

TEHRAN TIMES



Archer Zahra Nemati aims to make splash in Rio **11**

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Velayati: Our hands not tied if JCPOA breached

POLITICAL TEHRAN — As Republican U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump insists he will "rip up" or "police" the nuclear deal in his stump speeches, senior Iranian politician Ali Akbar Velayati says Tehran has a number of options at disposal to react.

"That Iran has no other option is not right and we certainly will act according to our interests," Velayati, top advisor to the Leader on international affairs, said in an interview with Al-Mayadeen.

And it makes no difference for Iran either a Republican or Democrat wins the incoming presidential competition in the U.S, Velayati added.

"There is no difference between the Republicans and Democrats in terms of their stance on our country and as we see the Democrats also create obstacles to the agreement with Iran."

Unlike Trump, Democratic rival Hillary Clinton has backed the nuclear deal in her speeches.

Earlier in June, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution said if the next U.S. president tears up the JCPOA, Iran will "light it on fire."

→2

Moscow fair to display Russian versions of Persian books

ART TEHRAN — Russian version of a collection of ten books by Iranian authors are scheduled to be on display at the 29th Moscow International Book Fair, which will be held from September 7 to 11.

The collection will be showcased at the event based on an agreement between Iranian publishers Neyestan and Sureh-Mehr and the Moscow-based publishing company, Sadra, the Iranian publishers announced in a press release on Friday. Four books from Seyyed Mehdi Shojaei's series for children "Philosophy for Children" are among the ten books.

The books are "Neither Friendship nor Hatred Will be Forgotten", "Talking with You", "Watch out! Take care of Rats... and others" and "What If the Snowmen Doesn't Melt?".

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Putin: Russia-Iran co-op has become strategic

Russian president says EAEU-Iran free trade zone can give impetus to investment

MOSCOW (TASS) — Establishing a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Iran can give a strong impetus to expanding bilateral trade and investment, Russian President

Vladimir Putin said in an interview with Azerbaijani state news agency AZERTAC. "The creation of a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union and Iran can give a strong impetus to trade

and investment contacts between Russia and Iran. The joint research group, which will study in detail the parameters of a possible agreement, has already begun its work," Putin said.

→2

3 Iranian shipping firms taken off UK Treasury sanctions list

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The UK Treasury deleted names of three Iranian companies active in maritime transportation from its list of entities entitled to financial sanctions.

The UK Treasury's Office of Financial Sanctions published a notice on August 3 saying that to update the treasury's Consolidated List regarding entities listed under Council Regulation (EU) imposing financial sanctions against Iran, an asset freeze no longer applies to IRISL Club, IRISL Multimodal Transport Company and Leading Maritime PTE LTD.

The notice reads that listings of these entities have been annulled as a result of judgments of the General Court of the European Union.

On November 9, 2013, a judgment of the General Court of the European Union of September 16, 2013 in regard to Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) annulled the listings of IRISL Club and Leading Maritime PTE Ltd.

The second judgment on March 9, 2015 upheld the annulment of IRISL Multimodal Transport Company.

U.S. sanctions barred the IRISL fleet of about 170 vessels from sailing in international waters. They also prohibited international shipping companies from calling on Iranian ports.

International shipping lines are stepping up port calls to Iran as the country's massive maritime trade sector is emerging from sanctions.



Iranian Muslims celebrate birthday of Hazrat Masumeh (SA)

Iranian Muslims attend the birthday celebration of Hazrat Masumeh (SA), the sister of Imam Reza (AS), at her holy shrine in Qom on August 4, 2016. The birthday of Hazrat Masumeh (SA) is also celebrated as Girls' Day in Iran.

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Indigenized platform construction industry welcomes modern technology: POGC official

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

PERSIAN GULF WATERS, Assalouyeh — Platform construction industry has thoroughly been indigenized in Iran but the need for transfer of modern technologies into some sectors still exists, the deputy managing director in off-shore section of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) told the Tehran Times on Tuesday.

"Today, our platform construction industry's need has changed," Farrokh Alikhani said on the sidelines of a ceremony to install the platform

18B of the South Pars gas field.

"The Islamic Republic is self-reliant in designing and construction of platforms and also in supplying fixed equipment as well as installation; however, to provide some commodities such as rotary tools including compressors there are still some needs to be fulfilled either by foreign companies or domestic ones."

"Iran has the base knowledge and domestic potential in platform construction industry and all the installed platforms to the present day observe HSE standards but the country warmly welcomes companies who are ready to provide us with advanced knowledge and up-to-date

technologies," the POGC official clarified.

In the press conference held for 18B installation, Alikhani noted that POGC has decided to install six new platforms of South Pars gas field by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), three of which including platform 18B (the 22nd platform of the giant gas field) have been installed successfully and the company will commence installation of the other three ones within the next 45 days.

Accordingly, the total number of installed platforms in South Pars will reach 25 by the end of the year, he added.

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PICTURE OF THE DAY © gcaptain.com



Iran tanker collides with container ship in Singapore Strait, no spill

An Iranian supertanker collided with a container ship in the Singapore Strait with no loss of life or pollution despite damage to both vessels, shipping officials said on Thursday.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said the collision took place just before midnight Thursday between Dream II, owned by Iran's top oil tanker operator NITC, and MSC Alexandra, owned by the world's number 2 container group MSC of Switzerland.

The MPA and MSC said a number of container boxes fell into the sea, and others landed on the deck of Dream II.

"We are... extremely relieved to hear that there has been no loss of life, or pollution caused despite the significant damage to the hull of MSC Alexandra," Yock Juee Tan, managing director of MSC Asia, said in a statement. "We are now continuing to work closely with the authorities and salvage teams to ensure containers are safely discharged."

MPA said separately Dream II sustained damage to its bow, adding that both vessels were safely anchored in Singapore.

Iran has aimed to ramp up oil exports since the lifting of international sanctions in January after Tehran signed a nuclear deal with world powers last year. The removal of international restrictions has enabled NITC to operate more freely and increase shipments of oil cargoes to its top buyers in Asia including China.

The Singapore Strait, one of the world's busiest commercial shipping routes, is a 105-km long, 16-km wide passage between the Strait of Malacca to the South China Sea. (Source: Reuters)

ARTICLE

By Seyed Hossein Mousavian

Former head of Foreign Relations Committee of Iran's National Security Council

How to kick-start Iran-U.S. regional cooperation

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei recently accused the United States of "obstructing and damaging Iran's economic relations with other countries" — in spite of the nuclear deal. This was proof, he said, of America's "lack of commitment" to its promises, making further talks on regional issues a "deadly poison" that Iran must avoid.

Meanwhile, the Middle East is on the verge of a historically unprecedented collapse. The regional well-springs of civilization — the Iranian plateau, the Nile River Valley and Anatolia (corresponding with the modern states of Iran, Egypt and Turkey) — are all under severe duress. Two of these three civilizational pillars are teeming with internal strife and discord. The continued stability of Iran is now all that stands between the region and all-consuming chaos.

→2

German FM: Trump is one of world's hate preachers

Germany's foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that U.S. presidential candidate from Republicans Donald Trump is one of the world's "hate preachers," the New York Times reported.

Steinmeier emphasized that as many right-wing populists, Donald Trump also plays with people's fear and they make their politics with fear. He also noted that promoters of Brexit are "the hate preachers, like Donald Trump at the moment in the U.S."

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Leader appoints two new provincial representatives

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has appointed two new provincial representatives to South and North Khorasan, Mehr reported on Thursday.

The Leader, in a decree issued on Thursday, appointed Seyyed Alireza Ebadi and Abolqassem Yaqobi as provincial representatives to South Khorasan and North Khorasan, respectively.

Provincial representatives of the Leader will be usually Friday prayer leaders of provincial capitals, as well.

Normally, provincial representatives and Friday prayer leaders are appointed from among those already elected to the Assembly of Experts.



Pakistan Foreign Ministry secretary in Tehran for talks

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Pakistani Foreign Ministry Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry will be holding talks on Saturday with Iranian officials, including Deputy Foreign Minister for Asian and Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour, IRNA reported on Friday.

The meeting will make it the 9th round of political negotiations between the two neighboring countries.

The talks come a week after two rounds of negotiations in Tehran between Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani and Nasser Khan Janjua, the national Security advisor of Pakistan.



Guardian Council in talks with Majlis to revise election law

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Guardian Council spokesman has said he is in talks with the Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani in connection with revising the election law, Tasnim reported on Friday.

Iran will be staging 12th presidential and 5th city and village council elections on May 19, 2017.

In addition to the parliament, the council also will exchange views with various political currents and parties on the revision scheme, said Abbasali Kadkhodaei.

However, the official did not provide details on possible revisions.



Jurisprudence council to feature in CBI decision-making

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A jurisprudence council will be formed in the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) soon to grant religious legitimacy of loan interests, ISNA reported on Friday.

"The Supreme Leader has recently written a letter asking for the formation of a jurisprudence council as a pillar in the central bank..." said Gholamreza Mesbahi-Moqadam, a member of the Expediency Council.

This will cause the people to have a "religiously legitimate" view toward interest rates, the figure explained.

Previously, the council's role was only advisory.



Inflated salaries infringement of Islamic values: cleric

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The interim Friday prayer leader of Tehran said astronomical salaries are against Islamic principles and religious teachings.

"That a member of a managing board receives 20 to 15 times higher than a worker is not tolerable," said Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Movahedi Kermani.

The salary row broke out in the country after a payslip leakage in social media revealed that some financial managers were paid astronomical wages.

President Hassan Rouhani has said the government will take a tough-on policy on luxurious salaries.



Iran, Afghanistan seek expansion of ties

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asian and Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour and Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai have highlighted the importance of expanding relations and cooperation.

During a meeting in Tehran on Thursday, the Iranian and Afghan officials discussed relations in various spheres of politics, economy, culture and fight against drug trafficking.

The officials also exchanged views on removing obstacles on expanding economic ties and legalizing the Afghan refugees' residency in Iran.

Tehran's policy in 'jelly' Middle East is rational: Larijani

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Iranian has characterized performance of some regional countries as "zigzag and conspiratorial," saying his country has acted judiciously in the mercurial region of the Middle East.

Larijani made the remarks in the city of Qom, which he represents in the parliament, Mehr reported on Thursday.

"While the region is in jelly political and security conditions and unlike the zigzag and conspiratorial stance of some neighboring countries, the behavior of the Islamic Republic (of Iran) has been wise and rational," said Ali Larijani.

Apart from the U.S. attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, the Middle East has been a large battlefield fought by terrorist and extremist groups in Iraq and Syria, where the self-proclaimed ISIS holds vast swathes of land.

Also, the Saudi-led war on Yemen and the abortive military coup in Turkey have added more complexity to the scene.

Iran has been backing Iraq and Syria in their fight against ISIS, an extremely shadowy group which its heinous crimes have come as a surprise to the world.

