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Zarif calls Iran-Pakistan ties 'strategic'



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Iran foils 'biggest terrorist plot' in Tehran, some other cities

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's Intelligence Ministry issued a statement on Monday, announcing it has foiled one of the "biggest terrorist plots of

Takfiri-Wahhabi groups" in Tehran and some other cities.

"Under the criminal plot of the anti-Islamic Takfiri terrorist group, a series of

bombings in several spots of the country had been planned for the coming events in Tehran and some other cities and the devil actions of the Takfiri terrorists were foiled...

and the terrorists were arrested and a large amount of explosives were seized," the statement said.

→2

'First section of Tehran-Shomal Freeway to be completed by March'

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The first section of the long-awaited Tehran-Shomal Freeway will be completed by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri announced during his visit to the project site on Monday.

The freeway aims to connect Tehran to the northern province of Mazandaran.

The protracted construction of the Tehran-Shomal Freeway, which was started around 20 years ago, has turned into a major concern for the government. The freeway reportedly includes four sections, spanning 121 kilometers upon completion. →9



© Mehr/Mohammad Mohebbi

Iran to place 'professional satellite' at GSO by 2025

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran says it will place "professional satellites" at the geosynchronous orbit by 2025.

Iran's current satellites are tentatively built to improve the country's space technology, but two professional satellites will be launched in ten years, Mohammad Homayoun Sadr, deputy director of Iran Space Organization, told Mehr on Monday.

The official said there are two special projects underway regarding the professional satellites, one being high-resolution imaging and the other being telecommunication services.

"This year (to end March 20), we will send one test satellite into space. For the next year we also plan to send two," he stated.

Japan, S Korea in talks with Iran for petchem projects

Iran's Petrochemical Commercial Company International (PCCI) is holding discussions with investors from Japan and South Korea for investing €520 million (\$591.01 million) in petrochemical projects in the country, said a report.

The investments will be made in the form of usance letter of credits (L/Cs).

PCCI has initiated talks with Japanese and South Korean investors to finance petrochemical projects in the Islamic Republic, Isa Mashayekhi, managing director of PCCI, was quoted as saying in an Iran Daily News report.

He said Iran's Ministry of Economy should provide state guarantees with the supervision of the Central Bank of Iran for PGPIC to access credit from countries such as Japan and South Korea.

He said a South Korean credit line valued at €13 billion (\$14.7 billion) is available for Iran while a €10 billion (\$11.37 billion) Japanese credit line will be accessible in August 2017, added the report. (Source: Trade Arabia)

Bangladeshi festival honors Iran's "Valad"

ART TEHRAN — "Valad", Iranian filmmaker Amir-Abbas Rabiei's short film about the savage Israeli bombardment of Gaza, has won the jury special award at the International Open Film Festival (IOFF), which was held in the Mirpur neighborhood of Dhaka,

Bangladesh.

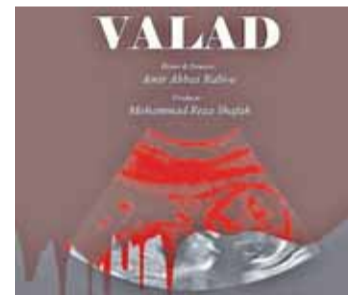
The story of the film is about a pregnant woman who is trapped under rubble after an Israeli bombardment of a hospital in Gaza.

The Arabic-language film was screened in the Film on Women section of the festival, which came to an end on June 14, Sureh Film,

the producer of the movie, announced on Monday.

"Vallad" has recently won the award for best social short film at the Tracce Cinematografiche Film Fest in the Italian town Nettuno.

The festival is scheduled to screen the winning films on June 26.



A poster for "Valad"

Iran, China resume talks on Arak reactor modernization

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Tehran and Beijing have started brainstorming sessions on the re-designing of Arak reactor under the terms of the nuclear deal Tehran and the 5+1 group of countries forged in July 2015.

The technical meetings are a follow-up to the talks held between Iranian and Chinese expert panels in Beijing previously, according to

Behrooz Kamalvandi.

Under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran will modernize the Arak heavy water research reactor to support peaceful nuclear

research and radioisotopes production for medical and industrial purposes.

The cooperation will be on the basis of the

JCPOA where Iran and 5+1 countries have agreed on the establishment of a Working Group composed of E3/EU+3 participants to facilitate the redesigning and rebuilding of the reactor.

Iran and China signed an agreement on the modernization project during the visit to Iran of Chinese President Xi Jinping in January.

JCPOA will possibly exist no longer if Trump becomes president: Richard Nephew

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Richard Nephew, who was a top negotiator with Iran over the country nuclear program up until late 2014, says that how the implementation of the nuclear deal in the long-term will be influenced by the U.S. presidential election will "depend greatly on who wins the election."

"In the short-term, there will be no impact, as the Obama Administration remains in office and the President himself has underscored his support for the JCPOA," Nephew tells the Tehran Times.

Former Principal Deputy Coordinator for Sanctions Policy at the Department of State says that "if the likely Republican nominee - Donald Trump - becomes president, then it is possible the JCPOA will no longer exist when he enters office in January 2017."

Following is the full text of the interview with Richard Nephew:

■ What will be the impact of the U.S. presidential election on the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA)?

A: The long-term impact will depend greatly on who wins the election. In the short-term, there will be no impact, as the Obama Administration remains in office and the President himself has underscored his support for the JCPOA.

■ Do you think there is any difference between Republican or Democrat final nominees when it comes to implementing the JCPOA?

A: Not for the near-term. But, if the likely Republican nominee - Donald Trump - becomes president, then it is possible the JCPOA will no longer exist when he enters office in January 2017.



He has said that he would terminate the deal on his first day in office. On the other hand, though, he has also said that he intends to be unpredictable and flexible, and that he may change

his mind. Candidly, we may not know what Donald Trump intends to do until he is in office and it may change.

If either Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders were to be president, then I believe they would both continue to support the implementation of the JCPOA so long as there are no indications of Iran's lack of commitment. If there were to be indications of this, then I would expect to seek to address any violations within the terms of the deal, using the dispute resolution process that the JCPOA established.

■ Which candidate will be the better option for Iran? Democrat or Republican one?

A: I think this is probably too difficult to answer without injecting my personal bias. I believe that Hillary Clinton should be the next U.S. President as she will be best for the United States. Insofar as Iran is concerned, she has made not only her concerns with Iranian policy very clear but also her readiness to engage with Iran diplomatically to help address those concerns. I share her concerns and support her approach.

CONDOLENCES

We at the Tehran Times are deeply saddened by the loss of our former colleague Davoud Swizzi. He will be truly missed. We will include him in our prayers.

TEHRANTIMES
staff and management

Muslim children introduce their native countries at Tehran Quran exhibit

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — Children from Muslim countries introduce their countries in the poster exhibit "I Am a Muslim" in the 24th International Holy Quran Exhibition now underway at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

Children from countries in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has 57 member states spread over four continents, as well as those from other Muslim countries, introduce the principal cities in their countries, their languages, and their countries' scenic beauty and religious sites.

"We Muslim children can be good friends with one another. We can cooperate with one another and make a better world," reads one of the posters on display.

"I am Haban from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Abu Dhabi is the capital of my country. Most of the people speak Arabic in my country. UAE is the neighbor of Saudi Arabia. Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi is one of the most beautiful sites in my country," reads the other poster.

Zahra from Iran also introduces her country in one poster, saying, "I am Zahra from Iran. Tehran is the capital of my country. We speak Persian." →12

Iranian MPs propose motion to fight dust pollution

A group of Iranian lawmakers put forward a motion to oblige President Hassan Rouhani's administration to address the issue of dust pollution in the country's western provinces, a parliamentarian said.



Speaking to the Tasnim News Agency, Hassan Soleimani said the motion, signed by 40 lawmakers, has been submitted to the presiding board of the parliament.

"According to the motion, the administration will be obliged to take practical measures in line with the fight against dust particles and should submit reports on its measures to the parliament," added Soleimani, who represents the people of Kangavar, western province of Kermanshah, in the parliament.

The dust pollution blanketing the country, particularly western provinces, in recent weeks reached "dangerous" levels, environmental officials said.

Director-General of Tehran Province's Environmental Protection Department Mohammad Hadi Heydarzadeh told Tasnim earlier that particles polluting the country had been emanating from Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

This is not the first time that residents of the western and southwestern provinces are facing a growing trend in the influx of fine particles, which are generated by drought-hit marshlands in neighboring countries.

The disruptive dust storms have pushed pollution in those border areas to alarming levels, raising health concerns.

The particles, carried by winds, can penetrate the lungs and enter the bloodstream, causing serious diseases such as lung cancer, asthma and heart problems. (Source: Tasnim)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



4,000 medical professors appreciate Leader's guidelines

TEHRAN — 4,000 professors of the medical field in Iran wrote a letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday to appreciate him for his recent remarks.

"We heard with our hearts your painstaking statements in the recent meeting with university professors," they wrote, stressing that they will do their best to realize the Leader's objectives, Nasim reported.



Iranian navy to stage 20 war games by March 2017: commander

TEHRAN — Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari announced that his forces will hold 20 military drills in the current Iranian year (March 20, 2016 – March 20, 2017).

Speaking to reporters in the northern city of Rasht on Sunday evening, Sayyari announced that an electronic warfare exercise was held earlier last week by the naval forces, adding that by the end of this Iranian year, 20 war games are planned to be staged, Tasnim reported.

Sayyari then praised the Navy's military might and said Iran's territorial waters are "in full security".

"The Navy's defense capabilities are so high that no enemy would dare to invade the territorial waters of Iran," the commander noted.



Jalali appointed head of Majlis research center

TEHRAN — Kazem Jalali was appointed as the head of the research center of the Majlis on Monday.

Majlis presiding board spokesman Behrooz Nemati said Jalali was reinstated in the position despite many candidates, ICANA reported.

Zarif calls Iran-Pakistan ties 'strategic'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that Iran-Pakistan relations are "strategic," describing ties "growing."

During a meeting with Nour Muhammad Jadmani, the outgoing Pakistani ambassador to Tehran, Zarif highlighted that there are capacities in the two countries to expand ties, expressing hope that banking interaction between the two countries would be facilitated.

He also noted that there is no restriction on Iran-Pakistan friendly relations.

Zarif evaluated the outgoing Pakistani official as "positive" during his Iranian mission.

Jadmani, also for his part, expressed hope that consultation between the two

countries officials would facilitate interaction in banking areas.

Zarif calls Belarus approach in time of sanctions 'constructive'

In a separate meeting with Victor Rybak, the outgoing Belarusian ambassador to Tehran on Monday, the Iranian foreign minister hailed Belarus's approach during the time of sanctions as "constructive."

Also, Rybak pointed to results of the nuclear deal between Iran and the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) and congratulated Iran on the agreement.

Iran and the six major powers finalized the text of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in Vienna in July 2015 and the nuclear deal went into effect in January 2016.

Zarif expresses hope that banking interaction between Iran and Pakistan would be facilitated.



Tehran sees reconsidering PMD issue politically motivated

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said on Monday that reconsidering the issue of Possible Military Dimension of Iran's nuclear program is politically motivated.

His comments came as the Wall Street Journal published an article on Sunday and claimed that the International Atomic Energy Agency discovered uranium particles at Parchin in 2015.

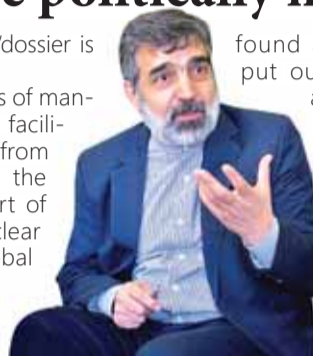
Kamalvandi said that PMD was "political" and resolved through technical, legal and political actions during the nuclear talks.

The IAEA investigated the PMD and its "dossier is closed", he added.

The Wall Street Journal reported, "Traces of man-made uranium were found at the Parchin facility, southeast of Tehran, by investigators from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, as part of an investigation tied to the landmark nuclear deal reached last July between Iran and global powers."

An Iranian government spokesman on Saturday denied uranium had been

found at Parchin and said a 2005 report put out by the IAEA found no "unusual activities" at the base, the WSJ reported.



In July 2015, Iran and the 5+1 group - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany - finalized the text of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in Vienna and the deal took effect in January 2016.

Iran foils 'biggest terrorist plot' in Tehran, some other cities

The statement added that interrogating the arrested terrorists will be continued and interrogation findings will be announced.

Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani said on Sunday that some suicide attacks had been foiled in Tehran during the recent days of holy month of Ramadan.

Any terrorist moves in any spot of Iran will be foiled through the people's participation and God's help, he said during a

ceremony held to commemorate Mostafa Chamran, the Iranian war hero during the 1980s.

On June 13, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps announced that its forces had killed five members of the Party for Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) in the northwestern border city of Sardasht.

"A 5-member terrorist group affiliated to the PJAK was disbanded in Sardasht region in northwestern parts of the country in the precise intelligence and reconnaissance operations of the IRGC Ground

Force," the IRGC said in a statement.

PJAK terrorist group is linked to Turkey's militant Kurdish Workers' Party.

In another clash in southern city of Khash on June 13, Iranian police forces killed five members of a terrorist group which is an offshoot of Jaish ul-Adl.

Western and Eastern borders of Iran have been a hotbed for terrorist activities, mainly influenced by weak border monitoring of neighboring countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Annually, Iranian forces bust terror-

ists groups in the regions, while losing forces, keeping a vigilant eye on its mainland.

The country's intelligence officers have already proven themselves, preventing terrorist blasts in the country, while its vast borders are surrounded by terrorist teams.

This is while terrorist groups have conducted operations in almost all regional countries, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon.

Even European countries have not been safe from terrorist attack.

Are changes under way in Tehran's Syrian policy without Amir-Abdollahian?

News analysis

Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif reshuffled his team on Saturday, appointing Hossein Jaber Ansari, who was serving as spokesman as of November 2015, to lead deputy foreign minister for Arab and African Affairs.

Jaber Ansari replaced Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who was taking the helm for five years. Zarif also commissioned Bahram Qasemi and outgoing Amir-Abdollahian to act as the new Foreign Ministry spokesman and adviser to the Iranian foreign minister, respectively.

While the installations were out of blue, Iranian and foreign sources have linked it, inter alia, Zarif's get-together with his American counterpart John Kerry on the sidelines of the Oslo Forum 2016 in Norway.

