

TEHRAN TIMES

WWW.TEHRANTIMES.COM INTERNATIONAL DAILY

12 Pages | Price 10,000 Rials | 38th year | No.12600 | Sunday | JULY 17, 2016 | Tir 27, 1395 | Shawwal 12, 1437

Borders with Turkey closely guarded

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Russia, U.S. to enforce fresh measures on Syria

Kerry says Moscow, Washington know what's needed to restore Syria truce

Russia and the United States have agreed to implement soon a series of new measures for restoring a fragile ceasefire across Syria.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Saturday after a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in Moscow on Friday that the two sides had agreed on enforcing their decisions regarding Syria in a matter of days.

"We have talked a lot about this today, and the measures that we have agreed upon and that we will have to start implementing within the next few days... I do hope they'll enable us to solve this problem," said Lavrov.

The Russian top diplomat said the main bone of contention between Moscow and Washington during the negotiations was how to take "practical steps on the ground to separate the opposition that is sensible and is ready to be involved in a political process from the terrorists." → 3

Iran condemns coup, fully backs Turkish govt.

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Ranking Iranian officials have condemned the abortive military coup in Turkey, saying Tehran fully backs the democratic and legitimate government of Ankara.

Friday midnight was quite disturbing

moments for the Turkish government and nation as a group of senior military officials seized power using military machines. However, the coup failed as Turkish people took to the streets in reply to President Erdogan's call on the nation to

take command of the unrest.

The incident left as many as 160 people killed, including many civilians, and more than a thousand injured. Also, many coup plotters were killed and many more surrendered themselves to the police.

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Reuters

Book City Institute to commemorate Iranologist Gherardo Gnoli

CULTURE TEHRAN — Italian Iranologist Gherardo Gnoli (1937-2012) is scheduled to be commemorated during a ceremony, which will be held at the Book City Institute in Tehran on Tuesday.

Gnoli was one of the most distinguished experts on the ancient history of Iran. He was among the driving forces promoting Iranian studies around the world and succeeded in establishing the subject in a number of Italian universities.

Italian Cultural Attaché Carlo Cherti and Iranian scholars Asgar Bahrami and Mahmud Jafari have been invited to deliver speeches at the meeting.

The Book City Institute is located at the Third Alley, Ahmad Qasir St., Shahid Beheshti Ave.

Erdogan will solidify power after attempted coup: expert

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — An expert on Middle East affairs says the failure of military coup in Turkey will embolden President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to "solidify his power".

"If the coup is defeated decisively, Erdogan can certainly take advantage of this and try to solidify his power by changing the country's constitution to his advantage and by going after his opponents, including those in the military, with vengeance," Nader Entessar, a professor of political science at South Alabama University, tells the Tehran Times.

According to the New York Times, the Turkish government rounded up thousands of military personnel on Saturday said to have taken part in an attempted coup, moving swiftly to re-establish control after a night of chaos and intrigue that left hundreds

dead.

By noon, there were few signs that those who had taken part in the coup attempt were still able to challenge the government, and many declared the uprising a failure.

Following is the text of the interview with Entessar:

■ What were the main motives behind the military coup in Turkey?

A: There are many possible reasons for the attempted coup. There is no love lost between the ruling AKP and certain elements of the Turkish military. Erdogan's has attempted several purges of the country's military brass, and the secular elements of the Turkish military have never felt quite comfortable with

Erdogan's domestic and regional policies. But it is too early to discuss the specific motives of the plotters at this time.

■ Which movement was behind the coup?

A: Again, it is too early to know who or what movement was behind the coup attempt. Certainly the top leadership of the Turkish military was not behind it. Otherwise, the coup would have been staged in a decisive fashion, with the immediate arrest of the top civilian leadership of the government.

■ Why did the coup end in failure very soon?

A: On the surface, it appears that the coup was not well organized and did not even have the support of the opposition parties in Turkey. Even the

pro-Kurdish opposition party condemned the coup attempt. Was the coup something from Erdogan's political trick bag, as some have claimed? At this time, there is no evidence that Erdogan was behind it.

■ Some argue the failure of the coup will open Erdogan's hand in pushing ahead with more speed for a presidential system and purge the army openly. What is your view?

A: If the coup is defeated decisively, Erdogan can certainly take advantage of this and try to solidify his power by changing the country's constitution to his advantage and by going after his opponents, including those in the military, with vengeance. Of course, if Erdogan overplays his hands, there is always the danger that his over-zealousness may rebound to the detriment of his own party and his political future.



Military coup postpones Iran-Turkey trade meeting

ECONOMY TEHRAN — A planned Iran-Turkey trade meeting, which was scheduled to be held on July 19 in Ankara, has been postponed due to the insecure situation in the wake of Saturday's Turkish military coup, IRNA reported.

According to Seyed Jalal Ebrahimi, the secretary general of

Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce, the meeting was expected to address joint agricultural activities between the two sides.

In the early hours of Saturday, anti-Erdogan military seized government buildings, bombed the parliament and took over media bureaus. However, thousands of people flooded onto the streets

across Turkey as Erdogan vowed to respond. Dozens of people have been reportedly killed.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the Iranian minister of communications and information technology, said in April "Regarding their present potentials, Iran and Turkey can enhance the volume of their bilateral trade up to \$100 billion per

annum."

"Both sides are resolved to reach a 30-billion-dollar trade volume in the near future, the goal which has been set by the two countries' presidents in their recent meeting," Vaezi said in a meeting with Erdal Bahcivan, the chairman of Istanbul Chamber of Industry.

Navy punishes four sailors who were detained by Iran

The Navy handed down punishments to two officers and two enlisted sailors in charge of the riverine boat crews who surrendered in Iranian waters earlier this year, causing an international incident and bringing embarrassment on the Navy for the litany of errors that led to their arrest and their violations of regulations while in custody.

All four received letters of reprimand at admiral's mast Thursday, the enlisted for dereliction of duty, and the officers for dereliction of duty and disobedience of superior commissioned officers, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command announced.

The officers were charged with disobedience for

failing to follow 5th Fleet guidance for how to conduct themselves in that area of responsibility, where they could expect to interact with Iranian forces, according to a Navy official who was not authorized to speak about the incident on the record.

"They did not follow the commander's guidance," he said. "If they had, they wouldn't have had this problem."

The Navy declined to release the punished sailors' ranks due to privacy concerns.

"In order to be a Navy that successfully maintains the trust and confidence of the American people, the chain of command and our Sailors, we have an obligation to self-examine and hold ourselves accountable when necessary," Rear

Adm. Frank Morneau, NECC's commander, said in a statement.

The sailors are the first four to receive punishment for their involvement in the January incident, including three of the boat crew members, the commanding and executive officers of the riverine squadron, the commodore and chief of staff of the group in charge of the riverines and two members of the shore support staff. Ten crew members were detained.

A five-month investigation found top-to-bottom errors and negligence led to the sailors' being detained.

(Source: navytimes.com)

Greece, Iran consider oil, LNG, renewable projects

Greek Environment and Energy Minister Panos Skourletis and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Europe and America Majid Takht-Ravanchi agreed to expand energy cooperation between the two countries, noting the big potential in this area, the Greek ministry said in a press release.

At a meeting that also included Iran's ambassador to Athens and Hellenic Petroleum CEO Grigoris Stergioulis, the Iranians highlighted their increased cooperation with Greece's largest refiner. The two sides also discussed liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects, renewable energy and ways to conserve energy, the Greek ministry said.

Skourletis said Greece wants "to be a bridge between Iran and the European Union" and confirmed Athens intentions to boost energy cooperation between the two countries.

Takht-Ravanchi, during his visit to Greece also met with Greek Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism, Giorgos Stathakis in Athens on July 13. They discussed all the aspects of extending Iran-Greece cooperation in areas of economy, trade, and industry, in their bilateral talks. They also expressed willingness to look into areas of pharmaceuticals, advanced technologies, ship building and shipping, tourism, and banking.

The Iranian and Greek officials also vowed to realize the agreements signed during the February visit of Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Tehran. (Source: neweurope.eu)

Nice attack shows terrorism threatens global security: Larjani

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larjani has condemned the terrorist attack in the French city of Nice, noting terrorism threatens global security.

"Terrorism is not restricted to one region and poses 'serious threat' against the global security and stability, he said in a message to French National Assembly President Claude Bartolone on Saturday.

"I believe that double standards and lack of serious fight against the evil phenomenon of terrorism will lead to spread of insecurity, violence and extremism in various spots of the world," Larjani remarked.

He added, "Given the recent events, the European Union is expected to adopt an active, principled, clear and integrated policy to counter terrorism and its roots."

Bartolone was scheduled to take a trip to Iran on Saturday which was cancelled due to the terrorist attack in Nice.

On Thursday night, an attacker while driving a heavy truck plowed into crowds celebrating Bastille Day in the French city of Nice, killing at least 84 people and injuring scores more in what President Francois Hollande called a terrorist act, according to Reuters.

The attacker, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, was a 31-year-old French man of Tunisian descent.

In remarks on Saturday Iranian Expediency Council chief Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani called the Nice attack a "new dangerous method" which should be taken seriously.

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Iran's Leading International Daily

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rafsanjani says he is closest to the Supreme Leader

TEHRAN — Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Expediency Council, has said there is nobody closer than him to the Supreme Leader.

"Nobody is closer to the Supreme Leader than me," Rafsanjani said, the Farhikhtegan daily reported on Saturday.

However, he added, there have been instances of disagreement and in such cases "I share with him my opinion and leave it to him to make the final decision as he is the leader of the society and I have to follow him."



Intelligence minister says borders with Turkey closely guarded

TEHRAN — The Iranian intelligence minister said on Saturday that all land and air borders with Turkey are closely guarded following the mid-night coup in the neighboring country.

"Security, military, and intelligence forces are on guard as demanded by the situation and all borderlines (with Turkey) are under full control."

With Erdogan holidaying, violence erupted late on Friday after a faction of the armed forces attempted to seize power using tanks and attack helicopters.



Tehran names new ambassador to South Africa

TEHRAN — Tehran has appointed Mohsen Movahedi Qomi as its new ambassador to South Africa, ILNA reported on Saturday.

Movahedi Qomi replaced Mohammad Faraji, who was holding the post since 2012.

Previously, the newly appointed ambassador had served as Iranian ambassador to Tanzania and deputy chief of the Foreign Ministry department for African affairs.

Also, Movahedi Qomi, was Iran's representative to the East African Community (EAC) while serving as ambassador to Tanzania.

Considering the nuclear deal between Iran and 5+1 countries, stronger ties between Tehran and Pretoria are on agenda.



Coups have no place in our region: Zarif

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that "coups have no place" in the region and are doomed to be failed.

"Turkish people's brave defense of democracy and their elected government proves that coups have no place in our region and are doomed to fail," Zarif tweeted on Saturday.

A faction of the Turkish military forces launched a military coup in Ankara on Saturday which was crumbled by forces loyal to the Turkish government. The coup attempt left more than 160 people killed.



Iran to deploy new MAV radar system designed to detect drones

TEHRAN — The chief Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base announced on Saturday that an advanced Micro Air Vehicles (MAVs) radar system designed especially to detect drones is to be deployed in the near future in Northern Khorasan Province, eastern Iran.

The newly developed radar system can spot flying objects with a cross section of 0.01, according to Farzad Esmaili.

This is the first time Iran has announced it aims to unveil a radar apparatus to make its sky insecure for drones, which are difficult to detect.



Iranian embassy asks nationals in Turkey to stay indoors

TEHRAN — Following a coup in Turkey on Friday night the Iranian embassy in Ankara has issued travelling warnings to the country and urged Iranian nationals in Turkey to either stay indoors or avoid crowded places for their safety.

No Iranians have been killed or injured during the incident, IRNA quoted Iranian sources as saying. Earlier, the Iranian Foreign Ministry had also issued a statement, requesting all Iranian nationals in Turkey to remain indoors.

Turkey's acting military chief said on Saturday that at least 194 people were killed in clashes that followed the coup. He said that figure included 47 civilians, 41 police officers, two soldiers and 104 alleged coup plotters. An additional 1,154 people were injured.

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Iran condemns coup, fully backs Turkish govt.



Being a neighbor of Turkey, Iran was among the first ones to react.

■ Tehran backs legitimate Turkish government

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said, "As the formal stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we condemn coup plotters and announce our support for the legitimate government of the country (Turkey) and respect for the vote and will of the Turkish people."

Having attended an extraordinary session held by the SNSC on assess the situation in Turkey, Shamkhani emphasized that the coup attempt is antithetical to the real will of the Turkish people.

Noting that Iran has been receiving moment-to-moment updates on the failed coup attempt, the official said Tehran "is against any sort of coup in the country either backed by domestic or foreign plotters."

He also hailed the Turkish political factions and people for condemning the coup, seeing it as a factor of paramount importance.

"What has determined the fate of Turkey's developments were the will and presence of the nation and vigilance of political parties whose contribution thwarted this coup."

On concerns over security measures taken at borders Iran shares with Turkey, Shamkhani said security forces have been on alert and no incidence has been reported up to now.

"Northwest borders with Turkey are secure enough and ground and air forces are well prepared."

"Turkish people's brave defense of democracy and their elected government proves that coups have no place in our region and are doomed to fail," Zarif tweeted.



■ Zarif: Coups in region doomed to fail

Reacting to the abortive military move, the Iranian foreign minister praised the Turkish people for their bravery in aborting the military coup.

"Turkish people's brave defense of democracy and their elected government proves that coups have no place in our region and are doomed to fail," Zarif tweeted.

Zarif also said he is "deeply concerned about the crisis in Turkey"

The Iranian foreign minister also spoke three times by phone with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu, discussing the latest developments in the country.

From the very beginning of the turmoil, Zarif has been emphasizing the role of people in the democratic system of the country as well as the need for all to respect the people's votes.

Also, in a statement carried by the official website of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Tehran stressed that the Islamic Republic "is deeply concerned about stability, security, unity, democracy, and the rule of law in Turkey."

Tehran attaches great significance to a democratic, secure, and stable Turkey



and hopes that Ankara restores serenity as soon as possible, the statement said.

■ 'Democratically elected governments enjoy Iranian support'

Also, the Iranian parliament speaker wrote to his Turkish counterpart, saying Iran "has always supported national sovereignty and will of democratically elected governments."

"Developments of the past hours indicated that the nations' votes and will is decisive..." Ali Larjani pointed out.

Elsewhere, Larjani felicitated his counterpart on the failure of the coup.

■ Leader aide: Tehran opposed to coup in Turkey

Reacting to the abortive coup attempt, Ali Akbar Velayati, the top advisor to the Supreme Leader, laid emphasis on

Shamkhani says Iran condemns coup plotters and announces our support for the legitimate government of the country (Turkey) and respect for the vote and will of the Turkish people.



Iran's opposition to overthrowing democratically-elected governments.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is a state governed by religious democracy, i.e. a government based on popular vote within the framework of Islamic values and is naturally against any illegal move and act of bullying to change popular governments," Velayati said in an interview with the Tasnim news agency.

He added that the governments in Turkey have for years assumed office through popular vote and democratic channels.

"If a few military personnel seek to crush underfoot the vote of the people under the influence whatever factor or factors and overthrow the popular government of Erdogan, the Islamic Republic of Iran will naturally and according to the principles it believes in oppose this coup d'état or any other coups," he pointed out, according to Press TV.