Even three years before the emergence of ISIS, also called Daesh in its Arabic acronym, Iran sided with the Syrian government against militants, calling Syria the "golden ring of resistance."

However, Saudi Arabia and its regional allies have been pouring money and arms to militants in Syria, working hard to dethrone President Bashar al-Assad.

Iran and Saudi Arabia as two regional powerhouses also differ widely on developments in Iraq. While Iran has been support-



Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani

ing Iraq to expel ISIL militants from lands it has occupied in the country the Riyadh government claims that Tehran is fomenting sectarian conflicts in favor of the Shiite population under the guise of its advisory role in the country.

In June Saudi Ambassador Thamer al-Sabhan to Baghdad had tweeted that Iranian military advisers were fueling sectarian violence in Fallujah, seeking to

change the demographic composition of Fallujah, inhabited mainly by Sunnis.

Reacting to the sectarian and religious remarks by Saudis against Tehran, Iraqi Ambassador to Tehran Rajeh Saber Abboud al-Mousavi said in July, "There is no document indicating Iran's interference with domestic affairs of countries."

"Iran's role in Iraq is limited to an advisory one and this is done at the formal request of Baghdad," he added.

On June 29 U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry deemed Iran's presence in Iraq to be "helpful" to American attempts to beat back the threat of ISIS, according to CNN.

"Look, we have challenges with Iran as everybody knows and we are working on those challenges," Kerry said. "But I can tell you that Iran in Iraq has been in certain ways helpful, and they clearly are focused on ISIL-Daesh, and so we have a common interest, actually," Kerry noted.

Brent McGurk, the U.S. special envoy tasked with defeating ISIS, also said on June 29 that Iran-backed Shiite militias are mostly helpful in Iraq, though some go rogue.

"We think most of these popular mobilization forces do operate under the control of the Iraqi state, but about 15-20% of them actually do not," McGurk said.

Syrians should determine their destiny, senior MP says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Thursday that the Syrian people should determine the destiny of their country.

"We support Syria's territorial integrity and condemn the U.S. plans to disintegrate Islamic countries. The Syrian nation will never let the country be disintegrated," - Boroujerdi said in a press conference in Damascus.

He said that the Zionist regime of Israel and the Jordanian forces back clashes in southern parts of Syria; however, he added that the terrorists' efforts will not reach a result.

The senior legislator also said the UN has many experiences in establishing "safe routes" to send humanitarian aid and can use these experiences in the conflict-stricken areas around Aleppo to help civilians exit the areas.

On Thursday Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders called for direct and effective aid to civilians in the Syrian city of Aleppo. On Thursday the countries participating in the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) met in Geneva to discuss the current situation in the war-torn country.

According to Koenders, so far the ISSG has booked little success in producing a breakthrough in the negotiations between the warring parties. "That is irresponsible. It is time that the ISSG and its co-chairs, the U.S. and Russia, take responsibility to prevent a humanitarian disaster in Aleppo," Koenders said, according to NL Times?

Elsewhere, he said that Saudi Arabia is pursuing a policy to normalize ties with the Zionist regime.

Iran condemns any effort which is in line with normal-



Alaeddin Boroujerdi, head of the Iranian Parliament security committee, meets with President al-Assad in Damascus

izing ties with the Tel Aviv regime, the senior MP added.

Boroujerdi said that the Palestinians can restore their rights through resistance.

Saudis twisted hajj negotiations on purpose: Ohadi

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The head of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization said they had done their utmost to reach a consensus with Saudis over the hajj impasse.

Saeed Ohadi made the remarks on a TV program on Friday.

"Mecca is the House of God and no one can deprive the Muslims of their religious rights. We still believe hajj pilgrimage must not be politicized," Ohadi said.

Already at loggerheads over a number of regional issues, notably the Syrian crisis and the storming of Riyadh's diplomatic posts in Tehran and Mashhad, Tehran and Riyadh failed to mend fences over this year's haj ritual over security concerns expressed by Iran.

Rounds of negotiations were held, coming to no tangible results. They had come up with a draft contract which Tehran rejected as "discriminatory" and "contrary to

the dignity of Iranians."

Tension between Tehran and Riyadh has been escalating since 464 Iranians lost their lives in a stampede in the area of Mina in September 2015 during the last Hajj.

According to the Iranian official, from the outset it was clear to the Iranian side that Saudis won't be cooperative.

"They (the Saudis) didn't even observe code of conduct, required fingerprints, and in so doing, they showed their hostility to

the negotiations," Ohadi lamented.

The Saudi officials, he added, "first sent [us] an invitation letter but they then asked to have it postponed and we accepted. They were supposed to give us visa in Month of Esfand (Feb 20-Mach 19, 2016) but they did not.

In a bid to save face, Ohadi added, Saudis issued visa for the Iranian negotiators, but the first round of negotiations took place three and a half months later.

Putin: Russian-Iranian co-op has already become strategic

Russia has agreed to build 8 more nuclear plants in Iran, Putin says



"We are also interested in strengthening our partnership with Tehran in regional affairs. We consider it an important factor of maintaining stability and security across a large territory from Central Asia and the Caspian region to the Middle East. We will continue to support Iran's pursuit of full SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) membership," the Russian leader noted.

"Iran is Russia's longtime partner. We believe that bilateral relations will benefit from the reduction of tensions around Iran following the comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear program," he noted.

"First of all, we intend to continue fostering trade and economic cooperation. During my visit to Tehran on November 23, last year, and my negotiations with Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, I found that Iran's leaders genuinely share this approach," Putin said. "Thus, through collective efforts we have managed to increase the volume of mutual trade. In the first five months of this



President Rouhani meets President Putin in Tehran in November 2015.

year, it grew by 70%, reaching \$855 million," he reminded.

The Russian president said large-scale joint projects in the oil and gas sphere, and the aerospace and electric power industries are being developed. "For instance, Russia intends to grant two state loans to Iran to the amount of €2.2 billion to finance the construction of a thermal power plant near the city of Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf coast and the electrification of the Garmsar-Ince Burun railway section in the north-east of the country," Putin noted.

"In certain areas, Russian-Iranian cooperation has already become strategic in nature. This is particularly true of the joint work in the field of peaceful nuclear energy. Iran's first nuclear power plant, Bushehr was built on the basis of Russian technologies. Plans for the construction of 8 more nuclear power units by Russian specialists in Iran have been agreed," he said. "We will further assist our Iranian partners in implementing the Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program, including the processing of enriched uranium and the conversion of facilities to produce stable isotopes," Putin concluded.

How to kick-start Iran-U.S. regional cooperation



While regional stability should be a priority for the international community, the forces seeking to undermine the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) wish nothing more than to return Iran and the United States to the path of full-scale confrontation. While they have not

yet been successful in their efforts to spur Washington into violating the letter of the nuclear deal, their actions have certainly violated its spirit.

Under the JCPOA, Iran committed to verifiably limit the two theoretical pathways to a bomb: uranium enrichment and plutonium production. It also agreed to the

highest international standards on nuclear inspections and transparency. Iran has fully abided by these obligations, as verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In return, Iran was due relief from all nuclear-related sanctions. This was enshrined not only in the JCPOA, but also in UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2231, which

voided all previous nuclear-related Security Council resolutions against Iran. As such, limitations on Iranian trade, banking and financial transactions were formally lifted and the Iranian people were set to begin benefiting from increased foreign investment and business. But all has not gone well so far.



Velayati: Our hands not tied if JCPOA breached



"We do not violate the deal, but if the other party violates it, if they tear the agreement up, we will light it on fire," the Leader asserted. Also on August 1, he said, "The JCPOA, as

an experience, proved the futility of negotiations with the Americans, their unfaithfulness, and the necessity of distrust in the Americans' promises once more..." complaining the deal has not resulted in any "tangible impact" on

the Iranians' lives.

There seems to be no immediate end to the anti-JCPOA remarks by both sides as presidential elections in both countries are drawing closer.

This is as true of the Obama administration in the U.S. as it is of the Rouhani administration in Iran, where opponents are leveling increasingly fiercer criticism at the government for slow economic benefits from the deal.

ISIL captures 3,000 fleeing Iraqis: UNHCR

The UN refugee agency UNHCR says ISIL (Daesh) terrorists may have captured up to 3,000 fleeing Iraqi villagers on Thursday and subsequently executed 12 of them.

The report followed a statement on Thursday from the Iraqi Observatory for Human Rights, which said about 1,900 civilians had been captured by an estimated 100-120 Daesh militants.

The observatory said Daesh was using people as shields against attacks by Iraqi security forces, adding scores of civilians had been executed, and six burnt.

The report said the Takfiri group had captured the internally displaced people from villages in Hawjah District in Kirkuk Governorate trying to flee to Kirkuk city.

"Reportedly, 12 of the IDPs have been killed in captivity," the UNHCR report said.

The Iraqi army and allied volunteer forces are preparing for a final push to dislodge Daesh from Mosul - the Takfiri group's last major city in Iraq.

The UN has appealed for about \$2 billion of donations to deal with the aftermath of the Mosul assault but has received nothing so far.

The likely capture of thousands of Iraqis came as Izidis marked this week the second anniversary of what investigators have termed a genocide by Daesh



against the Iraqi minority group.

On Wednesday, the United Nations said thousands of Izidis are being held captive by Daesh in Syria where many are used for sexual slavery or forced to fight for the Takfiri group.

According to the UN, around 3,200 Yazidi women and girls are being held captive, and thousands of men and boys are missing.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday condemned "the heinous crimes that continue to be committed by ISIL (Daesh) against the diverse ethnic and religious communities of Iraq."

He also expressed deep concern "about the safety of the people who remain in ISIL's captivity," calling upon all those engaged in the fight against

Daesh to make their release a prime objective in their military operations.

The US has been deploying additional troops to Iraq in anticipation of the assault on Mosul.

The plan has raised questions, with some critics citing Washington's failure to react when Daesh was overrunning Iraqi cities one after another.

The Americans and their allies have also been assisting Iraqi Kurds which maintain self-rule on some portions of the Arab country.

Kurdish forces are among the groups primed for a push on Mosul along with the Americans.

Hezbollah deputy head Sheikh Naim Qassem warned this week against the partitioning of Iraq and neighboring Syria.

"On the battlefield and in view of regional and international interventions I don't rule out that one of the ideas proposed is finding a state of partition in those two countries but will it succeed or not?" he said in an interview with Reuters.

"So far the forces that want the unity of Iraq and Syria are able to prevent the idea of partition but we should remain worried about the possibility that some countries might push these two countries or one of them into partition."

(Source: Reuters)

China joins Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan in security alliance



China is to set up an anti-terrorism alliance with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, as it seeks to boost coordination with neighbors to tackle what it says is a growing domestic militant threat.

Fang Fenghui, a member of the powerful Central Military Commission which controls China's armed forces, hosted a meeting with his counterparts on Wednesday in Urumqi, capital of the western Xinjiang region, where officials say they are battling Islamist militants.