Al-Monitor was among the first citing from sources that Zarif had signaled during the Oslo meeting that he had more authority on the Syria file than he had before, and that Iran may be prepared to show more flexibility to advance a political solution.

"What [Zarif] seemed to be signaling was that he has more authority on the Syria file than he has had until now," a U.S. non-governmental source who met with Zarif on the sidelines of the Oslo Forum had told Al-Monitor.

"He seemed to suggest that Iran is prepared to show more flexibility on how fast that question [of Assad] is dealt with and how."

The comments were indirectly confirmed by Kerry who had said "... I do believe the conversation I had with Zarif indicates to me possibilities for how this could be achieved."

"And my hope is that we will open up some political space to try to resolve ... one of the most complex international challenges the community has faced in at least a generation."

The news, however, drew immediate disapproval of the Iranian Foreign Ministry which rejected any shift in its Syrian agenda.

Relevant to this, a group of Basij (mobilization) students from six Tehran-located universities in Tehran issued an announcement, attributing the appointment to talks between Zarif and Kerry in Oslo, calling the Iranian foreign minister to act based on non-partisanship policies.

Ever since the Syrian conflict broke out in 2011, Amir-Abdollahian proved to be a key player in Iran's Middle East policies, representing Iran in Syrian talks occasionally.

Also, to some analysts, without

Amir-Abdollahian, Tehran will have a less bumpy road to reconciliation with Arab countries, notably Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Javan, an Iranian daily, for example, quotes from Al-mustaqbal as saying in March 2016 that absence of Amir-Abdollahian will be a goodwill gesture to Arab countries.

While no Iranian officials, particularly those at the Foreign Ministry, have made no comments on appointment, there are other hints lending support that a possible change is likely to be under way.

One major hint was the appointment of Ali Shamkhani as the senior coordinator for political, military and security affairs with Syria and Russia by the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) of Iran.

The announcement came after Shamkhani met Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and his Syrian counterpart Fahd Jassem al-Frej in Tehran to discuss the "war on terror", as well as other developments in Syria.

Shamkhani is moderate in principle and has shown lately mature and logical understanding of regional developments.

Besides, he has full support of the Leader, which can give him more leeway to take decisions.

This is the first time the position has existed, according to the statement.

Commenting on the new appointment, Al-Jazeera's Tehran Bureau Chief Abdul Qader Fayezi explained that creating the position means that politics may influence the course of events in Syria.

"The Iranian Revolutionary Guard has so far been the main controller of events in Syria, but after this post, politics may have more influence," he explained.

However, it seems that the analyses have ignored one fact about how decisions on foreign policy are finalized in Iran.

It is the Leader who has the final say on the country's foreign policy, according to Ali Akbar Velayati, top advisor to the Leader himself.

During the nuclear negotiations Iran had with the West over its nuclear program, Zarif kept the Leader posted on the latest developments in the talks.

Therefore, it is hardly tenable to claim that with Amir-Abdollahian leaving his position, there will be a big change in Iran's foreign policy.

If there is going to be any change of tack in Tehran's attitude toward Syria, it required the Leader's green light with or without Amir-Abdollahian.



It is hardly tenable to claim that with Amir-Abdollahian leaving his position, there will be a big change in Iran's foreign policy.

رایتل
RighTel



Call for identification of International or Local Solution providers and Contractors For the purchase of USSD Self-care Application

RighTel Telecommunication Service Company intends to identify competent and qualified contractors in providing USSD platform and services to meet requirements and criteria defined in RFI (Request For Information).

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1. Copy of company's registration documents including statute, establishment Ads and the last changes Ads.
2. Capabilities and proficiencies in mentioned fields together with specifications and the project technical team job C.V.
3. The list of performed contracts and projects in this field including job volume and technical specifications. (Upon RighTel request, the copy of Contract shall be provided by Contractor)
4. Documents related to foreign partner (including agreement, official contract or official representatives together with executive experiences/backgrounds in mobile phone industry. (For local Contractors)
5. Documents related to Proof of financial capability (copy of the last audited profit and loss balance sheet or tax returns)
6. Presenting full list of required and available equipment and facilities for executing call subject or similar projects in this field.

Interested solution providers will be expected to send an e-mail to ussdtender@rightel.ir and request for RFI. Upon receiving the RFI, Contractors shall send their RFI response along with all required documents to the mentioned e-mail address.

In addition, applicants must send their response to RFI together with all aforementioned documents' soft copy in the format of a Compressed Disk as well as hard copy of which to the secretariat of RighTel Telecommunication Services Company with below address at most up to July 5th, 2016:

Rightel Foreign Purchasing Department, 4th floor, No.8, West Armaghan St., Valiasr Ave., Tehran, Iran.

This is noteworthy that inserting the expressions "Related to Call for identification of International or Local Solution providers and Contractors For the purchase of USSD Self-care Application" and "Deliver to Rightel CCO/Foreign Purchasing Department" on the envelopes is mandatory; in case of any failure to insert aforesaid expressions and non-receipt of documents' envelope by RighTel Telecommunication Services Company, the responsibility will be borne by the participant.

In case of any ambiguity or any questions, please contact to below e-mail address: ussdtender@rightel.ir

UN: 24 people displaced per minute in 2015

The United Nations refugee agency says persecution and conflict in places such as Syria and Afghanistan raised the total number of refugees and internally displaced people worldwide to a record 65.3 million at the end of last year.

The previous year, 2014, had already seen the highest number of refugees worldwide since World War II, with 60 million displaced people.

But last year - when Lebanon, Turkey and European countries staggered under the arrival of large numbers of refugees - topped that record by nearly 10 percent, the UNHCR said on Monday in unveiling its annual Global Trends Report.

The Geneva-based agency urged leaders from Europe and elsewhere to do more to end the wars that are fanning the exodus of people from their homelands.

"I hope that the message carried by those forcibly displaced reaches the leaderships: We need action, political action, to stop conflicts," said Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. "The message that they have carried is: 'If you don't solve problems, problems will come to you.'"

24 displaced per minute

With stark detail, UNHCR said that on average, 24 people had been displaced every minute of every day last year - or 34,000 people a day - up from six every minute in 2005.

Global displacement has roughly doubled since 1997, and risen by 50 percent since 2011 alone - when the Syria war began.



More than half of all refugees came from three countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.

Turkey was the "top host" country for the second year running, taking in 2.5 million people - nearly all from neighboring Syria. Afghan neighbor Pakistan had 1.6 million, while Lebanon, next to Syria, hosted 1.1 million.

Grandi said policymakers and advocacy groups face daunting challenges helping the largest subset of displaced

people: About 40.8 million internally displaced in countries in conflict. Another 21.3 million were refugees and some 3.2 million more were seeking asylum.

More than a million people fled to Europe last year, causing a political crisis in the European Union.

Grandi called on countries to work to fight the xenophobia that has accompanied the rise in refugee populations, and decried both physical barriers - such as the fences erected by some European

countries - as well as legislative ones that limit access to richer, more peaceful EU states.

Such European policies were "spreading a negative example around the world," he said.

"There is no plan B for Europe in the long run," Grandi said. "Europe will continue to receive people seeking asylum. Their numbers may vary ... but it is inevitable."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

EU's Tusk appeals to British voters to vote to remain in EU



European Council President Donald Tusk issued a direct appeal to British voters Monday, urging them to stay in the EU at a referendum Thursday and saying Brexit would weaken not just Europe but the Western world.

"I would like to appeal to the British citizens, on behalf, I know that for a fact, of almost all Europeans and European leaders: Stay with us," the former Polish premier who chairs EU summits said on a visit to Portugal.

"Without you, not only Europe, but the whole Western community will become weaker. Together, we will be able to cope with increasingly difficult challenges of the future."

EU leaders have refrained from engaging very directly in the campaign in Britain for fear that would be counterproductive. But they have long insisted they want Britain to remain in the bloc and, as opinion polls have remained tight, several have spoken out in recent days to warn of the dangers of leaving.

Tusk will chair the next summit of European Union leaders next Tuesday and Wednesday in Brussels, when they will discuss how to respond to whether Britons have voted to stay or go.

"In no way are we downplaying the economic costs that would accompany Brexit," he said. "I have no doubt, however, that we are already prepared for the day after the referendum."

If Prime Minister David Cameron delivers a formal notice of Britain's intent to leave the EU, the other 27 leaders will have to set up a negotiating system to settle terms of divorce. If Britons vote to stay, then next week's summit will discuss pushing through a special deal agreed with Cameron in February.

Tusk has urged leaders to consider why voters, not just in Britain but across the bloc, are disillusioned with the European Union and has cautioned against those who advocate pressing on with closer political integration without public support.

"Whatever (the referendum) result is going to be, we must take a long, hard look on the future of the Union," Tusk said.

"We would be foolish if we ignored such a warning signal as the U.K. referendum. There are more signals of dissatisfaction with the Union coming from all of Europe, not only from the U.K." (Source: Reuters)

Pakistan, Afghanistan fail to reach border deal after deadly clashes

Pakistan and Afghanistan failed to reach an agreement on border management in talks on Monday, officials said, after days of clashes at the border last week left four dead and thousands stranded.

Fighting broke out when Pakistan started building a barrier at the crossing to stop Islamist militants crossing over from Afghanistan.

That plan angered Afghanistan, which rejects the colonial-era Durand Line border drawn up in 1893 and objects to Pakistan building checkpoints along the disputed boundary.

The two countries agreed on a ceasefire on Thursday, and it was decided that an Afghan delegation led by deputy foreign minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai would visit Pakistan for talks on Monday.

Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry on Monday informed the Afghan delegation that Pakistan planned to build four gates at different points on the crossing, a Pakistani foreign office official said.

"There was no final agreement but we have informed them (Afghanistan) of our position," the official said, requesting anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

"These gates are important for the safety and security of both Pakistan and Afghanistan."

A second Pakistani official said the foreign policy chiefs would hold further discussions at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Tashkent later this week.

A statement from the Afghan foreign ministry said the talks were held in an "amicable and friendly atmosphere" but said Karzai had raised what it called "various violations" by Pakistan, including setting up checkpoints in Afghan territory.

"Moreover, he strongly protested against Pakistan's ongoing unprovoked artillery shelling of Afghan villages," it said.

Thousands of vehicles normally pass through the crossing every week, making it a vital trade link between the countries.

On Monday, dozens of Pakistani traders protested outside the provincial parliament in Peshawar, demanding that Afghan refugees be deported.

Pakistan hosts some 2.5 million Afghans who have fled fighting in their home country.

A protest leader said the free movement of Afghans into Pakistan had destroyed peace in the country and needed to be checked.

Relations between the neighbors have been strained in recent months. Kabul accuses Pakistan of harboring militants seeking to topple the Afghan government and not doing enough to bring Afghan Taliban leaders, over which Pakistan holds some sway, to the negotiating table.

Pakistan denies supporting militants and says it is constructing the border gate to prevent anti-Pakistan militants crossing over from Afghanistan.

(Source: Reuters)

Separate bomb attacks kill at least 22 in Afghanistan

More than 20 people were killed in separate bomb attacks in Afghanistan on Monday, including at least 14 when a suicide bomber struck a minibus carrying Nepali security contractors in the capital Kabul, officials said.

A Reuters witness saw several apparently dead victims and at least two wounded being carried out of the remains of a yellow bus after the suicide bomber struck the vehicle in the capital.

Hours later, a bomb planted in a motorbike killed at least eight civilians and wounded another 18 in a crowded market in the northern province of Badakhshan, said provincial government spokesman Naveed Frotan. The casualty count could rise, he said.

The attacks are the latest in a surge of violence that highlights the challenges faced by the government in Kabul and its Western backers as Washington considers whether to delay plans to cut the number of its troops in Afghanistan.

Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said on Twitter that 14 people had been killed and eight wounded in the attack in Kabul. Police were working to identify the victims, he said.

The casualties appeared to include Afghan civilians and Nepali security contractors, Kabul police chief Abdul Rahman Rahimi said, after police and emergency vehicles surrounded the scene in the Banae district in the east of the city.

He said the suicide bomber had waited near a com-

pound housing the security contractors and struck as the vehicle moved through early morning traffic. Besides the bus passengers, several people in an adjacent market were also wounded in the attack during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the Kabul attack in a statement from the extremist group's main spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, on Twitter. However it denied responsibility for the attack in Badakhshan.

ISIL terrorist group, which is bitterly opposed by the Taliban, said it carried out the Kabul attack but Zabihullah Mujahid dismissed the claim as "rubbish".

"By organizing this attack, we wanted to show Americans and NATO military officials that we can conduct attacks wherever, and whenever, we want," the Taliban spokesman said.

The Nepal government was still working through its embassy in Pakistan, which also oversees Afghanistan, to verify reports that its citizens were involved in the attack, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bharat Paudel said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent his condolences to his two South Asian neighbors after the attack.

"We strongly condemn the horrible tragedy in Kabul. Our deep condolences to people and governments of Afghanistan and Nepal on loss of innocent lives," Modi said on Twitter.

Another explosion in Kabul later on Monday morning wounded a provincial council member and at least



three of his bodyguards, Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid said. It was thought a bomb had been attached to the lawmaker's car, he said.

The attacks underlined how serious the security threat facing Afghanistan remains since former Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a U.S. drone strike last month and was replaced by Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada.

The blasts follow a deadly suicide attack on a bus carrying justice ministry staff near Kabul last month and a separate attack on a court in the central city of Ghazni on June 1.

The Taliban claimed both those attacks in revenge for the execution of six Taliban prisoners.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS

Bahrain revokes citizenship of top Shia cleric

Bahraini authorities have revoked the citizenship of the most prominent Shia cleric in the Sunni-ruled kingdom, accusing him of sowing sectarian divisions, the interior ministry said Monday.

Sheikh Isa Qassim, considered the spiritual leader of Bahrain's Shia majority, was alleged to have used his position to "serve foreign interests and promote... sectarianism and violence," the ministry said in a statement carried by BNA state news agency.



Qassim "adopted theocracy and stressed the absolute allegiance to the clergy," the ministry said, adding that he had been in continuous contact with "organizations and parties that are enemies of the kingdom."

The decision follows the suspension of Bahrain's main Shia opposition group, Al-Wafaq, whose political chief Sheikh Ali Salman is serving a nine-year jail term for inciting violence.

Home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, Bahrain has been shaken by unrest since security forces crushed the 2011 protests demanding a constitutional monarchy and an elected prime minister.

