and avoid its sale as raw material," Sadeghabadi said. "Despite anticipated high supply of naphtha, there will be a proportionate high demand for naphtha with its extensive application in plastic-based products."

### ■ Eight plants

The Siraf project will consist of eight plants, each with a capacity of 60,000 barrels a day of condensate. The refineries will start in about three years, before reaching full capacity in four years, Sadeghabadi said. "It can be said Japan and South Korea are the focal points of Asian countries' interest to invest in Siraf"

The plants will target Asia's growing demand for refined oil products and will seek to supply chemical producers in South Korea and Japan. Beyond that, Iran aims to develop its own chemicals industry that will allow it to make more advanced products, such as plastics, that will bring in greater income than raw materials, Sadeghabadi said.

Petrochemical projects planned in Siraf would use naphtha from the refineries, he said. "It is not our aim to export naphtha in its raw form to the market indefinitely and we plan to turn naphtha to final products and export products with more value added."

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Iranian minister says export guarantee row with Germany almost solved

Iran expects a row with Germany over unpaid state export guarantees to be resolved soon, its industry minister was quoted as saying in a German newspaper on Thursday, a step which would remove a big hurdle to reviving trade relations.

Iran owes Germany about 500 million euros (\$570 million) under so-called Hermes covers, a German government arrangement that protects German companies if foreign debtors fail to pay.

Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh told Germany's Handelsblatt newspaper in an interview that there were only a few small problems left to be resolved.

"After my meeting with Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel it looks like the last problems will be able to be solved quickly," Nematzadeh said.

He added that he expected that Gabriel, who was forced to cancel a trip to Iran last month due to illness, would now head to Tehran in October. "By then we hope that all remaining problems

will be solved," he said.

A spokesman for Germany's economy ministry said that talks with Iran were still ongoing, but Berlin was optimistic that the government could soon offer fresh state export guarantees to companies that plan to do business with Iran.

German industry has been hoping for a surge in exports to Iran after international sanctions were lifted in January in return for the Islamic Republic complying with a deal to curb its nuclear program.

Nematzadeh said big German firms including Volkswagen, Daimler, Siemens, Linde, BASF and Airbus, were already in negotiations about doing business in Iran.

He added that Germany was interested in long-term co-operation with Iran and would prioritize projects in the transport sector, oil and gas industry, mining and food sector.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iran halts liquefied petroleum gas exports to Japan

Iran said on Wednesday it had stopped exports of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to Japan, but there were other customers available to buy the Islamic republic's LPG, the semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

The report did not give a reason but difficulties for shippers in obtaining insurance have continued to hamper Iranian LPG exports despite the lifting of international sanctions.

Japan's official customs-cleared trade data showed it last imported Iranian LPG in February 2012, before tough Western sanctions on tanker coverage for Iran came into effect.

In 2010, Japan imported about 861,000 tonnes of LPG from Iran, accounting for about 7 percent of total imports of the fuel, the data showed.

"Our LPG exports to Japan have stopped ... At the present, insurance issues and supplying of LPG carriers have been almost resolved," Mehr

quoted the head of the Association of Petrochemical Industry Corporations (APIC) Ahmad Mahdavi as saying.

"There are no limitations for the exports of the LPG in the post-sanctions era ... a myriad of customers are calling for Iran's LPG to the extent that the demand exceeds the supply."

Mahdavi did not elaborate.

"One major obstacle facing LPG exports has been supplying of ships ... Since the removal of sanctions, some buyers of Iran's LPG have managed to receive the product through their own LPG carriers," he said.

Iran's years of economic isolation ended when international sanctions were lifted in January after an agreement was reached ending a dispute over Iran's nuclear program. International companies, including Japanese ones, have expressed interest and readiness to boost trade with Iran.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



### Toyota mulls legal action against Brexit group for logo use

Carmaker Toyota said it could make a legal complaint against the official Brexit campaign for using its logo in leaflets, which the Japanese firm said might give the impression it backed Britain leaving the EU.

On one "Vote Leave" flyer, Toyota's logo appeared next to those of five other major companies including Unilever and automakers Nissan and Vauxhall with the message: "Major employers ... have all said they'll stay in the UK whatever the result of the referendum."

Toyota, which built more than one in 10 of Britain's 1.6 million new cars last year, said in February it believed a vote on June 23 to stay in the bloc would be better for its operations and long-term competitiveness.



### German prosecutors investigate VW over deleted data

German prosecutors are investigating whether Volkswagen employees deleted data that could be harmful to the company before the carmaker admitted to U.S. authorities that it had cheated diesel-emissions tests.

A spokesman for the prosecutor's office in Braunschweig, near Volkswagen's headquarters, said there was an initial suspicion of attempted obstruction of justice and concealment of evidence.

Volkswagen declined to comment on an ongoing investigation.

Volkswagen admitted on Sept. 18 it had cheated the Californian environmental tests, knocking a fifth off its market value, causing its chief executive to resign and potentially costing it billions in court cases, fines and technical fixes.



### Drivers sue Uber, Lyft over exit from Austin, Texas

Former Uber Technologies Inc. and Lyft Inc. drivers in Austin, Texas, on Thursday accused the ride-hailing companies of breaking a federal law by abruptly halting operations in the city after voters backed a measure requiring them to fingerprint drivers.

The lawsuits filed in federal court in San Francisco, where the companies are based, said Uber and Lyft violated a law that requires companies to give 60-day notice to employees before a "mass layoff."

Uber spokesman Matt Kallman declined to comment. Lyft did not respond to a request for comment.



# The most historic bridges in the world

From more modern structures like the USA's Brooklyn Bridge or Golden Gate Bridge to the famous, old Italian bridges of Venice and Florence, bridges form some of the world's most iconic architectural wonders: we take a tour across the globe, exploring some of the recognizable, historic bridges mankind has constructed.

## ■ Si-o-se Pol

Also known as the Allahverdi Khan Bridge, Iran's Si-o-se Pol (which translates as 'Bridge of 33 Arches') dates back to 1602 and stretches across the Zayandeh Rood River in Isfahan, connecting its historical main avenue Chahar Bagh with the neighborhood of New Jolfa.

Commissioned by Shah Abbas I of Persia, Si-o-se Pol is almost 300 meters long and 14 meters wide and is considered one of the world's finest examples of Safavid dynasty era bridge design. Alongside the equally impressive, but slightly younger Pol-e Khaju built in 1650 and the ancient Pol-e Shahrestan, dating back as far as the 3rd century, Si-o-se Pol is one of 11 bridges in Isfahan.

## ■ The Bridge of Sighs

Designed in 1600 by Italian architect Antonio Contino, The Bridge of Sighs is one of the most iconic of Venice's 400+ bridges. Officially the Ponte dei Sospiri, the bridge apparently got its English name after Lord Byron referred to it as such in his epic, four-part poem Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

Despite its beautiful, Baroque style and romantic exterior belies its original purpose – to transport prisoners between the Doge Palace and its new prison cells across the Rio di Palazzo. Nowadays, there's a much nicer story behind the bridge: legend has it that if couples share a kiss underneath The Bridge of Sighs, their love will last forever.

## ■ Charles Bridge

Charles Bridge, Prague's oldest and most magnificent bridge, was built over the course of 45 years from 1357 into the early 15th century, and is today one of the Czech capital's most visited sights. Flanked on either end by magnificent Gothic bridge towers the 516-meter-long



Iran's Si-o-se Pol

bridge, which connects Prague's Old Town with Mala Strana across the Vltava River, is adorned with 30 statues of saints carved between 1683 and 1928. Its most famous statue, that of St John of Nepomuk, is said to bring good fortune to those who touch it – ironic, perhaps, considering the saint was thrown to his death from the Charles Bridge in 1383.

## ■ Brooklyn Bridge

Designed by German-American engineer John Roebling and spanning 486 meters across New York's East River, the 133-year-old Brooklyn Bridge was officially opened in May 1883 and laid claim to the title of 'world's longest suspension bridge' until it was pipped to the post by the nearby Williamsburg Bridge in 1903, which surpassed its length by just two meters.

Nevertheless, the Brooklyn Bridge is one of the most iconic architectural features of New York City's stunning skyline and has been recognized with many accolades including becoming a designated National Historic Landmark in 1964 and a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1972.