The four countries recognized the serious threat of terrorism and extremism to regional stability, the official Xinhua news agency said, and they agreed to set up a "four-country mechanism" for intelligence sharing and training.

"All parties reaffirmed they will cooperate to respond to these forces, and safeguard all member countries' peace and stability," Xinhua said.

Afghan army chief of general staff, General Qadam Shah Shaheem, Pakistani army chief General Raheel Sharif, and the Chief of General Staff of the Tajikistan armed forces, Major General EA Cobidrozoda, took part in the talks, the news agency said.

The meeting comes after China's defense minister this week thanked Afghan-

istan's Shaheem for support in fighting the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) a group that China says wants to set up a separate state in Xinjiang.

China did not elaborate on the help it got.

China has long been concerned that instability in Afghanistan will spill over into violence-prone Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur people, where hundreds of people have died in recent years in unrest Beijing blames on extremists.

The United States and the United Nations have listed ETIM as a terrorist group, though some experts have questioned its cohesiveness and say China's policies in Xinjiang have contributed to unrest.

China denies that its policies stoke tension in Xinjiang or motivate Uighurs to join ISIL militants, though it acknowledges some have gone to Syria and Iraq to join the group.

China is also working with Pakistan and the United States to broker peace talks to end a Taliban insurgency that has raged for 15 years in Afghanistan.

That effort never got beyond exploratory talks and appeared to break down completely when Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Pakistan in May.

(Source: India Times)

Saudi Arabia forcefully evacuating residents near Yemen border



Saudi Arabia has launched a forced evacuation of locals in its Jizan region, as Yemeni forces advance deeper into the Saudi territory in response to Riyadh's war on their country.

Yemen's Khabar news agency website reported the development on Friday with pictures of departing locals as well as a video showing Saudi military personnel arguing with locals who resisted the order to leave their homes.

The report said villages and towns affected by the order are closest to the common border with Yemen.

The Saudi military has threatened to strip locals of their citizenship and invalidate their identification and travel documents if they refuse to leave. Saudi forces have also deployed to residential areas in the region in anticipation of a major escalation.

Some activists say the Saudi regime has already cut the locals' access to food resources and water reservoirs and limited their freedom of movement.

Yemen's army and Houthi Ansarullah fighters have been retaliating for Saudi attacks on their country.

About 10,000 people have been killed since March 2015, when the Sau-

di war was launched in an attempt to restore former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi to power. Yemenis say most of the victims in the Saudi airstrikes are civilians.

On Thursday, UN Special Envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh said he planned to suspend peace talks between the Houthis and representatives of the Saudi-backed former Yemeni government after the effort faced new hiccups.

The talks have been underway in Kuwait since April 21, without a major breakthrough amid sharp differences between the two sides.

Houthis say any potential peace process should, first and foremost, facilitate the formation of a national unity government and the appointment of a new consensus president, who would oversee transition.

A UN proposal has called on the Houthis to withdraw and surrender their arms. Ansarullah has rejected the plan as unacceptable, saying it falls short of establishing a unity government in the war-torn country. They have also accused the UN of having altered the terms of a draft agreement earlier worked out in Kuwait.

(Source: Press TV)

No basis for talks with Turkey after coup: German FM

The German foreign minister says Berlin-Ankara ties have become so strained after the failed military coup in Turkey that there is virtually "no basis" for negotiations between the two sides.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that the government in Berlin has serious concerns about mass arrests that have been carried out by Ankara after the thwarted coup on July 15.

"We are talking with each other like emissaries from two different planets. There is essentially no basis for understanding ... no basis for discussions," the top German diplomat said.

So far, tens of thousands have been sacked, suspended or detained as part of the government crackdown on the coup plotters and those linked to Fethullah Gulen, a US-based opposition cleric blamed by Ankara for the coup attempt.

In return, Turkey says Germany has not taken the coup attempt seriously. The Ankara government has also been angered by media reports in the European country suggesting the coup was actually orchestrated by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Steinmeier said, "We must be allowed to ask if mass arrests of tens of thousands of lawyers, judges, journalists, soldiers, closure of broadcast stations and shut-



downs of newspaper - were carried out under the rule of law."

He also said the reinstatement of the death penalty in Turkey would prevent its entry into the European Union.

The EU has harshly criticized Ankara's post-coup crackdown as "unacceptable," urging the Turkish government to respect the "rule of law" and "human rights."

The German minister, however, warned that stopping negotiations with Ankara would eliminate any leverage Europeans have regarding the many thousands of people arrested in Turkey.

He was reacting to a demand by Austrian Chancellor

Christian Kern for a halt in talks with Turkey.

The German official said Berlin is "trying to end the current situation, which is unsatisfactory but also dangerous, in which we are only communicating via megaphones, or microphones and cameras."

Analysts say the EU-Turkey standoff could endanger a deal they signed in March on curbing the influx of refugees into Europe.

Steinmeier, however, stressed that Ankara and Berlin would continue to implement the refugee deal, under which Turkey has committed to taking back all the asylum seekers and refugees that used the Aegean Sea to illegally reach Greece.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has threatened to withdraw from the agreement.

Last year, over a million refugees entered Europe through Turkey and Greece and then made their way through the Balkans to Germany and other northern member states of the EU.

Europe is now concerned that the continent would face another refugee influx after Erdogan warned that Turkey would allow the refugees to enter Europe if it failed to meet its commitments.

(Source: Today Zaman)

NEWS

Turkey calls for new round of Syria talks in Geneva

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Friday negotiations over the future of Syria should resume and he called for a fourth round of peace talks in Geneva.

Cavusoglu also said in an interview with broadcaster TGRT Haber that the surrounding of Aleppo by Syrian government forces threatened a new wave of migration.

(Source: Reuters)

Obama: ISIL still a threat despite coalition gains

U.S. President Barack Obama has touted gains in the campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group, but cautioned that the group, also known as ISIS, can still direct and inspire damaging attacks.

Speaking after meeting with top aides at the Pentagon, Obama said that ISIL will continue to be a threat, highlighting the group's ability to motivate so-called "lone wolf" supporters to launch small-scale attacks that are harder to detect and prevent.



"What ISIL has figured out is that if they can convince a handful of people, or even one person, to carry out an attack on a subway, or at a parade or some other public venue, and kill scores of people as opposed to thousands of people, it still creates the kinds of fear and concern that elevates their profile," Obama said.

ISIL has claimed responsibility for a number of recent mass killings, including a lorry attack in the French city of Nice last month that left 84 dead, and the nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, that killed 49.

While they may not have been directed by the group, the attackers were reportedly inspired by ISIL.

Obama said the U.S. must do a better job disrupting ISIL networks and intercepting the internet messages that can get to individuals and inspire them to act.

"Those networks are more active in Europe than they are here, but we don't know what we don't know, and so it's conceivable that there are some networks here that could be activated," he said.

Warning on overreaction

Obama cautioned against overreacting to such attacks and rejected efforts to demonize Muslims as a way to make the U.S. safer, in a criticism of Donald Trump, the Republican presidential candidate, who has called for a ban on Muslims entering the country.

"If we start making bad decisions, indiscriminately killing civilians for example in some of those areas, instituting offensive religious tests on who can enter the country, those kinds of strategies can end up backfiring," Obama said.

The U.S. is leading a military coalition conducting air strikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria, where the group seized broad swathes of territory in 2014.

Since then, the coalition has conducted daily plane and drone strikes - more than 14,000 so far - and worked with local forces on the ground to gradually reclaim the seized territory.

Yet, despite the massive effort, ISIL still holds Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, and the Syrian city of Raqqa.

"I am pleased with the progress that we've made on the ground in Iraq and Syria," Obama said, but added: "We're far from freeing Mosul and Raqqa."

'Back from the brink'

He also criticized Russia for failing "to take the necessary steps" to try to reduce violence in Syria, saying it was time for Moscow "to show that it is serious" about bringing peace.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has supported Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, offering international cover, military aid and carrying out air strikes in opposition-held areas.

Obama said the U.S. remains prepared to work with Russia, adding, however, that he was not confident Russia or Putin could be trusted.

"The depravity of the Syrian regime has rightly earned the condemnation of the world," Obama said.

"Russia's direct involvement in these actions over the last several weeks raises very serious questions about their commitment to pulling the situation back from the brink."

Earlier this week, Obama also announced a new front in the war, ordering air strikes against ISIL fighters' positions in the Libyan city of Sirte.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

SNIPPETS



Iran's trade balance with Turkey falls negative

ECONOMY TEHRAN – Iran's trade balance desk with Turkey reported negative after Turkey's export to the country rose by 37 percent in the first six months of 2016, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

According to the report, Iran imported \$2.597 billion worth of goods from Turkey in the mentioned period versus the \$1.892 billion of 2015.

Based on the data released by the Turkish Statistical Bureau, the volume of trade between the two countries fell by 11 percent in the first half of 2016 compared to the same time in 2015 and the amount of Iran's imports exceeded the exports by \$398 million.

Two countries bilateral trade volume stood at \$5.436 billion during January-June 2015 while the figure fell to \$4.796 billion in the six-month period in 2016.



Tehran hosting intl. furniture exhibition

ECONOMY TEHRAN – The 25th edition of Iran's International Exhibition of Home Furniture (HOFEX2016) kicked off in Tehran on 3 August, Tasnim reported.

According to Tasnim, the opening ceremony was attended by Hossein Eshfahbodi, deputy minister of industry, mining and trade and managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company, and more than 404 furniture manufacturers exhibiting at this year's fair.

The four-day event is running at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Alongside the Iranian exhibitors, six companies from Turkey and Lebanon are also showcasing their products.



Pakistan eyes importing energy from Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN – Importing from Iran is the fastest, closest and most economical way to meet Pakistan's energy requirements, IRNA quoted Pakistan's Water and Power Minister as saying on Thursday.

According to IRNA, Khawaja Muhammad Asif made the remarks in a meeting with Mehdi Honardoust, Iran's ambassador in Pakistan.

The minister noted that his country is seeking to take advantage of all possible opportunities for energy imports from Iran, adding "Pakistan attaches great importance to trade relations with Iran and sees the country as a close friend and a good neighbor."

Indigenized platform construction industry welcomes modern technology: POGC official



He underlined that South Pars' gas production in Iranian year 1390 (2011-2012) stood at 250 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d), while the figure currently stands at 430 mcm/d and will reach 540 mcm/d following the operation of the said six new platforms by the yearend.

South Pars' total output will eventually hit 820 mcm/d after having all of its 24 phases comprising 40 platforms operational in upcoming years, he said.

As formerly reported, the gas filed is divided into 24 standard phases, of which phases 1-10, 12, 15 and 16 are fully operational. Phases 17 and 18 as well as 19 are operating at half capacity.