(Source: AFP)

Syrian Army surges towards ISIL-held Tabqa

Syrian Army fighters backed by Russian air power surged towards a key town and adjacent air base held by the ISIL terrorist group, a monitor said.

Regime forces were now within seven kilometers (less than five miles) of the ISIL-held airport at Tabqa, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"There are fierce clashes now and at least nine pro-government fighters were killed," said the Observatory's Rami Abdel Rahman.

Abdel Rahman had no immediate toll for the number of ISIL terrorists killed.

Government fighters had been stuck at about 15 kilometers (10 miles) from the airport for more than one week.

But intensifying Russian air strikes on Sunday and reinforcements from the elite Republican Guard unit allowed them to advance, the Observatory said.

Earlier this month, government fighters backed by Moscow began pushing north towards Tabqa, whose dam, military air base, and strategic transit town have been held by IS since 2014.

The town lies some 50 kilometers (31 miles) west of the terrorist group's de facto Syrian capital of Raqa city, and recapturing it would sever the supply road from the west.

ISIL fighters had mounted their own counter-attack last week, bringing in reinforcements of fighters and weapons and briefly blocking the regime advance before renewed push.

The war in Syria -- which began with the brutal repression of anti-government demonstrations in 2011 -- has killed more than 280,000 people and displaced millions.

It has evolved into a brutal, complex civil war among the government, rebels, jihadists, and Kurds, each carving out zones of control.

(Source: AFP)

Putin to visit Xi Jinping in Beijing this week

Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit Beijing on Saturday at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, Chinese state media has confirmed.

The two leaders are expected to ink a \$6.2 billion high-speed rail deal as well as discuss extended military cooperation. Up to 30 trade agreements could also be signed, reports the South China Morning Post.

One deal on the cards would govern the supply of Russian wheat to China. Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Rogozin told reporters in Moscow, "We are talking about the construction of a grain terminal in the [Russian] Trans-Baikal region" and may "sign a contract for this kind of serious, large supplies of wheat to China."

The meeting is also seen as the latest attempt of President Xi to drum up support for his "One Belt, One Road" development strategy. Beijing wants to revive the iconic land and maritime Silk Road, which date back to the days of Marco Polo in the 13th century, by building a trade and infrastructure network stretching all the way to Western Europe and Africa. Geopolitically, it is seen as a rival to the Washington-led Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade pact, which Beijing opted not to join.

Xi has been traveling all over Central Asia and Eastern Europe in recent weeks -- including stops in Poland, Serbia and Uzbekistan -- but Russian support for One Belt, One Road is seen as particularly important, given Moscow's sway over key Balkan states. Putin will be keen to bolster a bilateral relationship that remains robust despite widespread international censure at the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea in 2014, which resulted in the U.S. and E.U. imposing economic sanctions on Russia.

(Source: Time)

NEWS

Gold slips more than 1 percent as Brexit campaign loses momentum

Gold fell on Monday after polls showed the campaign for Britain to remain in the European Union regaining some momentum, sharpening appetite for assets seen as higher risk and sparking a sharp rally in stocks.

Speculation that British voters could opt to leave the trading bloc in a referendum on Thursday helped push gold to its highest in nearly two years last week, and to three-year peaks in euro and sterling terms.

However, three opinion polls ahead of Thursday's vote showed the 'Remain' camp recovering some momentum, although the overall picture remained one of an evenly split electorate. That helped pull gold back from those highs.

Spot gold fell to a low of \$1,280.15 an ounce in early trade, and was at \$1,283.50 an ounce at 0931 GMT, down 1.1 percent. U.S. gold futures for August delivery were down \$8.20 an ounce at \$1,286.60. "There have been adjustments in expectations for a potential Brexit," Capital Economics analyst Simona Gambarini said. "We had a few days at the beginning of last week when the odds of a 'Leave' vote were getting higher than a 'Remain' vote, which prompted a sharp rally in the gold price."

"Now we're in a situation where we're getting a little bit more even, so you see a bit of steam coming out of the gold price," she said. "We may see some more volatility, according to which side prevails."

Two weekend polls showed "In" retaking the lead and another showed the "Out" campaign's lead narrowing. Bookmakers' odds have shown those wishing to stay in the EU ahead and Betfair put the implied probability of a vote to "Remain" at 72 percent on Monday, up from 60-67 percent on Friday.

Global stocks rallied and sterling strengthened broadly while safe havens including the yen retreated.

"The referendum will doubtless be the dominant theme this week," Commerzbank said in a note. "The uncertainty over the outcome of the vote should lend support to gold."

There was some optimism for bullion as holdings of the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, SPDR Gold Shares, rose 0.59 percent to 907.88 tons on Friday, the highest since September 2013. Hedge funds and money managers took their bullish stance in gold to the highest in nearly five years in the week to June 14, U.S. government data showed on Friday.

Among other precious metals, silver was down 0.7 percent at \$17.35 and platinum was 0.5 percent higher at \$972.76. Palladium, which touched its lowest since May 25 on Friday, was up 1.7 percent at \$539.44. (Source: Reuters)

German growth to slow sharply in Q2 before rebound: Bundesbank

Germany's economic growth is likely to slow sharply in the second quarter before rebounding later in the year and returning to a solid growth path, the Bundesbank said in a monthly report on Monday.

Growth will dip compared to the first quarter due to lower industrial export orders and fluctuations in the construction sector and as the positive impact of a relatively warm winter wears off, the country's central bank said.

Expanding at a quarterly rate of 0.7 percent, Germany was the driver of an unexpectedly strong first three months of 2016 for the euro zone economy, with strong investments and healthy industrial output suggesting that the bloc was on the upswing.

"The positive sentiment indicated by corporate and household surveys suggest that economic growth after a weak second quarter should increase again over the next six months," the central bank said.

Despite the second quarter dip, it still expects full year growth of 1.7 percent, in line with last year's figure, supporting the European Central Bank's view that its extraordinary stimulus was adding to growth and reviving inflation.

That figure also matches the government's growth forecast. Analyzing recent ECB policy steps, the Bundesbank said that its December measures, which included a rate cut and the extension of its asset buying program, will add between 0.1 percent and 1 percent to inflation per year between 2016 and 2018.

The ECB's March measures, another rate cut and a further expansion of purchases, would add somewhat less, it added. (Source: Reuters)

Iran's new oil export hub becomes operational

Farasakou Port, a new hub for exporting Iranian oil products, was put into operation in Pars Special Economic Zone (PSEEZ). According to the public relations office of Iran's PSEEZ, the first export shipment of petroleum products to the Persian Gulf littoral states was loaded on Saturday morning at Farasakou harbor in Assaluyeh. Farasakou Port in the south of Iran and has become operational in an area covering 50 hectares and with a loading capacity of 11 million tons per year offering excellent services for storage, transit, export, regional fuel distribution and bunkering because the company's oil terminal is situated in hinterland and its facilities and infrastructures are unique.

Enjoying several advantages including suitable land, breakwaters, stilling basin and strategic location, Farasakou Port marks the country's third pole in the field of exporting petroleum products. So far, two berths of the port have been constructed one with a depth of 10 meters and length of 214 meters while the other one marks Iran's largest petroleum berth being 15 meters deep and 324 meters long. Since the completion of its first development phase which meant using storage tanks, port facilities and installations in this locality, the port has gained a high loading capacity. The structure would be the biggest port of petroleum products in private sector as soon as the second development phase will have completed. (Source: The Asian Age)

Iran's Esfahan steel seeks buyers amid plan to boost production

Esfahan Steel Co., Iran's third-largest maker of the metal, is seeking buyers amid plans to boost production as the nation rebuilds after years of international sanctions that hurt its economy.

Companies in South Korea and Luxembourg are interested in taking a stake, Masoud Gholampour, research and marketing manager at Novin Investment Bank, said in an interview in Tehran. Novin is advising the government in the sale. Iran and the Steel Pensioners' Fund for retired Iranian steel workers want to sell a 73 percent stake.

Esfahan Steel aims to boost production to 3.2 million metric tons in the year ended March 2017 from 2.4 million tons a year earlier, according to Mojtaba Fereydoni, an investment manager at Esfahan Steel in Esfahan in central Iran. Output had declined 4 percent a year earlier as economic growth slowed because of low oil prices, he said.



■ **Trailing Turkey**
Iran is the biggest steel producer in the Middle East after Turkey, according to World Steel Association data. Output rose

to 1.5 million tons in April from 1.3 million tons at the end of last year before the international sanctions were lifted in January, the data show. The nation is seeking to

build its energy and other industries.

The Iranian Privatization Organization is overseeing the sale of the 56 percent stake in Esfahan that it took over from the Social Security Investment Co., the investment arm of the country's main social security provider. The Social Security group was unable to pay for the stake in full, according to Gholampour. The pension fund owns the other 17 percent that is being put up for sale.

As a first step, the entire 73 percent stake was offered through a block sale on the over-the-counter Fara Bourse on Sunday, and didn't generate any takers, according to Gholampour and Jafar Sobhani, adviser to the head of the Iranian Privatization Organization. The shares fell 5 percent in over-the-counter trading on Sunday.

A block sale will be offered again "in the near future," Sobhani said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Renowned companies seek part in Iran's LNG projects

■ **ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Foreign desk companies seek to participate in liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in Iran, IRNA quoted Managing Director of National Iranian Gas Exports Company (NIGEC) Alireza Kameli as saying on Sunday.

According to IRNA, based on a report by Oil ministry, Kameli announced that talks are underway between NIGEC and eight foreign and domestic companies specialized in LNG projects regarding the ways of participation in construction of new LNG plants in the country.

The managing director noted that applicant companies have presented their proposals and NIGEC is considering the offers and the decisions will be finalized as soon as the oil ministry notifies the company with its policy in this regard.



Iran possesses one of the largest reserves of the natural gas in the world, estimated at 34,020 billion cubic meters, according to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

On January 16, the International Atomic Energy Agency verified Tehran's compliance with the nuclear deal Iran reached in July with six world powers, opening the way for the country's return to the global energy market.

Iran, China sovereign wealth funds discuss cooperation

■ **ECONOMY TEHRAN** — The desk National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI) and China Investment Corporation (CIC) explored areas to launch joint ventures and to establish a fund aimed at financing private sector projects in Iran, IRNA reported on Sunday.

According to the report, Ding Xuedong, the head of CIC, heading a high-ranking delegation, met with Safdar Hosseini, the chairman of the NDFI, in Tehran on Sunday.

During the meeting, Hosseini mentioned some of the potential areas for joint investment among which Infrastructure projects in the field of oil, gas, petrochemical projects, agriculture and construction of greenhouses and fish farming in



cages could be mentioned.

Xuedong, for his part, noted that as a Capital institution, CIC is eager to learn more about Iran's market and its investment opportunities.

Hosseini also proposed establishing a joint group of financial experts from both sides and providing a timetable for the introduction and exploring potential projects which was welcomed by Chinese side.

Following Saudi Arabia, Iran hikes crude oil prices for now

Iran has been selling more oil at higher prices in recent weeks. The country sold light crude oil at \$47.58 per barrel in the week ended on June 10, a \$1.93 higher from the previous week.

Iran's price hike comes as the country expands output to reach its pre-sanction market share; and as Saudi Arabia has been raising its own crude oil prices.

It was only a few months ago that Saudi Arabia

and Iran were rushing to sign contracts with Asian customers, pushing prices lower, towards the \$20s.

In the first week of June, Saudi Arabia raised prices for Arab light crude in Asia for the second month in a row, the first back-to-back increase since May 2015, to the highest level since September 2014.

Saudi Arabia's and Iran's price hikes come at a time when unforeseen events, like wildfires in Canada and disruptions in Nigeria, have reduced the

global oil glut; and a few days after OPEC members failed to reach an agreement to an oil output freeze.

Will these price hikes last? It doesn't seem so.

The impact of unforeseen events on the oil markets seems to be subsiding. Besides, America's production is coming back, as evidenced by the rise in US rig count—Baker Hughes reported two consecutive weeks of increases in the rig count.

(Source: Forbes)

Iran Mercantile exchange resumes cement export trade

Cement offerings for export have resumed at Iran Mercantile Exchange, the IME chief said. Isfahan Cement Company initiated the offering with 2,000 tons of cement on Saturday, 1,000 tons of which were traded on cash payment.

"We intend to expand our export markets for cement and unify prices by exporting the commodity through IME," Hamed Soltaninejad was also quoted as saying by IRNA.

Government-enforced pricings and the subsequent lack of competition caused cement manufacturers to become disillusioned with the exchange and pull out of IME in 2012. Soltaninejad referred to the glut in the domestic cement market and emphasized that IME's capability to carry out foreign transactions in dollars and euros.

"Cement producers are currently going through a rough patch. They are grappling

with weak demand at home, as a result of a dormant construction sector. They recently lost the Iraqi market, one of the main export destinations of Iranian cement. North African countries like Kenya and Ethiopia are currently being considered as alternative market," he said.

Earlier, Mohammad Atabak with the Cement Industry Employers Association said cement prices were expected to rise about 15 per cent in late June, adding that the hike in prices is meant to compensate the rising production costs.

More than 15 million tons of cement and clinker were exported in the last Iranian year (March 2015-16), with Iraq accounting for close to 65 per cent of this figure. Afghanistan, Kuwait and Qatar were other major destinations. Iran aims to increase production and exports to 120 million tons and 32 million tons respectively by the end of 2020. (Source: cemnet.com)

China economy stabilizing, additional policy support possible

A slew of official data points to the stabilizing Chinese economy, and slower growth could prompt additional policy support, said a report released by Swiss bank UBS.

Most headline numbers for the Chinese economy released during the past week were in line with expectations. While fixed-asset investment disappointed, imports surprised on the upside, and firmer domestic demand saw industrial output growth stabilize, according to the report.

On the downside, manufacturing and private investment weakened further in May, UBS noted, adding that pro-growth policies may intensify again once growth further slows.

The bank expects the still strong property sector and the unfolding effects of earlier or ongoing easing

measures to help strengthen sequential gross domestic product (GDP) momentum in the second quarter.

"We expect growth in the second quarter to be firmer than the first on a sequential basis, but not much improved on a year-on-year basis, and to lose steam later in the year," the report said.

The bank saw macro policies "staying on hold" until the fourth quarter, when slower growth may prompt additional support again, and maintain its full year GDP growth forecast of 6.6 percent.