## ■ Tower Bridge

Part suspension bridge and part bascule – a sophisticated type of drawbridge that gets its name from the French word for 'see-saw' – London's Tower Bridge was constructed between 1886 and 1894 as a means of cutting congestion in the city

without disturbing river traffic below.

Though today the bridge is one of the capital's most quintessentially 'London' landmarks, it wasn't always so loved – in fact, English artist Frank Brangwyn stated in his 1920 publication A Book of Bridges that 'a more absurd structure than the Tower Bridge was never thrown across a strategic river'.

## ■ Alcántara Bridge

Dating back as far as the 2nd century, Spain's Alcántara Bridge is a spectacular feat of ancient Roman engineering. Constructed under the orders of Emperor Trajan, the six-arched structure crosses the Tagus River and was built to connect the then Roman settlement of Cáceres with Portugal's historic Beira Alta province.

Over its long, rich history the bridge has sustained considerable damage on a number of occasions – in 1214, Moors destroyed one of its smaller arches and again in 1760, another of its arches was razed by the Spanish to prevent Portuguese invasion – though thanks to several repair efforts, the ancient Alcántara Bridge has managed to withstand the test of time.

## ■ Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge

Located in north-eastern Guangxi's Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, the Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge – so called as it offers a scenic respite from the elements – is 100 years old and amongst China's most famous bridges.

Stretching over 60 meters across the Linxi River, the beautiful covered bridge sits on five stone columns each topped with wooden, pagoda-style pavilions and interestingly was built without using a single nail or rivet, with all beams and planks held together by dovetail joints instead. At one end of the Chengyang Wind and Rain Bridge, visitors will find an engraved poem by Chinese writer Guo Moruo, who was enchanted by the structure after first seeing it in the mid-1960s.

## ■ Kapellbrücke

Lucerne's early 14th century Kapellbrücke (or 'Chapel Bridge') is not only Europe's oldest covered wooden bridge, it's also the oldest surviving truss bridge on the planet too. Extending in an unusual diagonal shape over the Reuss River, the 170-meter-long bridge was originally constructed as part of Lucerne's fortifications and during the 17th century, a series of paintings by artist Hans Heinrich Wägmann depicting scenes from Swiss and local history were added.

Sadly, a fire broke out on the bridge in 1993 destroying the majority of Wägmann's works, alongside damaging much of Kapellbrücke itself, though around 30 of the paintings were rescued the bridge eventually fully restored.

## ■ Pont du Gard

Part of the 50-kilometer-long Nîmes aqueduct, France's Pont du Gard – a three-level bridge water bridge spanning Languedoc-Roussillon's Gardon River built midway through the 1st century AD and comprised of an astounding 21,000 cubic meters of rock weighing over 50,000 tons – is marvel of Roman engineering.

In 1985, the stunning aqueduct was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site while in 2004, Pont du Gard was recognized as one of France's most prized cultural treasures and named an official Grand Site de France. It is a source of inspiration for many artists too, from French painter Hubert Robert to English artists William Marlow and Frederick Richard Lee.

(Source: The Culture Trip)

## NEWS

### Ramadan tradition: How El Mesaharaty wakes people up for suhoor

The fasting month of Ramadan brings to light several traditions of Islamic nations. El Mesaharaty is one of the oldest of Ramadan traditions.

El Mesaharaty is the name given to the person who walks around an area beating his drum or chanting verses to wake people up to have suhoor (meal eaten early morning before beginning the fast).

However, with technology taking over modern-day life, this deep-rooted Ramadan tradition is on the decline. Today, television, mobiles and alarm clocks are fast replacing the job that a Mesaharaty did.

#### ■ First Mesaharaty

Earlier, El Mesaharaty was especially popular among children. They would rally around him, walking along until he finished his daily task of waking people up.

The concept of Mesaharaty was developed during the Abbasside era at the time of Caliph Al Nasser in Egypt.

The then Ruler of Egypt Otbah Ibn Ishaq was the first person to tour the streets of Cairo during Ramadan. He is said to have used poetic phrases meaning "O! those who of you who are asleep, wake up and pray to Allah..."

#### ■ Different practices

While, the El Mesaharaty of Oman was the first to beat drums to wake up people, in Kuwait, Abu Tablyah, the first El Mesaharaty, is believed to have chanted prayers that children repeated as he walked around.

In Yemen, the first El Mesaharaty is believed to have used a stick to beat on peoples' doors.

In Sudan, the El Mesaharaty walked around along with a child calling out names of people.

In Syria, Lebanon and Palestine they whistled, while in Saudi Arabia El Mesaharatys wake people up with a prayer.

#### ■ Woman El Mesaharaty

Meanwhile, social researcher and heritage expert Fatima Al Mughny says an Emirati woman has volunteered and played the role of El Mesaharaty.

According to Mughny, this woman would beat a drum and roam the streets to wake up her neighbours to have suhoor, without waiting for the reward.

(Source: emirates247.com)



کارکروه رسانه معاونت امور زنان و خانواده ریاست جمهوری با همکاری دفتر مطالعات و برنامه ریزی رسانه وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد اسلامی برگزار می کنند

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# Can Hillary Clinton beat Donald Trump?

By Marwan Bishara

I rushed to finish Hillary Clinton's book, *Hard Choices*, this week, expecting her to clinch the Democratic Party nomination for president. She did, but I am evermore ambivalent about her and her chances of winning.

Many factors will prove decisive in the November elections, but Clinton continues to suffer from the same shortcomings that cost her the 2008 Democratic Party primaries.

This is particularly important because in the public mind, the contrast can't be starker between the same packaged Clinton and the unrestrained Republican nominee Donald Trump. She won the Democratic nomination by mastering the rules of the game; he won the Republican nomination by refusing to play by the traditional rules of the game.

But come November, Clinton could still lose the general elections even though she's running against a populist candidate with "no policy knowledge or workable proposals", who managed to alienate so many Latinos, Muslims and African Americans.

*Hard Choices* is a tough read not because it's a long and exhaustive balance sheet of her

tenure as secretary of state, but rather because it is as self-congratulatory as it is self-explanatory.

She boasts of how her diplomatic intervention prevented "explosive confrontation"; how the team Obama-Clinton was seen as a "diplomatic version of the TV thriller, *Starsky and Hutch*"; and how she succeeded in lobbying for General Electric to gain multibillion-dollar contracts in Algeria. But there's little or no serious admission of fault and failure and of lessons learned, and certainly no bold vision for America in the world.

## ■ Hard choice

Since it was written with the intention of running again for president - clearly, not a "hard choice" - it's the kind of book that reveals less than it conceals; peddles instead of explaining. It confirms many of the doubts about Clinton's authenticity.

Like her book, Clinton's campaign also projects an image of a scripted and packaged candidacy that contrasts sharply with her Republican opponent.

Despite his ignorance, Donald Trump has been able to communicate freely, effectively and spontaneously with his base.

The contrast in their visions for America

could not be any sharper, as this Washington Post graphic shows, but it mirrors America's own down-the-middle societal and political division.

What will tip the balance to either side is the contrast between their characters.

The Democratic Party primaries have exposed Clinton's failure to inspire or gain the trust of important segments of the voters, especially the young.

According to The New York Times: "Many in this newest generation of American voters say that they don't trust her, or that she represents a Washington disconnected from their struggles."

In order to overcome this deep-seated suspicion about her character, the Clinton-friendly newspaper recommends that Hillary release transcripts of her Wall Street speeches and acknowledge the State Department inspector's general claim: that using a private email server for official business was not allowed or encouraged, but she did it anyway, in a misguided effort to protect her privacy.

This might help Clinton regain some credibility among her detractors, Democrats and Independents. But it won't suffice to change her image.



## ■ Winning the elections

To win the elections, Clinton needs to show how Trump's politics of fear is cowardly and un-American: fear of Mexicans, Muslims, illegal immigrants; fear of declining America; and fear of a world that threatens, disrespects and takes advantage of America.

She says America is great and doesn't require a Trump to make it "great again". But to demonstrate that, she needs to embrace the better, more optimistic, aspects of the Obama legacy and incorporate many of the proposals advanced by Bernie Sanders, both domestically and internationally.

She needs to show how fairness, inclusion and diplomacy trump Trump's politics of hatred

and exclusion, and why building bridges with the world is better than walling America in.

And she must show real empathy towards working people and struggling youth as they search for their rightful place in America's future, and revise her campaign platform accordingly.