Underscoring that it will take about four to five months for each platform to get operational, Alikhani reminded that "previously, when that we had foreigners as our partners in the projects seven months were required for having each platform online as of the installation, and the time duration [under Iranians' management] is decreased to five months maximally."

"The Oil Ministry and POGC have had rapid and safe expansion of South Pars gas field, especially exploiting joint fields, on their agenda and they have reached their primary goal so far, while meeting all the necessary HSE standards," he asserted.

"Iran's platform construction industry is mature now," he announced.

Talks ongoing with foreign investors'

On the sidelines of the same event,



(Left to right) Masoud Golshenas, the executive director of mega projects in IDRO; Farrokh Alikhani, the deputy managing director in off-shore section of POGC; Hassan Boveyri, the operator of South Pars phases 17 and 18 development project

the executive director of mega projects in the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Masoud Golshenas informed the Tehran Times of some ongoing negotiations between IDRO and foreign investment companies for future cooperation in joint oil and gas projects in Iran. He, however, refused to mention any specific name of the foreign companies.

Golshenas, who was among the speakers in the press conference, as the representative from the operating company of Iran Shipbuilding & Offshore Industries Complex Company (ISOICO), expressed

content that platform 18B was successfully installed, meeting all safety standards by Iranian experts in the industry.

"ISOICO, the body in charge of the platform construction and subsidiary company of the Ministry of Industries, Mining, and Trade, took advantage of the maximum capabilities and potentials of Iranian professionals to construct this platform and will do so in other off-shore platforms which are to be installed in future."

"Platform 18B was 100-percent designed and constructed domestically although some specific equipment were

imported," Golshenas said, "Iran does not require foreigners' participation in its platform construction industry."

'Platform 18B to start operation before winter'

Hassan Boveyri, the operator of South Pars phases 17 and 18 development project, who also addressed the press conference, described that the 2,300-ton platform 18B, with the capacity of producing 14 mcm/d of gas is the third installed platform in phases 17 and 18 and will become operational before winter.

"It took about nine million people per hour within 18 months to complete 18B's construction," he added.

Answering a question about the positive impact of the implementation of Iran's nuclear deal with the six world powers in January on accelerating the pace of installing platforms in South Pars, he elucidated that in Phases 17 and 18 some of the basic equipment including turbines and turbo compressors were to be supplied by European companies such as Siemens but the tools could not be received in the sanction-era. However, as of the first month of the current Iranian calendar year, Farvardin (March 20-April 19, 2016), all the ordered tools have been imported thanks to the execution of the nuclear accord, he said.

The platform 18B of Iran's South Pars gas field was fixed on its jacket in the phase 18 of the giant gas field in the Persian Gulf on Tuesday. The operation of loading the platform from Bandar-Abbas yard was conducted by ISOICO on June 23.

Iran adopts oil contract as glut no barrier to boost output

Iran approved a new oil contract model, taking the OPEC nation a step closer to welcoming foreign investment in its energy industry and boosting production even more into an oversupplied market.

The contract model was approved at a cabinet meeting Wednesday, according to the official Islamic Republic News Agency. Priority will be given to boosting output at jointly owned oil and gas fields, state radio reported, citing Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh. Iran wants to lure international companies that can make long-term investments worth billions of dollars and bring technology after sanctions were eased in January.

Iran has been working on the oil contract model for the past two years. The country hopes companies will invest as much as \$50 billion a year. It's already succeeding in meeting its pledge to regain market share it lost due to the sanctions over its nuclear program. Production was 3.55 million barrels a day in July, 27 percent higher for this year and the most since December 2011, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

"Any process is going to take time and a lot of steps



before any investment goes into the ground," Edward Bell, commodities analyst at Emirates NBD in Dubai, said by phone. "This isn't going to be a step change in the way markets are going now."

OPEC ranking

Brent crude prices fell 15 percent in July amid a growing recognition the global surplus of crude will take time to clear. Iran seeks to reach an eight-year high for daily output of 4 million barrels by the end of 2016, with foreign investment helping it regain the position as OPEC's

second-largest producer. It was third-largest in July, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Big oil companies, mostly from Europe and including Italy's Eni SpA and France's Total SA have expressed an interest in developing Iran's oil and gas fields. Calls to Eni and Total seeking comment about their interest now weren't immediately returned.

The new contract model was approved in a cabinet session presided by President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday. The Oil Ministry will review each contract to be signed by potential new investors, including details on price, duration and other terms of the project, according to state radio. The document still needs to be reviewed by parliament for final endorsement, Iran's Oil Ministry news service Shana reported.

Investors will want to know exactly what conditions they will face in Iran, such as joint venture regulations and dispute resolution, Emirates NBD's Bell said. "Once we get the full details on that, we will get a much better sense of how attractive the contracts are."

(Source: Bloomberg)

NEWS

China prepares economic solutions for G20

China plans to map out a landmark agenda in a bid to boost the global economy during the upcoming G20 Summit, which will be hosted for the first time in the country in less than a month.

The summit will concentrate on solutions that can bring an end to the economic problems that have been afflicting the world since 2008, echoing the meeting's slogan: "Toward an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy."

During the past few years, the recession has impaired the progress of developed economies, deterred the growths of emerging economies and impacted global trade.

The highly anticipated summit will focus on macro-economic, fiscal and financial policies from around the world. Ruan Zongze, the deputy director of China Institute of International Studies, said he hopes they will make a concerted effort to combat the rise of trade protectionism while highlighting common concerns and mutual assistance.

Before the summit, China convened three meetings between summit coordinators, financial ministers and chiefs of central banks to outline structural reforms spearheaded in nine major areas following 48 guiding principles.

China will also try to push forward international economic governance reform by extending the roles of emerging markets in global financial institutions.

On the G20 platform, China has proposed the idea of building an orderly, fair, just, and inclusive world taxation system. Meanwhile, within China's endeavor, the G20 members agree to commit to the expansion of infrastructure construction for middle -and-long-term economic growth.

Bringing new impetus to the world economy, the new industrial revolution and associated digital technologies, joint efforts in protesting trade protectionism and plans for the sustainable development are other issues that will be deliberated.

(Source: china.org.cn)

German manufacturing data point to sluggish economy

Manufacturing orders in Germany surprisingly declined on the month in June on a sharp drop in orders from within the Eurozone, data from the country's economy ministry showed Friday.

The data point to stagnation in the country's key industrial sector and suggest only moderate economic growth in coming months in Europe's largest economy.

Orders fell by 0.4% in adjusted terms versus expectations in a Wall Street Journal survey of 0.5% growth. Foreign orders declined by 1.2% while domestic orders rose by 0.7%. The data showed that orders from the rest of the Eurozone sharply fell by 8.5% on the month, while those from non-Eurozone states rose by 3.8%.

The ministry said that in the second

quarter new orders were down 0.5% versus the first three months of the year.

"Today's figures don't change the general picture of a stagnant German manufacturing sector," said Commerzbank economist Ralph Solveen in a note after the release. He said that the numbers point to downside risks to the industrial-production figures that are due to be released Monday.

"All this suggests that gross domestic product in Germany hardly grew after the strong beginning of the year," said Mr. Solveen. "Also for the third quarter moderate growth is on the horizon, which however isn't attributable to the Brexit vote, but rather to the general weakness of the global economy."

(Source: wall Street Journal)

Investors await Moody's Turkey verdict to move billions in funds

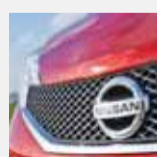
The fate of billions of dollars in investments in Turkish bonds hangs in the balance as Moody's Investors Service prepares to reveal whether it's handing the country a second junk rating on its debt.

Moody's, which put Turkey on review for a downgrade immediately after a failed military plot to oust the government last month, currently ranks the nation's debt at Baa3, its lowest rung within investment grade. A rating review is scheduled for Friday and derivatives traders are already treating it as speculative, with the score implied by credit default swaps at Ba3, three steps into high-yield territory, according to Moody's Analytics.

If it cuts, Moody's will join S&P Global Ratings in assigning Turkey non-investment grade status, rendering its bonds ineligible for many international investors who are limited to holding low-risk assets. While JPMorgan Chase & Co. said a downgrade may drive forced selling of as much as \$8.7 billion of Turkish bonds, even a decision to keep the rating unchanged will not assuage all investors if the outlook remains negative.

Whatever the outcome, "the market is much better off being short Turkey at the moment," said Cristian Maggio, head of emerging-markets research at TD Securities in London.

(Source: Bloomberg)



Nissan says Brexit deal will determine future UK plant investment: BBC

The chief executive of Japanese carmaker Nissan said future investment decisions about Britain's biggest car plant will depend on the terms of a Brexit deal struck with the European Union on customs, trade and free movement of goods.

Nissan's Sunderland plant in the north of England built nearly one in three of Britain's 1.6 million cars last year and has been lauded as one of Europe's most efficient facilities.

But most of the site's output is exported to Europe and Renault-Nissan Alliance Chief Executive Carlos Ghosn told the BBC that Nissan and other companies were waiting to see the outcome of Brexit talks before making new investment decisions.

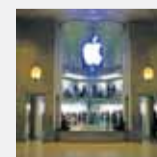


Commerzbank to finish trader moves from London to Frankfurt by year end

Germany's Commerzbank is set to complete a move of around 80 fixed income and foreign exchange traders from London to its Frankfurt base by year-end, a bank spokesman said on Friday.

The move, part of a broader strategic reshuffle announced in early 2015, comes as Britain's vote to leave the European Union in June has raised questions about London's position as a center for global finance.

"This process is almost complete and expected to be finalized by year-end 2016," said the spokesman, adding the decision had not been impacted by the Brexit vote in June.



Designers come out for Apple in patent fight with Samsung

Apple Inc. deserved the hundreds of millions of dollars in damages Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. paid for infringing patented designs of the iPhone, a group of design industry professionals told the U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday.

Setting up a clash with a number of companies that have come out on the side of Samsung, more than 100 designers and educators signed on to a new court brief supporting Apple.

They include the industrial design director at Parsons School of Design, the design director for Bentley Motors, and Tony Chambers, the editor-in-chief of Wallpaper magazine.

NEWS IN BRIEF

One month backpacking Iran: Top experiences

On our one way ticket to the Far East we never planned on stopping in Iran, a country we knew little about. However we had heard some amazing stories from backpackers who had visited Iran.

So we decided to go for it! And boy are we happy that we did. We spent one month travelling the country, from the date palm trees in the south, through the deserts in the west to the freezing mountains in the north.

Iran seems to offer everything a nature-lover can desire, where you can enjoy four seasons all-year round. Here you'll find the hottest deserts on earth, the world's largest water cave and the tallest mountains in the Middle-East. Not to mention, being repeatedly titled the most hospitable nation in the world by experienced travelers, with an unrivaled cultural heritage of ancient Persia.

But is it really safe to visit Iran?