Linking the coup to the Syrian crisis, Velayati referred to signs of a change of tack by the Turkish government, hailing it as a "step forward."

"President Bashar al-Assad also has been elected by the Syrians' vote and if it had not been for the people's support, it would have been impossible for him to withstand five years of an international war against the country."

Larjani greets Turkish counterpart on 'victory of democracy' over coup

IT POLITICAL TEHRAN — On **d e s k** Saturday Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larjani sent a message to his Turkish counterpart Ismail Kahraman congratulating him on the victory of "democracy" over military coup.

"I would like to congratulate your Excellency, the Turkish people and members of parliament on the victory of the people's will, national sovereignty and democracy over desperate and 'doomed to failure actions' against your country's institutions," he stated.

Larjani also said that Iran supports the Turkish people.

A faction of the Turkish military forces launched a military coup in Ankara on Saturday which was crumbled by forces loyal to the Turkish government. The coup attempt left more than 160 people killed.

According to Reuters, President Erdogan said, "They will pay a heavy price for this. This uprising is a gift from God to us because this will be a reason to cleanse our army."

Velayati to visit Singapore, Malaysia

IT POLITICAL TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, the senior foreign policy advisor to the Leader, is scheduled on take a trip to Singapore on Monday to attend a conference named "Growth Through Interaction: The South Asian Opportunity".

Velayati is also scheduled to travel to Malaysia after his two-day visit to Singapore in order to meet with Malaysian officials.

The 3rd South Asian Diaspora Convention (SADC) on the theme of "Growth Through Interaction: The

South Asian Opportunity" will be hosted by the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) and National University of Singapore.

The conference will bring together 1000 distinguished guests and more than 50 of the region's leading policy makers, business leaders, academics and civil society leaders.

Officials including Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe and Foreign Minister of Singapore Vivian Balakrishnan will attend the conference.

Western speechifying on terror gets nowhere: ex-embassy to Paris

IT POLITICAL TEHRAN — Following a horrific **d e s k** terrorist activity in Nice, the former Iranian ambassador to Paris has reprimanded the West for its worn-out speechifying on terrorism, saying time is ripe for taking practical steps.

Hamidrez Asefi said dimensions to the Nice crime late on Thursday were so extensive that no sensible person can avoid denouncing it or not sympathizing with the bereaved families. However, he questioned if a mere verbal condemnation and expression of disgust over such acts does work, something which he says has become a customary act by European and U.S. officials.

"Hasn't the time come that the international community goes beyond speechifying and identifies the roots of this evil and inhuman act?" he asked.

In an article published on Saturday in the Etemad daily, he also inquired: Have terrorist activities diminished in the world since the West, especially the United



States, deployed military forces in the region under the pretext of fighting terrorism after the 9/11 attacks?

Asefi said the root cause of terrorism is "a biased and manipulative use of terrorism by Western powers" and classification of terrorist groups into "bad" and "good"

helps the governments deflect the public opinion.

It should be noted that as long as there is a "selective" and "personal" approach toward terrorism, we should not expect that we will move toward a "safer" world.

The group claiming responsibility for the vicious crime is the same group that has been butchering the Syrian people for five years and the western governments including, instead of supporting the legitimate government of Syria, have been trying to undermine the Damascus government, he explained.

The group that committed such a crime in the city is the same group that his godfather former Saudi spy chief Prince Turki al-Faisal made a speech on July 9 in the gathering of the MKO terrorist group.

"Is there any link between that Saudi official and the group which he has raised and the Nice attack?" the former ambassador to London asked.

Guardian Council foundation anniversary marked

IT POLITICAL TEHRAN — On Saturday Iran marked **d e s k** the anniversary of the founding of the Guardian Council which is one of the most important bodies of the country.

The Guardian Council is duty bound to review the parliamentary bills to confirm they conform to the constitutional law and Sharia.

Parliamentary approvals become law after an endorsement by the council.

According to Article 96 of the constitution, the Guardian Council holds veto power over all legislations approved by the Majlis. It can nullify a law based on two accounts: being against Islamic law, or being against the constitution.

The parliament has no legal status without the Guardian Council. The council is also tasked to supervise elections.

The Guardian Council is a 12-member body: six reli-

gious scholars and six jurists.

The religious scholars are appointed by Supreme Leader and jurists by Majlis.

In separate decrees issued on Thursday Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reappointed Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, Hojatoleslam Seyyed Mohammadreza Modaresi Yazdi and Hojatoleslam Mahdi Shabzenderdar as religious scholars of the Guardian Council.

Russia, U.S. to enforce fresh measures on Syria: Lavrov

The U.S. and Russia announced a broad ceasefire agreement in late February to facilitate United Nations-backed peace talks between the Syrian government and some armed opposition groups. The initiative has largely held across Syria although Moscow and Washington have introduced localized truces to reduce hostilities.

Under the truce agreement, attacks are allowed on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group and the al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra). Russia, which carries out airstrikes against those groups based on a request from the Syrian government, has been repeatedly accused of attacking the positions of the so-called moderate opposition in Syria. Moscow has denied any deliberate attacks and has called on those groups to leave areas controlled by terrorists.

Lavrov said both the U.S. and Russia agree on the need for the opposition to disassociate themselves from groups such as the al-Nusra Front, saying the two were quite convinced that "these difficulties could have been overcome long

ago in the past months."

"... we presume that those remaining on the positions occupied by terrorists, despite having been urged to leave them for months, are perhaps hardly different from terrorists themselves," Lavrov said, adding that the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) should "outlaw" groups that still insist on remaining in the militant-held Syrian territories.

Lavrov also said that Russia and the U.S., as co-chairs of the ISSG, have intensified cooperation to provide joint dynamics to the efforts toward implementing UN Security Council resolutions regarding Syria.

He said Moscow and Washington have common understanding as to what needs to be done to intensify a dispute settlement process in Syria and to rid the country of the terrorists.

"Our common target is to secure a long term ceasefire in the whole territory of Syria - once again I will repeat in brackets - with the exception of ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra which will see no mercy. Our common target is to increase that positive (effect) that was reached in the framework of humanitarian aid delivery.

Since the beginning of this year humanitarian access was secured to all the 18 besieged regions. And our common target is to increase efforts in assisting political reforms in Syria in accordance with the resolution number 2254."

Also U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Washington and Moscow had reached a common understanding



Since the beginning of this year humanitarian access was secured to all the 18 besieged regions. And our common target is to increase efforts in assisting political reforms in Syria in accordance with the resolution number 2254."

on the steps now needed to get Syria's peace process back on track.

But Kerry, after a day of talks in Moscow with his Russian counterpart, said more work was needed before those steps could be implemented, and that Russia and the United States still differed over the future of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

(Source: agencies)

Police arrest three in Nice as ISIL claims truck attack Hollande calls for 'unity' after massacre

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group claimed responsibility for the truck attack in the French city of Nice on Saturday and police arrested three more people there after the carnage that claimed the lives of at least 84 people.

"The person who carried out the operation in Nice, France, to run down people was one of the soldiers of ISIL," the news agency Amaq, which supports the terrorist group, said via its Telegram account.

"He carried out the operation in response to calls to target nationals of states that are part of the coalition fighting ISIL," the statement said.

French authorities and media have yet to produce any evidence that the killer, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, was radicalized. The interior ministry said it was checking the claim.

The 31-year old Tunisian, who lived locally, drove at a Bastille Day crowd on the waterfront of the French Riviera city on Thursday night. Authorities had been working to find out what his motives were. He was not known to French intelligence sources for radicalization.

The arrests, which came on top of two others since the killing including the attacker's wife, concerned his "close entourage", police sources said. They were made in two different areas of Nice.

A Reuters reporter saw about 40 elite police raid a small apartment near the central station, where one individual was arrested.

The attack plunged France into new grief and fear just eight months after gunmen killed 130 people in Paris.

The truck zig-zagged along the seafront Promenade des Anglais for two kilometers as a fireworks display marking the French national day ended.



It was eventually stopped when police shot dead the driver.

The attack is the third of its kind in France since the beginning of 2015. A state of emergency in place since 130 people were killed in and around Paris last November is to be extended for another three months.

Bouhlel was known to police for petty crimes but was not on a watch list of suspected militants. He had one criminal conviction for road rage, having been sentenced to probation three months ago for throwing a wooden pallet at another driver.

Ahead of the claim by ISIL, the terrorist group which grabbed control of swathes of Iraq and Syria but which is now under military pressure from forces opposed to it, French officials had not disclosed any direct evidence linking Bouhlel with extremism.

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, asked on Friday if he could confirm the attacker's motives were linked to

extremism, said: "No... We have an individual who was not known to intelligence services."

Relatives and neighbors in Bouhlel's hometown of Msaken outside the coast city of Sousse said he was sporty and had shown no sign of being radicalized, including when he last returned for the wedding of a sister four years ago.

■ Cheap claim

Edwin Bakker, Professor at the Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands, said the claim did not necessarily point to any formal link.

"ISIL called for such (individual) attacks to be carried out back in 2014. They are also using the public perception that an attack like this seems to fit ISIL. Investigators still have not discovered a direct link between ISIL and the attacker, so it is a cheap claim," he said.

In Nice, where the holiday season would normally be in full swing, organizers of the annual Jazz festival joined the singer Rihanna in cancelling their event. A five-day annual festival that has run since 1948 had been due to start on Saturday.

■ Hollande calls for unity

Meanwhile, President Francois Hollande called on Saturday for national unity after the latest deadly attack in France, in which a Tunisian man ploughed a truck into a crowd in Nice killing 84 people, his spokesman said, AP reported.

"We are in a time when, and we have seen it, there is a temptation to divide the country. Faced with these temptations, faced with this risk, we must recall the unity and cohesion of this country," said spokesman Stephane Le Foll, citing a message from Hollande to his ministers.

(Source: agencies)

Former Afghan spy chief says letters show Pakistan supports militants

The former head of Afghanistan's main intelligence agency released documents which he said showed that Pakistani intelligence services helped leaders of the Taliban and the feared Haqqani network in 2014 and 2015.

Rahmatullah Nabil stepped down from the National Directorate of Security (NDS) in December last year after opposing Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's efforts to improve relations with Pakistan and include Islamabad in peace talks with the Taliban.

Nabil told a group of journalists in Kabul that he had released the letters to provide concrete evidence of Pakistan's collusion with the Taliban and the associated Haqqani group, which has been blamed for a series of kidnappings and high profile suicide bombings in the capital.

Pakistan's foreign office and the army's media wing did not respond to several written and telephoned requests for comment in which Reuters outlined the accusations leveled against Pakistan.

Neither the NDS nor the Afghan government was available for immediate comment on the letters.

Nabil did not say how the letters had been obtained. Reuters could not independently verify their authenticity.

Since retiring from the intelligence service, Nabil has been strongly critical of Pakistan, which is routinely accused by Afghanistan of sponsoring the Afghan Taliban, a charge it has consistently denied.

"For the past 14 years, no one has disclosed documents of this kind. Here, I'm

proving it," he told reporters, to whom he released the letters. "They kill us every day and commit all kinds of atrocities, we have to show them."

One letter, addressed from a section of Pakistan's military intelligence service in the northwestern city of Peshawar, is headed "Arrangements of Secure Houses and Protection to Afghan Taliban and Their Leadership".

In the letter, dated August 2014, an official arranges for safe houses and vehicles to be provided for Afghan Taliban commanders forced out of a remote area of northern Pakistan while an army operation is conducted.

Another letter, dated March 2015, requests an update on Haqqani network personnel in Nowshera, Mardan and Swabi, in the Pakistani border province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A third letter addressed from the Directorate General Military Intelligence, Ministry of Defense, dated July 2014, is headed "Kabul Airport Attacks and Release of Payments".

The letter says four members of the Haqqani network are to be paid 2.5 million Pakistani rupees (\$24,000) each for the "successful and comprehensive execution of assault on KB AP".

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid dismissed the letters as a "pack of lies" and said the group did not need foreign help in the fight against the Afghan government and its Western allies.

"Anyone can create such documents these days and that's why we don't take it seriously," he told Reuters.

■ Victim of terrorism



Authorities in Islamabad have long rejected accusations that Pakistan has provided support and sanctuary for the Afghan Taliban and its leaders, saying it has for years itself been a victim of terrorism, much of it from groups based in Afghanistan.

The release of the documents comes amid worsening tensions between the neighboring countries in recent weeks, with days of clashes last month during which troops on the border exchanged artillery fire.

It also came days after Pakistan faced heavy criticism in a Congressional Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in Washington.

Afghan President Ghani sharply criticized Pakistan during a visit to a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) summit in Warsaw last week, and has accused it of conducting an "undeclared war" against Afghanistan.

In response, Islamabad said that Afghanistan was playing a "blame game" instead of cooperating effectively to stop terrorism.

Pakistan's critics say that it supports Islamist militants in Afghanistan to maintain influence and counter attempts by arch-rival India to gain a foothold, effectively surrounding it.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. report hints at Saudi involvement in 9/11 attacks

The United States government has released 28 pages of a congressional report on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, which show the House of Saud regime may have had a hand in the attacks.

"While in the United States, some of the September 11 hijackers were in contact with, and received support or assistance from, individuals who may be connected to the Saudi Government," reads part of the report.

"There is information, primarily from FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) sources, that at least two of those individuals were alleged by some to be Saudi intelligence officers."

The Joint Inquiry also hints at the House of Saud regime's support for terrorist activities in the U.S. and other countries, but fails to show its extent.

"In their testimony, neither CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) nor FBI witnesses were able to identify definitively the extent of Saudi support for terrorist activity globally or within the United."

The report also shows information indicating that "Saudi Government officials in the United States may have other ties to al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups."

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has welcomed the release of the pages, saying there is no proof of Saudi involvement in the attacks.

"Since 2002, the 9/11 Commission and several government agencies, including the CIA and the FBI, have investigated the contents of the '28 Pages' and have confirmed that neither the Saudi government, nor senior Saudi officials, nor any person acting on behalf of the Saudi government provided any support or encouragement for these attacks," the Saudi Embassy in Washington said in a statement.

President Barack Obama, under pressure from Congress and the public, announced in April that the secret pages, which have been kept secret since 2002, would be declassified soon.

Former President George W. Bush and his vice president, Dick Cheney, reportedly told the commission that they would not be formally interviewed in relation to the 9/11 attacks, which killed nearly 3,000 people and caused about \$10 billion worth of property and infrastructure damage.

(Source: Press TV)

Latest advances prove Iraq able to defeat ISIL: UN

A United Nations official says recent strategic gains by Iraqi armed forces against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group indicate that the troops are capable of defeating the Takfiri terrorist group.

Speaking at the UN Security Council on Saturday, the special representative of the UN secretary general for Iraq, referred to the victories in Fallujah and Qayyarah as well as progress in cutting off ISIL supply lines in Hawjah as proof of the Iraqis' ability to crush the terrorist group.

Kubis also called on Iraq to consolidate control of armed groups and promote political reconciliation in a bid to achieve lasting peace and stability throughout the country.

Given the latest advances on the battlefield against the extremists, local officials must accelerate planning for what happens "the day after," he said, noting that the gains put the liberation of Mosul high on the agenda.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has vowed the liberation of Mosul in the near future, saying the national flag would be raised in the country's second largest city.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the UN official warned that the ISIL terrorists are increasingly resorting to brutal tactics to compensate for their heavy losses.