If as the record shows, and bizarre as it may sound, Americans are more likely to elect a taller candidate, the 6ft 3in Trump will have an advantage as he towers over Clinton come pre-election handshakes and debates.

But the record also shows that in America being tall pales in comparison to standing tall. The question is: Will Clinton stand taller as she confronts her aggressive, misogynist rival?

Otherwise, the Democrats are bound to repeat their 2000 defeat, when Al Gore, Bill Clinton's vice president, lost to the macho Texan, George Bush. At the time, more than two million progressive and disillusioned voters went for the Green Party candidate, Ralph Nader.

In other words, Clinton must heed the voices of those who gave Sanders their support in Ohio and other battleground states if she's to avoid Gore's fate.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

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# How UN's decision to drop Saudi from child-rights blacklist could backfire

By Peter Salisbury

Saudi Arabia's foreign policy has become more and more assertive since King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud ascended to the throne in early 2015.

Under its new ruler, and perhaps more importantly his son, the deputy crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Kingdom has entered the fray of Yemen's civil war and has taken a much more visible role in pushing its agenda at an international level.

The new King has reputedly used Saudi Arabia's financial heft as leverage to pressure the UN into limiting its criticisms of the conservative monarchy's actions at home and abroad and used its trade and political ties with Western allies, particularly the UK, to convince them to push for its agenda at the UN and elsewhere.

The most recent example of the Kingdom's newfound assertiveness is the extraordinary maneuver that saw the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon announce that he was temporarily removing Saudi Arabia from a list of countries accused of violating the rights of children during war.

## ■ Saudis 'pressured' UN over blacklist

This is an "irreversible and unconditional" decision, according to Saudi's Ambassador to the UN, Abdullah al-Mouallimi. The UN has, oddly, said that it stands by the content of the report, but the fact the Secretary General has also agreed that the UN will review its reporting with Yemen's government in exile in Riyadh and Saudi military leaders, is a clear signal that the push is working insofar as Salman is getting his way.

## ■ Unintended consequences

But the long-term effects of the decision, for the UN and Saudi Arabia, will likely come with other, unintended consequences.

Riyadh was listed as having violated the rights of children in armed conflict, joining a so-called "rogues' gallery" of states and armed groups, for its part in the Yemen war. The UN report, released on June 3, describes the Saudi-led campaign of aerial



bombardment in Yemen, ongoing since March 26, 2015, as having caused some 60% of all casualties among children since the conflict began. In total, the report attributes the death of 510 children and 667 more injuries to the Saudis.

The Kingdom, which is deeply sensitive to criticisms of its rights record at home and abroad, was furious at the report and apparently spent much of the following weekend furiously lobbying the UN to remove its name from the list. According to Foreign Policy's Colum Lynch, Riyadh threatened to pull funds and aid for UN humanitarian work and other projects, and convinced its regional allies to pile further pressure on to the organization.

Ban is said to have been contacted by officials from Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE and Bangladesh as part of a "full court press" aimed at getting him to revoke the designation.

## ■ Naming and shaming

Saudi officials told Ban that the report was biased and based on false reports provided by Yemen's Houthi fighters also listed as violators of children's rights in conflict in the report, according to Al Arabiya. No mention was made of the U.S. military, whose role in the bombing of a Medecins Sans Frontieres hospital in Afghanistan was referenced in the UN report but attributed to "international forces." In effect, if other powerful countries aren't named and shamed for political reasons,

the argument seems to be, Saudi Arabia shouldn't be either.

Whatever was said, it worked -- to an extent at least. Ban announced that Saudi Arabia's listing would be suspended on June 7, just four days after he personally launched the report.

But contradicting al-Mouallimi, the UN has said that it stands by its methodology, and that the Kingdom's removal is temporary; it will last only until the data used in the report has been reviewed by the Kingdom and the government of Yemeni President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi.

That may be the case, but the damage has already been done, both to the UN's reputation and to Saudi Arabia's already battered image. The decision to list the Kingdom and then suspend its designation is terrible for the credibility of the UN, especially given that the report had been in circulation since at least April. If the Saudis do win the argument and have themselves removed from the list permanently by arguing that the methodology was flawed, the UN's ability to pressure others to improve protections for children in conflict will be irrevocably broken.

## ■ Pressure on Western governments

If Saudi Arabia can undermine the credibility of the UN reporting on such a crucial issue, then why should other countries pay attention to the norms they are meant to uphold? By caving in to Saudi

pressure, Ban has hurt the UN's ability to speak definitively on the protection of children in conflict, and undermined his own efforts to bring human rights into the mainstream -- a core tenet of his early platform as secretary-general.

That a UN member state has been able to so nakedly use its influence and financial firepower to influence reporting on such an important, issue signals that, for the UN and the international community, humanitarian law and the rights of children come second to political and financial expediency.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has done little to improve its international standing. Most human rights groups are incandescent with rage over the move, and are likely to redouble already fierce criticism of the Saudis' conduct in Yemen -- and of Western indifference to the actions of a major oil producer and weapons market. The suspension of the designation is hardly likely to convince anyone that the contents of the report are wrong; if anything, the opposite is true.

This move puts more pressure on Western governments -- the U.S., UK and France in particular -- to justify their close ties with, and defense of the reputation of, the Kingdom to voters. That is probably the exact opposite of what the Kingdom hoped to achieve. Salman would be well advised to take a more nuanced approach next time around; and Ban to stand up for the values he claims to promote. (Source: CNN)

## COMMENT

### Time to end the strikes in France

France, at the moment, is seemingly in chaos. Strikes are disrupting vital public services, including rail travel. Major unions have called for a national day of protest last Tuesday. All this threatens France's image, its economy and its security.

But for what? The immediate cause is a labor reform bill backed by the government of François Hollande that would ease some worker protections in the hope of encouraging job growth. The larger cause is a deep sense of betrayal on France's left, unhappy with what it sees as a rightward turn by Hollande's Socialist government.

## ■ Labor-reform bill

Outrage on the left forced Hollande to abandon a bill in March that would have stripped some French of their citizenship if convicted of terrorism. Many French see the labor-reform bill as a last straw. Since the Hollande government introduced the bill in March, hundreds of thousands of people have marched in protest across France, clashing violently with police at times.

Last month, using its executive authority, the government rammed the bill through a recalcitrant National Assembly. That prompted a series of strikes called by the General Confederation of Labor union, or C.G.T., that disrupted public transportation and rail travel, forced flight cancellations and, last month, caused temporary fuel shortages when unions shut down oil refineries. Now come the pilots, sensing their own opportunity to inflict pain.

The Hollande government has already watered down some of the original provisions of the bill, which it regards as essential to reducing an unemployment rate stuck above 10 percent. But Prime Minister Manuel Valls made it clear in an interview last Friday that the government will not back down any further, saying: "If we were to give in to the C.G.T., we would never be able to reform France."

Meanwhile, some two million foreign soccer fans are expected to arrive in France over the coming weeks, and the terrorism threat level in the wake of attacks in Paris last year and in Brussels earlier this year is high. Last Monday, Ukrainian authorities arrested a Frenchman who was apparently planning a series of terrorist attacks during the tournament to protest French immigration policy.

In these circumstances, it is sheer folly for the C.G.T. to continue to disrupt vital public services, and outrageous for Air France pilots, generally considered well paid, to strike over the first weekend of the tournament. As Hollande said last Tuesday, there comes a point when "you must realize it's time to stop striking." In France, where public opinion is turning against the strikes, that point is now. (Source: NYT)



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Fish can recognize human faces, says Oxford University study

A species of tropical fish can differentiate between human faces, the first time fish have been found to possess such recognition, according to researchers.

Archerfish, distinguished by their black and silver striped scales, can accurately recognize one face from another during staged testing, a joint study from the University of Oxford and Queensland found.

The fish were trained individually to select faces on a monitor in view of their tank and pick out a face they had learned from 44 new faces by spitting a jet of water at the correct image.

During the tests the fish were able to identify the faces through detailed feature recognition, even when the shapes and colors of faces were altered.

It was previously believed that only certain mammals, and primates in particular, had facial recognition capabilities due to the large size of their brains.

Certain species of birds have also been found to "possess neocortex-like structures", which aid with human facial recognition.

However results of the study suggest that, despite having tiny brains, some fish may have highly-developed visual discrimination capabilities.

Dr Cait Newport, research fellow at the University of Oxford and co-author of the study, said: "Being able to distinguish between a large number of human faces is a surprisingly difficult task, mainly due to the fact that all human faces share the same basic features.