China's GDP expanded 6.7 percent year on year in the first quarter, the slowest growth since the global financial crisis in early 2009. The official reading for the second quarter is expected in a month.

(Source: China Daily)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Exclusive: Francisco Partners, Elliott near Dell software deal: sources

Buyout firm Francisco Partners and the private equity arm of activist hedge fund Elliott Management Corp are in advanced talks to acquire Dell Inc's software division for more than \$2 billion, three people familiar with the matter said.

Divesting the software assets will help Dell refocus its technology portfolio and bolster its balance sheet after it agreed in October to buy data storage company EMC Corp for \$67 billion. EMC owns a controlling stake in VMware Inc., a cloud-based virtualization software company.

Dell is seeking to sell almost all of its software assets, including Quest Software, which helps with information technology management, as well as SonicWall, an e-mail encryption and data security provider, the people said.

Oracle shares rise on better-than-expected revenue

Oracle shares climbed more than 2 percent Friday after it reported strong quarterly revenue the day before.

The cloud software company on Thursday after the close announced fiscal fourth-quarter revenue of \$10.6 billion, beating the Reuters consensus estimate for \$10.47 billion. Earnings per share of 81 cents met expectations.

Oracle said the quarterly results were due to strong performance in its cloud business. The company's revenue in application services, cloud software as a service and platform as a service were up by 68 percent in constant currency.

"We expect that the SaaS and PaaS hyper-growth we experienced in FY16 will continue on for the next few years.

As its rivals pair up, will Twitter be next?

In the relentless push toward consolidation in technology and social media, Twitter, the social networking site that allows users to send and receive short messages, or tweets, has been the perennial bridesmaid. But this week's megadeal between Microsoft and LinkedIn has renewed speculation on Wall Street that Twitter needs to attract a suitor or risk being overtaken by ever-larger competitors.

"If current trends continue, it's inevitable that Twitter will get acquired," Robert Peck, managing director and internet equity analyst at SunTrust Robinson Humphrey, told me this week. Mr. Peck has long considered a Twitter deal likely, and he renewed that prediction last week even before the Microsoft-LinkedIn deal was announced.

Qeshm locals open doors of their homes to tourists

By Setareh Behrooz

As one of the most important islands on the Persian Gulf, Qeshm is a place where you can enjoy several natural and historical attractions as well as traditional customs of people.

The affable and hospitable people of Qeshm have established several homestays in different parts of the island, which is 135 km long and comprises 59 towns and villages.

On a hot spring morning, I and some of my friends accompanied the head of Qeshm cultural heritage office Abdorreza Dashtizadeh, ecotourism instructor and inspector Ashkan Boruj on their visit to homestays in Qeshm.

Rural tourism is the main type of tourism on Qeshm Island, Dashtizadeh told the Tehran Times while visiting Shafei homestay in Kani village, located in most western part of the island near Salt dome site, the longest salt cave of the world.

In the homestay, Shafei family offers traditional cuisines and handicrafts to tourists who stay there.

Due to the scattering of tourist attrac-

tions on the island, the rural tourism encompasses natural, coastal and maritime and historical tourism, he said.

The homestays located inside or suburb of villages, which are near historical and tourist sites, should be empowered, he added.

We aim to decentralize tourism from Qeshm center but we concern the local culture, he added.

He said that the office holds several courses on principal of ecotourism, which is preservation of local culture, and warn about social anomalies caused by tourists.

Unfortunately most of people who come to Qeshm are travelers not tourists so they don't have any economic benefit for villages of the island, he lamented.

By establishing homestays, villages also benefit from tourism, he added.

The shortage of infrastructures, such as roads, on the island, intensifies the problem for expanding ecotourism on the island, he said.

Homestay is a way to help local economic. Qeshm locals are very kind and honest people and it means a lot for a tourism site, Dashtizadeh concluded.



In Shafei homestay of Kani village on Qeshm Island, the family offers traditional cuisines and handicrafts to tourists.

Nicaragua's hidden gem

Costa Rica may have its rainforests and eco-lodges, but this Central American country is not to be overlooked.

When you've loved a place, and left it, coming back is a mixed blessing. What if it has all changed? What if they paved paradise and put up a parking lot? But when we visited a few months ago, Granada remained as irresistible as ever. Built on the banks of Lake Cocibolca, around the Parque Central, it's eminently walkable, with winding cobblestone roads that connect church to church.

The hotels just keep getting better. And the Granadinos are still partying. Here are our greatest hits of Granada, to help you plan your visitand, maybe, inspire you to fall in love.

What to do?

Mombacho Volcano

This nearby volcano is home to wild orchids, lava sinkholes, and the coffee plantation of Café las Flores brand. Now Las Flores has opened a café the Parque Central, where you can book multiple eco adventures on Mombacho, from hiking to ziplining.



Lake Cocibolca

Along the coast of massive Lake Cocibolca you'll find restaurants where you can eat fresh guapote (arguably the ugliest fish in the world), and motorboats offering tours of some of its 365 islets, which house tiny villages, summer homes of Managua's glitterati, and wild monkeys. Or, you can sit at Henry's Iguana Bar and Restaurant, have a drink, and watch as the boats come and go,

the sun sets, and the sky turns pink.

Pure Spa

No trip to Granada would be complete without a stop to visit the mascot at Pure Spa and Yoga, a huge turtle that thrills visitors. Equally thrilling? The \$8 pedicures, \$15 private personal training sessions, and a \$26 hour-long massage that my sybaritic father insists is the best he's ever had.

Carriage ride

In Granada, horse and carriage rides are a bona fide mode of transportation, as affordable as taxis and often easier to flag down. Set a price and route before you leave.

Marengo Childrens Clothes

In the US, hand-smocked dresses and John-John rompers tend to cost more than they should. But Granada abounds with stores in which nice older ladies sell handmade kids clothes worthy of the Easter parade for about \$20 each. My favorite, run by the Marengo sisters, is on Calle Xalteva about a block away from the Parque.

(Source: Smarter Traveler)

A CLOSER LOOK

Travel apps for medical emergencies

What happens when you're traveling and you suddenly find yourself sick or injured? Locating the nearest doctor or hospital might not be so easy if you can't even speak the local language.

As smartphones take over the world, we've come up with a list of a few emergency medical travel apps every globetrotter should download (and, hopefully, never have to use). Read on for a list of the apps and their features, which range from storing emergency contacts to helping you translate the names of your medications.



TravelSmart

iOS and Android, free

Using GPS capabilities, this app provides you with numbers for emergency services by destination and also offers a comprehensive list of hospitals in 129 countries, all of which have been vetted by Allianz Global Assistance (a reputable travel insurance company). To make communicating abroad even easier, it allows you to translate first aid terms and offers a "drug dictionary" with names of common medications in a variety of languages.

Find-ER by Air Ambulance Card

iOS, free

This app was created by Air Ambulance Card, a service that flies travelers home to hospitals in the U.S. and Canada if they become sick or are injured abroad. In addition to mapping you to the nearest hospital, Find-ER can store helpful information like emergency contacts, doctor and pharmacy names and phone numbers, and a list of any conditions you have or medications you're taking.

iTriage

iOS and Android, free

In addition to providing a listing of ailments and their symptoms, this app, engineered by Healthagen (which develops medical technology), can help you to find the nearest hospital and lets you know how long your estimated wait time will be at certain emergency rooms and urgent care facilities. It will even let you check in at emergency clinics remotely via your smartphone, or make appointments with select doctors if an emergency visit isn't warranted. Additionally, the app allows you to store information like emergency contacts, medical conditions and medications you're taking.

(Source: independenttraveler.com)



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Donald Trump's dangerous demagoguery

By Lauren Carasik

Presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's recent attack on a federal judge presiding over fraud lawsuits against Trump University ignited a firestorm of controversy.

The bigoted attack on the judge's heritage was hardly surprising since white nationalism is part of his appeal. His vitriol also elicited condemnation for his flagrant disregard for judicial independence and the rule of law.

Yet, the Republican Party is largely circling the wagons, privileging party loyalty and reclaiming the White House over principled resistance to the pernicious politics of hatred and exclusion and the authoritarianism Trump's demagoguery threatens to usher in.

Trump said that federal Judge Gonzalo Curiel, a respected jurist who was born in the United States, had an "inherent conflict of interest", and issued unfair rulings because of his Mexican heritage, owing to the nominee's plan to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and his immigration policies.

Facing an outcry, Trump was unrepentant,

initially doubling down instead and suggesting Muslims could also be unqualified to preside over a case against him because of his proposed temporary ban on Muslims entering the country.

Having shed the patina of respectable deniability, Trump finally crossed a line, eliciting push back from that party that had been impervious to his inflammatory rhetoric.

Yet, Trump's Republican support remains largely intact: Only a handful of legislators distanced themselves from the candidate. Others, like House Speaker Paul Ryan, denounced the remark as the "textbook definition of a racist comment", but vowed ongoing support. A few even rallied to Trump's defense, denying the comments were offensive.

Mounting pressure

Bowing to mounting pressure, Trump later toned down his accusation, arguing that his comments had been misconstrued, but notably declining to apologize. He was clearly not chastened by the rebukes, continuing to call Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren "Pocahontas", to denigrate her claimed Native American heritage.

The incendiary rhetoric is nothing new: Trump's campaign has been predicated on bigotry since its inception.

He built his platform on white nativism, launching into an attack on Mexican migrants just minutes into his speech announcing his candidacy, but opportunistically stoking resentment predates Trump's candidacy.

In 2013, when questioned about his support for "birtherism" - a xenophobic campaign to discredit President Barack Obama's legitimacy by questioning his birthplace, Trump said "I don't think I went overboard. Actually, I think it made me very popular ... I do think I know what I'm doing."

He has since failed to see the offence in pointing out "my African American" at a rally, retweeted misrepresented black murder statistics, and dragged his feet in disavowing the Ku Klux Klan.

Inflaming racism is not new to the Republican Party. Richard Nixon rode to victory in 1968 on the party's "southern strategy" of stoking racial resentment.

Ronald Reagan dog-whistled about states' rights to mask opposition to federally man-



dated equality at a speech in Philadelphia, Mississippi, not far from where three civil rights workers were gunned down in 1964, and employed the disparaging, racially coded imagery of "welfare queens".

Similarly, Trump has deftly exploited the disaffection of white voters already beleaguered by the erosion of financial stability, the projected diminution of the white majority and the insecurity that demographic change engenders, and the unfolding backlash against a black president.

Unsurprisingly, Trump's comments about

Curiel elicited a partisan response: according to a recent poll, only 22 percent of Republicans believed the comments were racist. In contrast, 81 percent of Democrats and 44 percent of independents believed they were.

The resentments stoked by Trump's invective will not be easy to extinguish, and the damage is already evident.

Aside from an even more bitterly polarized electorate, the inflammatory rhetoric is exacting a harrowing toll on minority children.

In one study by the Southern Poverty Law Center, 67 percent of teachers reported alarming levels of anxiety, that "students of color are worried about what will happen to them under a Trump presidency," and an increase in racially motivated bullying.

Democratic accountability

Trump's disregard for principles of democratic accountability and the rule of law should also sound alarm bells.

Federal judges are not required to recuse themselves based solely on race or ethnicity. They are bound to carry out their duties impartially, and there is no evidence Curiel has failed to do so here.

→ 9

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Apt. in Elahieh
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Apt. in Elahieh
160 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn, \$3000
Mr.Niaki: 09128103207

Apt. in Elahieh
In nice Tower
6th Fl., 200 sq.m, 3 bdrs, unfurn, lobby, SPJ, gym, **Diplomatic**, \$3800
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Velenjak
250 sq.m, 4 bdrs, furn, \$3600
Mr.Niaki: 09128103207

Apt. in Elahieh
3rd Fl., 170 sq.m, 3 bdrs, nice furn, Pkg, nice & cozy, \$2800
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Elahieh
300 sq.m, 4 bdrs, unfurn, \$3500
Mr.Niaki: 09128103207

Apt. in Jordan
140 sq.m, 2 bdrs, furn, \$2300
Mr.Niaki: 09128103207

Villa

Duplex Villa in Shahrak-Qarb
800 sq.m land, 400 sq.m built up, large living room, pool, \$6000
Mr.Niaki: 09128103207

Duplex Villa in Elahieh
500 sq.m built up, 5 bdrs, un furn, completely renovated, **Suitable for Embassies**
Diba: 09128103206

Triplex Villa in Qeytarieh
400 sq.m built up, 5 bdrs, furn & unfurn, green garden, **Suitable for Residency**, \$6000
Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Elahieh
700 sq.m built up in 1800 sq.m land, 5 bdrs, larg living room, nice garden, 9000 USD
Mr. Niaki: 09128103207

Duplex Villa in Mahmoudieh
600 sq.m built up, 5 bdrs, furn & unfurn, renovated, pool, **Suitable for Embassies & Residencies**,
Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Farmanieh
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Mr.Niaki: 09128103207



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Inflation squeezes Ramadan feasts in Egypt as food costs surge

Twelve people are seated around the dining table at Mokhtar Gamal's house, their mouths dry and bellies empty after a day of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Plates of food fill the table, and all eyes are on the stuffed grape leaves that are his wife's specialty.

Family and guests dig into plates heaped with rice, grape leaves and chicken breasts, washing it down with pitchers of juice. A smile is fixed on Gamal's face, but his mind is on one thing: How much this feast costs.

A quick mental calculation puts it at 10 percent of his monthly salesman's pay of 3,000 pounds (\$338). "I told my wife to take it easy on the nuts" when she's making desserts, he said over coffee recently. "Nut prices have shot up."

That middle-class Egyptians like Gamal must scrimp on nuts gives a sense of the economic hardships his country faces. Core inflation is at a seven-year peak and a foreign currency crunch is impeding investment and growth, driving Egypt's central bank last week to raise its benchmark interest rate to its highest in at least a decade.

President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi has ordered authorities to stabilize prices and his government is distributing discounted food, in a bid to stave off the kind of dissatisfaction with his leadership that erupted into demonstrations just weeks ago. He's failed to quell militants based in the Sinai peninsula who's attacks have discouraged tourism. Critics accuse him of curtailing liberties and dissent, a charge he denies.

Annual core inflation soared to 12.23 percent in May, two months after the central bank ordered the biggest one-time currency devaluation in more than a decade. With the pound officially trading at a 25 percent premium to black market dollars, policy makers



on Thursday tried to rein in prices by raising borrowing costs by 100 basis points, possibly setting the stage for another devaluation.