He also expressed concerns about the humanitarian situation in Iraq, urging more aid for people in the conflict-ridden state.

Some 640,000 people have been displaced in the western province of Anbar alone, while more than 10 million Iraqis require some form of humanitarian assistance, Kubis added.

The northern and western parts of Iraq have been plagued by gruesome violence ever since ISIL terrorists began their reign of terror in the country in June 2014.

Iraqi army soldiers and allied volunteer fighters are seeking to win back militant-held regions in joint operations.

(Source: Press TV)

China calls for greater global cooperation against terrorism

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called on Saturday for greater global cooperation against terrorism, state media said, as the Asian giant seeks greater international support for its anti-terror fight.

Speaking at an Asia-Europe summit, Li said various security challenges - conventional and unconventional - remain prominent even though those regions had remained generally stable and peaceful.

"Acts of terrorism are common challenges faced by every nation. Countries should work more closely to fight terrorism, and build societies that are truly open and tolerant so to root out the soil where it grows," said Li.

(Source: AP)

INTERVIEW

Post-sanctions oil market:
Former OPEC governor's
outlook

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

Iran has already revived its share in the oil market, so that its oil production and export have almost doubled and are on the verge of pre-sanction levels.

What Iran managed to do in post-sanctions era would have some repercussions considering the country's role in the international market, its relations with other oil exporters, future oil prices, etc. In an interview with Iran's former OPEC Governor Mohammad Ali Khatibi, the Tehran Times sought to get a general outlook of what is going on and what may happen to the international oil market. Below are his views on the issue.



There is room for Iran to further increase oil exports

Iran's crude oil exports in post-sanctions era nearly doubled to around 2 million barrels per day and the exported volume was fully absorbed into the international market due to some events which took place in favor of Iran. As a matter of fact, at the time when concerns mounted over wildfires in Canada and political tensions in Nigeria and the cut in their oil exports, Iran's oil helped stabilize the global oil market. That was somehow the country's good chance, which made it able to raise exports when there was a shortage in the market. It is worth mentioning that before the sanctions, exports of Iran's crude oil was hovering around 2.5 million bpd, i.e., there is room for the Islamic Republic to further increase exports thanks to the demand from its customers.

War on market share will pull prices down

The situation under which Iran could successfully increase its market share was a temporary one. Those countries who were absent in the market are re-emerging and there would be a pressure on the market. When Iran's exports level mounted, many predicted prices will fall, but there was even an increase in prices due to the dominant conditions. However, in the near future, there would be a challenge among exporters to save their market shares and there will be a pressure on prices, which may push them back to \$30 or \$40. If so, Iran's exports, its market share and the offered prices would rely on the volume of crude oil it will sell via term or spot contracts. Of course, in contrast with the term contracts, the market provides no security and guarantee for the spot ones and the government cannot count on a precise volume of exports and the earned income.

OPEC's authority under question

As Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said in his recent speech, global oil prices are not his priority. He is trying his best to save the market share even if prices fall to \$7 per barrel. Of course, he did not clarify if this is his own viewpoint or it is the government's official stance. Regarding the Islamic Republic's role and attitude over the past decades, it is necessary to mention that there had been two distinct schools of thought in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Saudi Arabia and its allies including the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar believed in saving the market share and were even ready to sacrifice prices. On the contrary, Iran and a majority of OPEC members tended to defend fair prices. In recent years, however, Iran has shifted its attitude and is seeking to maintain the market share. Therefore, there should not be any expectation for balanced prices when the leading powers are fighting to preserve the market and are ready to sacrifice prices. In better words, the shift in Iran's attitude has negatively affected the OPEC's power and there is not any significant support for preserving the prices. So, the international body has lost its power. It cannot define a ceiling or quotas for its members and cannot monitor the market via managing the supply. It has lost its market and supply management authority.

S. Arabia cannot further oil exports notably

Saudi Arabia has always had excess oil production capacity to influence prices. However, since the past two years, it has been utilizing its full capacity or the biggest part of it to preserve its market share. It seems that the Saudis cannot notably go further than this capacity. In an optimistic view, Saudi Arabia would only add around one million bpd to its current production level, which would not be considered sustainable regarding the capacity of their tanks. Any decision to further increase oil production level will incur damage to Saudi Arabia's facilities and will indeed reduce its production level in the long run.

OPEC, non-OPEC producers vying for foreign investment

In recent years, oil exporters, both OPEC members and non-OPEC countries, have been focusing on foreign investment to develop and renovate their facilities to maintain their production level and even to give it an increase on the way to guarantee their shares in the global market. Since the investments made so far require three to five years to bear fruit, those countries which absorbed such investments would have a better chance to add to their production level in the future. Of course, the investments would be financially justifiable if oil prices stand at reasonable levels and do not experience a dramatic drop because costs and revenues in an oil project are highly affected by global oil prices. However, under the current conditions that OPEC has lost its power of supply management, the prices are hit. Yet, the competition for developing oilfields and discovering new ones as well as attracting investments and technology is internationally taking place among oil producers.

Iran's crude oil price below \$45 in a week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran sold light crude oil desk at \$44.68 per barrel in the week ended on July 8, a 53-cent drop from its previous week, according to the Shana news agency.

The country's light oil price stood at \$36.98 on average since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2016).

Also, Iran sold heavy crude oil at \$42.83 in the mentioned week, with 41 cents decrease from its preceding week.

The country's heavy oil price stood at \$34.63 on average since the start of this calendar year.

Meanwhile, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s basket price was \$44.31 per barrel on average in the week ended on July 8, with 95 cents fall from its preceding week.

Iran has regained about 80 percent of the market share it held before the U.S. and European Union tightened sanctions on its oil industry in 2012, Mohsen Ghamsari, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s director of international affairs, said on July 11, Bloomberg reported.

The country exports about 2 million barrels of its daily output of 3.8 million, the official added.

Sanctions were eased in January, and Iran plans to double crude exports.

"Our exports peak is above 4 million barrels a day, and we have plans for that and are waiting for the right conditions," Ghamsari said in an interview in Tehran, without elaborating on the timing for such an increase.



The Persian Gulf nation is seeking more than \$100 billion in investment from international partners to upgrade its oil industry and reclaim its position as the second-biggest producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, after Saudi Arabia. Iran

targets 5.8 million barrels a day in combined production of crude and condensates by 2021. It defied skeptics with a 25 percent surge in production so far in 2016 and aims to reach an eight-year high for daily output of 4 million barrels by the end of the year.

China's economy gets boost from property, construction sectors

China's real estate sector grew faster than the overall economy in the second quarter as new home purchase restrictions in the biggest cities failed to deter buyers.

Economic output by real-estate brokers surged 8.8 percent from a year earlier in the April-to-June period, while construction activities jumped 7.3 percent, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed Saturday. The nation's gross domestic product grew 6.7 percent. Other industries such as technology, health and education increased 9 percent.

A housing recovery fueled by cheap credit has supported growth this year even as headwinds loom for developers with bloated inventories. Property sales jumped 42.1 percent in the first half, slowing from 54.1 percent in the first quarter after cities like Shanghai and Shenzhen



hen tightened criteria for some homebuyers. The world's second-largest economy is continuing its transformation toward growth led by services, which are becoming a major pillar of the economy.

Services accounted for more than half of output last year for the first time, while GDP data released Friday showed consumption made up more than 70 percent of the expansion. Services grew 7.5 percent in the second quarter from a year earlier, surpassing the 6.3 percent pace for manufacturing and 3.1 percent for agriculture.

The financial sector expanded 5.3 percent in the second quarter amid a sluggish stock market, slowing from the 8.1 percent increase in the preceding three months. Lodging and catering services rose 6.8 percent.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Top EU official urges UK to clear up Brexit uncertainty fast

The U.K. should begin negotiating its departure from the European Union as soon as possible to avoid prolonging this period of uncertainty, Valdis Dombrovskis, a vice president of the European Commission, told The Nikkei on Friday.

The EU is in no position to set a deadline for the official notification that would initiate formal talks, Dombrovskis said, calling it a matter for the British government to decide. But he raised concerns about potential consequences if the new government under Prime Minister Theresa May drags its feet unnecessarily, warning that "businesses in the EU and U.K. and potential investors don't know what to expect."

The commission projects 1.8 percent growth for the EU this year, Dombrovskis said. A preliminary assessment indicates that Brexit will dent EU-wide growth by a quarter to half a percentage point through 2017, with a much larger possible impact of 1 point to 2.5 points on the U.K. itself, he said.

On the bad-debt crisis facing Italy's banks, Dombrovskis said the commission is "in close contact with

Italian authorities." EU rules put stakeholders on the hook for losses when member governments use public funds to prop up ailing banks. The existing regulatory framework lets the EU address the concerns of the authorities with regard to retail investors, Dombrovskis said, indicating that some flexibility is possible.

The European Council found Tuesday that Spain and Portugal violated the EU's fiscal rules by missing the deadline for correcting their deficits, opening the door to sanctions. The two countries now need to submit requests to lower the fines, providing mitigating factors and committing to further action to rectify the situation, Dombrovskis said. The fines could be substantially reduced or eliminated depending on the details, the vice president said, acknowledging "major efforts" by both countries to overcome their financial crises.

Dombrovskis also discussed Japanese currency policy, reiterating that Group of 20 members have pledged to avoid competitive devaluation. He made similar comments in June, singling out Japan by name.

(Source: Nikkei)

European financial system nearing a grand catastrophe

The cheap money policy of the European Central Bank (ECB) creates risk for the entire European financial system, a German economist said.

The European Central Bank purchased €85.1 billion (\$94.8 billion) of debt in June as it increased its asset-purchase program, Bloomberg reported.

The asset-purchase program is part of the ECB's quantitative easing plan. The pace of buying in June compares with a target of €80 billion per month. Thus, the bank is directly investing into the European economy, bypassing the banking system.

This program creates significant risks while its advantages are questionable, financial expert Ernst Wolff said. He warned that the initiative may result in a total financial collapse.

The analysts explained that the ECB policy creates serious risks for small and less developed countries like Greece. At the same time, big economies like Germany take advantage of working with the regulator because the ECB acts in favor of rich and powerful investors.

In addition to corporate bonds, the ECB is buying government bonds. However, according to its rules, the bank

cannot purchase bonds at a yield lower than the bank's deposit rate, which is currently —0.4 percent.

However, Wolff noted, the ECB usually violates the rule, in particular buying German government bonds.

The ECB also cannot get access to the shares of some German companies. But now the ECB is probably involved in the stabilization of Deutsche Bank, the expert pointed out.

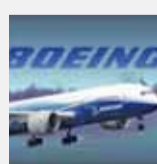
Meanwhile, if the Central Bank decides to ease rules on buying assets European leaders are likely to oppose the move.

"The ECB is a supranational institution. Each European country has its own interests. This is why they will oppose the initiative. For example, Italy wants to save its banking sector with help from the European Stability Mechanism. But Germany is against it because it provides guarantees for this money. We're witnessing that the financial crisis is making visible previously hidden conflict. And they're a threat for the European Union," Wolff said.

The expert also criticized the ECB monetary policy, saying it is aimed at delaying the bankruptcy of the Eurozone.

(Source: Sputnik)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Boeing aims for supersonics and Mars at outset of second century

The Boeing Co marked its centennial on Friday with plans to sharpen its focus on innovation, including ambitious projects for supersonic commercial flight and a rocket that could carry humans to other planets.

But innovation at Boeing will be "disciplined" and not endanger the future of the world's biggest plane maker, Chief Executive Dennis Muilenburg told reporters at an event marking the company's founding on July 15, 1916.

The enterprise established by William Boeing in a Seattle boathouse has faced numerous "bet the company" moments over its 10 decades to bring out new planes such as the 707 and 747.

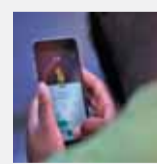


General Motors escapes some claims from 2014 recalls

A U.S. judge on Friday dismissed some claims brought against General Motors by customers seeking compensation for a drop in vehicle resale values after a rash of safety recalls in 2014, including one for a faulty ignition switch.

U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman in Manhattan federal court dismissed racketeering and some state-law claims, as well as claims from customers whose vehicles were not allegedly defective when sold.

Plaintiffs' pursuit of damages based purely on perceived harm to GM's brand following more than 70 recalls in 2014 was "unprecedented and unsound," Furman wrote.



Developer of Nintendo's Pokemon GO aiming for rollout to 200 markets soon

The head of the developer behind Nintendo Co Ltd's Pokemon GO said he wanted to launch the smash-hit mobile game in roughly 200 countries and regions "relatively soon" and was working on bolstering server capacity to enable the wider rollout.

The game, which marries a classic 20-year old franchise with augmented reality, has taken the world by storm despite having been launched in only five countries - the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Germany.

"Why limit it?" John Hanke, chief executive of Niantic, which developed Pokemon GO jointly with Nintendo affiliate Pokemon Company, said in an interview with Reuters on Friday.

Where to travel in every decade of your life?

We like to think that travel is a life-time journey. We believe it should start young and carry on into our late years as something that adds to our lives, at specific moments in our lives. While we have always had trouble turning down a trip, no matter where it might take us, we've learned that various spots are better suited for some ages than others. So we've put the best travel destinations in the world into a list that categorizes them by the decade of your life you should visit them in, starting with childhood.

Your childhood: Anaheim, CA

Two words: Mickey and Mouse. Disneyland is every kid's dream come true (and even that of some adults), so we felt Anaheim was an obvious choice for the best destination for kids under age 10. Sure, the options for babies are limited, but as the years pass, the park can take on new meaning and adventures for you as you get to meet Mickey and pals, float on rides, lick large lollipops, and sing along with the whole crew.

Your tweens and teens: Orlando, FL

As you graduate to double-digits, it seems only natural that your appetite for theme parks may grow, too. But, while some may still find magic in the Magic Kingdom, others may have a taste for something different.

Luckily, Orlando has almost got it all not only are there a host of theme parks, like Islands of Adventure, Universal Studios (including The Wizarding World of Harry Potter Hogsmeade), Sea World, waterpark Wet N Wild, Disney's Animal Kingdom, and, our personal travel-lovers favorite, Epcot, but there are also tons of silly tween-and-teen-friendly spots like Ripley's Believe It or Not, murder mystery dinners, and crazy golf. If you are one of the kids who starts to outgrow theme parks as you get into your teens, you can still shop 'til you drop at the outlets, catch a show, or hit up the under-18-friendly dance clubs at Universal's City Walk.

Your 20s: Berlin, Germany

As most everyone will tell you, your twenties is a great time to explore new things. Many have just graduated from



college or moved out of your parents house and it's a whole new world for discovering. Berlin is a great stepping stone for traveling and challenging yourself in a new environment.

The city is crawling with culture, clubs, great food, and even better beers, and it has just the right balance of familiarity (from being a Western city) and foreign (from being, well, foreign to U.S. travelers). Berlin is one of Europe's more tolerant and safer cities; it's clean, hip, and almost everyone can speak English.

Your 30s: Vietnam

Now that you've challenged yourself in Europe, the next logical step is to go even further, learn even more, and experience something totally different. Enter: Asia. Vietnam has a ton of history to behold (some good, some ugly), fantastic food, lovely locals, and stunning nature.

If you come here before your thirties, you might just find the cheap booze and sandy beaches of interest, but having some of the party travel out of your system, in your thirties you'll be able to really appreciate all this country has to offer, whether it's diving off boats in Ha Long Bay, observing the hill tribes of Sapa,

soaking in the culture and history of Ho Chi Minh, roaming the streets of Hanoi, or taking cooking lessons in Hoi An.