"All faces have two eyes above a nose and mouth, therefore to tell people apart we must be able to identify subtle differences in their features.

(Source: The Independent)

Cancer clues in the breath: Test could ease screening

A simple breath test can detect changes in people who have undergone surgery for lung cancer, a new study reports.

Researchers found that three chemical markers known as carbonyl compounds, which are gases released when people exhale, were reduced in patients with lung cancer after they had an operation to remove their tumors, compared with before their operations. The findings were published online on June 9 in the journal The Annals of Thoracic Surgery.

This study demonstrated that levels of certain chemical markers associated with a tumor went down in people after they had surgery for lung cancer, said Dr. Victor van Berkel, a thoracic surgeon at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Kentucky, who was a co-author of the study.

Researchers don't yet know why the compounds detected in the breath samples were reduced. It could be because the tumor that was removed made the compounds, or because the inflammatory process in the body associated with the tumor made them, van Berkel told Live Science.

But the findings suggest that scientists may be able to use these markers in the future as a screening method when they monitor patients after surgery for lung cancer, he said.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among men and women in the U.S., van Berkel said.

"More people die from lung cancer each year than from breast, prostate and colon cancers combined," he said. If cancer returns in a patient who had surgery, it is helpful to identify this right away, when treatment can be most effective, he explained.

(Source: Live Science)

WHO says people living in areas with Zika should delay pregnancy

Men and women who are living in areas where Zika is actively spreading should consider delaying pregnancy, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

On Thursday, the agency released a correction to its guidance for preventing sexual transmission of Zika.



"In order to prevent adverse pregnancy and fetal outcomes, men and women of reproductive age, living in areas where local transmission of Zika virus is known to occur, be correctly informed and oriented to consider delaying pregnancy," the agency wrote.

The agency said that the update to the recommendation was meant to make the agency's recommendation to delay pregnancy clearer.

"This was the original intention of the guidance," the WHO said in a press release. The guidance was released last week, but the update added more clarity for people living in countries with active transmission compared to travelers.

Other countries, like El Salvador, have been recommending that people delay pregnancies for quite some time. The country recommends people put off pregnancy for two years.

(Source: Time)

Listen to space music from 13-billion-year-old stars

Space — contrary to how it may be commonly portrayed — is not a soundless expanse. Astrophysicists, for instance, have recently captured sounds from some of the oldest stars found in the Milky Way galaxy, giving space enthusiasts a rare audio treat.

University of Birmingham researchers detected acoustic oscillation of stars in the M4 star cluster, which host some of the furthest known distant and oldest stars in our own galaxy at 13 billion years old.

Through data from NASA's Kepler /K2 mission, they studied the oscillations — which result from sound trapped inside the stars and lead to small pulses or changes in the stars' brightness — through a method called asteroseismology.

Measuring these tones in the "music" will help scientists create a formula to determine stars' ages and masses.

The hope is to use these sounds to get insights on what the universe was like in its very early days.

The "stars we have studied really are living fossils from the time of the formation of our Galaxy, and we now hope be able



The "stars we have studied really are living fossils from the time of the formation of our Galaxy, and we now hope be able to unlock the secrets of how spiral galaxies, like our own, formed and evolved," said lead researcher Dr. Andrea Miglio.

Surprise volcano growing under New Zealand

Beneath Matata, a small coastal town 125 miles from Auckland, on New Zealand's North Island, scientists recently discovered a massive magma build-up, possibly signaling the beginnings of a new volcano.

According to geophysicist Ian Hamling, since 1950 an incredible influx of magma — enough to fill 80,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools — has accumulated beneath the small New Zealand town, pushing up the surface of the ground by 40 cm (16 inches).

In a paper published in the online journal, Science Advances, Hamling describes discovering the enormous magma chamber as, "quite a big surprise," stating that while New Zealand contains a great deal of volcanic activity, it is unusual to find a developing chamber of magma so far removed from any active volcanos.

Hamling and his team had been studying the Taupo Volcanic Zone (TVZ), which runs down the center of New Zealand's North Island and has seen 25 large-scale volcanic eruptions in the past 1.6 million years and currently is home to many spectacular volcanic features such as



bubbling hot pots and frequent eruptions at Whakaari — a small active volcano 30 miles from the east coast of the North Island.

Volcanic activity

The team's focus was on ground motions throughout

the TVZ, searching for volcanic activity in an area that had been believed to be subsiding because of magma draining from an underground chamber. However, shifting the examination, the team discovered the ground beneath Matata, a town with a population of 650 people, had been rising yearly since 1950 and the rate of increase had been growing substantially through the beginning to mid-2000s, triggering thousands of small earthquakes initially believed to be associated with tectonic shifts.

Utilizing satellite data, Hamling and his team were able to follow the development of minor ground shifts, measuring minute horizontal and vertical changes in the coastal land levels, demonstrating the shifting nature of subsurface magma within the TVZ.

Calculations imply that approximately 9 million cubic meters of magma — or 3,600 Olympic-sized swimming pools worth — pressed into the Earth's crust each year during the chamber's peak growth period.

(Source: The CSM)

Study reveals how altered gut microbes cause obesity

Obesity is linked to changes in our gut microbes -- the trillions of tiny organisms that inhabit our intestines. But the mechanism has not been clear. In a new study published in Nature, a Yale-led team of researchers has identified how an altered gut microbiota causes obesity.

In an earlier study, Gerald I. Shulman, M.D., the George R. Cowgill Professor of Medicine, observed that acetate, a short-chain fatty acid, stimulated the secretion of insulin in rodents. To learn more about acetate's role, Shulman, who is also an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and a team of Yale researchers conducted a series of experiments in rodent models of obesity.

The research team compared acetate to other short-chain fatty acids and found higher levels of acetate in animals that consumed a high-fat diet. They also observed that infusions of acetate stimulated insulin secretion by beta cells in the pancreas, but it was unclear how.

Next, the researchers determined that when acetate was injected directly into the brain, it triggered increased insulin by activating the parasympathetic nervous system. "Acetate stimulates beta cells to secrete more insulin in response to glucose through a centrally mediated mechanism," said Shulman. "It also stimulates secretion of the hormones gastrin and ghrelin, which lead to increased food intake."

Increased insulin

Finally, the research team sought to



establish a causal relationship between the gut microbiota and increased insulin. After transferring fecal matter from one group of rodents to another, they observed similar changes in the gut microbiota, acetate levels, and insulin.

"Taken together these experiments demonstrate a causal link between alterations in the gut microbiota in response to changes in the diet and increased acetate production," said Shulman. The increased acetate in turn leads to increased food intake, setting off a positive feedback loop that drives obesity and insulin resistance, he explained.

The study authors suggest that this positive feedback loop may have served an important role in evolution, by prompting animals to fatten up when they stumbled across calorically dense food in times of food scarcity.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Low-fat diets and exercise are pointless for losing weight: expert

Low-fat diets and exercise are pointless for those wanting to lose weight and obese people should simply eat less.

Lord McColl, emeritus professor of surgery at Guys Hospital in London, warned that current health advice to avoid fat was 'false and misleading' and was fueling the obesity epidemic.

Speaking at a House of Lords debate, the former surgeon warned that exercising was useless against the huge levels of calories from carbohydrates and sugars that people are now consuming. He warned that the obesity epidemic was as bad for public health as the 1919 flu epidemic.

"In the UK the Department of Health and Nice (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) maintains for many years that the obesity epidemic was due to lack of exercise," he told peers.

"It's a pity that the 500 people employed by Nice didn't think to go into the gymnasium get on a machine and exercise to see how few calories you actually burn off.

"One can pedal away on one of those machines for half an hour and only two or three hundred calories are burned up. One has to run miles to take a pound of fat off.

Obesity epidemic

The "whole subject has been bedeviled by all sorts of theories about the course of the obesity; genetics, epigenetic, psychological disturbances. None



of them is the cause of the obesity epidemic.

"One fact remains. It is impossible to be obese unless one is eating too many calories."

In May the National Obesity Forum and the Public Health Collaboration called for a major overhaul of dietary guidelines saying 30 years of urging people to adopt low-fat diets was having 'disastrous health consequences'.

Their report claimed the low-fat and low-cholesterol message, which has been official policy in the UK since 1983, was based on "flawed science" and had resulted in an increased consumption of junk food and carbohydrates.