The inflationary spiral has made things especially tough during Ramadan, when food prices generally jump. Within the past three weeks the cost of food has climbed, with a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of rice, an Egyptian staple, nearly doubling in some markets to 9 pounds from 5 pounds. Even before the holiday, they had spiked nearly 50 percent since the start of the year, according to the central bank.

"Merchants took us by surprise. How can prices jump" like this? asked Mahasen Ali, a 45-year-old housewife. "What are people to do?"

As Egyptians struggle with the price increases, officials are asking them to help stem the outflow of hard currency.

Higher duties on so-called "luxury" items such as nuts put them further out of reach for most. Egyptians have also been bruised by a 20 percent increase in the cost of locally produced medicines, which the government authorized to compensate drug-makers facing higher production costs as a result of the weaker pound.

Pitch in

As Egyptians struggle with the price increases, officials are asking them to help stem the outflow of hard currency.

Television ads urge them to curb energy use and buy local products to help cut the import bill and shore up foreign reserves. At \$17.5 billion, reserves have only started to inch up in the past couple of months, though still

less than half of their levels on the eve of the uprising that toppled President Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Tens of billions of dollars in cash infusions by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait have tapered off because of lower oil prices.

The government is also looking to save by paring subsidies that consume roughly a quarter of the state budget. It's also looking to boost tax revenue by improving collection, and introduce a value-added tax seen as a key step to unlocking a long-awaited \$3 billion World Bank loan.

Combined with expectations of another devaluation, inflation "could rise toward 15 percent year-on-year during the second half of 2016" as the government moves ahead with reforms, Bryan Plamondon, IHS Global Insight's Middle East economic analysis director, said in an e-mailed report.

Barely a month after protests against El-Sisi's decision to cede two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia, the government is aware of the need to avoid reigniting public discontent.

It has set up markets selling discounted food -- chicken and beef, for instance, are going at up to half the price -- and the military has been distributing goods on the street.

Thousands lined up at a food fair at the Cairo convention center, waiting to buy everything from Ramadan staples such as apricots and nuts to meat, rice, and sugar and cleaning products. A similar fair was held in every one of Egypt's 27 provinces.

"If it wasn't for this fair, we wouldn't have been able to buy these things," Adel Abdel-Baset, a 48-year-old construction worker said, standing in one line while his wife waited in another. "Prices have increased in an unprecedented way."

(Source: Bloomberg)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Boeing said near \$4 billion deal with Russian firm to save 747

Boeing Co. is nearing a \$4 billion deal with Russia's largest air-freight company that would help extend the life of the iconic, hump-nosed 747 jumbo jet amid waning demand for four-engine aircraft, people close to the transaction said.

The U.S. plane-maker is in advanced talks with AirBridgeCargo Airlines and its Moscow-based parent, Volga-Dnepr Group, to convert a year-old commitment into more than 10 firm orders for 747-8 freighters, two of the people said. The agreement could be announced as soon as the Farnborough Airshow next month in England, according to four people briefed on the deal, who asked not to be identified because the talks are confidential.

The deal would provide a crucial lifeline for the "Queen of the Skies" as Boeing tries to preserve production until the air-cargo market revives or shipping companies start to replace aging wide-body fleets. The 747 freighter, prized for a hinged nose that allows large cargo to be loaded at the front, is Boeing's second-most expensive commercial jet, with a list price of \$379.1 million. Buyers typically negotiate discounts. (Source: Bloomberg)

Oil extends gains as Brexit fears ease

Oil extended gains in Asian trading on Monday as a weaker dollar and easing worries over Britain's possible exit from the European Union helped support crude.

London Brent crude for August delivery was up 34 cents at \$49.51 a barrel by 0235 GMT, after settling up \$1.98, or 4.2 percent, at \$49.17 on Friday.

NYMEX crude for July delivery, which expires on Tuesday, was up 44 cents at \$48.42 a barrel, after closing up \$1.77, or 3.8 percent, on Friday.

Three opinion polls ahead of Thursday's vote showed the 'Remain' camp recovering some momentum, although the overall picture remained one of an evenly split electorate.

The pound was up against the dollar at \$1.4450 from \$1.4350 on Friday. The Japanese yen held not far from its highest level against the dollar in almost two years.

Oil prices continued to recover despite data showing U.S. energy firms adding oil rigs for a third week in a row, suggesting higher production to come. (Source: Reuters)



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Meet the world's first electric walking bike



The scooter-like contraption -- the first of its kind in the world -- was invented by Bruin Bergmeester, who of course hails from the bike-friendly Netherlands.

"When I was talking on my treadmill in my fitness room one day I thought, 'Why not bring the treadmill outdoors?'" he recalled to the Epoch Times.

Bergmeester and his wife built the first five Lopifit bikes in their living room, InsideEVs reported.

With six gears and a Quantum Motor that gives the bike a range of 34 miles on a single charge, the Lopifit is another reason to leave your car at home.

The "Lopifit is a totally new way of moving," the company boasts on its website. "With the electric assist, it takes no more effort to walk than 'a walk in the park!'"

Not only is riding a Lopifit faster than walking, as Lopifit marketing manager Rob van Ooijen says in the video below, "You go 25 kilometers (15 miles) an hour so you get more distance with a Lopifit."

To get moving on the Lopifit, all you have to do is walk at a normal pace to push the treadmill belt backwards. An onboard sensor registers the movement and activates the motor to propel the bike.

As for the specs, the Lopifit's frame is made of steel and comes with LED lighting and a luggage carrier. The bike is 2.3 meters (7.5 feet) in total length with a 28-inch front wheel and a 20-inch rear wheel.

While the bike first debuted in 2014, it really took off in February 2015 after professional skateboarder Bam Margera posted a video of the Lopifit on his Facebook page.

(Source: EcoWatch)

Full moon may disrupt sleep, study says

A new study in the journal *Current Biology* suggests that people tend to get lower quality sleep around the time of full moons, snoozing an average of 20 minutes less than they do during a new moon.

"If you ask people, at least in Switzerland, about 40% report feeling the moon during sleep, or they blame the full moon for bad sleep," said lead study author Christian Cajochen of the Psychiatric Hospital of the University of Basel in Switzerland.

The study included 33 healthy volunteers, between ages 20 and 74. Participants slept under strictly controlled conditions in a laboratory with no windows, so they had no way of seeing the moon. They stayed in the laboratory for 3½ days. Humidity and temperature were controlled.

Neither the participants nor the researchers knew, at the time of the experiment, that the phase of the moon would become part of the study. This decision reduced any bias that either group may have introduced regarding the moon -- but also presented the drawback that the study didn't look at all phases of the moon's cycle.

The data come from an experiment done 10 years ago; Cajochen and colleagues didn't analyze the results in terms of lunar patterns until several years after they did the study and waited to publish until now.

Researchers also found that it took about five minutes longer for participants to fall asleep around a full moon than around a new moon. Deep sleep was, on average, 30% decreased around the time of a full moon.

(Source: CNN)

Scientists develop world's first 1,000-processor chip

Scientists have developed a microchip featuring 1,000 processors with each of its cores capable of running programs independently. Titled the world's first 1,000-processor chip, it can compute up to 1.78 trillion instructions per second (IPS) and contains 621 million transistors.

Developed by a group of scientists at the University of California, Davis, the chip dubbed KiloCore was displayed at the 2016 Symposium on VLSI Technology and Circuits in Honolulu on 16 June. The KiloCore chip is fabricated by IBM using 32nm CMOS architecture.

To "the best of our knowledge, it is the world's first 1,000-processor chip and it is the highest clock-rate processor ever designed in a university," said Bevan Baas, professor of electrical and computer engineering. Baas led the team involved in designing the architecture of the chip.

Although there have been several multi-processor chips none of them contain more than 300 processors. Most of these chips are meant for research while some are sold commercially.

Since each processor in the chip runs with an independent clock speed, it can shut itself down to conserve energy. The cores operate at a maximum clock speed of 1.78GHz and transfer data directly to each other instead of using a pooled memory area, which could lead to a bottleneck for data.

(Source: International Business Times)

Blood test shows chance of suffering heart attack within five years

Researchers have discovered that high levels of antibodies -- molecules produced by the immune system -- are linked to a low risk of heart problems, regardless of other risk factors.

Currently doctors use information such as age, sex, medical history, cholesterol levels and blood pressure to calculate the risk of future heart problems.

But the new test looks for levels of protective IgG antibodies which seem to shield the body from a heart attack even when cholesterol and blood pressure is high.

People with the highest number of antibodies had a 58 per cent lower risk of coronary heart disease or heart attack and a 38 percent lower chance of suffering a stroke or other heart events during the five year trial period.

"Linking a stronger, more robust immune system to protection from heart attacks is a really exciting finding," said lead researcher Dr. Ramzi Khamis, consultant cardiologist at the National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London.

"As well as improving the way we tell



"Linking a stronger, more robust immune system to protection from heart attacks is a really exciting finding," says lead researcher Dr. Ramzi Khamis.

who is at the highest risk of a heart attack so that we can give them appropriate treatments, we now have a new avenue to fol-

low in future work.

■ **Immune system**

"We hope that we can use this new

finding to study the factors that lead some people to have an immune system that helps protect from heart attacks, while others don't. We also hope to explore ways of strengthening the immune system to aid in protecting from heart disease."

The disease is responsible for nearly 70,000 deaths in the UK each year and most deaths from coronary heart disease are caused by a heart attack.

Measuring IgG is simple and cheap, so the scientists suggest that this finding may in the future make it easier for clinicians to more accurately determine a person's risk of having a heart attack.

It could mean that people who are currently prescribed statins or beta-blockers no longer need the drugs because their immune systems are strong enough to protect them without help.

IgG is the most abundant form of antibody and is found within all bodily fluids. It is responsible for protecting the body against bacterial and viral infections.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Scientists battle to save world's coral reefs

After the most powerful El Nino on record heated the world's oceans to never-before-seen levels, huge swaths of once vibrant coral reefs that were teeming with life are now stark white ghost towns disintegrating into the sea.

And the world's top marine scientists are still struggling in the face of global warming and decades of devastating reef destruction to find the political and financial wherewithal to tackle the loss of these globally important ecosystems.

"What we have to do is to really translate the urgency," said Ruth Gates, president of the International Society for Reef Studies and director of the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology.

Gates, who helped organize a conference this week for more than 2,000 international reef scientists, policymakers and others, said the scientific community needs to make it clear

how "intimately reef health is intertwined with human health."

The International Coral Reef Symposium convenes Monday to try to create a more unified conservation plan for coral reefs.

■ **Coral bleaching**

Consecutive years of coral bleaching have led to some of the most widespread mortality of reefs on record, leaving scientists in a race to save them. While bleached coral often recovers, multiple years weakens the organisms and increases the risk of death.

Researchers have achieved some success with projects such as creating coral nurseries and growing forms of "super coral" that can withstand harsher conditions.

Bob Richmond, director of the University of Hawaii's

Kewalo Marine Laboratory, said the problems are very clear: "overfishing of reef herbivores and top predators, land-based sources of pollution and sedimentation, and the continued and growing impacts of climate change."

While reefs are major contributors to many coastal tourist economies, saving the world's coral isn't just about having pretty places for vacationers to explore. Reefs are integral to the overall ecosystem and are an essential component of everyday human existence.

Reefs not only provide habitat for most ocean fish consumed by humans, but they also shelter land from storm surges and rising sea levels. Coral has even been found to have medicinal properties.

(Source: AP)

E-cigarettes: Gateway or roadblock to cigarette smoking?

A new study from the UK Center for Substance Use Research, shows e-cigarettes are playing an important role in reducing the likelihood of young people smoking, in many cases acting as a 'roadblock' to combustible tobacco.

In detailed qualitative interviews with young people aged 16 to 25 across Scotland and England, the majority of participants viewed e-cigarettes as having reduced - not increased - the possibility of both themselves and other people smoking.

"There was very little indication amongst the young people interviewed that e-cigarettes were resulting in an increased likelihood of young people smoking," said Dr. Neil McKeganey who led the research. "In fact the majority were interviewed, including those who were vaping, perceived smoking in very negative terms and saw vaping as being entirely different to smoking."

During one interview, an eighteen year-old commented: "I think vaping is having an effect on smoking cigarettes in that it's taking away from it. People are moving off cigarettes and moving onto vaping." Another said: "I think if vaping becomes more common, then smoking is going to become more uncommon because it's the aspect of quitting. I think vaping will replace smoking".

■ **E-cigarette users**

Importantly, the overwhelming majority of participants - who collectively represented current and former smokers, non-smokers, and e-cigarette users - viewed tobacco as 'extremely harmful'



and believed e-cigarettes offered smokers an alternative.

Asked whether the opposite might happen; that e-cigarettes might actually lead to smoking, one nineteen year-old said: "I think it's usually people who are trying to stop smoking who vape. I mean there is the odd person who does it because it's cool and that might influence them to want to try smoking, but I think on the whole it's the other way round. It's people vaping who have given up smoking".

Despite the acute awareness of the harms of tobacco however, it was evident that some young people remain confused about e-cigarettes and whether or not they are similarly harmful. Some mentioned they had seen media coverage reporting that e-cigarettes "are just as bad" as smoking and, as a result, they were uncertain and reluctant about using the devices.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Climate change the 'key to megafauna extinction'

Bears the size of cars and savage saber-toothed cats that ruled the plains of ice age Patagonia were no match for a fatal combination of humans and climate change that wiped them out about 12,300 years ago, according to a new study.

But contrary to previous research, humans alone did not cause their downfall. The fossil record shows humans had been at Monte Verde, on the edge of Patagonia, from about 14,600 years ago. That means the South American megafauna had coexisted with humans for up to 3,000 years.

But when the climate heated up, almost all the megafauna were extinct within 300 years, research led by the Australian Center for Ancient DNA (ACAD) at the University of Adelaide has found.

Ice cores from Greenland and Antarctica suggest that average global temperatures quickly shot up around 12,300 years ago and Patagonia warmed by about 2°C over 1,000 years, with disastrous consequences.

"Patagonia turns out to be the Rosetta Stone -- it shows that human colonization didn't immediately result in extinctions, but only as long as it stayed cold," says study leader Alan Cooper, ACAD Director.

■ **Radiocarbon-dated bones**

Ancient DNA extracted from radiocarbon-dated bones and teeth found in caves across Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego, reveal the genetic history of the populations.