Your 40s: Maldives

Now that you've reached your forties and have gotten the backpacking and enlightening exploration under your belt and likely some more money in your wallet you deserve to indulge a bit. Head to the Maldives, and swap pounding the pavement with relaxing at the beach, hostels with overwater bungalows, and food carts with white tablecloth dinners that face unbelievable sunsets over the Indian Ocean.

This is also the perfect spot to get in some of the world's best underwater exploration; swim with whale sharks, manta rays, and tons of colorful fish, and marvel at the bioluminescent marine life. If you are feeling extra adventurous, you can add on a trip to nearby Sri Lanka, and go on a wildlife safari, climb to the tippy-top of Sigiriya, and check out the Dambulla Cave temples.

Your 50s: Cape Town, South Africa

South Africa is a great destination for almost any decade of your life, but doing it in your fifties particularly Cape Town is

just that much sweeter. The Mother City and surrounding areas has got it all: museums, delicious food, the beach, vineyards, mountains, shopping, and day trips to view wildlife and national parks.

Visit Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was held as a political prisoner, take a sunset cruise before grabbing a gourmet meal at the V&A Waterfront, travel down to the Constantia wine valley, try out the tasting menu at the 3-Michelin-star-rated Le Quartier Français in Franschhoek, and make friends with the cute penguins down at Boulders Beach to name a few.

Your 60s: China

China may seem like an exotic choice to some Americans, but you might be surprised to know that several of our retirement-aged travel friends actually wait until the beginning of their golden years to explore this ancient land. Escorted tours of the country are best at this age, so you can have some help navigating the heavy language barriers, Chinese-only menus, and gorgeous temples, relics, and busy streets. While Beijing has more of a historical feel with iconic landmarks like the Forbidden City and Summer Palace, you'll find Shanghai to be more modern and westernized, full of shopping, parks, and gorgeous architecture.

Your 70s: Alaska

Maybe it's the desire to reconnect with nature as we age, or the fact that we want to make sure to explore the awesome beauty of our own backyard either way, Alaska is a popular destination for seniors. While overland trips exist, the majority of trips to Alaska seem to be done via cruise ships that set sail from the top of the lower 48 and make stops along the coast.

We suggest hopping aboard a ship that also has a few days on land, as we've found it offers an entirely different point of view. Besides, everyone should have fresh-caught Alaskan salmon, halibut, or king crab on their foodie bucket list. If you are feeling adventurous in your young-at-heart age, try the reindeer beef jerky.

(Source: Trip Advisor)

NEWS

Best travel tips after four years traveling the world

It's now been four years since I sold everything and left the United States to travel the world. These are the best travel tips I've discovered along the way:

Patience is important

Don't sweat the stuff you can't control. Life is much too short to be angry & annoyed all the time. Did you miss your bus? No worries, there will be another one. ATMs out of money? Great! Take an unplanned road trip over to the next town and explore. Sometimes freakouts happen regardless.

Just take a deep breath and remind yourself that it could be worse.

Wake up early

Rise at sunrise to have the best attractions all to yourself while avoiding crowds. It's also a magical time for photos due to soft diffused light, and usually easier to interact with locals. Sketchy areas are less dangerous in the morning too. Honest hardworking people wake up early; touts, scammers, and criminals sleep in.

laugh at yourself

You will definitely look like a fool many times when traveling to new places. Rather than get embarrassed, laugh at yourself. Don't be afraid to screw up, and don't take life so seriously.

Once a whole bus full of Guatemalans laughed with glee when I forced our driver to stop so I could urgently pee on the side of the road. Returning to the bus and laughing with them gave me new friends for the rest of the journey.

Stash extra cash

Cash is king around the world. I recommend at least a couple hundred dollars worth. If you lose your wallet, your card stops working, or the ATMs run out of money, you'll be glad you did.

Some of my favorite stash spots include socks, under shoe inserts, a toiletry bag, around the frame of a backpack, even sewn behind a patch on your bag.

Meet local people

Make it a point to avoid other travelers from time to time and start conversations with local people. Basic English is spoken widely all over the world, so it's easier to communicate with them than you might think, especially when you combine hand gestures and body language.

Learn from those who live in the country you're visiting. People enrich your travels more than sights do.

Back everything up

When my laptop computer was stolen in Panama, having most of my important documents and photos backed up saved my ass. Keep both digital and physical copies of your passport, visas, driver's license, birth certificate, health insurance card, serial numbers, and important phone numbers ready to go in case of an emergency.

Backup your files & photos on an external hard drive as well as online with software like Backblaze.

(Source: expertvagabond.com)

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What France can learn from U.S. about fighting terrorism

By Aki Peritz

The horrifying truck attack in Nice, France, that killed at least 84 people is the 10th strike in the country since the beginning of 2015. The French government is now considering a complete overhaul of its intelligence agencies to address this persistent threat.

A French parliamentary commis-

sion released a report last week that recommended the government fuse all its security services into one large "national anti-terrorism agency."

Such an approach would mirror Washington's National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), a bureaucracy created in the years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The objective was to break down barriers within the U.S. government and pull together all agencies and departments

related to terrorism issues.

But Paris should try to improve on Washington's experiences. It certainly needs to avoid making the same mistakes.

France's law enforcement and intelligence communities are similar to Washington's in that they have their own cultural differences, opaque turf wars, resource constraints and labor problems. None



of these issues, as Americans realized, would likely be resolved overnight by legislation.

More important, standing up and successfully deploying an organization like the National Counterterrorism Center requires each other law enforcement and intelligence division to cede power, share intelligence and provide personnel.

→9

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Duplex Apt. in Qeytarieh
120 sq.m, 2 bdrs, luxury furn, Pkg, SPJ, **Diplomatic, Good access to highway**, 2000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Elahieh
260 sq.m, 4 bdrs, furn & unfurn, SPJ, nice lobby, cozy & **Diplomatic**, \$4500
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in nice Tower in Elahieh
6th Fl., 200 sq.m, 3 bdrs, unfurn, nice lobby, unbelievable gym salon with SPJ, meeting room, **Good access to highway**, \$4000
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Kamranieh
15th Fl., 250 sq.m, 3 bdrs, furn & unfurn, SPJ, balcony, Tehran view, green garden, lobby, **Diplomatic Tower**, \$5000
Diba: 09128103206

New Apt. in Velenjak
6th Fl., 370 sq.m, 4 bdrs, furn & unfurn, City view, balcony, nice lobby, SPJ, nice design, **Good access to highway, Suitable for Residency**, \$9000
Diba: 09128103206

Villa

Duplex Villa in Farmanieh
900 sq.m built up in 2000 sq.m land, 6 bdrs, beautiful garden, extra apt at the end of garden
150 sq.m, Pkg
Diba: 09128103206

Duplex Villa in Mahmoudieh
550 sq.m built up in 600 sq.m land, 5 bdrs, unfurn, outdoor pool, small yard, Pkg, renovated, **Suitable for Residency & Embassy**, 10000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Luxury Villa in Niavaran
Duplex, 450 sq.m built up, 4 bdrs, modern & unbelievable furn, remodeling & renovated, pool, green garden, **Suitable for Residency**, 8000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Triplex Villa in Farmanieh
600 sq.m built up in 900 sq.m land, 6 bdrs, 2 kitchens, furn & unfurn, renovated, outdoor pool, Pkg, **Suitable for Ambassador & Embassy**, 12000 USD
Diba: 09128103206



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Building & Office

Whole Bldg. in Niavaran
8 apts, 4800 sq.m built up, 6500 sq.m land, lobby, 3 level Pkg, SPJ, **Suitable for Embassy & Residency**
Diba: 09128103206

Nice Office in Jordan
220 sq.m, renovated, lobby, Pkg lots, **Suitable for Foreign Company**
\$40 per each sq.m
Diba: 09128103206

Whole Bldg. in Farmanieh
Brand New, 12 Apts., 2400 sq.m built up, 42 rooms, Pkg, **Diplomatic, Suitable for Residency**
Diba: 09128103206

Whole Bldg. in Zafranieh
3 levels, each level 400 sq.m, totally 14 rooms, 2 entrances, pool, nice garden, renovated, 18000 USD
Diba: 09128103206

Commercial Bldg. in Vozara
2nd Fl., 500 sq.m, flat, renovated, **Suitable for Companies**
Diba: 09128103206

Occasion

Apt. in Shahrak-Qarb
2nd Fl., 120 sq.m, 2 bdrs, fully furn, renovated, **1300 USD**
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Jordan
2nd Fl., 150 sq.m, 3 bdrs, fully furn, Pkg, lobby, **Good access to highway**, **1800 USD**
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Jordan
4th Fl., 125 sq.m, 2 bdrs, semi furn, **Good access for guest house**, **1600 USD**
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Qeytarieh
150 sq.m, 3 bdrs, fully furn, Pkg, **Diplomatic**, **1700 USD**
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Jordan
90 sq.m, 2 bdrs, fully furn, Pkg, **Diplomatic Bldg.**, **1500 USD**
Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Andarzgoo
2nd Fl., 120 sq.m, 2 bdrs, fully furn, nice garden, **1300 USD**
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Bank of England chief economist calls for big post-Brexit stimulus

The Bank of England's chief economist has called for a big package of measures to support the UK's Post-Brexit economy, stressing the need for a prompt and robust response to the uncertainty. Andy Haldane made it clear the Bank's monetary policy committee would do more than merely cut interest rates from their already record low of 0.5 percent when it meets in August.

The Bank's chief economist used a speech to warn that decisive action was required at a time when confidence had been dented by the shock referendum result.

"In my personal view, this means a material easing of monetary policy is likely to be needed, as one part of a collective policy response aimed at helping protect the economy and jobs from a downturn.

"Given the scale of insurance required, a package of mutually complementary monetary policy easing measures is likely to be necessary. And this monetary response, if it is to buttress expectations and confidence, needs I think to be delivered promptly as well as muscularly. By promptly I mean next month, when the precise size and extent of the necessary stimulatory measures can be determined as part of the August inflation report round."

The Bank surprised the City when it left interest rates on hold at its July meeting held this week, but the minutes of the MPC's discussions said most of its nine members thought an easing of policy would be required in August.

The tone and content of Haldane's speech suggest that the MPC will use public appearances to make the case for strong action in August. Options include cutting interest rates to 0.25 percent or lower, restarting the Bank's £375bn quantitative easing scheme and providing cut price loans to banks under the funding for lending scheme.

Signs that the Bank is planning a major stimulus package next month put a halt to the upward move in the pound, which had rallied after Threadneedle Street left rates on hold. Sterling lost a cent against the dollar to stand at \$1.3245.

In a reference to the prison movie *The Shawshank Redemption* Haldane said: "I would rather run the risk of taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut than taking a miniature rock hammer to tunnel my way out of prison - like another Andy, the one in the *Shawshank Redemption*. And yes I know Andy did eventually escape. But it did take him 20 years. The MPC does not have that same 'luxury'."

Haldane originally made his speech in Port Talbot a week after the 23 June referendum. It has only just been released in an amended form to include references to the Bank's July interest-rate decision and to recent economic



developments.

The Bank's economist said there had been signs of the economy struggling even before the Brexit vote, but added: "Over the past month, the outcome of the EU referendum has added another important ingredient to this mix. It has increased materially the degree of uncertainty - economic, policy, and political - around the UK's economic recovery."

Haldane said the economy was unlikely to crash but was likely to slow, perhaps markedly in the quarters ahead. "While companies and consumers might not be slamming

the brakes and going into reverse, as in 2008, some are likely to be going down a few gears, perhaps even moving into neutral.

"External economists expect the UK economy to tread water over the next few quarters. That means the amount of slack in the UK economy is likely to begin steadily rising in the period ahead, perhaps causing unemployment to rise."

Haldane's remarks came as official figures showed that the construction industry - which accounts for around 6 percent of national output - was struggling before the Brexit vote.

The sharpest fall in housebuilding since 2014 meant that construction output in May was 2.1 percent down on April and 2 percent lower than in May 2015.

Housing output has now fallen in every month this year apart from February, and things could slow further after the 23 June Brexit vote.

The latest figures from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, published earlier this week, found that buyer interest and expectations of future sales withered in the post-referendum period.

(Source: *The Guardian*)

Signs that Bank of England is planning a major stimulus package next month put a halt to the upward move in the pound, which had rallied after Threadneedle Street left rates on hold.

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU and U.S. seek trade deal this year, knowing large hurdles remain

EU and U.S. negotiators said that they still needed to overcome large differences for a transatlantic free trade deal to be sealed this year, and factor in the impending exit from the European Union of Britain, one of the United States' biggest export markets.

The two sides are trying to agree on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which supporters say could boost each economy by some \$100 billion (£75.9 billion) at a time when growth in China and emerging markets is slowing.

Chief EU negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercero and U.S. counterpart Dan Mullaney told a news conference after a 14th round of talks that both sides were committed to sealing a deal before U.S. President Barack Obama leaves office at the turn of the year.

The partners have made progress on tariff elimination and on regulatory cooperation.

However, they are stuck over EU demands including greater access to public sector tenders; Garcia Bercero described the U.S. offer as a serious cause of concern.

(Source: Reuters)

Global corporate defaults hit 100, up 50 percent year-on-year

The number of firms that have defaulted this year has reached 100 and is more than 50 percent higher than at the same stage of 2015, rating agency Standard & Poor's said on Friday.

S&P said four companies had defaulted this week, keeping 2016 firmly on track to top the 177 record number of defaults seen at the height of the financial crisis in 2009.

The U.S. corporate trailing-12-month speculative-grade default rate is forecast to rise to 5.3 percent by March 2017 from 3.8 percent this March. For speculative-grade European financial and non-financial firms the rate is seen inching up to 2.4 percent from 2.1 percent by the end of 2016.

"Stress in the form of persistently low prices for oil and other commodities, the potential for more rate hikes by the Federal Reserve, and financial market volatility abroad will likely produce more defaults in the next 12 months," Vazza said.

(Source: Reuters)

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NEWS

'Iran short of 8,000 psychiatrists'

MEDICAL TEHRAN — Currently, there is 1.7 psychiatrists per 100,000 Iranians, whereas the ratio should be at least 10 to 11 mind doctors for that population.

This means a shortage of 8,000 psychiatrists for the 80-million country, a scientific panel at the Tehran University of Medical Sciences has reported.

In the U.S. and in Canada the ratio is 12-13 psychiatrists to 100,000 citizens and in Sweden and Norway it is 20-30 to 100,000, Mohammad Sana'ati said.

According to IRNA on Saturday, back in the 1980s, there were 120 psychiatrists for the 50 million Iranians, while, today, the number has reached to upwards of 1,200 psychiatrists.

Across Iran, 200 to 300 clinical psychologists are in practice, not comparable to developed countries and even developing ones, illustrating that Iran lags behind in this regard.

After going through years of war, imposed sanctions, economic hardships, and overall tough living conditions, the people of Iran are in desperate shape of psychiatric aide.

The very first chair of psychiatry in Iran goes to Professor Hossein Rezaian back in 1940, and the very first modern psychiatric hospital, Roozbeh Hospital, was established in 1946 in the country.

It was jointly founded by late Professors Abdolhossein Mirsepassi and Rezaian.