At first our ignorant minds wandered about the Islamic State in Iraq and Afghani Taliban. How can it possibly be safe to travel to Iran, bordered between these two unstable countries? But we were wrong! After filtering through media propaganda and US embassy warnings, we found heaps of real travel stories, all mentioning how safe it is to visit Iran.

After spending 30 days in the country we can now share our own personal experience. We felt safe from day one! Even when wandering the streets after nightfall.

Iranians have the utmost respect for travelers and make their efforts in convincing you that Iran is safe, disproving the media rumors. Violent crime rates are low, even lower than in the U.S.

That being said, every country has its own set of rules and Iran might have stricter rules than most countries, but as a traveler it is your responsibility to respect them.

Women must cover their hair by law and dress appropriately. However after a few days in Iran this gets into habit and by respecting their culture you will not face any trouble.

So now that your safety concerns are out of the question, let's have a closer look at what the country really has to offer.

■ Enjoy Iranian cuisine, sitting on a Persian carpet

You won't find many restaurants in the country, since Iranians prefer to cook at home. Most dishes include rice and meat (lamb, chicken or fish) mixed



A foreign backpacker in a historical site of Kerman city, southeastern Iran

with various herbs and spices. Kebab with saffron rice is a popular dish, but the Fesenjan, a savory stew featuring duck, pomegranate and walnut, is a must try! Sitting on the carpet floor is the usual way of dining for most Iranians, whether poor or rich.

At first we had some difficulties finding a comfortable position, but with every meal our muscles and ligaments seemed to get more and more used to the strain. Somehow sitting together on a beautiful Persian carpet makes the atmosphere more relaxed and less formal than dining at a dinner table.

■ Go back to ancient Persia and visit Persepolis

Did you know that Iran is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations and hosts thirteen UNESCO World Heritage Sites? Persepolis is one of them and one of the greatest ancient UNESCO sites in the Middle East.

Built over 2500 years ago, Persepolis was the capital of the Persian Empire, back when it reached from Greece to India. The world empire was thought to have inhabited 44% of the world's population during these times (the highest such number of any world empire). Its glory came to an end when Alexander the Great burned and sacked the city 333 BC, leaving Persepolis in ruins ever since.

■ Climb the Kalouts of the Shahdad desert

The so-called Kalouts are a rare formation of towering sand rocks, scattered around in the Shahdad desert. Here you will also find one of the hottest spots on earth, with ground temperatures reaching as high as 70°C during summer. Here you won't find any living creatures, except maybe the toughest bacteria.

■ Meet the locals and learn how to Tarof

Iranians are famous for being one of the most hospitable nations in the world. You won't have to wait long to test this reputation. We hadn't even landed in Iran, but already we were starting to get invitation to stay for dinner or overnight from complete strangers.

Accept these offers once in a while and get to know the unique etiquette of Tarof, where denying a cup of tea at least three times before accepting is considered courteous.

■ Go skiing in Dizin

In the Alborz mountain range, north of Tehran, you'll find one of the highest ski resorts in the world, Dizin. This resort has a good number of pistes to choose from and at the top (4000 m) you'll get a perfect view over Mt. Damavand, Iran's tallest mountain.

■ Visit half of the world in Isfahan

Once a capital of Iran and known for being one of the most beautiful cities in the world, with tree-lined boulevards, historical bridges and Islamic architecture, there is a famous rhyme in Persian "Isfahan nesf-e Jahan", meaning "Isfahan is half of the world".

■ Get lost in Abyaneh, the ancient mountain village

The village is often referred to as the Red Village for its red mud brick houses and the surrounding mountain terrain (bearing the same color due to iron oxides).

The village is at least 1500 years old originating from the time of the Arab invasion, when many of the Persians fled to the mountains and deserts to escape forced conversion to Islam.

■ Sail into the largest water cave in the world

Take a 2.4 km boat tour inside Ali-Sadr cave, the largest of its kind. On the walls inside you'll find pictures of animals and hunting scenes dating back to 12,000 years ago.

■ Bargain for a Persian carpet at the bazaar

It can take one person up to 6-12 months to weave a 1.5 x 1.0 m carpet depending on how dense you weave it (knots per square inch). They can cost you up to 5000\$, but you can get them for cheaper, with fewer knots made from cheap wool instead of silk, colored with chemicals instead of organic dyes, but we couldn't get our eyes off the irresistible and shiny silk carpets woven to perfection.

Take your time, drink tea with the owners and visit a few different shops. When you find the right carpet, remember to bargain heavily!

If you are looking for a country off the beaten path, then Iran is the place for you. The tourism is quite underdeveloped and it's remarkable to see how Iranians stay close to their old traditions.

Iran is a rewarding place to visit especially for curious travelers who want to learn the basis of the country, who its people are and what their culture stands for – ignoring political propaganda and news headlines. So hurry up while you can, you never know when the sanctions will be lifted off, blowing in a gust of Western influence.

(Source: hippie-inheels.com)

Thailand's tourism boom: It's over

The boom in tourist arrivals to Thailand over the past five years finally appears to be over. The industry will remain one of the country's best-performing sectors but cannot maintain previous growth rates.

While Chinese demand for holidays in Thailand will continue to rise, it can no longer drive the rate of industry expansion recorded from 2011 to 2015. Growth in Chinese tourist arrivals fell to 13.2 per cent in the second quarter, dragging down overall arrivals growth. The sector will become increasingly dependent on rising spending per visitor.

As tourism growth decelerates, the Thai economy risks more severe underperformance. The sector has an outsized influence on the economy, directly contributing 13.2 per cent of GDP growth in the first quarter, the high-

est level on record.

After years of rapid expansion, the growth of Thailand's tourism industry is slowing. In the second quarter of 2016, arrivals increased a relatively modest 8.2 per cent year on year (see chart), largely due to a deceleration in growth of arrivals from China. FT Confidential Research nevertheless believes the sector is heading into a new era of healthy, if slower, growth.

Over the past decade, Thailand has become one of the world's top tourist destinations. In 2015, the country ranked sixth globally for tourism receipts and 11th for arrivals. Visitor numbers nearly doubled between 2010 and 2015, rising from 15.9m to 29.9m, and annual receipts now exceed Bt1.4tn (\$40.5bn).

In the first quarter of the year, tourism revenue account-

ed for a record 13.2 per cent of GDP, more than Thailand's entire agricultural sector. This does not include the secondary effects of tourism, which probably push the total contribution of the sector above 20 per cent of GDP.

Rising incomes in China have led to a surge in outbound tourism, with an estimated 120m Chinese tourists spending \$215bn on international travel in 2015, according to the China Tourism Research Institute and World Travel and Tourism Council, respectively.

Thailand has been a primary beneficiary. Nearly 8m Chinese tourists visited Thailand in 2015, according to the Thailand Department of Tourism, a more than sixfold increase over the 1.1m recorded in 2010. China accounted for 29.5 per cent of foreign arrivals last year.

(Source: Financial Times)

Adventures in New Guinea: Get yourself out of the place!

"I began to look forward to Papua New Guinea; it was one of the most unfamiliar and daunting places I could think of choosing for a journey. In particular, it had a vast, uninhabited jungle that would be so indifferent to my presence that it could consume me without a trace. I would go way into that jungle and get myself out again. It would be hard. It would be the ultimate test. I knew that Papua New Guinea had a reputation for being especially dangerous, was overrun with gangs of hoodlums and terrorized by violence. So here again was the challenge: Get yourself out of the place. I would have to toughen up like never before. No fear. I would be forced to have confidence in myself, and to trust in my capabilities. I would need to become someone new, altogether, an entirely different kind of person. A fighter."*

* "Four Corners: A Journey into the Heart of Papua New Guinea" by Kira Salak

NEWS

Do tourists really go to Afghanistan?

A Taliban attack on a group of foreign tourists in Afghanistan, that left at least six people wounded, is not the first of its kind in the country.

However, while civilian casualties in Afghanistan have reached their highest-recorded level, attacks on tourists are rare.

The fact Afghanistan attracts tourists at all may come as a surprise to some, but a number of companies offer tours to the country where there were more than 11,000 casualties of violence last year.

The UN World Tourism Organization does not receive statistics from the Afghan government on tourist numbers, so it is difficult to track how many visitors are making it there.

Those figures show a big drop in the amount of money spent by tourists in the country - from \$168m (£128m) in 2012 to \$91m in 2014, the most recent year's statistics available.

Muqim Jamshady is chief executive of Kabul-based Afghan Logistics And Tours, which helps organise trips and treks for visitors in safe parts of the country.

He told the BBC that up to 300 tourists used their services in 2003, but the number had now dropped to about 100 a year.

The fall in visitors has come as deaths from violence in Afghanistan have increased.

Afghan tourists at a lake on the outskirts of Bamiyan The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against travelling to most parts of Afghanistan, adding that "there is a high threat from terrorism and specific methods of attack are evolving and increasing in sophistication".

The U.S. State Department goes even further, warning there is a risk of "kidnapping, hostage taking, military combat operations, landmines, banditry, armed rivalry between political and tribal groups, militant attacks, direct and indirect fire, suicide bombings, and insurgent attacks, including attacks using vehicle-borne or other improvised explosive devices".

Huge areas of Afghanistan are no-go areas for visitors, said Bilal Sarwary, an Afghan journalist who does his part to promote the 'Afghanistan You Never See' on his Facebook page, but that is not to say everywhere is inaccessible.

"The State Department, the FCO, all advise it is not safe. It is not Sri Lanka or the Maldives, but it's not Libya or Syria either," he said.

"There are places in Afghanistan that are totally safe for tourists. If you fly into Kabul, then fly to Bamiyan or Herat, that's the safe way.

"What attracts people to Afghanistan is its diverse landscape - from mountains to deserts to lakes."

(Source: BBC News)

Reasons why you should travel alone

While it's wonderful to share a special trip and new experiences with friends, a partner, or family, there's a compelling case for travel alone from time to time. Solo travel can work for anyone, whether you're single, in a relationship, extroverted, or introverted, and here are 9 good reasons why you should try it.

■ Simple logistics

It can be challenging to coordinate a trip and time away from work with another busy person in your life, and it's even more difficult when you try to make plans with a group.

■ Work on your bucket list

Is there something you've been dying to try that no one is willing to try with you? Maybe you'd like to go skydiving over the Grand Canyon, see ancient Mayan ruins, or simply eat real Maine lobster.

■ You're great company

If you rarely spend significant time alone, you may be surprised at how enjoyable it can be. When was the last time you truly listened to only your thoughts and entertained only your dreams? Depending on the destination, a solo trip can be a powerful, introspective, life-changing experience.

■ Meet new people

If you're a born extrovert, traveling alone can be a wonderful way to meet locals and make new friends. Often, people who are alone appear more approachable to others. Before you know it, you could be chatting with some interesting folks at a sidewalk cafe or even joining a group of like-minded people for yoga on the beach. The key is to keep an open mind while keeping safety in mind, especially in a foreign land.