Species such as the South American horse, giant jaguar and saber-toothed cat, a sloth the size of an elephant and one-ton short-faced bear seemed to disappear across Patagonia shortly after humans arrived.

The only large species in South America to survive were the guanaco and vicuna -- ancestors of today's llama and alpaca -- and even they almost went extinct.

Only the late arrival in Patagonia of a population of guanacos from the north saved the species, all other populations became extinct, the study found. Because they arrived so late, all the other species were dead, leaving an abundance of food.

"Because all the other animals are now extinct, no-one is eating the grass so you basically inherit the earth," Cooper told reporters.

(Source: Cosmos Magazine)

A few more vegetables and little less meat may reduce diabetes risk

The findings are based on an analysis of the eating patterns of 200,000 men and women from three long-term studies who reported on their diets repeatedly over the course of two decades, and were published this week in *PLOS Medicine*.

The studies - the Nurses' Health Study, the Nurses' Health Study 2 and the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study - asked participants to fill out more than 100 detailed questions about their eating habits. They provided information not just about the foods they ate but about how the foods were prepared and even what cooking oils were used.

While self-reported dietary information can be flawed, extra steps were taken to confirm the data.

Participants completed questionnaires every two to four years, and the nutrient intake information was compared to tests of blood bio-markers to make sure they matched up. The results were also adjusted, or modified, to account for other characteristics that contribute to Type 2 diabetes, like being overweight.



The research was also unusual in that it distinguished between healthy and unhealthy plant-based foods.

■ **Whole grains**

Healthy plant-based foods include whole grains, fruits, vegetables nuts, seed and legumes, while an unhealthy plant-based diet could include refined carbohydrates like

bagels and muffins, starchy vegetables like potatoes and French fries and sugary foods like cake and cola. Animal-based foods include meat of all kinds, fish and seafood as well as eggs, dairy products and animal fats like butter.

On average, adults who ate a plant-based diet with few animal products cut their risk of Type 2 diabetes by 20 per cent. But when researchers distinguished between healthy and unhealthy plant-based foods, they found that diabetes risk dropped by 34 per cent among the healthy plant-based eaters. Notably, there wasn't a benefit to plant-based eating when a person consumed a lot of refined carbohydrates and starchy vegetables. In that case, a person's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes increased slightly.

While most American adults are omnivores, eating from many different food sources, and few are vegetarian, the research suggests that simply reducing the amount of animal-based food you eat from five or six servings a day to about four servings a day can lower the incidence of Type 2 diabetes.

(Source: The NYT)

Britons will shape the future of the United Kingdom and Europe on Thursday when they decide whether to stay in the European Union following a campaign that has shown the potency of anti-establishment feeling in the West.

The vote comes a week after the murder of a lawmaker in the street left many voters wondering whether the campaign rhetoric on both sides - warnings of economic disaster versus uncontrolled immigration - had gone too far in a country considered a paragon of stability.

Whatever the outcome, the referendum could force the EU to rethink how it governs 500 million citizens and - along with the rise of Donald Trump in the United States - have far-reaching implications for the future configuration of the West.

Allies such as U.S. President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have implored Britain to stay in the bloc, which they say has given Europe decades of prosperity after centuries of bloodshed.

Investors, chief executives and central bankers are bracing for what could be one of the most volatile events for financial markets since, at least, the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers.

Prime Minister David Cameron, who promised the referendum in 2013 under pressure from euroskeptic lawmakers in his own party, has mixed rhetoric about his island nation's history with dire warnings about the costs and dangers of a Brexit.

"This referendum has now become a watershed moment for our country," Cameron said when campaigning resumed after a two-and-a-half-day suspension called as a sign of respect for lawmaker Jo Cox, who was shot and stabbed last week.

"There is no turning back if we leave," he added, warning this would be "an abject and self-imposed humiliation" that would leave "a permanently poorer country in every sense."

The murder of Cox, a 41-year-old mother of two young children who was an ardent supporter of EU membership, shocked the country and abruptly changed the tone of the caustic campaigning that has polarized the country.

Both sides have accused their opponents of misleading the public, and critics say the debate had descended into a negative row over the economic dangers of leaving versus the difficulties of limiting immigration if Britain stays.

Witnesses to the Cox attack said the accused, 52-year-old Thomas Mair, was heard saying "Britain first, keep Britain independent, Britain always comes first". Such comments added to speculation the murder was politically-motivated, making it a potentially defining moment in the referendum.

Campaigners said events and leafletting would go ahead as planned this week, but the rhetoric would be scaled back.

"People are thinking carefully about the conduct of this campaign, perhaps taking a more respectful tone towards opponents," said a "Stronger In" campaign source. Leave officials would not discuss the details of their campaign plans.

Voting begins at 0600 GMT on June 23 and closes at 2100. Results are due around 0000-0500 GMT the next day.

Opinion polls have painted a contradictory and volatile picture of British pub-

In the shadow of a murder, Britain to vote on EU membership



lic opinion with Remain ahead for much of the campaign but Leave taking a late lead before the Cox murder.

A vote to leave could unleash turmoil on foreign exchange, equity and bond markets, lead to a political crisis in Britain and fragment the post-Cold War European order.

The EU would have to weather the exit of its No.2 economy representing \$2.9 trillion of its gross domestic product, the only European financial capital to rival New York and one of its only two nuclear powers, while Britain's economy could stall.

A vote to remain would trigger a rise in sterling and relief in Western capitals but would still leave Britain - and Cameron's ruling Conservative Party - deeply divided.

What kind of Britain

The murder of Cox in the street of her own electoral district in northern England has shocked Britain, which has strict gun controls, and sparked soul-searching about a referendum which both sides admit is about much more than membership of the club it joined in 1973.

"The referendum was always about more than Europe; it was always about what kind of Britain we are and what we aspire to be," former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who is pro-membership, said in an article for the Guardian newspaper.

"But some have attempted to hijack a decision on the future of Britain in Europe and turn it into a vote on immigration, and then on immigrants and those who support immigrants."

It was not clear what impact the killing would have on public opinion or even if pollsters, who failed to forecast Cameron's decisive election victory, were reliable guides.

In the week before Cox's murder, the Out campaign had developed a strong lead in opinion polls.

But a YouGov poll, for which a third of responses were gathered before news of the killing, showed support for staying in the EU had risen 5 percentage points to 44 percent while support for leaving had fallen 3 points to 43 percent.

"The underlying figures suggest the movement may be more to do with people worrying about the economic impact of leaving the European Union," YouGov said.

Gisela Stuart, a Labour lawmaker who is helping to lead the main Leave campaign, urged politicians and voters to "reflect on the hate-filled language that too often scars our debates".

"We must take care before assuming that anger turned up to maximum volume should be the default way to hold a political discussion," said Stuart, who added that Britain had to take back control of its own laws.

Threat to Europe

Britain has been divided over its European destiny since it lost its empire and though it eventually joined the EU, it remained a reluctant member outside the core euro zone.

Leave campaigners have said Britain would prosper if it broke free from what they say is a doomed German-dominated bloc and a failed project in excessive debt-funded welfare spending that has usurped sovereignty from the people.

Boris Johnson, seen as a leading contender to replace Cameron as Conservative leader and prime minister, even contended that the bloc was following the path of Adolf Hitler and Napoleon by trying to create a European superstate.

"Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically," Johnson said in a newspaper interview last month. "The EU is an attempt to do this by different methods. But fundamentally what is lacking is the eternal problem, which is that there is no underlying loyalty to the idea of Europe."

But allies have warned that ditching a 60-year strategy of trying to hedge partial European participation with the U.S. alliance, for an uncertain future outside the world's biggest trading bloc, would be a hammer blow to Britain's economy and would shred what remains of its global clout.

Beyond British shores, an exit would pose a major threat to European integration.

While the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the Soviet Union in 1991 spurred integration as the Cold War melted into the archives, a Brexit could unravel a union already grappling with differences over migration, the future of the euro zone and how to deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"A vote to leave would shake the union," German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said. "It would not just carry on as 28 (members) minus one."

"It would require concerted efforts to ensure that the union holds together and that a decades-long, successful integration effort does not end in disintegration," he said.

Even if a Brexit didn't unravel the EU, it would ensnare Brussels and London in years of complex negotiations that could lead to a decade of economic uncertainty while a Brexit would embolden euroskeptics in other member states to press for their own renegotiations and referendums.

Pro-Europeans, including former Prime Ministers Tony Blair and John Major, have warned an exit could trigger the break-up of the United Kingdom itself by undermining peace in Northern Ireland and bolstering the Scottish independence movement.

Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, told Reuters last week that the EU referendum was on a knife edge and that if England backs an exit that drags Scots out of the bloc against their will, Scotland may call a new vote on independence.

After Brexit

Despite Britain's historical reticence concerning Europe, only 13 years ago its leaders were arguing about when to join the single currency and an EU exit was a far-fetched notion entertained only by skeptics on the fringes of major parties.

But the turmoil of the euro zone and migration crises, combined with growing anger at what many voters perceive as arrogant elites in London and Brussels, have driven demands for a Brexit.

Since the referendum was announced, companies from BP to Rolls-Royce, as well as international allies, have cautioned about the risks of leaving.

Some British leaders have questioned what sort of Britain would remain.

Washington has made clear that Germany would be its first ally of choice in Europe if Britain left. In the biggest intervention in the domestic affairs of a Western European ally since the Cold War, Obama warned in April that Britain would be "the back of the queue" for a U.S. trade deal if it left.

His comments chimed with warnings about the consequences of leaving from Bank of England chief Mark Carney, the City of London, U.S. investment banks and major trade unions.

But opponents of membership say such warnings about Brexit from global corporations and leaders have further fueled an anti-establishment wind that has grown in strength since the 2008 financial crisis.

"We are capturing that wind and I think it could be the thing which really drives us to victory," Matthew Elliott, the head of Vote Leave, told Reuters last month.

"I wouldn't see it as the wind of [presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald] Trump - I think there is a much wider anti-establishment feeling across the world."

NEWS

Time to send 'strong signal' to Russia and gradually lift sanctions: Austrian FM

Russia sanctions should gradually be lifted in return for each step forward on the Minsk agreement, Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz said ahead of an EU summit that will likely extend the restrictions for another six months.

The time has come for the EU to send a message to Russia and pave the way for dialogue, Kurz said.



"I believe that we should gradually come to a mode in which for every implementation of the Minsk Protocol, for every single step, sanctions will gradually be lifted in return," he told an ORF TV show. Kurz has stressed that this would be "a very strong signal of accommodation" and expressed hope that it will be received "appropriately."

His remarks come as the EU summit next week is likely to extend for another six months the economic sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014. Moscow was accused by Brussels of annexing Crimea, which joined Russia following a referendum, and supporting rebels in eastern Ukraine.

Brussels still maintains the restrictions will be lifted once the Minsk peace accords signed by the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine are implemented in full.

However, a number of EU member states have said the "all-or-nothing" approach is counterproductive, and called for more flexibility. On Sunday, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the sanctions "are not an end in themselves," stressing that "they should rather give incentives for a change in behavior," according to Reuters.

The minister added that "an all-or-nothing approach, even if it sounds good, doesn't work." He reiterated the restrictions may be lifted gradually if Moscow "did its part" in implementing the Minsk accords. Speaking at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) on Friday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow could lift the counter-sanctions first, but the move must be followed by reciprocal steps from the EU. He also emphasized that Russia is ready "to meet our European partners halfway," adding: "But it certainly cannot be a one-way game."

Previously, Berlin admitted that growing dissent among EU member states on Russia sanctions makes it more difficult to automatically prolong them when they expire on July 31.

(Source: RT)

Donald Trump's dangerous demagoguery

In fact, his rulings appear quite even-handed. If Trump's attorneys had any real evidence of biased rulings, they could seek his recusal. Their failure to do so suggests that he is improperly trying to influence the outcome of the case or divert attention from evidence he defrauded vulnerable students.

The self-serving accusations bode poorly for Trump's future respect for the independence of a judiciary that will inevitably be called on to rule on questions of constitutional import.

This is not the only area in which Trump threatens core democratic principles: he said he will expand libel laws so he can silence his critics, threatening the First Amendment, and advocated for expanding torture and killing the families of terrorists, in violation of international law.

Especially in the aftermath of the horrific Orlando massacre and the escalating importance of tolerance and unity, Republican leaders should muster the integrity and courage to reign in Trump's dangerous demagoguery.

Though the racialized and nativist hostility he has exploited will not evaporate with Trump's defeat, it would be immeasurably amplified if he wins.

Either way, the enduring damage to the country's international standing and founding ideals is already incalculable.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

'First section of Tehran-Shomal Freeway to be completed by March'

As ISNA reported, this has been Jahangiri's third visit to the long-awaited project since President Hassan Rouhani took office in August 2013.

Initially, a group of Iranian engineers living in the United States proposed the project to the government of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (Iran's president from 1989 to 1997).

The government later rejected the proposal, assigning the project to Mostazafan Foundation—the second-largest conglomerate in Iran. Nonetheless, the project ran into problems over financing and implementation.

Based on a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and Mostazafan Foundation last year, a Chinese contractor was tasked with completing the tunnels and bridges along this section.

Earlier in May, South Korean Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Kang Ho-in in his meeting with Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhondi offered cooperation on completion of this freeway.

EU agrees to boost Libya naval mission

EU foreign ministers Monday agreed to boost the bloc's anti-people smuggling operation in the Mediterranean to include training of the Libyan coastguard and enforcing a UN arms embargo.

Ministers also agreed to extend Operation Sophia's mandate by one year to July 2017, a statement said, as the European Union tries to control a flood of migrants from North Africa and beyond trying to get to Europe.

"The Council (of member states) extended until 27 July 2017 the mandate for EU NAVFOR MED Operation

Sophia, the EU naval operation to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers in the southern central Mediterranean," a statement said after the ministers met in Luxembourg.

"The Council also reinforced the operation's mandate by adding two supporting tasks -- training of the Libyan coastguard and navy, and contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya," it said.

The EU launched Operation Sophia last year after

hundreds of migrants died when their rickety boats sank off southern Italy, sparking popular outrage at their plight.

It currently comprises five vessels and three helicopters charged with intercepting smugglers' boats and destroying them, in international waters.

Officials said they will review what additional assets the mission will need in July so Sophia will be able to meet its new tasks.