Educated in France, the two psychiatrists pioneered modern psychiatry in Iran and introduced neuropsychiatry to the context.

Organic computers are coming

A team of the Lomonosov MSU researchers in collaboration with their German colleagues from the Institute of Polymer Research in Dresden (Leibniz Institute) managed to find a molecule that, to their opinion, could give the impetus to the development of organic electronics. The results of the work were published in Advanced Materials.

Scientists from the Moscow State University together with colleagues from Germany have found that a derivative of (3)-radialene, a molecule known to the science for nearly 30 years, can be used to create organic semiconductors. Dmitry Ivanov, the Head of the Laboratory of Materials Engineering at the Department of Fundamental Physics and Chemical Engineering, Moscow State University, believes that the achievement will greatly contribute to the development of organic electronics and, in particular, to fabrication of organic light emitting diodes and new classes of organic solar cells.

Organic or "plastic" electronics is a relatively young scientific field, which came to life about 15-20 years ago. Its purpose is the development of electronic devices based on organic materials. This type of devices is yet inferior to the standard silicon-based electronics in terms of performance, and also less durable. But it also has advantages -- lightness, thinness, flexibility, transparency, and most importantly -- plastic electronics is much cheaper than silicon.

The main applications of organic electronics include solar cells, which will be much cheaper than the silicon-based modules (high cost is one of the reasons, which restricts the latter from covering large areas and thus make better use of the sun energy). Also, organic electronics can be used to design organic light emitting devices and field-effect transistors.

(Source: EurekAlert)



Jet Ski & Jet Boot Technician

Let me introduced myself.

I am **Iman Karimi**, born on April 20, 1988, issued in: Noshahr with 13 year working experience in related field.

Academic Degree: Mechanical Engineer in Marine Engines from Mahmoudabad Industrial University

Credits:

- Member of Technical Committee of Iranian Jet Ski and Jet Boot Association,
- Trained in Taiwan,
- Technician in Jet Ski and Marine Engines of Iranian Oil Platforms
- Technician in Maritime Jet Ski and Naval Force of Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)
- Expert Jet Ski Technician in Iranian Red Crescent Society of Iran (IRCS)

NASA is ready to start building its life-hunting 2020 Mars rover

NASA's life-hunting 2020 Mars rover has cleared an extensive review process and is now ready to begin the final design and construction phase, agency officials announced on July 15.

If all goes according to plan, the six-wheeled robot will blast off in August 2020, touch down in February 2021 in a yet-to-be-determined spot, and then explore the Martian surface for at least two years, mission team members said.

"While we're there, the major scientific objective of the mission is to seek the signs of life," Mars 2020 project scientist Kenneth Farley, of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, said.

Modern Martian surface

The modern Martian surface is cold, dry and radiation-blasted, but this wasn't always the case. For example, NASA's Mars rover Curiosity discovered that the huge crater it landed in hosted a potentially habitable lake-and-stream system billions of years ago. And other spacecraft have turned up additional evidence that the ancient Red Planet was a relatively warm and wet world.

The "Mars 2020 rover is the first step in a potential multi-mission campaign to return



If all goes according to plan, the six-wheeled robot will blast off in August 2020, touch down in February 2021 in a yet-to-be-determined spot, and then explore the Martian surface for at least two years, mission team members said.

carefully selected and sealed samples of Martian rocks and soil to Earth," Geoffrey Yoder,

acting associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington, D.C., said in a statement. "This mission marks a significant milestone in NASA's Journey to Mars -- to determine whether life has ever existed on Mars, and to advance our goal of sending humans to the Red Planet."

The 2020 rover will also carry an instrument called MOXIE (Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resources Utilization Experiment), which will generate oxygen from the carbon-dioxide-dominated Martian atmosphere. Such work will demonstrate technology that future human explorers could use on the Red Planet, NASA officials have said.

The rover will also use ground-penetrating radar to characterize the subsurface environment. Another instrument, called SuperCam, will fire a powerful laser at rocks, vaporizing them and allowing Mars 2020 to determine their composition from afar.

Other instruments include high-resolution cameras, an advanced weather station and spectrometers that will potentially enable mission scientists to detect carbon-containing organic molecules -- the building blocks as life as we know it -- in Martian samples.

(Source: space.com)

Controlling social interaction also an immune system function

Researchers from the University of Virginia School of Medicine and the University of Massachusetts Medical School have discovered that the immune system directly affects social behavior, even controlling the desire to interact with others.

In a study published in the journal Nature, Jonathan Kipnis and colleagues detailed their discovery, saying that problems with the immune system could affect the ability to socially interact normally. Their findings also have significant implications for understanding neurological diseases like schizophrenia and autism-spectrum disorders.

For decades, it has been thought that the brain and the immune system are isolated from each other. As such, any immune activity occurring in the brain region was seen as a sign of pathology. However, the researchers discovered in 2015 that meningeal vessels directly link the brain and the lymphatic system.

How brain, evolution worked

Kipnis and colleagues carried out further research to shed light on how the brain and evolution worked, sug-



gesting that people and pathogens directly affect social behavior development, which paved the way for social interactions important to survival and immune system processes that offered protection from diseases that could be spread during those interactions.

"It's extremely critical for an organism to be social for

the survival of the species ... but (in doing so), you have a higher chance of spreading pathogens," said Anthony J. Filiano, the study's lead author.

For the study, the researchers came up with a computational approach to examine the connection between the brain and the immune system and how that affects the health. They predicted that a certain immune system molecule secreted by T lymphocytes, called the interferon gamma, has a hand in promoting social functions in the brain.

True enough, interferon gamma appeared to be essential for social behavior, with various creatures like rats, mice, zebrafish and flies activating responses to the molecule while socializing.

Interferon gamma is normally produced by the immune system when responding to the threat of parasites, viruses or bacteria. When the molecule was blocked, the researchers observed that mice became less social. When it was restored, the mice's behavior returned to normal.

(Source: Tech Times)

New 3D map of the universe features a whopping 1.2 million galaxies

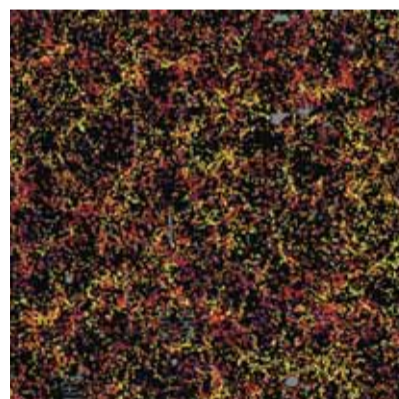
The astronomical map you see here doesn't depict stars, it shows galaxies -- 1.2 million of them, to be exact, a new record for astronomers. This extraordinary new 3D scan of the universe provides yet more evidence that a mysterious substance known as dark energy is likely causing the universe to expand at an accelerating rate.

The map encompasses 650 cubic billion light-years of space--about a quarter of the sky--and required the work of hundreds of scientists from the Baryon Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey (BOSS). BOSS is a program within the Sloan Digital Sky Survey III (SDSS-III) that measures the sound waves of the early universe, which left faint imprints on the cosmic background radiation--the "afterglow," as it were, of the Big Bang. They also left their imprints on the distribution of galaxies, which is what BOSS is using to map the positions and distances of galaxies back through time.

Cosmic picture

And the new map is not just a pretty cosmic picture. It provides one of the most precise measurements of the expansion of the universe to date, and confirms a leading explanation for the dark energy physicists believe is driving that expansion.

When Albert Einstein first proposed his general theory of relativity in 1916, he didn't know the



universe was expanding. Like everyone else at the time, he thought the size of the cosmos was fixed, and the only way he could get the equations to work for a static universe was by introducing a mathematical fudge factor he dubbed the "cosmological constant" symbolized by the Greek letter lambda. Without it, the universe would have either contracted or expanded.

Einstein had to revise this idea when American astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered in 1929 that the universe really was expanding. Einstein called it the biggest blunder of his career. Then, in 1998, two teams of physicists studying supernovae found that not only are distant galaxies receding from us, they are doing so at a faster and faster rate.

(Source: Gizmodo)

Bacterial meningitis isn't spread easily but can kill in a matter of hours

Health experts in Oakland County are reporting that bacterial meningitis can't be spread through casual contact a day after a Rochester Hills fitness center employee diagnosed with the infection was put on life support.

However, even with early care, 10 to 20 percent of those who contract the bacteria still die from it, doctors say.

"Meningococcal meningitis is contagious and can spread from one person to another," said Dr. Matthew Sims, director of infectious diseases research for Beaumont Health.

"But it's not like if you're in the same room with someone, you're going to get it. There has to be a significant amount of contact, such as if you're living in the same household, or if it's a paramedic intubating a patient."

Bacterial meningitis

Kristy Malter, 21, of Shelby Township, was admitted to Beaumont Hospital in Troy on Tuesday after being diagnosed with bacterial meningitis, and the next day was placed on life support, according to Macomb County Health Department officials. Health officials have not confirmed some social media reports that Malter died from the illness.

Bacterial meningitis, also known as meningococcal disease, is an infection of the fluid around the spinal cord or brain caused by a bacteria. Malter, a student at Central Michigan University, was working at a day camp for Lifetime Fitness in Rochester Hills, when she



apparently contracted the infection.

Oakland County health officials said that about 219 children attended the camp between July 1-11. That includes residents of both Macomb and Oakland counties.

Health officers in both Macomb and Oakland counties are now urging anyone who may have come in contact with the woman to seek a medical evaluation, and those who have already been given an antibiotic to stop a possible spread of the disease.

Sims said that after exposure to meningitis, there are treatments that can prevent the disease from spreading and turning into a full-blown infection.

An antibiotic known as prophylaxis is most prominently used, which is what most of the children in the Lifetime Fitness camp received, he said. That can be taken orally or as a shot.

(Source: oklandpress.com)

After 300 years, Amazon rainforest tree list nears 12,000 species

A new study of all known tree specimens taken from the Amazon rainforest over the past 300 years has counted some 11,676 species -- and they aren't done yet, say scientists.

The study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, used more than 500,000 digitized records from museum collections reaching back to 1707 -- including photographs of fruits, flowers, and leaves -- stored on scientific aggregators like iDigBio.

The "checklist gives scientists a better sense of what's actually growing in the Amazon basin, and that helps conservation efforts," said co-author Dr. Hans ter Steege, an ecologist from the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in the Netherlands.

Species of trees

The team's methods suggest that another 4,000 species of

trees have yet to be discovered in the Amazon, say researchers.

"Since 1900, between 50 and 200 new trees have been discovered in the Amazon every year," said Nigel Pitman, a co-author and ecologist at the Field Museum in Chicago. "Our analysis suggests that we won't be done discovering new tree species there for three more centuries."

The findings may have delivered a bit of vindication for the team. In 2013, they drew criticism from other scientists when they estimated that 16,000 tree species exist in the Amazon, based on a 5,000-tree sample that tracked patterns of commonness, rareness, and richness. The latest report appears to lend credence to the team's previous estimate. Dr. Steege told The New York Times that the findings were "great news (that) supports our Amazon of 16,000."

The study also took note of the waxing and waning of botanists' efforts to collect tree specimens in Amazonia over the centuries, finding three major peaks in the years around 1840, 1920, and 1980. It attributed those peaks to growth in flora projects and inventory plots.

Digitization campaigns are often slow, painstaking work, and in many corners of the scientific world, the gap between what's in physical archives and what's in digital form is huge. Last year, The Christian Science Monitor reported that in the field of phylogenetics, which studies how living things are related evolutionarily, "only one out of six studies published in about 100 journals in the decade leading up to 2012 have digital data that others can use."

(Source: The CSM)

By staff & agencies

Forces loyal to Turkey's government fought on Saturday to crush the last remnants of a military coup attempt which collapsed after crowds answered Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's call to take to the streets and dozens of rebels abandoned their tanks.

More than 160 people were killed, including many civilians, after a faction of the armed forces tried to seize power using tanks and attack helicopters.

Some strafed the headquarters of Turkish intelligence and parliament in the capital, Ankara, and others seized a major bridge in Istanbul, Reuters reported.

Erdogan accused the coup plotters of trying to kill him and launched a purge of the armed forces, which last used force to stage a successful coup more than 30 years ago.

"They will pay a heavy price for this," said Erdogan, who also saw off mass public protests against his rule three years ago. "This uprising is a gift from God to us because this will be a reason to cleanse our army."

One government minister said some military commanders were still being held hostage by the plotters. But the government declared the situation fully under control, saying 161 people had been killed and 2,839 had been rounded up from foot soldiers to senior officers, including those who had formed "the backbone" of the rebellion.

A successful overthrow of Erdogan, who has ruled the country of about 80 million people since 2003, would have marked one of the biggest shifts in the Middle East in years, transforming a major United States ally while war rages on its border.

However, a failed coup attempt could still destabilize a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member that lies between the European Union and the chaos of Syria, with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) bombers targeting Turkish cities and the government also at war with Kurdish separatists.

Erdogan, who had been holidaying on the southwest coast when the coup was launched, flew into Istanbul before dawn on Saturday and was shown on television outside Ataturk Airport.

Addressing a crowd of thousands of flag-waving supporters at the airport later, Erdogan said the government remained at the helm, although disturbances continued in Ankara.

Erdogan, a polarizing figure whose Islamic-rooted ideology lies at odds with supporters of modern Turkey's secular principles, said the plotters had tried to attack him in the resort town of Marmaris.

"They bombed places I had departed right after I was gone," he said. "They probably thought we were still there."

Erdogan's AK Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi/ Justice and Development Party), has long had strained relations with the military, which has a history of mounting coups to defend secularism although it has not seized power directly since 1980.

While loved by his supporters, Erdogan's conservative religious views have also alienated many ordinary Turks who accuse him of authoritarianism. Police used heavy force in 2013 to suppress mass protest demanding more freedom.

Smart phone address

In a night that sometimes verged on the bizarre, Erdogan frequently took to social media even though he is an avowed enemy of the technology when his opponents use it, frequently targeting Twitter and Facebook.

Gunfire and explosions had rocked both Istanbul and Ankara through the night after soldiers took up positions in both cities and ordered state television to read out a statement declaring they had taken power. However, by dawn the noise of fighting had died down considerably.

About 50 soldiers involved in the coup surrendered on one of the bridges across

Turkey foils coup, Erdogan returns

Syrian rebels praise Turks defeating conspiracy against Erdogan



the Bosphorus Strait in Istanbul after dawn on Saturday, abandoning their tanks with their hands raised in the air. Reuters witnesses saw government supporters attack the pro-coup soldiers who had surrendered.

Earlier, around 30 pro-coup soldiers had surrendered their weapons after being surrounded by armed police in Istanbul's central Taksim square.

They were taken away in police vans as a fighter jet repeatedly screeched overhead at low altitude, causing a boom that shook surrounding buildings and shattered windows.

Neighboring Greece arrested eight men aboard a Turkish military helicopter which landed in the northern city of Alexandroupolis on Saturday, the country's police ministry said, adding that they had requested political asylum.

Once Erdogan's ally, Gulen

Erdogan addressed the nation via a video calling service, appearing on the smart phone of a CNN Turk reporter who held it up to a studio camera so viewers to the network could see him.

He said the "parallel structure" was be-

rorist activity.

Gulen, once supported Erdogan but became a nemesis. The pro-Gulen Alliance for Shared Values said it condemned any military intervention in domestic politics.