■ Do everything you want and nothing you don't want

Have you ever been hesitant to do that half-day at the spa you were longing for because you felt bad leaving your travel partner with nothing to do? When you travel alone, you are not obliged to entertain anyone but yourself. If you want to "waste" the day sitting at an outdoor bar drinking mojitos instead of sightseeing, you won't have to answer to anyone.

■ It's empowering

If traveling makes you a better, smarter person, then traveling alone makes you super-better and super-smarter. For any of you who may feel uncomfortable even sitting alone at a diner to have breakfast, taking a trip by yourself might seem daunting.

■ Great service

For some reason, service at hotels and restaurants seems better when you're traveling single. People tend to admire those who travel solo, and it's possible that when you make it known, you could be in for a sweet room upgrade or a cocktail "on the house".

(Source: Life Hacks)

PICTURE OF THE DAY

© Tehran Times /Fatemeh Abedi



Two Iranian nomad women, belonging to Shahsavan tribe, are baking bread. They live nine months of the year in Pars Abad, Ardebil Province, and move to Sabalan heights in summer.

Did Paul Ryan just predict that Clinton will win in a landslide?

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) sent an urgent fundraising appeal Thursday evening that warned: "If we fail to protect our majority in Congress, we could be handing President Hillary Clinton a blank check."

Whether or not it was intentional, the phrase "blank check" has a political echo — one that suggests a deep fear by congressional Republicans that a sinking presidential candidate could

take their majorities in the House and Senate with him, and that they are getting ready to desert him.

It goes back 20 years, to an infamous chapter in internecine Republican politics. In the weeks before the 1996 presidential election, as it became clearer and clearer that GOP nominee Bob Dole would not defeat incumbent president Bill Clinton, Republican operatives began urging their

struggling congressional candidates to begin making the argument: "Let's not give Clinton a blank check."

In late October of that year, the National Republican Congressional Committee spent \$4 million on television ads in 50 congressional districts where races were close. The final shot was of a blank check hovering over the Capitol dome. It was signed: "American taxpayer."

For Dole, the implication that even his own party had given up on him was a devastating blow.

Top strategists

One of Dole's top strategists that year was Paul Manafort, who is now Trump's campaign chairman. Dole's personal assistant was Michael Glassner, who has worked for Trump's campaign for more than a year. A number of other Dole staffers now work for Trump.



White House Speaker Paul D. Ryan

Ryan used the words "blank check" at least three times Thursday, as Trump sat below Clinton in the polls and continued to deal with the aftermath of controversies of his own making.

This week, Trump refused to endorse Ryan in the Wisconsin Republican primary and praised Ryan's underdog opponent, Paul Nehlen. It was a snub that angered many Republican leaders.

→9

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt. in Elahieh
200 sq.m, 3 bdrs, fully furn,
nice view, 2700 USD
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Apt. in Elahieh
First Fl., 180 sq.m, 3 bdrs, luxury
furn, nice lobby,
SPJ & roof garden, **International**
Bldg., \$3500
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Velenjak
180 sq.m, 3 bdrs, fully furn,
nice view, 2600 USD
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Apt. in Elahieh
130 sq.m, 2 bdrs, fully furn, lobby,
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The war candidates



By Paul R. Pillar

A common observation about the role of foreign policy in the current presidential race is that Donald Trump's candidacy is profiting from a lack of appetite among much of the electorate for continued heavy and costly U.S. involvement in overseas conflict. With Trump having made some remarks that sound critical of that involvement, support for Trump gets interpreted as a rejection of establishment thinking on foreign involvement and of Hillary Clinton's hawkishness (insofar as foreign policy rather than domestic issues might be shaping any voters' sentiments). Some intelligent proponents of a more restrained U.S. foreign policy see hopeful signs in Trump's comments; Ivan Eland does, for example, and just wishes that Trump would "fill in some of the details on his strategic vision for a proper American role in the world."

There is no denying that Hillary Clinton epitomizes whatever can be described as establishment thinking on foreign policy. There also is no denying her hawkishness, including when comparing her to the incumbent president. Those hoping for more restraint in U.S. foreign policy have reason to be concerned about that and to look for hopeful signs elsewhere. But to look to Trump in this way is a set-up for unpleasant surprises.

Consider some modern history that is relevant to how the pronouncements and postures of American presidential candidates do or do not relate to their policies on war and peace once in office. A winning campaign slogan of Woodrow Wilson in 1916 was "he kept us out of war." Five months later Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. In the 1940 election campaign Franklin Roosevelt promised that he would "not send American boys into any foreign wars." Thirteen months after winning



the election, Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. Roosevelt had not been especially regarded as a peace candidate, but it is worth noting that Republican nominee Wendell Willkie criticized Roosevelt for not adequately preparing the country for war and had been more strongly in favor of supporting Britain in the European war that was already under way than were other GOP presidential hopefuls such as Robert Taft and Thomas Dewey.

A central theme of the 1964 presidential campaign was that Barry Goldwater was the warmonger in the race. The Lyndon Johnson campaign's effective use of tactics that scared people about the prospect of Goldwater's finger on the nuclear trigger helped to produce Johnson's landslide victory. Less than a year after the election, Johnson began the escalation in Vietnam that would lead to 58,000 American deaths. In the 2000 election, George W. Bush disavowed large nation-building exercises and gave no hint of any inclination that he would take the United States into another war. A couple of years later he launched the first major U.S. offensive war in over a century.

Several reasons account for the glaring discrepancies between the campaign

postures and the later decisions about going to war. One is that stuff happens. Some stuff (unrestricted German submarine warfare; a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) can reasonably call for an armed response. Other stuff (9/11) might be used in a more contrived way to build public support for an unrelated agenda.

Presidential neuroses and responses based on gut feelings and emotions can have a larger impact on presidential policies than anything involving statements made during a campaign. Much of Wilson's policies, concerning his handling of the peace at least as much as taking the country to war, can be explained in terms of Wilson's neuroses. And George W. Bush's need to match or exceed the impact in foreign affairs of his father, who had presided over a successful end to the Cold War, is not just pop psychology.

Other reasons have to do with how most of the electorate responds, often primitively and from the gut, to what the public thinks a candidate represents, rather than taking a more carefully reasoned approach toward what policies a particular candidate is most likely to follow when in office. Votes cast as an expression of dissatisfaction with the status quo are counterproductive when

they lead to policies that only make the sources of dissatisfaction even worse. This happens all the time on domestic policy, with unhappy voters dissatisfied with stagnant wages and a sluggish economy voting for legislators who oppose the very sort of demand-stimulating measures that would be needed to energize the economy. We should not be surprised when something similar happens on foreign policy. Campaigns waged in terms of slogans and slurs rather than in terms of strategy and specifics only encourage such non-thinking responses by the electorate.

With Donald Trump, and with the political habits that engendered his gaining the Republican nomination, these reasons for discrepancy between campaign hopes and in-office performance are present in abundance. Trump illustrates splendidly the clinical definition of the personality disorder known as narcissism. The most persuasive future explanations of the foreign policies of a Trump presidency, including decisions on war and peace, probably would be based in large part on presidential neuroses. Hillary Clinton's speechwriters have a valid point when noting, in their candidate's convention acceptance speech, that giving "a man you can bait with a tweet" the powers of the presidency has grim implications for the conduct of foreign and security policy.

Self-contradictory pronouncements

The nonspecific, ever-changing, and often self-contradictory pronouncements by Trump give little basis for a voter to reason out what a President Trump's foreign and security policies would be even if the voter wanted to apply such a careful process to his or her decision and tried hard to apply such a process. To speak of "Donald Trump" and "strategic vision" in the same sentence is oxymoronic. Even when Trump has stuck to a teleprompter and a script in talking about foreign policy, the product has been a largely vision-free string of slogans.

→ 9

COMMENT

Taking the fight to ISIL in Africa

Last week, American drones and manned aircraft hit ISIL targets in Libya. It was the first time since the Nato-led intervention that toppled former president Muammar Qaddafi in 2011 that United States warplanes carried out strikes in the country. And it could not have come at a better time in the global fight against ISIL, as the group has suffered various setbacks in their strongholds.

While the militants have ramped up attacks in Europe on civilian targets, they are under pressure in Iraq and Syria. The city of Fallujah has been wrestled from ISIL's grip by Iraqi security forces as part of a larger bid to retake Mosul, the country's second largest city. There is more work to be done in weeding out collaborators but the direction of travel is clear. On the back foot, ISIL is redoubling efforts to increase its presence in Libya.

Senior Pentagon officials have confirmed that the United States has been planning action in Libya for some time in consultation with their French counterparts. Washington is looking to expand the model it has employed in Iraq and Syria, where U.S. planes provide air support for allied groups fighting ISIL on the ground.

Since the fall of Qaddafi, Libya has been a broken state at war with itself and various rebel groups. American air strikes run the risk of emboldening groups that might end up proving harmful to the long-term security of Libya and the region. That being said, the war on ISIL is a multi-faceted endeavor. The militants are trying to establish a large base of operation in the country, which could be the starting point for new attacks on European targets.

As Turkey, a key Nato ally and critical member of the U.S.-led coalition against ISIL, continues to rout out suspected coup plotters inside its military, it is critical for the U.S. to send a strong message to ISIL's leadership that the fight continues.

Barack Obama has tried to avoid renewed military conflict in Libya since 2011 but the reality is that America can't turn its back on this important front in the larger war. The air strikes must continue against the militants but now it is time for the U.S. and its allies to draft a realistic plan for Libya's future. The rebuilding of the country is critical for the safety of the region and the world.

(Source: The National)



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Good attitudes about aging help seniors handle stress

New research from North Carolina State University finds that having a positive attitude about aging makes older adults more resilient when faced with stressful situations.

"There has been a lot of research on how older adults respond to stress, but the findings have been mixed: some studies



have found that older adults are less resilient than younger adults at responding to stress; some have found that they're more resilient; and some have found no difference," says Jennifer Bellinger, a Ph.D. student at NC State and lead author of a paper describing the work. "We wanted to see whether attitudes toward aging could account for this disparity in research findings.

In other words, are older adults with positive attitudes about aging more resilient

than older adults with negative attitudes?" For the study, researchers had 43 adults between the ages of 60 and 96 fill out a daily questionnaire for eight consecutive days. At the beginning of the study, participants were asked about their attitudes toward aging. For example, participants were asked if they felt they were as useful now as they had been when they were younger, and whether they were as happy as when they were younger.

The daily questionnaire asked participants about any stress they'd experienced that day, as well as the extent to which they experienced negative emotions, such as fear, irritability or distress.

The researchers also accounted for the personality of study participants. Were they optimistic and upbeat about everything, or are there benefits tied specifically to an individual's attitudes about aging? (Source: *Sonoran News*)

Insomnia? Oversleeping? Both may increase your risk of stroke

There is growing evidence that sleep disorders like insomnia and sleep apnea are related to stroke risk and recovery from stroke, according to a recent literature review.