(Source: AFP)

Domestic engineers manage to inject three-phase corrosive inhibitor substance

ECONOMY At the initiative taken by expert engineers in Persian Gulf region, three-phase corrosive inhibitor substance was injected in pipeline for the first time at Iranian Oil Pipeline and Telecommunication Company (IOPTC).

Eng. Mehrad Haghghian Technical Deputy of Persian Gulf region announced the above statement and said: "After following up necessary measures on 26-inch pipeline, injection of these materials was conducted successfully with the aim of cleansing the internal wall of 26-inch pipe."

Turning to the transferring gas condensate from

South Pars Gas Field by Bandar Abbas - Assaluyeh 36-inch pipeline and also transferring a part of gas condensate by 26-inch pipeline with the production capacity of 36,000 barrels of oil per day (BPD) to the nationwide pipeline as feedstock of refineries in the country, he reiterated: "Given the physiochemical specifications of this substance, which contains a high amount of sulfur, three-phase corrosive inhibitor substance, amounting to 26-liter per million liter, was conducted successfully."

Eng. Alireza Attar Manager of Persian Gulf region was the next speaker who expressed his special thanks to the industrious personnel of Bandar Abbas Oil Transfer

Center, Head of Corrosion Department and Technical Deputy of the region in taking giant stride in this regard for the first time in the country and said: "Implementation of this project is indicative of high expertise and proficiency of expert domestic engineers on one hand and saving expenses on the other hand."

It is worth mentioning that injection of single-phase corrosive inhibitor substance is carried out in order to control and reduce degree of corrosion of internal wall of pipes on oil, gas, kerosene, gasoline, heavy and light naphtha products according to international standards and instructions.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



"A praying mother is more precious and valuable than all the riches in the world."
Violet James

NEWS

'Honor killing': Relatives murder Pakistani pregnant woman who married for love

A pregnant woman who chose to marry for love rather than take part in an arranged marriage has had her throat cut by relatives in Pakistan. The murder is the latest in a string of so-called "honor killings."

Muqaddas Bibi, 22, became estranged from her family three years ago, when she married her husband, Taufiq Ahmed. That marriage was viewed as shameful by Bibi's family because it wasn't an arranged marriage, police investigator Mohammad Arshad told AFP.

However, it appeared the family feud had ended on Thursday, when Bibi's mother and brother reportedly approached her at a clinic where she was having a check-up. They asked her to come home, saying they accepted her decision to marry for love.

The woman, who was seven months pregnant with her second child, accepted the invitation to the house in Buttaranwali, a village some 75 kilometers (46 miles) north of Punjab, Lahore.

However, when she arrived at her parents' house, her father, mother, and brother cut her throat with a knife and she died on the spot, local police station chief Gohar Abbas said.

The family fled their house after the murder, Abbas said, adding that police are searching for them and have already detained another relative for inciting the killing.

Hundreds of women are murdered by their relatives in Muslim Pakistan each year, in an attempt to defend what is seen as "family honor." Just last week, a 16-year-old girl was killed by her mother for marrying a man for love.

Soon after, a couple in Lahore were killed after marrying without their family's consent.

It comes just four months after a documentary on Pakistani honor killings titled "A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness" won an Oscar for best documentary short. During publicity for the film, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif vowed to eradicate the "evil" murders, though no legislation has yet been drafted.

(Source: RT)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Ash-e-jow (Iranian barley soup)

"I've seen a lot of recipes for this soup; however, my mother-in-law adds tomato paste for a bit of a different flavor and she doesn't add any lentils or beans. It's thick, filling, and delicious, and you could make it vegetarian by using vegetable stock. Serve it for Iftar!"

Ingredients:



- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 cup uncooked pearl barley
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 8 lime wedges

Directions:

Heat the chicken stock in a pot to a gentle simmer. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pot over medium heat and saute the onion until translucent. Add the pearl barley to the pot and stir for one minute. Stir in the hot chicken stock, turmeric, lime juice, tomato paste, salt, and pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 1 hour. Mix in the carrots and continue simmering 30 minutes or until the soup has thickened and the carrots and barley are tender. If the soup is too thick, add hot water, one tablespoon at a time. Place the sour cream in a small bowl. Slowly pour 1/2 cup of hot soup mixture into sour cream, whisking constantly. Gradually add the sour cream mixture into the soup pot, whisking constantly. Stir in the fresh parsley. Serve with fresh lime wedges.

Which Majlis commissions have female members?

WOMEN TEHRAN — Six female MPs have been elected as members of different commissions in the Iranian parliament (Majlis).

Parvaneh Mafi is in the Councils and Internal Affairs Commission, Soheila Jelodarzadeh and Nahid Tajeddin are in the Social Affairs Commission, and Fatemeh Saeedi is in the Education and Research Commission, ISNA reported.

Also, Seyedeh Hamideh Zarabadi is in the Industries and Mines Commission, and Fatemeh Zolqadr is in the Cultural Commission of Majlis.

The current Iranian parliament has more women than the last parliaments, with 17 women, setting a new record for the Islamic Republic, with the previous highest number of female MPs being 14.

There are 290 seats in the parliament.

The parliamentary elections were held on February 26, when more than 60 percent of some 55 million eligible voters cast their ballots at around 53,000 polling stations across the country.

The run-off votes were also held in late April to fill the remaining seats.



Bulgaria follows France and Netherlands in move to ban the veil

Bulgaria is on course to become the latest European country to ban the wearing of niqabs or burqas in public places, following France and the Netherlands in prohibiting clothing that covers the face.

The bill, which was tabled by the nationalist Patriotic Front (PF), was backed by 108 MPs, with just eight voting against it, at its first reading on Wednesday.

Bulgaria's second-largest opposition party, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), tried to get the reading postponed by suggesting the measures be covered in counter-terrorism legislation instead, but the move was rejected.

The law states that clothing hiding the face may not be worn in central and local government offices, schools, cultural institutions, and places of public recreation, sports and communications.

Tuncher Kardzhaliyev, an MRF MP, said the bill had no value and did not solve a single major problem, the Sofia Globe reported. The way it was drafted meant it would apply to beekeepers as well as religious clothing, he said.

Those who violate the law face a fine of 200 leva (£80) for the first offence, and for second and further offences, 1500 leva and deprivation of social benefits, the website reported.

Muslims make up about 12 percent of Bulgaria's 7.2 million population and most belong to a centuries-old community, largely ethnic Turks, among whom full-face veils are not common.

The move at a national level follows a ban in several towns in Bulgaria, starting in Pazardzhik in April. At the time, the local government of the town, which has a population of 70,000 people, said it would prevent tension among communities and boost security in the wake of the terrorist attacks that shocked France and Belgium.

"I am tired to hear that Pazardzhik is the town of the burqas. We want to say aloud that we are not that, but a town of responsible people and we will be associated with other achievements," Mayor Todor Popov told the national radio.

Part of the Roma minority practices an ultra-conservative form of Islam and its women have started

wearing full-face veils in recent years, angering nationalists and bewildering other residents of Pazardzhik.

Many Bulgarians are concerned that their predominantly Orthodox Christian culture and help radicalize part of the country's long-established Muslim minority.

In February, 13 men - most from Pazardzhik's Roma minority - went on trial charged with helping people join the Islamic State group in Syria, propagating an extremist ideology and inciting to war.

France in 2010 banned full-face veils after years of debate, while in May, the Netherlands introduced a partial ban on wearing a veil in schools, hospitals and on public transport.

The subject has long been debated in Britain. In January, David Cameron, the Prime Minister, refused to endorse a French-style blanket ban but made clear that individual organizations can choose to stop Muslim women wearing the veil.

(Source: telegraph.co.uk)

Ban declares era of impunity 'over' for sexual violence in war

Marking the first International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Sunday said that the era of impunity for sexual violence as a tool of war is over, citing a host of landmark rulings against political and military leaders.

In February, a national court in Guatemala convicted two former military officers of committing sexual violence during the country's civil war - the first time that a national court anywhere in the world considered charges of sexual slavery during armed conflict.

Women's organizations worked for years with indigenous women to develop their case, which was presented in the court by Guatemala's female attorney general before a female presiding judge.

In March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) handed down its first conviction for sexual and gender-based crimes.

An all-female panel of three judges presided over the case against former Congolese Vice-President Jean-Pierre Bemba, who was brought to justice by a female prosecutor, thanks to unprecedented levels of participation of women victims and witnesses from the Central African Republic.

In May, the extraordinary African cham-



Students of a midwifery school in El Fasher, North Darfur, march against Gender Violence.

bers in Senegal convicted the former president of Chad, Hissène Habré, for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape

and sexual slavery. This was the first universal jurisdiction case to make it to trial in Africa, and the first time a former head of

The abduction of more than 200 girls from Chibok in Nigeria, and the continued tragedy of women and girls subjected to forced marriage or sexual slavery by extremist groups in the Middle East, are two of the most horrific examples of the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism

state was held personally accountable for committing rape as an international crime.

This conviction would not have been possible without the testimonies of women and the inspiring determination of lawyers, victims' advocates, human rights defenders, and local and international civil society organizations.

All of these were long overdue and all had one thing in common: the unstoppable force of women's voice and leadership, said UN Women, an agency tasked with promoting gender equality.

"With widespread sexual violence still a devastating reality in too many conflicts in the world, it is heartening to see that steps are being taken towards securing accountability for these acts, and that women are persevering with strength and unity in not letting these crimes go unspoken or unpunished," said a statement released by UN Women.

Mr. Ban said that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram and other extremist groups are using sexual violence as a means of attracting and retaining fighters, and to generate revenue.

The abduction of more than 200 girls from Chibok in Nigeria, and the continued tragedy of women and girls subjected to forced marriage or sexual slavery by extremist groups in the Middle East, are two of the most horrific examples of the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism, Mr. Ban said, calling for the immediate release of all those taken captive, and for the care and support of those who return.

On a positive note, there has also been clear progress and unprecedented political momentum to address these crimes, he stressed. Sexual violence is now widely recognized as a deliberate strategy used to shred the fabric of society; to control and intimidate communities and to force people from their homes. It is rightly seen as a threat to international peace and security, a serious violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, and a major impediment to post-conflict reconciliation and economic development, he said.

On June 19, 2015, the UN General Assembly proclaimed June 19, of each year the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, in order to raise awareness of the need to put an end to conflict-related sexual violence, to honor the victims and survivors of sexual violence around the world and to pay tribute to all those who have courageously devoted their lives to and lost their lives in standing up for the eradication of these crimes.

The date was chosen to commemorate the adoption on 19 June 2008 of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), in which the Council condemned sexual violence as a tactic of war and an impediment to peacebuilding.

(UN News Center)

IN FOCUS Mehro Asghar Khamseh



A little girl draws her feeling about the holy month of Ramadan by her colorful pencils.



Haddadi in fine fettle as Iran win Atlas Challenge

SUZHOU (2016 FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournaments) — Iran's confidence will be soaring after clinching top spot in the Atlas Challenge with a victory over a Lithuania B national team in China.

Preparing for the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament (OQT) in Turin, the Iranians overcame a China B, 80-66, in the Semi-Finals and then beat their Baltic opponents in the title game, 85-70.

Hamed Haddadi poured in 22 points to lead Iran. Haddadi, Iran's center for nearly a decade, played at last year's FIBA Asia Championship. He had been his country's best player at the 2014 FIBA Basketball World Cup.

In earlier games at the Atlas Challenge, Iran defeated the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (MKD), 80-75 and American college basketball team Idaho Vandals, 71-62. In their victory over Idaho, Haddadi shone with 14 points and 8 rebounds.

Iran also beat Lithuania before advancing to the Semi-Finals, 78-76. Iran have been in good form of late. They recently won the WABA Championship as the host nation.

At the OQT in Turin, Iran will play in Group A against Greece and Mexico. If they finish in the top two, Dirk Bauermann's team will advance to a Semi-Final and face a team out of a Group B which consists of Croatia, Italy and Tunisia.

Only the winner of the OQT will advance to the Rio de Janeiro Games. Iran played at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing but did not qualify for the event four years ago in London.

(Source: FIBA)



Portugal's Silva confident they will get the job done

Portugal will put their frustrating start to Euro 2016 behind them when they take on Hungary in their final Group F game to book their place in the knockout stages on Wednesday, according to midfielder Adrien Silva.

Substitute Silva believes the game will prove to be a turning point for a team who dominated their first two games against Iceland and Austria, but had to settle for a draw each time.

"We are not losing sleep but we are saddened," Silva told a news conference on Monday. "No one is going to throw in the towel. We will bounce back to reach our goal. I'm confident."

"We don't deserve to be in this position. You are left with a bitter taste because your work has not been rewarded but the fighting spirit and the confidence of the group are still intact."

Portugal had 10 attempts on target against Iceland for a 1-1 draw and against Austria, they managed six but failed to score.

"The only issue is that the ball is not going in," Silva said. "Unfortunately, we have been unable to finish off the numerous chances we have produced."

Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo has yet to hit the back of the net.

Ronaldo, who scored 51 goals in 48 games in all competitions for Real Madrid this season, missed a late penalty against Austria.

"If we didn't create chances, we should have reason to be worried," said Silva.

"Just because we haven't achieved the best results, it doesn't mean that everything is bad. But I am sure things will change."

(Source: Reuters)



Esteghlal striker Borhani joins Paykan



SPORTS Esteghlal's all-time top scorer Arash Borhani has left the football club after nine years to join Paykan on a one-year contract on Monday.

"I'm happy to join Paykan and work under Majid Jalali again. I had fabulous days with him at Pas and I would like to repeat them in the next season. I received a couple of offers to play outside of Iran but Jalali asked me to join Paykan,"

Borhani told reporters.

The second all-time top goal scorers in Iran's Premier Football League joined Esteghlal in the summer of 2008 and scored 108 goals in 288 appearances in all competitions during his nine-year spell at the club.

The newly promoted club Paykan has appointed Majid Jalali as the new coach and has signed Bahador Abdi, Mehdi Shiri and Arash Borhani so far in the transfer market.

Carlos Queiroz cancels training camps in Armenia and Austria



SPORTS Iran national football team head coach Carlos Queiroz has stated that the two upcoming preparatory camps in Armenia and Austria have been canceled due to not having enough players.

"The clubs won't let the players to attend in the national team trainings so we decided to cancel the preparatory camps in Armenia and Austria," Queiroz told reporters.