Syrian rebels & Erdogan

Meanwhile, Syrian rebels praised Turks on Saturday for standing firm against a "conspiracy" to overthrow President Erdogan, one of the main regional supporters of their fight against the Syrian President Bashar Assad.

"We congratulate the Turkish government...for the victory of the Turkish people and the government they elected," said a statement issued in the name of the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

It said the Turkish people had thwarted a "great conspiracy which targeted the stability and security of the country", and had shown the world that their will would not be broken.

U.S., unaware of Turkey coup plot

Meantime, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Saturday that Washington had no idea that a coup attempt was brewing in NATO ally Turkey before Friday's bloody events.

In a night that sometimes verged on the bizarre, Erdogan frequently took to social media even though he is an avowed enemy of the technology when his opponents use it, frequently targeting Twitter and Facebook.

hind the coup attempt -- his shorthand for followers of Fethullah Gulen, a Muslim cleric whom he has repeatedly accused of trying to foment an uprising in the military, media and judiciary.

Muhammed Fethullah Gulen is a Turkish preacher, writer, and political figure. He is the founder of the Gulen movement (known as Hizmet meaning service in Turkish). He currently lives in self-imposed exile in the United States, residing in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania.

Gulen was an ally of Turkish President Erdogan before 2013. The alliance was destroyed after alleged 2013 corruption investigations in Turkey. Erdogan accused Gulen for being behind the corruption investigations. He is currently on Turkey's most-wanted terrorist list and is accused of leading what the current Turkish officials call the Gulenist Terror Organization (FETO). A Turkish criminal court issued an arrest warrant for Gulen. Turkey is demanding the extradition of Gulen from the U.S. However, so far there is no Turkish court decision that charges Gulen or his followers with any ter-

But he added that the failed putsch had apparently been incompetently executed, and restated Washington's support for Erdogan's elected government, AFP reported.

"If you're planning a coup you don't exactly advertise it to your partners in NATO," Kerry told reporters who asked how U.S. intelligence could have been surprised by events.

"It surprised everybody, including the people in Turkey," the top U.S. diplomat added, speaking in Luxembourg during a diplomatic tour of European capitals.

"I must say, it does not appear to have been a very brilliantly planned or executed event, but let's reserve all judgment until the facts are in."

Kerry said the United States would entertain an extradition request for exiled cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Turkey's president blames for a failed coup.

But Kerry adds Turkey's government would have to present evidence of Gulen's wrongdoing that withstands scrutiny.

While visiting Luxembourg, Kerry said Turkey hasn't made a request to send the

Kerry said the United States would entertain an extradition request for exiled cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Turkey's president blames for a failed coup.

BIM CEO: Banks should play important role to spur economy in country

ECONOMY Banks must play significant role in boosting economic situation in the country.

Chief Executive and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM) Ali Ashraf-Afkhami announced the above statement and said: "Considering the necessity of materializing objectives of 'resistance economy', all provincial banks should practice 'Core Banking' issue in order to boom economic situation of the country. (Core banking is a banking service provided by a group of networked bank branches where customers may access their bank account and perform basic transactions from any of the member branch offices.)

Speaking in a get-together meeting in front of heads of bank branches, he pointed to the excellent performance of the bank in international arena and said: "BIM has established relationship with a number

of 51 foreign brokerage banks through global financial system dubbed "SWIFT".

As the first and major shareholder of Iran - Europe Commercial Bank, Bank of Industry and Mine managed to exchange a considerable sum amounting to approx. €5.400 billion.

In the same period, €1.200 billion worth of Letter of Credit (L/C) with high security and without any agent has been opened by the Bank for Iranian industrial projects, he said, adding: "This issue has saved currency as much as 10% for the country due to the omission of agent."

In the end, Chief Executive and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM) Ali Ashraf-Afkhami said: "Valuable and precious role of Bank of Industry and Mine in settling international debt of banking network of the country has improved Iran's banking status in global arena."

Iran Ready to Transfer Technical Know-how of Rare Earth Elements

ECONOMY Tehran, July16, IMIDRO_ Head of Iranian Mineral Processing Research Center(-IMPRC) announced that IMPRC is ready to transfer technical know-how of rare earth elements to other countries.

According to the report of public relations of IMIDRO, Gholamreza Taheri noted modern technical equipment and knowledge of IMPRC and said that IMPRC is among top 5 centers in mineral processing research. By having competent workforce and modern equipment, IMPRC has activities in all sectors of mineral processing such as iron ore, copper, education of foreign experts etc.

We are studying some projects in rare earth elements processing research with neighbor countries, he added.

Head of IMPRC continued that this center entered international communi-

Pennsylvania-based Gulen home. But he says he anticipates questions about Gulen, who has condemned the coup.

Kerry said on Saturday the U.S. opposed any attempt to overthrow a democratically elected leader. He said change must come through a constitutional process.

Kerry also said U.S. military cooperation with its NATO ally has been unaffected by the turmoil.

Rebels hold navy head, frigate

Meanwhile, Turkish rebels held captive a frigate at the Golcuk naval base, along with the head of the Turkish navy, a Greek military source told local media.

The TCG Yavuz, a frigate, was taken from the base by the rebels, but later returned, DHA news agency reported.

Admiral Bulent Bostanoglu is one of several senior figures in the Turkish military reportedly caught in the ongoing coup attempt, which has taken the nation and the world by surprise. He has been heading the Turkish navy since August 2013.

Hurriyet newspaper reported later that General Abidin Unal, commander of the Turkish Air Force, was captured by the plotters as well. Unal was attending a wedding ceremony of a daughter of one of his fellow officers when he was abducted.

Erdogan

Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a Turkish politician who has been 12th President of Turkey since 2014. He previously served as the Prime Minister of Turkey from 2003 to 2014 and as the Mayor of Istanbul from 1994 to 1998. He founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2001 and led it to three general election victories in 2002, 2007 and 2011 before standing down as leader upon his election as President in 2014. Originating from an Islamist political background and as a self-described conservative democrat, his administration has overseen social conservative and liberal economic policies.

As President, Erdogan has been a strong advocate of an executive presidency that would boost his own powers and has maintained an active influence over political affairs despite the symbolic nature of his office. In 2016, he was accused of forcing the resignation of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu due to his skepticism over the proposed presidential system, resulting in his replacement by close ally Binali Yildirim. He has also come under fire for constructing Ak Saray, the world's largest palace on Ataturk Forest Farm and Zoo for his own use as President and has been repeatedly accused of breaching the constitutional terms of his office by not maintaining political neutrality. In 2015, amid consistent allegations that he maintained financial links with the ISIL, revelations that the state was supplying arms to terrorist groups in Syria in the 2014 National Intelligence Organization lorry scandal led to accusations of high treason

Erdogan's failed peace negotiations with Kurdish rebels and lax security policies against ISIL have been consistently blamed for the sharp rise in terrorist incidents in Turkey since 2015.

Nationwide protests against the perceived authoritarianism of Erdogan's government began in May 2013, with the internationally criticized police crackdown resulting in 22 deaths and the stalling of EU membership negotiations. Following a split with long-time ally Fethullah Gulen, Erdogan brought about large-scale judicial reforms that were criticized for threatening judicial independence. A U.S.\$100 billion government corruption scandal in 2013 led to the arrests of Erdogan's close allies, with Erdogan himself incriminated after a recording was released on social media. Erdogan's government has since come under fire for electoral fraud, demeaning the Constitution, alleged human rights violations and crackdown on press and social media, having blocked access to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube on numerous occasions.

Opposition journalists and politicians have thus branded him a "dictator".

cations and is trying to update its technology and international knowledge. Last year as a result of a MoU signed by IMPRC and Mintek of South Africa as one of the top countries in mineral processing research, Iran faced with large number of research projects in Africa and Latin America.

In addition to defined joint projects by IMPRC and Mintek, all contracted projects of Mintek in Asia and Persian Gulf will be conducted jointly in IMPRC. Also, IMPRC negotiated with 3 other companies including MSA group, Fraser Alexander, Maelgwyn Mineral Services for development of cooperation in mineral processing, he expressed.

Currently, Mines and Geology Minister of Conakry Guinea visited IMPRC and stressed expansion of technical cooperation in mine sector between two countries.

JUMP

What France can learn from U.S. about fighting terrorism

National security

Are the French going to decide that the attacks in 2015 and this year are such a grave threat to national security that leaders and employees will accept a total change in the way they have been doing business for decades?

Because severe structural agony will most certainly occur. NCTC, under the overarching control of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, was viewed with great suspicion and skepticism when it was created in 2004. Numerous problems have been resolved since then, but many critics still view the agency as a shrunken head atop a lumbering body.

Why? Because even now, real decision-making power still remains within the individual intelligence and law-enforcement organizations, whether that means the Department of Defense, the CIA, the FBI or some other agency or department. The counterterrorism center can't compete because it doesn't really control any of the relevant pieces. Many of its personnel are actually employees loaned from various other agencies. It can't even bring a knife to a bureaucratic gunfight because it doesn't own most of its own cutlery.

In fact, forcibly putting disparate groups into one bureaucratic mega-organization can create difficult problems. In 2002, multiple security-focused organizations were mushed together like Play-Doh to create the Department of Homeland Security. It still lacks a permanent headquarters and is consistently ranked by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey as the "worst place" to work in the U.S. government.

Of course, the counterterrorism center does possess some strengths because it can serve as the hub for sharing counterterrorism intelligence across the entire government. It also helps break down walls among the intelligence services.

Coordinating bodies

But it remains essentially a coordinating body. As Jean-Charles Brisard, director of the French Center for the Analysis of Terrorism recently told the Washington Post, "We have reached in France a point where we have more coordinating bodies than we have intelligence services."

In any case, it's unclear if a French iteration of the counterterrorism center could have done much to stop the assault on the Charlie Hebdo offices in January 2015, or the attack on Bataclan concert hall and various cafes in Paris on Nov. 13, 2015. Some of the killers were known to authorities, others not.

French intelligence had been monitoring one of the Charlie Hebdo killers, Said Kouachi, for example, but had stopped because he didn't seem to be a threat at the time and there were other, more urgent suspects. Amedy Coulibaly, who killed a policewoman and four civilians in a kosher supermarket that same day, had been in and out of prison. But, again, the police didn't consider him a top priority. In addition, many gunmen in the November strike were Belgian citizens. So French intelligence would have had to rely on Brussels for information and assistance. The ringleader, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, was later killed during a police shootout in a Parisian suburb. How would a central French agency have stopped them?

Instead of creating a new bureaucracy, Paris might be better to examine other approaches when reforming its intelligence communities so they can better grapple with terrorism at home and abroad. One relatively easy step, for example, would be to pass legislation that broadens punishments for those involved, even tangentially, with terrorist cells operating in France. A terrorism charge in the United States that could mean a 25-year prison sentence currently results in only three years behind bars in France.

Another example would be to commit more resources to monitoring radicals in France's prisons. France is also experimenting with efforts to weaken ties between the jihadists and the "persuadables" within the penal system.

Yet it's unclear if that would have the desired permanent effects. An estimated 1,200 French citizens have traveled to Syria, presumably to fight for Islamic State. Hundreds have now returned. Others within France could have "self-radicalized." As is evident, it does not take many people to create havoc that can unsettle an entire nation. Additional legislation won't be enough to prevent the next domestic attack.

Rather, hiring and retaining competent and effective personnel, building institutional capacity, opening up resources and providing real leadership can all help keep France safe. More funding is needed to achieve all this.

Counterterrorism efforts

In addition, law enforcement and intelligence personnel, from senior to junior ranks, should rotate through other divisions so that all would be better informed about the overall counterterrorism effort. One long-term effect of 9/11 is that the U.S. intelligence community has indeed grown culturally closer. Individual agencies now better understand each other's needs. Rotating individuals throughout the

French system might go a long way to foster trust within the system. It would help minimize intelligence silos and cultural roadblocks that might hamper France's ability to stop the next attack. France should also take the lead in developing a continent-wide database of all European citizens who have gone to Syria to fight for Islamic State or al Qaeda. The United States maintains one at NCTC, but France should orchestrate one for Europe as well. This could help build cooperation across Europe, as other countries feed into the database.

Paris should make this a high diplomatic priority in the European Union. It should also strive to work with nations, such as Turkey and Russia, largely because it's in France's self-interest to do so. Thwarting Islamic State's efforts across the continent is a European problem, not just a French one. Many nations have returning fighters at this point, so they would be willing to work together. And with the European-wide database, Paris wouldn't have to rely on Washington for basic information.

Soon after 9/11, Washington had the resolve and wealth to strengthen its intelligence services and also create a vast new bureaucracy. The result has produced great successes, but also some wasteful, costly mistakes.

France doesn't have the billions of euros to fritter away trying to figure this out over the next decade. Rather, Paris should learn from Washington's victories, and failures, as it tries to fight its shadowy war against terrorism within its borders.

(Source: Reuters)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



You cannot create experience. You must undergo it.
Albert Camus

LEARN ENGLISH

Using Illegal Drugs

Nancy: So, what do you think?
Ron: Uh, that was interesting.
Nancy: That's all you have to say? I spent six months making this **anti-drug** film to show students in schools to try and **deter** illegal drug use.
Ron: Well, I'm not sure if it **gets the point across**.
Nancy: What do you mean? I show footage of people using **hardcore drugs**.
Ron: That's just it. You start by showing people **smoking pot**, making the point that it's a **gateway drug**, and then showing addicts **popping pills**, **shooting up** heroine, and **snorting** and **freebasing** cocaine.
Nancy: I'm trying to show the **downhill spiral** that results from illegal drug use.
Ron: But considering how incredibly **explicit** the film is, I'm afraid that teachers might mistake it for some other type of film.
Nancy: What do you mean? What type of film?
Ron: Well, instead of an anti-drug educational film, it seems more **instructional**. If kids don't know how to use illegal drugs before, they will after watching this film!
(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

anti-drug: opposing or restricting the use of narcotics or other drugs of abuse
deter: to stop someone from doing something, by making them realize it will be difficult or have bad results
get something across: to succeed in communicating an idea or piece of information to someone, or to be communicated successfully
footage: cinema film showing a particular event
hardcore drug: a narcotic that is considered relatively strong and likely to cause addiction
smoke pot: smoking marijuana
gateway drug: a drug such as cannabis which is not a very dangerous, but which some people believe leads to the use of more dangerous drugs such as heroin
addict: someone who is unable to stop taking drugs
pop pill: to take pills too often, or to take too many at one time
shoot up: to put illegal drugs into your blood, using a needle
snort: to take drugs by breathing them in through your nose
freebase: to take
downhill spiral: a series of thoughts or actions which feeds back into itself, causing a situation to become progressively worse
explicit: expressed in a way that is very clear and direct
instructional: providing instruction

QUIZ OF THE DAY

184) He's married ___ two kids.
a) to
b) with
(Quiz No. 183 answer: b)

PHRASAL VERB

Vouch for

■ **Meaning**: express confidence in, or guarantee something
■ **For example**: You can give the keys to Andy. I can vouch for him.

ENGLISH PROVERB

He who plays with fire gets burnt

■ **Explanation**: if you behave in a risky way, you are likely to have problems



Be kind to me!

Tehran, Minsk ink documents to expand technological cooperation

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran and Belarus signed documents to increase technological cooperation, IRNA news agency reported on Friday.