Based on the review, the authors recommend that people who have had a stroke or a mini-stroke, called a transient ischemic attack, be screened for sleep disorders.

"Although sleep disorders are common after a stroke, very few stroke patients are tested for them," said study author Dirk M. Hermann, MD, of University Hospital Essen in Essen, Germany.

The "results of our review show that should change, as people with sleep disorders may be more likely to have another stroke or other negative outcomes than people without sleep problems, such as having to go to a nursing home after leaving the hospital."

The researchers also recommend that sleep apnea be treated with a continuous positive airway pressure machine (CPAP), based on evidence that shows that its use can improve outcomes after stroke.

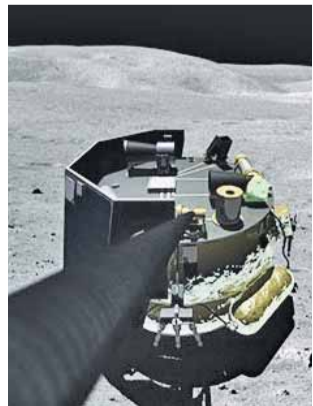
For the literature review, the researchers examined dozens of studies that looked at the link between sleep disturbances and stroke. They then combined the data of multiple studies in a meta-analysis. Sleep disorders generally fall into two categories: sleep breathing problems and sleep-wake disorders. Sleep breathing problems like sleep apnea disrupt breathing while asleep. Sleep-wake disorders like insomnia and restless leg syndrome affect the amount of time spent asleep.

The review found evidence linking sleep breathing problems with stroke risk and recovery. Sleep-wake disorders may increase stroke risk and harm recovery, although there is less evidence to prove so. (Source: *EurekAlert*)

Startup to launch the first private moon mission

A small company with big aspirations to explore the moon said on Wednesday that it had received government permission to send a robotic probe on the first privately-backed lunar journey.

Mountain View, California-based startup Moon Express said it consulted with the Federal Aviation Administration, the White House, the State Department, NASA and other federal agencies to get the "green light" for its proposed launch next year.



The "Moon Express 2017 mission approval is a landmark decision by the U.S. government and a pathfinder for private sector commercial missions beyond the Earth's orbit," CEO and co-founder Bob Richards said in a statement. "We are now free to set sail as explorers to earth's eighth continent, the Moon, seeking new knowledge and resources to expand the Earth's economic sphere for the benefit of all humanity."

The company's MX-1E lunar lander is an initial test to further the company's ultimate goal of exploring the surface of the moon to look for valuable materials such as platinum group metals and rare earth elements, then processing the materials and returning them to the Earth. Moon Express will rely on another space startup, Rocket Lab, to launch the probe. The company is aiming to win the Lunar X Prize for the commercial mission to the moon. To win the Google prize, a group must send a probe to the moon, where it must travel at least 500 meters and transmit high-definition video back to the Earth. First prize is \$20 million. (Source: *Fortune*)

China's bonkers elevated bus is real and already on the road

An elevated bus that straddles roads, carrying passengers over the traffic below, has been tested for the first time in China.

The Transit Elevated Bus (TEB) is powered by electricity and can carry passengers above two lanes of traffic while cars drive underneath it.

The 22 meter long, 7.8 meter wide and 4.8 meter high bus trundled along a 300 meter stretch of road in the city of Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province, at an excruciatingly slow speed for its inaugural test run, but the finished version should hit speeds of 40 mph.

The spacious interior of each bus looks more like a luxury airport departure lounge than a public bus and can squeeze in 300 passengers at full capacity.

Original designs for the TEB showed multiple carriages linked together to carry up to 1,200 passengers.

Full-sized tests

Designs for the TEB have come on a long way since they debuted at the 19th China Beijing International High-Tech Expo



The spacious interior of each bus looks more like a luxury airport departure lounge than a public bus and can squeeze in 300 passengers at full capacity.

in May 2016. Back then, engineers unveiled a toy-sized model of the TEB while promising that full-sized tests would take place in the second half of 2016.

While they certainly got a move on when it came to getting the bus on – or above – the road, tests still have a long way to go before the TEB is put to real use. The bus didn't navigate any corners on its inaugural test run or deal with any tricky bits of road infrastructure such as crossroads, bridges or traffic lights.

Passengers will board the sixteen-wheeled bus via elevated platforms on the roadside, although commuters in a hurry are still better off taking the subway as no high-speed tests of the bus have taken place yet.

"Its construction can be finished in one year," said Bai Chiming, the engineer in charge of the TEB project when the bus was unveiled in May. Chinese newspaper The People's Daily estimates the buses could be in use by the end of this year. (Source: *wired.co.uk*)

Brain's 'thirst circuit' tells you when to drink and when to quit

Scientists discovered specialized brain cells in mice that can "predict" why people like to drink something while eating and why cold water is more preferable when thirsty.

Thirst is the brain's way of sending signals alerting the body that there is a disruption in the composition of the blood stream. When one is thirsty, it usually means that the blood volume has dipped or the blood has become too concentrated. But the thirst neurons in the brain's subfornical organ (SFO) do not send out signals to alert the person to stop drinking because thirst is satiated soon, much before it can bring changes to the blood stream's composition.

"You drink a glass of water and you instantly feel like your thirst is quenched, but it actually takes tens of minutes for that water to reach your blood," senior author of the study Zachary Knight from the University of California, San Francisco, reportedly said. "You eat something salty and you instantly beginning to feel thirsty even though that food is just in your mouth.

**The dominant model**

The dominant model that thirst is a response to changes in the blood didn't explain that."

The researchers found that in mice, the SFO activity shut down soon after the mice began to drink and hence, the

mice stopped drinking in a bit. Scientists said that this activity indicated that SFO is linked to sensors in the mouth and throat that detect food and water consumption. They called this the "thirst circuit."

Researchers then genetically modified the mice's brain cells so the researchers could shut down or restart SFO activity. They deprived the mice of water overnight and shut down SFO activity. The next day, despite not having had water, which would result in changes in blood composition, the mice didn't drink. When the researchers restarted SFO activity, the mice drank plenty of water.

Lead author of the study Christopher Zimmerman said, "Almost everyone has had the experience of exercising or doing some sort of activity and becoming really thirsty, and almost viscerally feeling better after drinking a cold glass of water. But why does cold water seem to quench your thirst so much more rapidly?" (Source: *International Business Times*)

Acupuncture may slow pre-dementia memory loss: study

Acupuncture may benefit people who have memory loss, but don't yet have dementia, suggests a review by Chinese researchers of five earlier studies.

Nothing has yet been proven to halt the progression to dementia in those who are destined to progress. But, acupuncture used alone or along with another treatment, such as the medication nimodipine, might help retain some memory function, the researchers said.

But several doctors not involved with the review said it was too soon to say that acupuncture might be effective against dementia.

For the study, Min Deng and Xu-Feng Wang, from Wuhan University in China, reviewed five previously published studies done in 2012 and 2013.

The trials included nearly 600 people with mild cognitive impairment, a type of memory loss that's considered pre-dementia. About 5 percent to 10 percent of people with mild cognitive impairment develop dementia each year, the study authors noted.

Type of impairment

The researchers concentrated on people who had a specific form of mild cognitive impairment called amnesic. People with this type of impairment are even more likely to develop dementia, the review authors said.

The studies compared the benefit of acupuncture alone versus nimodipine. Or, looked at the two treatments together compared to nimodipine alone.

Patients received treatment three to five times a week for eight weeks in four trials.



The fifth trial lasted for three months.

The combined data from all five trials showed that those receiving acupuncture did better than those on nimodipine alone.

The acupuncture patients scored better on two tests of memory and dementia: the mini-mental state exam (a 30-point questionnaire that measures mental impairment), and picture recognition.

In addition, the combination of acupuncture and nimodipine improved scores on the mini-mental state exam compared with nimodipine alone, the researchers found.

Three trials reported side effects, which for acupuncture included fainting during treatment and slow bleeding at the needle sites. Side effects reported for nimodipine included nausea, constipation and mild headache, according to the report.

Dr. Remy Coeytaux is an associate professor in community and family medicine and an acupuncture researcher at Duke University in Durham, N.C. He was one of the experts reluctant to embrace the review's findings. (Source: *U.S. News & World News*)

New "flexible" quantum computer can be reprogrammed with lasers

The future of the quantum computer is already bright, but this new variation on the ultra-powerful new tech can do what none other can: It can be reprogrammed on the fly to crunch new algorithms.

While computer scientists worldwide have already built dozens of small, simple quantum computers-machines that use the mind-bending physics of atoms to solve complex math in simple steps-they've been almost entirely "rigid" devices.

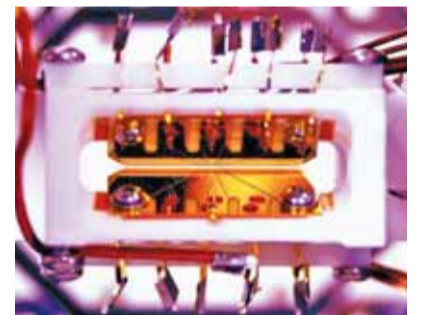
Basically single-use computers that can't be reprogrammed to do new things after they've been built. But a team of scientists led by Shantanu Deb-nath at the University of Maryland has just built a "flexible" quantum computer, as detailed in a paper published today in the journal Nature. Make no mistake, it's a hell of a feat.

To understand why Deb-nath's new, flexible quantum computer is so cool, it helps to understand how exactly quantum computers work.

Modern computers

When you dive down into the circuits, all modern computers basically function the same way. Simply put, they shuffle data around using a few simple rules. All that data is made up of bits-single fragments of information with one of two binary states. In your computer, these bits represent either 1s or 0s. Like a light-bulb that's either on or off.

Quantum computers take advantage of something fantastically strange.



Quantum theory, the physics that rules the tiny world of atoms and particles, tells us that there are certain circumstances under which a piece of matter can be two things at the same time. You can have an atom that's spinning in two opposite directions at once. Or a light-bulb that shining and not shining at the same time. If this sounds like a total farce, you're sufficiently appreciating quantum theory.

Physicist Niels Bohr once said, "Those who are not shocked when they first come across quantum theory cannot possibly have understood it."

A quantum computer basically leverages that weird dual state of matter-called superposition-so that its bits of information aren't just 1s and 0s, but can also be a combo of both. This is called a quantum bit, or a qubit. Using qubits could theoretically allow computers to crunch insanely difficult computational problems in single steps by drastically increasing the amount of data that can be moved at once. (Source: *Popular Mechanics*)

'Striking' results from early Zika vaccine trial

The race to develop a safe and effective vaccine against the Zika virus got one step closer Thursday, when a team of researchers reported positive results in the latest round of testing in monkeys.