"I've prepared a new schedule in

which we will have the players just four days before our official games according to the FIFA calendar. I hope we could get good results in the World Cup qualifying games," the Portuguese coach added.

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

Carlos Queiroz men will host Qatar in the first game of 2018 World Cup qualifying third round on September 1.

Esteghlal signs Arash Afshin



SPORTS Esteghlal football team completed the signing Arash Afshin from Malavan on Monday.

The 27-year-old striker has joined the Blues on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Afshin started his senior career at Foolad in 2009. He joined Sepahan after four years but returned to Foolad after one-year.

Afshin joined Malavan on loan in 2014 to fulfill his military service commitment.

He was a member of Iran U-23 in 2010 Asian Games.

On 2 January 2011, Afshin was called up to the Iran for the team's friendly match against Angola and made his debut.

He was also one of Team Melli's players in 2011 AFC Asian Cup.

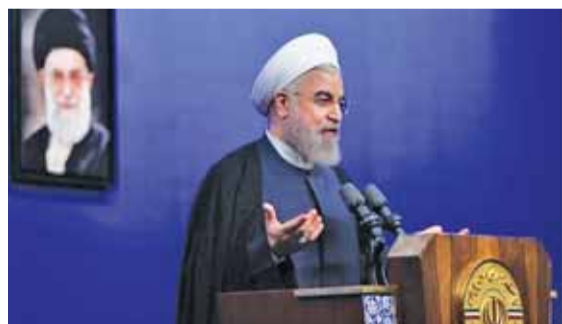
President Rouhani: Olympics-qualified athletes bring honour to Iranian nation

Underlining paying attention to public sports along with championship sports, Dr Rouhani said: "Public sports is the base, but on the other side, championship sports can encourage our young population to follow public sports".

"Championship and professional sports and games bring national honour to the country and introduce our national identity and culture to the world," added the President at an Iftar ceremony with athletes late on Sunday.

"We are happy to be living in a country the youths of which bring honour in science and knowledge, just as great diplomacy heroes who possess scientific, technical and legal power and can leave a grave global issue victoriously," added Dr Rouhani, referring to the nuclear negotiation team.

He continued: "Our country's heroes broke the



chains of sanctions and cleared the path for the society to be more active".

Wishing victory for the athletes in Olympics and

Paralympics, he said: "While some countries have no historical honour and pride and create imaginary heroes, the Iranian nation's history is replete with historical honours and pride".

He also mentioned two significant eras in Iranian history, namely the Islamic Revolution and the Sacred Defence and said: "The Iranian nation will never forget great figures such as the Babaeis, Sattaris, Hemmats, Bakeris and Baqeris and will always be proud of its great historic heroes".

Thanking women athletes for attending global sport events, observing Islamic values, he added: "Observing these Islamic values by our women athletes is both an honour for us in the Islamic community and a great honour for resistance based on our culture and identity".

(Source: president.ir)

Ex-Iran basketball player Zandi joins Mahindra Enforcer

Mahindra Enforcer from the Philippines has signed Iranian basketball player Iman Zandi.

The 35-year-old Iranian ex-international swingman Zandi has played most recently at Shahrdary Gorgan in Iranian Superleague.

Zandi has also played for other Iranian teams like Zob Ahan, Sanam, and BEEM.

He also represented Iran national team at the West Asia Basketball Championships in Duhok (Iraq) five years ago.

Zandi is close to retirement age as a player and it may be one of the last seasons in his extensive career.

The Mahindra Enforcer is a profes-



sional basketball team in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA).

(Source: Tasnim)

Paykan volleyball team set to sign Saeid Marouf

SPORTS Paykan volleyball club is reportedly ready to sign Iranian international setter Saeid Marouf.

Free agent Marouf, who is arguably one of the best setters in the world, parted the ways with Shahrdari Urmia last season.

On 27 December 2014, Marouf signed a one-year contract with Russian Super League champion Zenit Kazan with an option for a one-year extension.

The contract is worth over 1 million dollars, making Marouf one of the world's highest-paid volleyball players.

He was also linked with a move to Mode-



na in Serie A but the Italian team is facing financial difficulties. Paykan also wants to sign Amir Ghafour and Nikolay Nikolov.

21 June 2016			
UKR		20:30	POL
21 June 2016			
NIR		20:30	GER
21 June 2016			
CZE		23:30	TUR
21 June 2016			
CRO		23:30	ESP



Poem of the day

He attained exaltation by his perfection.
He dispelled darkness by his beauty.
Beauteous are all his qualities,
Benediction be on him and on his family.

Sadi

Prayer Times

Noon:13:06 Evening: 20:45 Dawn: 4:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:49 (tomorrow)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Adaptation of "The Maids" to go on stage in Tehran

T A R T TEHRAN — Director Maryam d e s k Malmir will stage an adaptation of French writer Jean Genet's "The Maids" at the Entezami Hall of the Iran Artists Forum in Tehran on June 30.

The play was renamed "The Papin Sisters" for the performance. Genet wrote "The Maids" based on the true story of two sisters who murdered their employer's wife and daughter.

The play will remain on stage until July 20 at the theater located on Musavi St., off Taleqani Ave.



Charles Bukowski's poems published in Persian

T A R T TEHRAN — A selection of d e s k Charles Bukowski's poems has recently been published in Persian in a book titled "Fortunate People".

Alireza Behnam is the translator of the collection, which was published by Morvarid Publications in Tehran.

NEWS

"Dark Lord" translated into Persian

T A R T TEHRAN — British writer Jamie d e s k Thomson's "Dark Lord: The Early Years" has recently been translated into Persian by Farnmehr Amirdust.



The book, which is the first part of Thomson's series of the same title, tells the story of Dirk Lloyd, a schoolboy who is confounded when he awakens in the middle of a small town on a planet he has never seen before.

The book is scheduled to be published by Donya-e Eqtesad Publications in Tehran in the near future. The series also includes "Dark Lord: School's Out" and "Dark Lord: Eternal

Detention".

"Finding Dory" blows animation record out of the water

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The forgetful blue fish of "Finding Dory" is box office gold.

The Pixar sequel far surpassed its already ocean-sized expectations to take in \$136.2 million in North American theaters, making it the highest-grossing animated debut of all time, not adjusting for inflation, according to comScore estimates Sunday.

The 2007 film "Shrek the Third" was the previous record-holder, with a \$121.6 million debut.

"Finding Dory", which comes 13 years after "Finding Nemo", is also the second-largest June opening of all time, with "Jurassic World" at No. 1. The well-reviewed film features the voices of Ellen DeGeneres and Albert Brooks.

Going into the weekend, analysts expected "Finding Dory" to draw big, \$100 million-plus numbers, but never this big.

"The thought was: 'Could this be the movie to eclipse 'Toy Story 3's' opening?' not, 'Could it become the biggest animated opening of all time?'" said Paul Dergarabedian, comScore's senior media analyst. "That's the power of the Pixar brand"

Until now, "Toy Story 3" was Pixar's biggest opening ever, with \$110.3 million.

Disney Executive Vice President of Distribution Dave Hollis was particularly heartened that the film did such robust late-night business on Friday and Saturday.

"That's really a testament to this being a picture for everyone - not just for families," Hollis said.

"Finding Dory" has the animated seas to itself until "The Secret Life of Pets" opens July 8.

The Kevin Hart and Dwayne Johnson buddy comedy "Central Intelligence" also had a relatively muscular weekend, with a better-than-expected \$34.5 million, putting it in second place.

"It's a real home run," said Jeff Goldstein, Warner Bros' executive vice president of domestic distribution. "These two comedians are just stars. They connect with their audience and each other in such a strong way. You just laugh when you watch them."

"Central Intelligence" cost a reported \$50 million to make and scored especially well with younger audiences, who the studio hopes will propel word-of-mouth business in weeks to come. The next major comedy releases don't come until mid-July, with "Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates" and "Ghostbusters."

Iranian thespians attending Italian festival of workshops

T A R T TEHRAN — A number of interested Iranian theater actors have been selected to attend workshops at the Intercultural Festival Laboratory of Theater Practices, which will be held in Fara Sabina, near Rome in Italy from June 22 to July 3.

Several other artists are coming from Japan, India, Denmark, U.S and Italy, and will give the festival their own contribution through sharing their personal theatrical experiences, organizers have announced on the website.

Organized by Teatro Potlach, the festival is now in its 16th edition, hosting twelve days of workshops, shows and dialogues about the creative exchanges between different cultures.

Claudio De Maglio from Italy will be holding the workshop "Masks and Characters in Commedia dell'Arte" for three days on June 22, 23 and 24.

A workshop on "Practical Training on Language Development" will be given by Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley from



A poster for the Intercultural Festival Laboratory of Theater Practices

Denmark from June 24 to 26.

Keiin Yoshimura from Japan will also be holding a workshop on "Kamigata-mai Dance in the Japanese Tradition" from June 26 to 29.

A workshop on "Song, Dance and Narrative Techniques in the

Indian Baul Tradition" will be given by Parvathy Baul from India from June 29 to July 3.

Iranian director Kiumars Moradi, the executive and artistic director of the U.S. based Hope Theater Company will also be cooperating with several other

Italian and American stage directors and designers including Pino Di Buduo and Agnese Giglia and James Jordan and Christopher Shorr in the workshop "The Urban Environment Transformed by Art", which will end with the show "Invisible Cities".

Brazilian festival to screen "Exterior Wash"

T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k director Jaber Ramazani's "Exterior Wash" will go on screen in the short film section of the 4th Porto Alegre Screenwriting Festival -- FRAPA, which will be held in the Brazilian city from July 5 to 8.

The film starring Maryam Nurmohammadi, Sheyda Khaliq and Fariba Jeddi is about Zohreh who

brings her friend, Mahtab, for pony (reckoning) in a carwash on the day of the funeral of his father.

Productions from Poland, Pakistan, U.S., Sweden and France will also be screened in the section.

According to the organizers, the FRAPA is a foremost festival in Latin America that focuses on scriptwriting both for television and cinema.

Muslim children introduce their native countries at Tehran Quran exhibit

T A R T TEHRAN — Afghanistan, Turkey, and Pakistan are our Muslim neighboring countries. The Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia, is located in Mashhad. Jamkaran in Qom and Shah Cheragh in Shiraz are other religious sites in my country". Project executor Shabnam Mirzeinolabedin, artistic director

Leila Belon and advisor Ali Kashefi Khansari have collaborated in this project.

There are plans to compile and publish the posters in a book in the future.

A wide range of programs and cultural activities have been arranged during the exhibit, which will be running until June 28.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Reza Kianian (R) and an unidentified person carry a cake during a ceremony held by his colleagues at Baran Theater in Tehran on June 19, 2016 to celebrate the actor's 65th birthday. The celebration was arranged at end of a performance of Italian playwright Dario Fo's monologue "The Tale of a Tiger" by Hedayat Hashemi.

Actor Anton Yelchin of "Star Trek" films dies in freak accident

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Actor Anton Yelchin, best known for playing the young Russian starship navigator Chekov in the rebooted series of "Star Trek" movies, was killed on Sunday when accidentally crushed by his own car against a driveway wall, police said.

The Russian-born Yelchin, 27, died shortly after 1 a.m. after he apparently stepped out of his car in the steep driveway of his Los Angeles home and it rolled backwards, said Jenny Houser, spokeswoman for the Los Angeles Police Department.

"The car pinned him against a brick wall and a security fence, and that trauma led to his death," Houser said.

Yelchin was due at a rehearsal, and when he did not show up friends went to his house and found him dead, Houser said. No foul play was suspected, but the

accident was under investigation, she said.

A number of actors and others who worked with Yelchin took to social media with tributes and expressions of dismay.

"Still in shock. Rest in peace, Anton," Justin Lin, who directed Yelchin in his third "Star Trek" movie, wrote on Twitter. "Your passion and enthusiasm will live on with everyone that had the pleasure of knowing you."

Yelchin was best known for assuming the role of Pavel Chekov, the young navigator on the bridge of the starship Enterprise, for the 2009 re-launch of the "Star Trek" film franchise and two sequels - 2013's "Star Trek Into Darkness" and the upcoming "Star Trek Beyond", set to open on July 22.

The Chekov character was originally played on television in the 1960s "Star



Cast member Anton Yelchin poses during the photo call for the movie "Burying the ex" at the 71st Venice Film Festival September 4, 2014. (Reuters/Tony Gentile)

Trek" series, and in the first seven big-screen adaptations of the show, by Walter Koenig, who died in 1994.

"I loved Anton Yelchin so much," wrote John Cho, who played fellow Enterprise crew member Sulu in the new "Star Trek" films. "He was a true artist - curious,

Actor Leslie Odom Jr. to exit hit Broadway show "Hamilton"

Leslie Odom Jr., winner of the 2016 Tony Award for best leading actor in a musical for his role in the smash Broadway hit "Hamilton", became on Sunday the latest member of the cast to announce his departure.

Odom, 34, said on his Facebook page he would make his last performance in the show on July 9, the same day the show's co-star and creator, Lin-Manuel Miranda, bows out.

Odom plays Aaron Burr in the musical, which blends hip-hop and other musical genres to tell the story of Alexander Hamilton, one of the U.S. Founding Fathers and the first Treasury secretary. The show won 11 of Broadway's top honors at the Tony Awards on June 12.

"It has just been the most completely wonderful, totally healing and inspiring experience from beginning to end," Odom said in a video statement from his dressing room, posted on Facebook. "I will never forget the people I have met. I will never forget you."

Odom said rehearsals were the most exciting part of his work on "Hamilton" because the show held such great potential.

"I am excited to have a blank page now," Odom said. He said he was looking for something fresh to work on.

beautiful, courageous. He was a great pal and a great son. I'm in ruins."

Yelchin was born in St. Petersburg, the son of two figure skaters, and emigrated to the United States as an infant.

He has appeared in numerous films and was in the TV series "Huff", starring Hank Azaria, who wrote on Twitter that he was devastated. "He was a very sweet kid. My heart goes out to his family."

Early in his career as a teenager, Yelchin gained wide attention appearing with Anthony Hopkins in the 2001 film "Hearts in Atlantis" and with Robin Williams in 2004's "House of D."

Yelchin played Jacob Clarke in the Steven Spielberg miniseries "Taken" and also appeared in the films "Terminator Salvation", "Charlie Bartlett", "Fright Night", "Like Crazy", and "Only Lovers Left Alive" between 2007 and 2013.