The documents were inked in Minsk over the sixth meeting of joint cooperation committee co-headed by the chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus, Alexander Shumilin, and the Iranian Science, Research and Technology Minister, Mohammad Farhadi.

The agreements include financing scientific project of the two countries and enhancing cooperation between Khajeh Nasir Toosi University of Technology, Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute, and Belarusian state technological university.

Additionally, for the next meeting slated for 2017 in Tehran some subject matters such as using advanced technologies in agriculture, industry, medicine, pharmacology, and construction as well as faculty and student exchange pro-



grams and executing joint projects were discussed over this session.

Regarding 1,600 Iranian medical students studying in Belarus the Iranian

delegation had meetings with them as well to discuss ways of facilitating cooperation and dissolving problems between the two nations.

Farhadi explained that based on an agreement reached by the two countries a joint committee and a fund to provide capital to develop new and advanced technologies would be established and their progress would be check monthly.

Holding training courses, workshops, and conferences, and cooperation in producing knowledge and technology are of the other topics of this agreement, Farhadi noted.

An Iranian delegation is also scheduled to travel to Belarus to evaluate and determine the Belarusian universities standards, the minister added.

Mentioning their meetings with the Belarusian universities' chairmen, Farhadi pointed that they have shown keen interest in promoting cooperation with Iran's academic circles.

The Iranian delegation headed by the science, research and technology minister and accompanied by a group of deputy vice ministers as well as universities' chancellors travelled to Minsk on Wednesday for a three-day trip.

Paralyzed woman hikes the Appalachian Trail

The 2,190-mile long Appalachian Trail is daunting even to those who have no trouble walking, and few who set out manage to travel the entire trail.

That hasn't stopped Stacey Kozel. Her paralyzed body hasn't stopped her, either.

The 41-year-old Ohio resident had always been an athlete who loved the outdoors and fresh air. She was always active until lupus stole her muscles and strength, bit by bit.

The autoimmune disease causes the immune system to attack different body parts, including internal organs. People with lupus experience it differently. For Kozel, the disorder targets her central nervous system. Although her heart and lungs function normally, the weakening of her muscles makes it hard for her to breathe. Since her diagnosis at 19, she has frequently had to go to the hospital for treatment whenever she got a "flare-up."

"It never feels good. You don't feel right. A lot of pain. A lot of weakness. You're exhausted just by doing daily activities," said Kozel. It would take her months to recover and rebuild muscles from a lupus attack that lasted for a few weeks.

Over the years, her condition has only gotten worse. She would use her hands to help herself get off the chair when her lower body muscles weren't working well. But to people who didn't know about her diagnosis, she looked normal.

"I've spent all of my life trying to hide it from people because I don't want people to treat me differently," said Kozel.

Kozel's efforts even fooled her mother, Mary Kozel. It wasn't until a visit to the doctors with her daughter that she realized how sick her daughter was. "It was the first time I realized how much she couldn't do with her muscles, how much she's been compensating," Mary Kozel said.

Stacey made it easy to overlook. Even as her muscles deteriorated, her spirit never weakened. "She always looks for...what can I do with what I have now?" said Mary Kozel. "She always finds something. She keeps moving forward."

■ **The worst 'flare-up'**

Stacey Kozel had lost her ability to walk several times, but she had always managed to get back on her feet until a flare-up in March 2014.

"I walked into a hospital, came out in a wheelchair," recalled Stacey Kozel, "When I left the hospital I could only lift my left arm. I can't really control it. It just flopped around."

She suspects a car accident a year before might have worsened her condition, but ultimately, she knows lupus cost her lower body mobility. Kozel grew frustrated staring at empty walls, desperate to smell fresh air outside.

It happened right when Kozel was picking up her life after a previous lupus attack and eight weeks before her graduation from a radiology program. When lying on the hospital bed, she wasn't thinking about paralysis. She worried about not being able to graduate.

"Even then, I thought I would get better. I did not prepare myself for being paralyzed," said Kozel.

Still, with the help of a powered wheelchair and a pair of leg braces, she made her way back to class, made up her missed clinical time, finished her finals and graduated with honors.



Still, with the help of a powered wheelchair and a pair of leg braces, she made her way back to class, made up her missed clinical time, finished her finals and graduated with honors.

■ **Another uphill battle: Insurance**

Although Kozel was able to walk stiffly with an old pair of braces, they wouldn't help her walk comfortably enough to embrace the outdoors.

The chance finally came when she came across the Ottobock C-Brace. The brace functions essentially as the muscles and bones of a leg, as long as the person wearing it is able to move the hips.

Each brace comes with a microprocessor stocked with movement data at the knee joint. A sensor at the joint sends information to the processor and tells it how fast the knee is trying to collapse, while another sensor feeds ankle information. When the mini-computer thinks the knee is going to collapse, it locks up the knee. Once it senses the foot is behind the body, and when the toe is off the ground, it unlocks the knee to let the foot move to the front.

She wanted to show insurance companies how useful the braces can be for those who have lost their mobility. With more awareness about those braces, she thought it might make it easier for others to get the braces covered. Walking on the streets was simply not enough to gain enough attention, Kozel thought, she needed to aim higher.

The price tag for the technology was steep: \$75,000 each.

Kozel's doctors and therapists knew that getting these braces covered by insurance would be an uphill climb. Her insurance claim was denied, more documents were sent. The back and forth between the insurance company and therapists lasted a year. Kozel thought her life would never resemble the one she had before she was paralyzed.

When her claim was finally approved after 12 months, she was "in shock."

■ **Meet 'Iron will'**

Just three days after Kozel got her braces, Joey Pollak, Kozel's orthopedist, got a call saying Kozel was in a 5K race, "just walking, not running."

"To say Stacey is an overachiever is an understatement," said Pollak, who has worked with her since November 2014.

What Pollak did not know was an idea forming in Kozel's head.

She wanted to show insurance companies how useful the braces can be for those who have lost their mobility. With more awareness about those braces, she thought it might make it easier for others to get the braces covered. Walking on the streets was simply not enough to gain enough attention, Kozel thought, she needed to aim higher.

After research, she set her mind on the Appalachian Trail, just two months after she received her braces.

Pollak tried to talk her out of it, but gave up after about 10 minutes. "She already got a plane ticket," said Pollak. "She was going no matter if I said 'yay' or 'nay!'"

Even Kozel's mother was scared when she heard the plan. But Mary didn't stop her daughter, either.

"She's already paralyzed," said Mary Kozel. "And to hold her back from something she wants to do...It would only make it worse."

Now, with support from her orthopedist, her mother and strangers along the way, she is slowly approaching her destination. Kozel calls her community of support "trail angels," who bring food and water or offer rides.

The adventure has gotten her back outside, among gorgeous scenery, into the fresh air she always loved and among new friends. "The best part has been the people out there," she said. "You're never actually alone."

Not knowing when her next lupus attack could be and how much worse she could get, Kozel said, "I don't want to have regret the next time I didn't do something."

Kozel's legs are more flexible with the help of the new braces. She cannot, however, be on the trail for days on end. The batteries in the braces last 36 hours at most. To keep on hiking, Kozel has to get off the trail once in a while to have them charged.

In experienced hikers' term, "zero day" means hiking zero miles a day. Kozel knew before entering the trail that she would probably be taking more zero days than an average hiker, either because of her strength, her speed or the dying batteries. But none of this bothers her.

Kozel has just passed the halfway point on the Appalachian Trail, and she will keep going. Her determination has earned her a nickname among the hikers on the trail: Iron will.

(Source: CNN)

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

India's COM-DEALL to help launch autism rehabilitation center in Iran

In association with Indian research center COM-DEALL, Iran's first international autism rehabilitation center will be opened in Tehran, the director for speech therapy group of Tehran's University of Medical Sciences said.

As autism is on the rise in Iran, launching such centers can help provide more efficient treatment with the help of scientists from other countries, Ahmadreza Khatounabadi told Tasnim news agency.

Speech therapy, occupational therapy, play therapy and training the parents and other services of the kind will be provided in this center, Khatounabadi explained.

Mentioning the considerable expenses of the autism patients' treatment process he called on the officials for financial supports of such families.

راه‌اندازی مرکز توانبخشی اوتیسم در ایران با کمک کام - دیل هندوستان

مدیر گروه گفتار درمانی دانشکده توانبخشی دانشگاه علوم پزشکی تهران از راه‌اندازی نخستین مرکز بین‌المللی توانبخشی اوتیسم ایران در تهران با مشارکت و همکاری موسسه تحقیقاتی دانشگاهی کام - دیل هند خبر داد.

احمد رضا خاتون‌آبادی در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگاری تسنیم اظهار داشت: با توجه به روند افزایشی اختلال اوتیسم در کشورمان هدف از راه‌اندازی این مرکز، ارائه خدمات درمانی تخصصی با استفاده از توان‌دانشمندان سایر کشورها است.

خاتون‌آبادی توضیح داد: در این مرکز خدمات توانبخشی از جمله، گفتاردرمانی، کاردرمانی، آموزش والدین، بازی درمانی و دیگر خدمات ارائه خواهد شد.

وی خاطرنشان کرد: با توجه به اینکه هزینه‌های توانبخشی افراد دارای اختلال اوتیسم، بسیار سنگین است و خانواده‌ها را دچار مشکل می‌کند، لازم است در این زمینه حمایت لازم از سوی دولت ارائه شود.

Iran names Paralympic Games delegation



SPORTS Iran announced the athletes that will make up their 95-strong delegation that will compete in 11 sports at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Iran's women's sitting volleyball player Eshrat Kordestani will be the delegation's flag-bearer at the opening ceremony. Iran seeks gold medal in the men's sitting volleyball as the team has won five gold medals in the Games. The most decorated sitting volleyball team is in Pool B alongside world and European champion Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia and China. Sitting Volleyball at the 2016 Summer Paralympics will be held from 9 September to 18 September at the Riocentro Pavilion 6 in Rio de Janeiro. Two events will be contested: men's and women's team. Debutant Iran's women's sitting volleyball team has been pooled with powerhouses China, USA and Rwanda. Powerlifter Siamand Rahman will have an eye-catching performance since the over 107kg strongman is saving a 300kg haul for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

Five other Iranian powerlifters including Majid Farzin in the 80kg and Hamed Solhipour in the 88kg weight categories could win the medals in the prestigious event. The wheelchair basketball team has been pitted against USA, England, Germany, Algeria and host Brazil in Pool B. Iran coach Abbas Aghakouchaki says that his side will be hard team to beat. "We will have difficult matches ahead of us. We have analyzed our rivals expect Algeria which remains an unknown team for us," Aghakouchaki told Paralympic.ir. "Iran has been out of the competition for eight years. We finished in eighth place in the 2014 Men's Wheelchair Basketball World Championship in Incheon, South Korea, but we need to balance logic and emotion to make better decisions in our matches. Iran will be a difficult team to defeat and we are even among the favorites," he added. The competition will be held from September 8 to 17. Iran's football 5-a-side team aims for podium for the first time. Host Brazil is the most decorated team in the Games. Iranian athletic team won five gold medals, five silvers and three bronzes at the 2012 Summer Paralympics in London and the athletes look forward to repeating their glorious days at Rio. Iran will participate at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games with 25 athletes. Para-archer Zahra Nemati, who became the first Iranian woman to win Olympic or Paralympic gold when she topped the podium in the individual recurve W1/W2, will carry Iran's flag at the 2016 Olympic Games. First, she will do her best to take a medal in the Olympics then will try to repeat her gold at the Paralympics. "I will do my best to win honors in Olympic and

Paralympic Games simultaneously and I dedicate a gold medal to my family," she said. A total of seven archers will represent Team Iran in the event, Teamiran.net. Iran will also have three judokas in the competition. Para-shooter Sareh Javanmardi, who won a bronze at the Women's 10 m air pistol SH1 in London, is going to take a gold medal in the upcoming event. Five shooters will participate at Paralympics. Para-canoeist Shahla Behrouzi Rad sees herself as an athlete who has a chance to win a medal in Paralympics. She will represent Iran at the women's KL2 200m. Para-cyclist Bahman Golbarnezhad will participate at the event as the sole Iranian representative. Also, para-swimmer Shahin Izadyar is the sole Iranian delegate in Rio. The Iranian delegation is hoping to outdo its performance at London 2012, when it won 10 gold medals, seven silvers and seven bronzes.



Iran's Masoud Shojaei linked with Greek move

SPORTS Iranian international midfielder Masoud Shojaei has been linked with a move to Greek side Panionios FC, according to a report on Gazzetta.gr. Panionios official website also confirms the club's interest in signing the Iranian midfielder; "The club is waiting for Masoud to arrive in Greece in order to undergo the medical exam and sign the contract," Panionios official website reported. Shojaei is going to team up with fellow countryman Karim Ansarifard at Panionios who was one of team's key players last season after scoring 11 goals in 36 matches. The 32-year old player has previously played five years



for Spanish side Osasuna scoring 8 goals in 101 appearances. Masoud who has also played for Las Palmas in Segunda division, passed the last two years at Qatar Stars League playing for Al Shahania and Al Gharafa. Shojaei has represented his country in two World Cups and three Asian Cups. He has scored eight goals in 65 caps for Iran. Panionios would have qualified for the Europa League second qualifying round as the fifth-placed team of the 2015-16 Superleague Greece, but was excluded from participating in the 2016-17 European competitions by UEFA for financial reasons. As a result, the berth was given to the sixth-placed team PAS Giannina.

Machine Sazi set to sign Spanish keeper

SPORTS Iranian newly promoted club Machine Sazi FC is set to sign Spanish goalkeeper Manuel Fernandez Muniz from Deportivo La Coruna, according to the local media. The 30-year old keeper who has previously played for Sporting Gijon, Recreativo, Alcaron and Alaves made eight appearances for Deportivo last season. Last week, Iceland goalkeeper at Euro 2016 Hannes

Halldorsson was scheduled to join Machine Sazi but the move collapsed due to personal issues. Machine Sazi has signed Saman Nariman Jahan, Andranik Teymourian, Saeid Daghighi, Payam Sadeghian, Habib Gordani, Jalal Rafkhaei, Edson Henrique da Silva, Thaer Krouma, Khadi Kakha, and Ditmar Bica so far in the transfer window. Machine Sazi, led by Rasoul Khatibi, won promotion to Iran Professional League in May.