Lord McColl said eating fat was important because it kept people feeling fuller for longer, and advised overweight people to start adding fat into their diet.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Could snails be the key to turbocharging robots' performance?

Their defining characteristic may be the speed at which they move, but a new study from the University of Sussex shows when it comes to decision-making, snails are fast as lightning.

More important still, in terms of future technologies, is how efficiently snails go about making these decisions.

"Our study reveals for the first time how just two neurons can create a mechanism in an animal's brain which drives and optimizes complex decision making tasks. It also shows how this system helps to manage how much energy they use once they have made a decision," said Professor George Kemenes, of the University of Sussex, who led the study.

The scientists from the university's Neuroscience de-

partment used electrodes to monitor freshwater snails' brainwave activity in individual neurons while searching for food. They found that just two neurons was all the snails needed in order to know when food was present and what to do with it -- i.e.: hungry, eat it; sated: leave it.

Acting in a circuit

What's more, the two neurons acting in a simple circuit are able to help the snail save energy, informing the brain to power down in terms of energy and movement when food is needed but none can be found.

Replicating such a simple but effective circuit in the field of robotics could lead to smarter, quicker decision making while simplifying the manufacturing process and improving the robot's energy management capabilities.

The results also open the door to future studies of other animals for aid in developing the machines and computers of tomorrow.

"Our findings can help scientists to identify other core neuronal systems which underlie similar decision making processes. This will eventually help us design the 'brains' of robots based on the principle of using the fewest possible components necessary to perform complex tasks," continued Professor Kemenes.

The full study, "A two-neuron system for adaptive goal-directed decision making in Lymnaea", conducted Dr. Michael Crossley and Professors Kevin Staras and George Kemenes is published in Nature Communications.

(Source: AFP)



An alliance of Syrian Kurdish and Arab forces has managed to cut off the ISIL (Daesh) terror group's main supply route to Turkey after encircling the Syrian border town of Manbij.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a coalition of Kurdish, Arab, Assyrian, Armenian, and Turkmen fighters, backed by the People's Protection Units (YPG), surrounded Manbij on Friday, said the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The SDF also blocked the road south of the town, which heads to Raqqah. The strategic city of Manbij, located in Syria's Aleppo Province, is a key point along Daesh's main supply line from the Turkish frontier to Raqqah.

Raqqah, on the northern bank of the Euphrates River, about 160 kilometers east of Aleppo, was overrun by Takfiri terrorists in March 2013, and in 2014 was proclaimed the center for most of the terrorists' administrative and control tasks.

Syrian forces are now engaged in a military offensive to liberate the strategic town.

Daesh, however, still controls territory along the Turkish border with secondary roads to the frontier, but these are more dangerous and difficult to access, according to Observatory head Rami Abdel



Rahman.

To "reach the Turkish border from Raqqah," Daesh terrorists have to take a

route that is more dangerous, because of the presence of Syrian troops and Russian air strikes, he added.

(Source: SANA)

## Syrians cut off main ISIL road to Turkey

Earlier this week, the SDF fighters managed to cut the road north out of Manbij to the border town of Jarabulus. The town has been used by Daesh as a transit point for terrorists, money and weapons.

The SDF's Manbij operations center said on Thursday that the Syrian forces were close enough to target Daesh positions inside the city.

A total of 132 Daesh elements and 21 SDF fighters had been killed since the start of the Manbij assault.

About 20,000 people are still living in the city which had a pre-war population of about 120,000, mostly Arabs.

Turkey, which was irked by the rapid advance of Syrian Kurdish fighters in areas near its border, has shelled their positions inside Syria for several times.

Ankara has widely been blamed for the surge in the conflict in Syria as it has been supporting anti-Damascus militants with funds, training and weapons.

On Friday, the Russian ceasefire monitoring center in Syria said al-Nusra militants are carrying out mortar attacks on positions held by the Syrian Army and Kurdish militia as well as civilian areas in Aleppo.

## 'Trump's support base is complicated to assess'

➡ The Democrats' support base is wide among the economically poorest while the Republicans have traditionally had a distinct edge among those in the richest and upper middle classes. This year it looks like many people with relatively low education -- that is, high school or less -- are flocking to the Republican Party's nominee Donald Trump. Democrats have more support among the college educated and higher.

■ **Which social classes mostly support Trump?**

A: Donald Trump's support base is more complicated to assess. Some of it, many say most, during the primary

election stage came from those who view the ongoing demographic and cultural changes in America as threatening to their lifestyles. These are people who have reacted very negatively to having President Barack Obama as the nation's first African-American head of state. They are the ones who would like to 'take the country back' in a socio-cultural sense and like Trump's slogan 'Make American Great Again'. But now that Trump is the presumptive nominee of the Republican party, most Republicans including moderates, among those several from the party's top leadership who had earlier seemed totally opposed to him, have

come around to supporting him. He is attracting wide support from white males, religious conservatives as well as independents some of whom are libertarians. In the south and the mid-west he is getting a groundswell of support, especially in small towns and rural areas. Metropolitan America leans towards Democrats.

■ **How do you assess the American people's election behavior until now?**

A: This question is difficult to answer in any clear form. A significant section of the voting population seems to be angry and frustrated with the way things are. Whether such angry people form a majority is not clear. Those who

find Obama's two terms as president satisfying and the state of a growing economy to continue in the direction of improvement instead of radical change seem to be supporting Clinton. If, however, you are referring to the tone and rhetoric used in this extraordinarily heated and campaign, moderate Americans of both parties are alarmed at what they see as at least a temporary breakdown of civility and a hardening of bitter partisanship in American politics. These would be the same people who are nervous about the prospect of a Trump presidency, the precise contour or nature of which is unpredictable at this point.

## U.S. election: Barack Obama endorses Hillary Clinton

U.S. President Barack Obama has officially endorsed fellow Democrat Hillary Clinton for president, saying he did not think there had ever been a nominee "so qualified" for the White House.

"I want to congratulate Hillary Clinton, on making history as the presumptive democratic nominee for President of the United States," Obama said in a video released on Clinton's official YouTube Channel on Thursday.

"I'm with her, I'm fired up and I cannot wait to get out there and campaign for Hillary," he added. "I don't think there has ever been someone so qualified to hold this office."

As it circulated the Obama video, the Clinton campaign announced that their first joint appearance on the campaign trail will be on Wednesday in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

■ **Obama-Sanders meeting**

The endorsement came shortly after Obama met Clinton's rival in the Democratic primary contest, US Senator Bernie Sanders, at the White House.

Speaking after his meeting with Obama, Sanders said that he would work with Clinton to defeat Republican

hopeful Donald Trump.

"Needless to say, I am going to do everything in my power and I will work as hard as I can to make sure that Donald Trump does not become president of the United States," Sanders said.

He added, however, that he was going to stay in the race to compete in the final Democratic primary vote in Washington DC on June 14.

Al Jazeera's White House correspondent Patty Culhane, reporting from Washington, said that it was clear why Sanders visited the White House.

"He was being given a heads-up," Culhane said.

Obama had been expected to support Clinton since she declared herself the party's presumptive nominee after reaching the number of delegates needed to be named its candidate in the November elections.

But, Senator Sanders still remains popular and the Democratic party is expected to need his support to win the presidency in November.

After the president's meeting with Sanders, the Obama administration changed their mind at the last minute and allowed the press to take photographs of the

president and the senator walking into the Oval Office, Culhane said.

"Obama is trying to send a message to Bernie Sanders' supporters that the president is not disrespecting Senator Sanders," she added.

According to the latest poll by CBS and New York Times, 52 percent of Americans say that they have an unfavourable view of Clinton, while 57 percent say that they have an unfavourable view of Trump.

"Bernie Sanders is the only candidate left in the race that has more people say they like him than don't like him," said Culhane.

"So, if Hillary Clinton is going to get ahead on the polls, she is going to need Senator Sanders on her side.

"She is going to need to use his popularity and the passion of his supporters to make sure that they go out to vote for her."

Obama remains popular with voters, and his endorsement will come as a significant boost to Clinton.

Obama and Clinton were rivals during the 2008 Democratic primary that Obama won. Clinton went on to serve as Obama's secretary of state during his first term in office.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Syria: Food aid reaches Daraya for first time in years

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and the UN have delivered food aid to the Damascus suburb of Daraya for the first time since it came under siege in 2012.

The drop late on Thursday came hours after the UN said the Syrian government had permitted access to 15 of the 19 besieged areas within the war-ravaged country.

The rebel-held suburb of Daraya, southwest of the Syrian capital, has been under siege since November 2012 and has witnessed some of the worst bombardment during Syria's civil war, now in its sixth year.

The delivery of food supplies came a week after a joint convoy of the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross and SARC reached Daraya and delivered medicine, vaccines, baby formula, and "nutritional items for children" but no food.

The UN estimates that there are currently 592,700 people living under siege in Syria.

Lifting the siege on rebel-held areas was a key demand by the opposition during indirect peace talks held in Geneva earlier this year.

SARC said the delivery - which included food, flour and medical supplies - was coordinated with the UN in the Syrian capital.



■ **'One meal per day'**

In a video posted online by media activists in Daraya, an official with the UN's World Food Program (WFP) said the organization is delivering assistance to the suburb for the first time since 2012.

He said that WFP had delivered about 480 food rations that would feed around 2,400 individuals for a month.

The official said he had met some beneficiaries of the food aid and community leaders.

"The supply of the very basic commodities is very challenging, so as a consequence the prices of the commodities themselves are very high whenever they are available," he said.

"As a result, most families are having to do with one meal, which is not complete as a meal, per day in order to be able to get by," he said.

An amateur video posted online showed UN SUVs and white SARC trucks driving through sand barriers in the dark until they were met by opposition fighters.

Photographs posted online by activists in the suburb showed UN and SARC officials meeting local dignitaries and men removing WFP boxes from a white truck.

Among those joining the convoy into Daraya were the UN humanitarian coordinator for Syria, Yacoub El Hillo, and Khawla Mattar, a spokeswoman for the UN Special Envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura, according to photographs posted by local activists.

The UN estimates that 4,000 to 8,000 people live in Daraya, which has been subject to a crippling government blockade since residents expelled security forces in the early stages of the 2011 uprising against President Bashar Assad.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## JUMP

### To Ban Ki-moon

➡ Nobody knows for sure if other UN reports like the ones on the Sabra and Shatila massacre and the killing of the Syrian people have been kept hidden from the world under duress from governments and groups contributing money to the organization. With such passivism, it shall now be clear why an increasing number of regions are being threatened by the ghost of war and bloodshed.

## Damascus envoy in Russia calls for backing Syrian army in war on terror

➡ He cited the necessity of closing the Syrian-Turkish borders to prevent the infiltration of weapons and terrorists to Syria.

Haddad said what is happening in Syria is not an anti-Christianity campaign but a foreign-backed terrorist war using the elements of extremism against the Syrian people in all their components, blaming the Turkish regime for supporting the groups responsible for the abduction of two prominent Christian figures in Aleppo.

The ambassador highlighted the role of the Syrian army and armed forces in the fight against terrorism, hailing the progress the army is making, backed by the Russian allies, on multiple fronts.

(Source: syriaonline.sy)

## EU, Germany hit back at Erdogan in genocide row

German politicians hit back at Turkey's president for accusing lawmakers of Turkish origin of having "tainted blood" in a row over whether the Ottoman Empire committed genocide in World War I.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reacted furiously after the 11 German MPs with Turkish roots last week backed a parliamentary resolution that recognized the mass killings of Armenians as a genocide.

The sensitive issue has infuriated Erdogan at a time when relations are already strained by disputes about media freedom, while the EU is banking on Turkey to stop the cross-border flow of migrants.



A group of Turkish lawyers has also filed a complaint with prosecutors asking for the 11 German lawmakers to be charged with "insulting Turkishness and the Turkish state," the Hurriyet daily reported.

European Parliament President Martin Schulz wrote to Erdogan to voice his "great concern" about his "verbal attacks and allegations concerning freely elected members of the German Bundestag".

Schulz, a German national, also condemned "in the strongest terms" Erdogan's comments linking the lawmakers to "terrorists", in reference to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Lawmakers and journalists' ability to work "without having to fear repression is part of the non-negotiable foundation of every democracy," he wrote.

Schulz warned that if national leaders challenge these rights, this "can be damaging to international relations in the long run".

■ **'Hateful threats'**

The German parliament's president, Norbert Lammert, said that statements by Turkish leaders had prepared the ground for a torrent of "hateful threats and insults" that were mailed to the MPs.

"I would not have thought it possible that a democratically elected president in the 21st century mixes his criticism of democratically elected representatives of the German Bundestag with doubts about their Turkish origin, that he refers to their 'tainted blood'," Lammert said in an address to the chamber. He added that "anyone who tries to pressure individual MPs with threats must know that he is attacking the whole parliament".

Lammert also warned that "we will respond accordingly with all options available to us under the law".

Erdogan late Wednesday spoke of people with "tainted blood" -- explaining he meant those "who wrong their own people" -- and pointed at the "members of parliament in Germany that accuse their own country of genocide".

His comments went a step further than remarks at the weekend in which he suggested the MPs should undergo blood tests to see "what kind of Turks they are".

Germany's foreign ministry on Tuesday asked in the Turkish charge d'affaires to say that recent statements about German MPs were met with "incomprehension" in Berlin.

One of the German lawmakers, the Green party's Cem Ozdemir, told Turkey's Armenian weekly Agos that while he and other parliamentarians were the targets of "death threats and insults", at least they were "not incarcerated" and not had their "immunity lifted for having simply expressed what we thought, unlike our colleagues in Turkey".

(Source: AFP)

Iraqi sources say the leader of the ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group, Ibrahim al-Samarrai, also known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, has been wounded in an airstrike in Iraq.

Iraqi Al Sumaria TV cited local sources in Iraq's Nineveh Province as saying that Baghdadi and other Takfiri leaders were wounded in an airstrike on one of the terrorist group's headquarters in an area 65

kilometers west of Nineveh, close to the Syrian border, on Thursday.

The Iraqi TV channel said al-Baghdadi, who was believed to be in the Daesh stronghold of Raqqah in Syria, was wounded by the explosion of a bomb released from a U.S.-led coalition aircraft.

A U.S.-led coalition, which purports to be striking Daesh targets in

Syria and Iraq, said on Friday it could not confirm the report by the Iraqi TV channel.

A spokesman for the coalition, Army Col. Christopher Garver, said in an email that he had seen the reports but had "nothing to confirm this at this time."

Earlier, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least

30 civilians lost their lives when the U.S.-led coalition launched an aerial attack purportedly against a position of the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group in Syria's northern province of Aleppo.

Raqqah was overrun by Takfiri terrorists in March 2013. Syrian forces are now engaged in a military offensive to liberate the Daesh-held city.

(Source: Press TV)

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT



To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering.  
*Friedrich Nietzsche*

LEARN ENGLISH

Talking to a Bank Teller

Bank Teller: Can I help you?  
Antonio: Yes, I'd like to **deposit this check**.  
Bank Teller: Please fill out a **deposit slip** and be sure to **endorse** the check on the back.  
Antonio: Here you are. I've already filled out a slip and signed the check. I'd also like to **cash** this other check.  
Bank Teller: Sure, I can help you with that. Here you are. Here's a **receipt** for your deposit and I've cashed your check. Let me **count out** your \$100: 20, 40, 60, 80, and 100.  
Antonio: Thanks. Could I also check my **bank balance** for my other account?  
Bank Teller: No problem. You just have to **swipe** your ATM card and enter your PIN. It looks like you have a balance of \$1,752. Will that be all?  
Antonio: Oh, I have that much? I'd like to **withdraw** \$80.  
Bank Teller: All right. You'll need to fill out a **withdrawal slip**. Why don't you step aside while you do that so I can help the next customer, and when you're done, come back to this window and I'll help you.  
Antonio: Okay, I'll do that. And if I want to **transfer** money between accounts?  
Bank Teller: You'll need to fill out a withdrawal slip for the first account and a deposit slip for the second.  
Antonio: Got it. This might **take a while**.  
Bank Teller: No problem, sir. We're here all day – at least until 5:00.