Lionel Messi, Andres Iniesta still in Spain ahead of Turkey charity match



Barcelona striker Lionel Messi and teammate Andres Iniesta are in Spain despite being scheduled to take part in a charity match on Saturday in Antalya, Turkey, according to an announcement from the club. The match was organised by Samuel Eto'o, a former teammate of both Iniesta and Messi, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of his charity foundation. However, the match has been threatened after a military coup was attempted in Turkey early on Saturday morning. According to reports, Messi cancelled his Saturday flight to the country. Messi, 29, was just one of a number of current and one-time world class players that committed to play in the

match. Neymar, Luis Suarez, Eden Hazard, Francesco Totti, Michael Essien, Xavi Hernandez, Carles Puyol, Eric Abidal, Jay Jay Okocha, Pierre Emerick Aubameyang, Andres Iniesta, Demba Ba, Didier Drogba and Arda Turan were all expected to take part in the game. Turan, Puyol, Deco, Abidal and sporting director Alejandro Echeverria, who were already in Turkey, are safe and in contact with the club. The status of Eto'o's charity match is unknown, although a report in the Mirror suggested it had been cancelled. Messi had been on vacation in Ibiza, Spain, and will reportedly stay there after cancelling the flight and his participation in the charity match. (Source: Soccer.net)

Louis van Gaal 'a potential candidate' for Belgium manager's job



Louis van Gaal will be considered to replace Marc Wilmots as Belgium manager if he applies for the role, according to Francois De Keersemaeker, the president of the Belgian FA. Former Bayern Munich, Barcelona and Ajax boss Van Gaal has taken charge of the Netherlands' national team on two separate occasions and is currently available after leaving Manchester United at the end of last season. Francois De Keersemaeker, the president of the Belgian FA, told reporters on Friday: "Van Gaal might be a potential candidate. We will see if he puts himself forward as a candidate. If he does then we will evaluate his candidacy." Van Gaal's candidacy will be helped by his success with Netherlands, whom he led

to the semifinals of the 2014 World Cup, according to the Belgian FA's technical director Chris van Puyvelde who wants the Red Devils' next manager to have experience on the international stage. "It's an open process; I expect my mailbox is going to be flooded [with applications]," Van Puyvelde told a news conference. "We want a candidate to have experience and to have already achieved results in international football. He must play modern football. He must show tactical acumen and flexibility to adapt because no one game or no opponent are ever the same. He must also deliver a high-performance environment because the players he is working with are used to working at a high level." (Source: ESPN)

FOOTBALL

Paper Round: Mahrez rejects Leicester contract as Arsenal and PSG prepare to pounce

Riyad Mahrez turns down a long-term contract offer, Mario Gotze looks to seal move back to Dortmund while Arsenal eye a late move for Carlos Bacca. Here are the pick of Saturday morning's newspaper headlines.

Mahrez set to join Kante by leaving Leicester

Leicester City forward Riyad Mahrez has knocked back a contract extension, according to The Sun. The report claims the midfielder has turned down a new deal, with Arsenal, Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain all keen to land the Algerian, a key man in Leicester's title-winning success. Claudio Raineri has remained confident the player will stay, but Mahrez reportedly wants an opportunity at a bigger club.



Paper Round's view: Losing Mahrez is a massive blow any chance of Leicester picking up where they left off last season. The best they can hope for in a situation like this is that receive a good fee in return and manage to find a half-decent replacement. But like N'Golo Kante heading for Chelsea, it will be difficult to attract a suitable replacement.

Gotze on verge of returning to Dortmund

Mario Gotze is set to make a stunning return to former club Borussia Dortmund, according to the Daily Mail. The report says that the 24 year old has been unable to hold down a regular starting slot at Bayern. His former club Dortmund have offered him a five year deal and the Bundesliga champions £23 million to re-sign the winger.

There was substantial Premier League interest in the German international. Liverpool are managed by his former boss Jurgen Klopp, but it seems unlikely he will opt for a reunion with Klopp.

Paper Round's view: This deal is moving closer and closer to completion, and potentially a blow to Liverpool in that Klopp's star power wasn't enough to get this over the line. While Sadio Mane is a good buy regardless of his price tag, it shows how much work the former Dortmund manager has on his hands to rebuild the Liverpool with the competition fierce to land the continent's most coveted figures.

Arsenal make late run for Carlos Bacca

Arsenal are trying to land Carlos Bacca ahead of London rivals West Ham, according to the Sun. The Gunners have reportedly moved in for AC Milan's Bacca, just as West Ham have been trying to thrash out a deal with the Serie A giants. West Ham are said to have bid £25 million for Bacca, but will face some late competition in Arsenal and Napoli who are also said to be keen.

Paper Round's view: Arsenal appear to be entering a panic phase in their transfer window. It looks like Juventus have moved to the head of the pack in the race to sign Gonzalo Higuain. Arsenal appear to be grasping at whatever's left that's up for grabs. It's a hasty and potentially dangerous way to conduct business. For their sake, let's hope they have other moves lined up.

City consider move for PSV's Jeroen Zoet

Manchester City are considering a £7 million move for PSV's Jeroen Zoet, according to the Daily Mail. Pep Guardiola is looking for a back-up keeper to challenge Joe Hart, who after a few average seasons and a poor Euro 2016 tournament is looking more and more uncertain as the club's current number one. City are weighing up the move, as they wait and see on Barcelona's Marc-Andre ter Stegen before moving in for Zoet.

Paper Round's view: A left-field option from Pep and City, but remember that Pep requires a sweeping goalkeeper who can play out with his feet. Dutch football is well-renowned for producing a good technical standard of player, so expect a few other keepers in the Eredivisie to be monitored by Guardiola. (Source: Eurosport)

Two Ukrainian players on Persepolis of Iran's radar

Ukrainian players Oleksiy Polyanskiy and Volodymyr Pryyomov have caught the eye of Iran's Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic.

In the Persepolis's training camp held in Ukraine, the Croatian coach showed interest in signing the Ukrainian duo, according to Persepolis website.

Polyanskiy is a 30-year-old midfielder who currently plays in Metalist Kharkiv on loan. Pryyomov is also a 30-year-old striker who plays for Metalist Kharkiv.

The Ukrainian duo travelled to Iran to negotiate with the Iranian team.

Both of players were members of Ukraine U-19 football teams.

Persepolis, who became runner-up at the Iran Professional League last season, is preparing for the new edition of the competition. (Source: Tasnim)





Poem of the day

Except thy road through affliction pass,
None may reach the halting-station of mirth.

Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon:13:10 Evening: 20:40 Dawn: 4:20 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:02 (tomorrow)

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■ Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
■ Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
■ www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co. Tel: 88911433
■ Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
■ Printed at: Kayhan - ISSN: 1017-94

NEWS IN BRIEF



Tehran meeting to review social status of public libraries in France

T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian scholars d e s k will gather for a meeting at the City Park Library in Tehran on Monday to discuss the role of public libraries in the social structure of France.

Majlis Library, Museum and Documentation Center Director Mohammadreza Majidi, and scholars Mohammad-Baqer Khoramshad and Mozafar Cheshmeh-Sohrabi are scheduled to give speeches at the meeting, which will be held by the Organization of Public Libraries.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Photo

■ An exhibition of photos by Yunes Shokrkhan, Shahram Gilabadi, and 49 other photojournalists is currently underway at the Arasbaran Cultural Center.

The exhibit titled "Tehran, City of Life" will run until July 23 at the Gallery No. 1 of the center, which can be found on Jolfa St., off Shariati Ave.



■ Photos by Kurosh Adim, Mehrdad Afsari, Nader Davudi, Ebrahim Safi, and several other photographers are on display in an exhibition at Theme Gallery.

The exhibition named "Seven Passages" runs until July 28 at the gallery located at 10 Zebardad Alley, North Villa St., off Karimkhan Ave.

Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Hadi Taqizadeh and Mojgan Etezadi is underway at Laleh Gallery.

The exhibit runs until August 2 at the gallery, which can be found on Fatemi St., near Laleh Park.

Calligraphy

■ A collection of calligraphy works by Bahram Hanafi is on display in an exhibition at Mojdeh Gallery.

The exhibit runs until July 29 at the gallery located at 27 North Allameh Blvd., in the Saadatabad neighborhood.

Illustration

■ Homa Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of illustrations by Farshid Shafi.

The exhibition titled "I Trust Myself" will be running until July 26 at the gallery located at No. 8, 4th Gharbi Alley, Sanai St., off Karimkhan Ave.

NEWS

"People v. O.J. Simpson," "Game of Thrones" lead Emmy nominations

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — "The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story", a TV mini-series exploring racial tensions that strained the criminal justice system 20 years before Black Lives Matter, dominated the Primetime Emmy nominations on Thursday along with HBO's medieval fantasy "Game of Thrones".

The 10-part drama on basic-cable channel FX chronicling the sensational, polarizing murder trial of O.J. Simpson in 1995 earned 22 nominations in all, including best limited series and best actor for Cuba Gooding Jr's title role as the disgraced former football star.

"The People v. O.J." viewed Simpson's trial through the prism of racial politics gripping the nation in the aftermath of the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King by white policemen in Los Angeles.

The show aired against a contemporary backdrop of rising tensions between minority communities and law enforcement over a series of killings of unarmed black men at the hands of police in cities across the country, giving rise to the Black Lives Matter protest movement.

"Game of Thrones" led Emmy contenders with 23 nominations overall, including nods for best drama series, two for best supporting actor and three for best supporting actress.

The hit show, based on George R.R. Martin's fantasy novel series "A Song of Ice and Fire", was named outstanding drama series at last year's Emmy Awards.

Rounding out the best drama race are Showtime's CIA thriller "Homeland", FX's Cold War espionage saga "The Americans", AMC's quirky legal story "Better Call Saul", Netflix's political mystery "House of Cards", the final season of PBS's period melodrama "Downton Abbey" and USA Network's freshman cyberhacking drama "Mr. Robot".

"I Am Not Salvador" hits silver screens in Turkey

T A R T TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Manuchehr Hadi's comedy drama "I Am Not Salvador" went on screen at 30 movie theaters in major cities of Turkey on Thursday.

The film with Turkish subtitles will be on screen for one month, Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation announced on Friday.

In an opening ceremony organized by Iran's Embassy in a theater in Istanbul, the film was screened for a number of Iranian and Turkish cultural figures and officials including leading Turkish historian Ilber Ortayli, Supervision and Evaluation Office (SEO) Director Habib Ilbeigi, and cineastes Habib Esmaeili, Amir Parvin Hosseini, Mansur Sohrabpur and Mehdi Mehrabi.

Professor Ortayli praised Iranian cultural activities in Istanbul including the film screening sessions, calling them a big step in reinforcing cultural relations between the two countries.

He added that Iranian films, inspired by spiritual and human values, have filled the empty world of the cinema of Hollywood and have been a great help to the world industry of cinema.

Habib Ilbeigi expressed his thanks to the organizers of the event and said, "The

Iranian cinema has made good progress since the Islamic Revolution (1979). Iranian films have been honored in most international film festivals, indicating the fact that Iranian cinema has provided a good opportunity for the production of films with rare and invaluable concepts."

Cinetech Mall of Istanbul, Cinemaximum Atakoy Plus, Atakoy Galleria Cinepeople, Cinemaximum Aqua Florya and Cinemaximum Zorlu Center are among the theaters in Istanbul screening "I Am Not Salvador".

"I Am Not Salvador", starring Reza Attaran, Yekta Naser and former Brazilian footballer Rivaldo, tells the story of an Iranian man who is invited to take a trip to Brazil with his family.

According to the report released by the Persian service of ILNA on Saturday, cineastes Esmaeili, Hosseini and Sohrabpur returned home on Friday morning before the Turkish military launched a coup attempt on Friday afternoon.

Ilbeigi's meetings with several managers of Turkish TV channels on Friday afternoon were cancelled due to the coup attempt; however, Ilbeigi is still in Turkey and is reportedly safe and sound in his hotel room in Istanbul.



A poster for the Turkish premiere of Iranian comedy drama "I Am Not Salvador" by Manuchehr Hadi

Iranian troupe to stage musical at Azerbaijani festival

T A R T TEHRAN — The Iranian troupe Neqab plans to perform "Turup Tarab", a musical based on a story from the royal court of the Qajar king, Nasser ad-Din Shah, at the Third Shaki International Theater Festival in Azerbaijan.

The troupe in collaboration with some thespians from Azerbaijan performed Bahram Beizai's play "The King Snake"

in the country last year, director/writer Kheirollah Taqiani told the Persian service of Honaronline on Saturday.

"The director of the [Shaki] festival invited us to stage a play at the event after watching the play," he added.

He said that his troupe will use various forms of Iranian traditional dramatic art, such as naqqali, and siah-bazi, to stage the play at the festival, which will be held

in the Azerbaijani city from September 15 to 23.

"Turup Tarab" tells the story of a woman of Nasser ad-Din Shah's harem who invites a group of musicians to perform during a national celebration, during which a favorite of the king dies.

"This play has been selected for the festival because it is familiar among the Azerbaijani-speaking people," Taqiani

stated. Earlier in May 2014, the troupe co-directed by Taqiani and Javad Nuri performed the musical at Tehran's Charsu Hall.

Puneh Abdolkarimzadeh, Ali Soleimani, Javad Purzand, Vahid Nafar, Mostafa Sasani, Alireza Nasehi, Alireza Mehran, Mohammad-Hadi Atai and Hossein Shafiei are members of the troupe.

PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline/Mohammad Namazi



A couple visits an exhibition of paintings by several child laborers along with sets of installation art by Mohammad Pureskandarian at Eyyan Gallery in Tehran on July 15, 2016. The exhibition, which will run until July 21, has been organized to raise funds for child laborers. The gallery can be found at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebheh St., off Mahdieh St., in the Elahieh neighborhood.

Execs of Resistance filmfest meet Leader's senior advisor

T A R T TEHRAN — Executives of the 14th International Resistance Film Festival (IRFF) have met with Ali Akbar Velayati, the foreign policy advisor to the Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution, at his office in Tehran on Saturday.

Velayati asked the organizers of the festival, which is dedicated to productions featuring resistance of people in wars and armed conflicts in the world, to establish a society of Islamic Awakening filmmakers in order to discover talents in the resistance cinema.

IRFF secretary Mohammad Khazaei gave a report on the festival at the meeting.

The festival has received submissions from over 100 countries, including the U.S, India, Germany, Turkey, England, Italy, France, Canada, Spain and Russia.

The event will be held during the Sacred Defense Week in September to commemorate the anniversary of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Belgium ambassador, CEO of Tehran cultural organization meet

T A R T TEHRAN — The director of the Art and Cultural Organization of Tehran Municipality, Mahmud Salahi, and Belgium Ambassador François Delhaye have met at the organization.

They discussed the expansion of art and cultural relations between Tehran and Brussels, the organization announced in a press release published on Saturday.

Emphasizing the role of art and culture in making constructive relationships between nations, Salahi said that it is a good time for the two countries to develop art and cultural ties.

He also introduced the art and cultural capacities of the capital Tehran and said

that cultural weeks in the two countries can be of great help.

The ambassador who was accompanied by Paul Dujardin, the chief executive officer of Bozar and also artistic director of the prestigious Belgian art center, hoped for more meetings in the future.

He said that the people of Europe have had no clear image of Iran over the past years, but today they believe that Iran is a country that can institutionalize a constructive culture in the world.

For his part, Paul Dujardin also said that Bozar can act as a bridge to bring the cultures closer to one another and help the artists communicate with one another easier.

Paramount stake sale could hamper deal for Viacom: National Amusements

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Sumner Redstone's privately held movie theater company said on Friday it opposes the sale of a minority stake in Viacom Inc's Paramount Pictures, because such a transaction could hurt the chances of a deal involving all of Viacom.

National Amusements Inc, through which the 93-year-old media mogul owns 80 percent of Viacom, said in a statement that Paramount was "one of Viacom's most valuable assets" and a stake sale "would chill the interest of parties that may be interested in a larger transaction involving all of Viacom."

Redstone also owns 80 percent of the voting shares of CBS Corp through

National Amusements. Viacom split off from CBS in 2006, but many investors have said they hope the two will merge again.

CBS Chief Executive Les Moonves, whom some expect would be tapped to head the combined company if that merger were to happen, is said to be interested in owning a movie studio, according to sources familiar with the situation. CBS declined to comment.

A Viacom spokesman said it was "beyond understanding" that National Amusements would continue to interfere with a potential Paramount deal that would create a long-term value "without even waiting for the facts."