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

**deposit a check:** put money into your bank account  
**deposit slip:** a piece of paper that you write your account information on so that the teller knows where to put this check  
**endorse:** to sign your name on the back of a check to show that it is correct  
**cash:** to exchange a check etc. for the amount of money it is worth  
**receipt:** a piece of paper that you are given which shows that you have paid for something  
**count out:** to put things down one by one as you count them  
**bank balance:** the amount of money someone has in their bank account  
**swipe:** to take the ATM card and move it quickly through the narrow area that reads the electronic information of the back of the card  
**withdraw:** to take money out of a bank account  
**withdrawal slip:** a piece of paper you fill out with your information that you give to the bank teller so that he or she can take money out of your account  
**transfer:** to move money from one account or institution to another  
**take a while:** used when a task may take a long time to complete

QUIZ OF THE DAY

165) \_\_\_\_ were ill so they stayed at home instead of going to school.  
a) Both  
b) Either  
c) Neither  
(Quiz No. 164 answer: a)

PHRASAL VERB

Take away

■ **Meaning:** buy food at a restaurant and carry it elsewhere to eat it  
■ **For example:** Two beef curries to take away please.

ENGLISH PROVERB

First come, first served

■ **Explanation:** the first person in the line will be attended to first



Be kind to me!

# This Mexico City teacher is bringing Spiderman to his classroom

It's a marvelous way of getting his student's attention

A Mexican science teacher has come up with a novel way to get his students' attention giving lessons dressed as Spiderman.

Moises Vazquez, 26, said he was inspired to pull on the tight blue and red suit of the superhero after reading in comics that the Marvel character behind the mask, Peter Parker, worked as a science teacher after his time as a freelance photographer.

"I do the same job as anyone else, I don't think it's the best class in the world just because I put on a suit. But I assure you I want to be the most honest and dedicated there is, I just want to make the classroom a better place," he said.

When giving class at the National Autonomous University of Mexico as the superhero, Vazquez leaves home in east-

ern Mexico City with his mother's blessing, and rides in public transport to the prestigious seat of learning dressed as the Avenger.

Vazquez's family originally thought that pretending to be Spiderman could hurt his career when he started donning the suit for class a year and a half ago, but instead the unusual turn has gone down well with students and other teachers, he said.

"Obviously they reacted with surprise, but they were happy too," Vazquez added. "Everyone was smiling at me."

On the streets of the megalopolis, people are generally surprised to learn the Mexican superhero is a university lecturer, assuming that his outfit is part of a film shoot.

(Source: Reuters)



Moises Vazquez, 26, known as Spider Moy, a computer science teaching assistant at the Faculty of Science of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), teaches dressed as a comic superhero Spiderman in Mexico City.

## Fair markets in fair societies

By Yury Fedotov

Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The outcry over the so-called Panama Papers has again focused attention on the tides and currents of our global financial system.

Whether those named in the papers are breaking the law is not necessarily the point. What concerns is that there appears to be enough underwater caves beneath our financial high seas for vast amounts of treasure to be hidden from view.

Some of this money undoubtedly comes from illicit sources. Although now five years old, UNODC's Estimating Illicit Financial Flows' publication showed that money laundered from criminal acts amounted to around US\$1.5 trillion annually. That's probably a conservative estimate.

But it is not just the illicit money that washes through our financial systems, corruption is also harming financial trust and government credibility. Although this is probably enough to be going on with, this endemic crime does immeasurable harm to our societies, especially to the weak and the vulnerable.

Money diverted from governments, can prevent schools and hospitals from being built, as well as desperately needed infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

This should dispel the entirely false view that corruption is a victimless crime. Victims are legion and they include millions of vulnerable women, children and men; individuals

who suffer most when corruption spirits away funds for essential services.

Corruption is modern proof of the old children's nursery rhyme: "For want of a nail." In the poem, the lack of a nail led inescapably to the loss of a kingdom. Corruption pursues the same frightening logic.

But, corruption is not measured by lost kingdoms, or lost lives or even irreparably damaged communities, it is measured in generations of missed opportunities and hopes made barren.

Corruption's ability to undermine societies and hinder development is specifically recognized in the 2030 development agenda under Goal 16, which calls for substantial reductions in corruption and bribery.

Thankfully, there are also some signs that the tide is turning. One striking reason is the landmark UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

It is the only universal, legal, anti-corruption instrument, and it is driven by innovative anti-corruption standards that are applicable to both the public and private sectors. The Convention is changing attitudes and changing lives at the same time.

The inclusion of the private sector is essential. Governments cannot undertake the heavy lifting on their own. There is a desperate need for close collaboration.

Fortunately, the private sector seems to be moving in the same direction. Businesses realize that the fight against corruption is a win-win situation: Business thrives where laws

are clearly defined and fairly applied.

To help, I would suggest four key actions are needed.

First, countries need to create the laws necessary to give teeth to UNCAC at the local level. Second, criminal justice institutions must be given the authority and independence to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate corruption offences.

Third, cooperation must drive everything that we do. Finally, there is a need to promote asset recovery mechanisms to identify, seize and return the proceeds of crime.

Our goal must be the following: No funds stolen from any developing country are to be left behind in a foreign bank or tax haven. Everything must be returned.

But we cannot do this alone. The private sector can support this work. Their role is to continue turning the much desired level-playing field into the legislated playing field.

UNCAC can help. Its unique selling point is its reach and global credibility.

In the recent past, people accepted corruption and bribery as part of everyday life. Now they reject it. But it has not been tamed, it can come back with a vengeance if we let things slide.

The United Nations is seeking to help build better lives and greater equality, while businesses are seeking integrity, accountability and transparency.

Let's combine our work to ensure that there are fair markets in fair societies.

(Source: UNIC)

IN FOCUS ISNA/ Amir Harirchi



A miniature park in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province, is partly exploited with nine of Iran's ancient remains of historical sites and monuments such as Kandovan village, and Ferdowsi's tomb as well as building of train stations and dams. The park is expected to complete with 60 of such historical and non-historical buildings in the future.

## LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

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

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.

### سوادآموزی بیش از ۶۸۰ هزار نفر از اتباع خارجی در عرض ۲۷ سال در ایران

علی باقرزاده رئیس سازمان نهضت سوادآموزی گفت: در طول سال های ۱۳۶۳ تا ۱۳۹۰ بیش از ۶۸۰ هزار نفر از اتباع خارجی در ایران تحت پوشش سوادآموزی قرار گرفته اند.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر باقرزاده گفت: بنابراین درصد باسوادی آن ها از ۶ درصد به ۶۲ درصد رسیده است.

وی خاطرنشان کرد: در سال ۱۳۹۴ نزدیک به ۲۵ هزار نفر از اتباع سوادآموزی از خدمات سوادآموزی بهره مند شده اند که بیش از ۷۸ درصد آنان زن و ۲۲ درصد مرد بودند.



# I can't promise a medal at Olympics, says Raul Lozano

**IT'SPORTS** d e s k Iran national volleyball team head coach Raul Lozano believes that winning a medal at 2016 Rio Olympics will be amazing but he cannot promise it will happen at the tournament.

Last week, Iran volleyball team made history by earning its first-ever Olympic Games qualification for 52 years in Tokyo, Japan.

"I'm extremely happy that I could share my happiness with Iranian people. Reaching the Olympic Games for the first time is a historic achievement for Iranian volleyball team which has not done just by me or the players, this was a long journey started five years ago when Julio Velasco came here.

"I would like to thank Velasco and Juan Manuel Cichello, who built up the team and did a great job which we can take advantage of that," Lozano told in an interview with Iran Volleyball Federation official website.

Winning a medal in the Olympic Games in volleyball is another dream for Iranian fans but Lozano stated that he cannot promise that.

"The only thing I can promise to the Iranian fans is that all of the players and technical staff will make every effort to make them happy. If we try our best the result will come. Finishing on a podium in Olympics depends on multiple things while we should not forget that world's greatest teams will take part at the Olympics and winning a medal there is not easy at all," the Argentine added.

Iran has been pitted against London 2012 gold medalist Russia, World Championship 2014 winner Poland, Ar-



gentina, Cuba and Egypt in Pool B of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

Pool A consists of host Brazil, FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup winner and runner-up USA and Italy respective-

ly, FIVB Volleyball World League and European champion France, Mexico and Canada.

The Rio 2016 Olympic Games men's volleyball tournament runs from August 6 until August 20.

## Team Melli is in good situation, Iran football president Taj says

**IT'SPORTS** TEHRAN — President d e s k of Iran Football Federation Mehdi Taj expects positive results when Team Melli starts the 2016 World Cup qualifying.

Iran has been drawn in Group A along with South Korea, Uzbekistan, Qatar, China and Syria.

"I've seen South Korea in its recent international friendly matches and I have to say it is not the team to beat. Uzbekistan and China are good teams but Qatar has hired some foreign players. With all the respect I have for our opponents, I have to say Iran has a better condition than five other teams in the group," Taj said.

Iran defeated Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan 3-0 and 6-0 respectively as part of its preparation for the World Cup qualifying.



"I believed that the friendly match against Macedonia was good. I also believe that we have to play with the stronger teams but we need time to plan the friendlies. Also, there is no enough budget to arrange the warm-up matches with the powerful teams," Iran football president added.

## We are favorites in three competitions, says Branko Ivankovic

**IT'SPORTS** d e s k Persepolis head coach Branko Ivankovic believes his team has the chance of winning the title in all three competitions for the next season.

The Croatian coach, who nearly missed the Iran Professional League title with Persepolis last season, thinks his team is the favorite in IPL, Hazfi Cup and also AFC Champions League.

"We will play in the league, Hazfi Cup and AFC Champions League and we are the favorites in all three. We had good performance last season and we want to build on that to bring more glories to the club. Our priority is to make our fans happy as they supported us from until the last seconds," Branko told reporters.

"I've given a list of the players to the club officials and I hope we could strengthen the team in the transfer window. Vahid Amiri and Mehrdad Mohammadi are both on my list and I hope the club could sign them in the coming weeks," Branko added.



Persepolis has already signed Sasan Ansari, Ehsan Alvanzadeh, Alireza Beyranvand and Jalal Hosseini in the transfer market.

## Iran ready to defend title at Freestyle Wrestling World Cup

**IT'SPORTS** d e s k Iran dispatched 16 wrestlers to Los Angeles for the 2016 Men's Freestyle Wrestling World Cup.

The competition will be held in Inglewood, Calif, June 11-12.

Iran, who has won the last two World Cup team titles, will be headed by Rasoul Khadem in the competition.

The World Cup is the annual international dual meet championships, and will feature the top eight men's freestyle wrestling teams in the world.

The Iranian team is experienced and talented, with a World or Olympic medalist in six of the eight international weight classes.

The prestigious competition has brought eight coun-



tries together.

Iran has drawn into Group B, and will face the United States, Azerbaijan and India.

Russia, Georgia, Turkey and Mongolia are in Group A.

Iran Freestyle World Cup Team Roster

57kg: Hassan Rahimi, Reza Atri

61kg: Masoud Esmailpour, Behnam Ehsanpour

65kg: Ahmad Mohammadi, Meysam Nasiri

70kg: Mostafa Hosseinkhani, Saeid Dadashpour

74kg: Hassan Yazdani, Alireza Ghasemi

86kg: Alireza Karimi, Reza Bayat

96kg: Abbas Tahan, Amir Mohammadi

125kg: Komeil Ghasemi, Parviz Hadi

## Iran basketball team loses to Philippines in friendly



Iran national basketball team was defeated against the Philippines in a friendly match.

In the match held at the Smart Araneta Coliseum in Manila, the Iranian team

lost to host 81-70.

Andray Blatche came through with game highs of 20 points and 11 rebounds in a sparkling performance.

Behnam Yakhchali and Oshin Sahakian put in 16 and 13 points, respectively, for the Iranians.

"Playing in the Philippines against such a good and well-coached team will be huge for our young players. We want them to get as much experience from this," Iran coach Dirk Bauermann said before the friendly. "We have the highest respect for Gilas and Coach Tab."

Iran is preparing for the Olympic Qualifying Tournament (OQT), slated for July 4-9.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Iranian powerlifter Farzin omitted from national team



Majid Farzin has been left out of the Iran's powerlifting team after criticizing his coach.

With about three months to the up-

coming Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, the 80kg powerlifter was omitted from the national team.

The 2012 Paralympic Games gold medalist had said in an interview with the local media his coach, Ahmad Deljavan, prevented him to lift more than 233kg.

"I am not allowed to lift more than 233kg and it's while I lifted 236.5 kg in the UAE in February and broke the world record at the IPC Powerlifting World Cup. Under the circumstance, I cannot repeat my gold medal at Rio," Farzin said.

Iran's National Paralympic Committee announced that the powerlifter should attend the disciplinary committee next week for disrespecting his coach.

(Source: Tasnim)

## BOXING

### Thousands gather for Muslim funeral honoring Muhammad Ali

A Muslim funeral for Muhammad Ali on Thursday drew thousands of admirers to the boxer's hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, where mourners prayed over the body of a man who battled in the ring and sought peace outside it.

An estimated 14,000 people, representing many races and creeds, attended the jenazah, or "funeral" in Arabic, where he was repeatedly feted as "the people's champion."

Ali, a three-time heavyweight champion known for his showmanship, political activism and devotion to humanitarian causes, died on Friday of septic shock in an Arizona hospital. He was 74.

"The passing of Muhammad Ali has made us all feel a little more alone in the world," said Sherman Jackson, a Muslim scholar at the University of Southern California.

"Something solid, something big, beautiful and life-affirming has left this world," he said of a man who was forced to give up more than three years of boxing at the height of his career for his refusal to serve in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War.

Jackson praised Ali for advancing the cause of black Americans during and after the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Others admired him for making Islam more acceptable and giving U.S. Muslims a hero they could share with the American mainstream. Imam Zaid Shakir, a founder of Muslim liberal arts school Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California, led worshippers in prayers such as "Allahu akbar" ("God is greatest") over Ali's body, which lay in a casket covered with a black and gold cloth.

Ali and his family planned his funeral for 10 years, making sure it would honor his Muslim faith while also adapting to the demands of Western media-driven culture.

U.S. President Barack Obama also praised Ali on Thursday in a Facebook live broadcast from the White House, showing off a copy of the book, "GOAT: A Tribute to Muhammad Ali," and a signed pair of boxing gloves gifted to him by Ali.

"It's very rare where a figure captures the imagination of the entire world," Obama said. "He was one of a kind and in my book he'll always be the greatest."

Ali was due to be buried on Friday, after a funeral procession and before one final goodbye when thousands more will gather for an interfaith service.

Luminaries including former U.S. President Bill Clinton, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and comedian Billy Crystal will attend Friday's event, at the KFC Yum Center.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iran's Ali Kafashian among eight candidates contesting three Asia places on FIFA council

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Electoral Committee has reviewed the nomination forms and documents provided and has confirmed that eight candidates will stand for the three additional places available to Asia on the new FIFA Council. At least one of those three places must be filled by a woman.

The eight candidates who will contest the election at the AFC Extraordinary Congress on September 27 in Goa and who complied with the requirements set out in the May 17, 2016 letter and in the AFC Electoral Code which called for candidates are:

- A. FIFA Council Members
1. Zhang Jian (China PR)
2. Ali Kafashian Naeni (Islamic Republic of Iran)
3. Mong Gyu Chung (Korea Republic)
4. Saoud A. Aziz Al-Mohannadi (Qatar)
5. Zainuddin Nordin (Singapore)
- B. FIFA Female Council Member
1. Moya Dodd (Australia)
2. Mahfuza Ahkter (Bangladesh)
3. Han Un Gyeong (DPR Korea)

In accordance to the FIFA Statutes and the FIFA Governance Regulations, the above list of candidates for the FIFA Council has been submitted to the FIFA General Secretariat in order for the FIFA Review Committee to carry out the eligibility check on each candidate.

(Source: AFC)

## Iran water polo team to participate at Tbilisi Cup

Iran water polo team will participate in the Tbilisi Cup as part of preparation for the Asian Water Polo Championship which will be held in Tokyo, Japan, from November 8 to 13.

The water polo team coached by Alexander Ciric will hold a one-week training camp in Tbilisi.

Iran will also participate in a tournament in Georgia.

Teams from China, Slovakia, Kazakhstan and Georgia (two teams) are expected to take part in the competition.

(Source: Tasnim)



## Alidoosti sacked as head coach of Iran U-17 football team

Iran Football Federation has sacked Hamid Alidoosti as head coach of the country's Under-17 team.

Abbas Chamanian has been named as the team's interim coach.

Alidoosti was appointed as the head coach in December 2014.

He played for the Iranian club Homa FC for most of his

career, and also appeared with FSV Salmrohr in Germany.

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

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

(Source: Tasnim)



"The audience ... cannot be more thrilled or more appreciative or more ready to be caught up in the spirit of the undertaking," wrote the New York Times adding: "The three main characters remained true to their younger selves".