Three experimental vaccines being developed by researchers at Harvard's Beth Israel Hospital and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research had already shown promise in mice — but monkeys are a much better model of how the medicines will work in humans.

All three of the vaccines were found to be safe and protected the monkeys against infection with the virus, according to the report published in Science.

The urgency for a vaccine to protect against Zika infection has intensified as the virus spreads rapidly across Latin America and the Caribbean. This week an unprecedented

travel advisory was given for southern Florida after more than a dozen people were diagnosed with Zika after being bitten by "homegrown" mosquitoes.

Zika virus is most dangerous to pregnant women, because it can cause severe birth defects in babies if they are infected in the womb.

Traditional vaccine

Right now, just one of those three vaccines will be progressing to clinical trials. That vaccine — dubbed ZPIV for purified inactivated Zika virus — uses a more traditional vaccine approach and depends on dead virus particles.

To develop the vaccine, researchers kill the virus with chemicals, leaving behind harmless proteins that the body can learn to recognize as foreign invaders. Using those proteins as targets, the immune system can then produce

antibodies to latch onto live virus particles and destroy them. This kind of vaccine is much safer than ones that depend on live virus particles to foster immunity.

The researchers gave 16 monkeys an initial dose of ZPIV and then a booster four weeks later. Then the monkeys were exposed to active forms of the virus. In tests afterwards, the monkeys showed antibodies against Zika and no detectable virus in their blood or urine, meaning that the protection from the vaccine was complete. Monkeys that got a sham vaccine developed no antibodies.

The results were "striking," said study coauthor Dr. Dan Barouch, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. The "findings substantially increase our optimism for the potential for the development of a Zika vaccine for humans." (Source: *nbcnews.com*)

U.S. President Obama ridiculed Donald Trump's recent suggestion that the election system could be rigged, called on the candidate to act like a president since he's soon to be briefed on confidential information and implied that he didn't believe the billionaire businessman could be trusted with America's nuclear codes.

"Just listen to what Mr. Trump has to say and make your own judgment with respect to how confident you feel about his ability to manage things like our nuclear triad," he said in response to a question from CNN's Barbara Starr. "This is serious business."

Unserious, he suggested, was Trump's warning that November's election could be rigged against him: He mocked the assertion as "ridiculous."

"Of course the election won't be rigged. What does that mean?" Obama said, struggling to disguise his contempt. "If Mr. Trump is suggesting that there is a conspiracy theory that is propagated across the country, including in places like Texas where typically it is not Democrats who are in charge of voting booths, that's ridiculous. That doesn't make any sense."

Obama, in his last planned public appearance before his annual vacation in Martha's Vineyard, said he had never

Obama: Trump's warning on elections is 'ridiculous'



heard of anyone complaining that they had been cheated before the score had been tallied.

"My suggestion would be, you know, go out there and try to win the election."

"If Mr. Trump is up 10 or 15 points on Election Day and he ends up losing, then, you know, maybe he can raise some questions," Obama said. "That doesn't seem to be the case at the moment."

■ Obama speaks out

It was the latest in a string of recent presidential rebukes to the GOP nominee. Obama hit out at Trump just two days after branding him unfit to be commander in chief from the podium in the White House's East Room. His intervention underscored the unusually prominent role the current occupant of the Oval Office is playing in the election to decide his successor as he tries to ensure

that Democrat Hillary Clinton wins in November.

Obama did say, however, that should Trump beat Clinton, he would fulfill his duty to help the incoming president despite his criticisms of the billionaire's fitness for the Oval Office.

"If somebody wins the election and they are president, then my responsibility is to peacefully transfer power to that individual. And do everything I can to help them succeed," he said.

But, he said, "We're going to go by the law which is that -- tradition and the law -- that if someone is the Republican nominee for president, they need to get security briefings so if they were to win, they are not starting from scratch in terms of being prepared for this office."

According to legal experts, however, there is no law requiring security briefings of presidential candidates, just a decades-long practice of doing so.

"They have been told: These are classified briefings. If they want to be president, they have got to start acting like (a) president. That means being able to receive these briefings and not spreading them around," he said.

(Source: CNN)

South Africa's ANC faces worst election losses since apartheid

South Africa's ANC (African National Congress) was on track for its worst electoral performance since the end of apartheid on Friday as voters vented anger about high unemployment and corruption in municipal elections that herald a sea change in politics and society.

The African National Congress has ruled virtually unopposed since it ended white-minority rule in 1994 with Nelson Mandela at its helm, but has lost support - particularly in cities - among voters who feel their lives have not improved and accuse President Jacob Zuma of mismanaging the economy.

The ANC was still leading in the overall count in the nationwide municipal vote, with 95 percent of ballots counted. But it lost to the main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) in the municipality of Nelson Mandela Bay, which includes the city of Port Elizabeth, and was trailing in Tshwane, home to the capital Pretoria.

Since the end of apartheid, the ANC had enjoyed an iron electoral grip on these areas, as well as on the economic hub of Johannesburg - where it held just a narrow lead on Friday.

Now, no party looks likely to win a majority in these three urban centers, ushering in a new era of coalition

politics as South Africa shifts from what has effectively been a one-party system in the period immediately post-apartheid.

This shift reshapes the political landscape in South Africa ahead of the 2019 national election, and may also embolden Zuma's rivals within the ANC to challenge him.

The DA has retained control of Cape Town, which it has held since 2006.

The ANC chief whip, Jackson Mthembu, said the losses across the country were "a worrying trend" for the ruling party and would prompt soul-searching. "We need to have a serious introspection, and that is what we will do."

The election also represents a political renaissance for the DA, which last year elected its first black leader, Mmusi Maimane, as part of its efforts to shake off its image as a party that mainly serves white interests.

"In the region named after Nelson Mandela, who promoted reconciliation, I think it is fitting that we have to cooperate with other political parties," said Athol Trollip, the DA's mayoral candidate in the bay area.

Final results are due on Saturday.

■ Zuma scandals

Moscow fair to display Russian versions of Persian books

1 → "Neither Friendship nor Hatred Will be Forgotten" and some of Shojaei's other books, including "Democracy or Demo Crazy" and "In the Twinkling of an Eye", have also been rendered into several languages.

The collection also consists of works from Persian classical literature, including Sadi's

"Bustan" and "Gulistan", and Rumi's "Masnavi-ye Manavi".

The books have been translated by a group of Russian scholars of the Persian language collaborating with Sadra and the Russian Foundation for Islamic Studies in Moscow.



A poster for the 29th Moscow International Book Fair

How to kick-start Iran-U.S. regional cooperation

1 → In the six months since the implementation of the nuclear deal, Iran has accrued important benefits. These gains include the doubling of its petroleum exports, attraction of nearly \$3.5 billion in foreign investment, access to as much as \$30 billion of its frozen assets, reconnection to the SWIFT network and establishment of banking relations with more than 400 foreign banks. Nevertheless, Tehran has run into serious issues when it comes to getting major international banks to facilitate the numerous trade and investment agreements it has reached aimed at boosting its economic development.

The problem has been twofold. First, a U.S. ban on dollar clearing for Iran remains in effect, preventing foreign banks wishing to deal with Iran from conducting transactions in U.S. dollars. This has impeded banks' abilities to facilitate major trade deals and repatriate frozen Iranian assets. Second, international banks and investors remain hesitant to deal with Iran due to fears that they will run afoul of remaining U.S. sanctions or that new sanctions will be imposed down the road that may nullify their investments.

One senior Iranian official recently told me that the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which over-

sees the implementation of the sanctions regime, "continues its business at times with even more zeal and sends unsolicited warnings to business partners." He cited an example of a recent request to a Latin American bank to transfer \$25 million for Iran to buy soybeans. The bank responded, "We must inform you that our bank does not enter into any deal involving Iran, since said country appears on OFAC lists."

JCPOA opponents have been instrumental in fostering this atmosphere of fear, which is preventing Iran from receiving effective sanctions relief. Working in tandem with hawks in the U.S. Congress, groups such as the neoconservative Foundation for Defense of Democracies have lobbied relentlessly for upwards of 30 bills that would impose additional U.S. sanctions and prevent trade deals with Iran from materializing.

These actions run counter to the nuclear deal, which requires the United States to "sustain this JCPOA and to prevent interference with the realization of the full benefit by Iran of the sanctions lifting." The efforts of the lobby in Washington opposed to Iran-U.S. engagement have spurred strong reactions in Tehran. Parliament

Speaker Ali Larijani recently declared that the time has come for Iran to "counteract" the actions of Congress. In this vein, he called for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to make the preparations necessary to return the country's nuclear capabilities back to their state prior to the nuclear deal.

The reality is that the JCPOA was agreed to by six major powers and mandated by a UNSC resolution. If a bill imposing new sanctions on Iran was to be passed by Congress and approved by a future president, it would result in the United States violating the deal and thereby isolating itself. Not only would the JCPOA-mandated commission charged with overseeing disputes in the deal's implementation blame the United States, but Iran would also have JCPOA-stipulated grounds to follow Larijani's suggestion and engage in "nuclear snapback" — reconstituting its previous nuclear capabilities.

Consequently, the tactic of die-hard opponents of U.S.-Iran engagement — to increase sanctions on Iran — is a moot effort and in fact a bluff. Their real aim is not to directly sabotage the deal, but to create an atmosphere of uncertainty predicated on threatening new non-nu-

clear sanctions in order to scare away international banks and companies from doing business with Iran, thereby minimizing the incentives Iran has to comply with the deal.

The solution is to not fall for this psychological ploy. International banks and companies should rest assured that nuclear-related sanctions on Iran are gone for good and that there is nothing the United States can do — neither now nor in the future — to reimpose them without destroying its credibility at the same time. Iranian officials, meanwhile, should be careful to not play into the hands of the deal's American opponents and increase uncertainty about the future of the JCPOA.

Deal opponents in Washington should similarly understand that efforts to undermine the JCPOA only serve to reinforce in the minds of Iranians the notion that the United States cannot be trusted or engaged with on regional or other issues. They should also be cognizant of the fact that Iran is the last pillar in the way of regional collapse — an outcome that would have existential consequences not only for regional countries but also for the West.

(Source: Al-Monitor)

German FM: Trump is one of world's hate preachers

1 → Earlier, Steinmeier expressed concern over the nomination of Trump's candidacy for the U.S. presidency, expressing the view that his possible victory on elections will complicate the future of the transatlantic relations.

Steinmeier previously said a Donald Trump presidency would lead to "many

uncertainties for the transatlantic relationship".

Frank-Walter Steinmeier called Trump's view of the U.S. as a country surrounded by inner and outer enemies "grotesque," in an interview with Passauer Neuer Presse.

"The fact that a presidential candidate, Trump, attacks the entire political elite,

even if he is part of it, and receives support for these attacks, worries me a lot," Steinmeier said.

He added he "can't explain" how Trump's pledge to "Make America Great Again" sits with the candidate's calls for the U.S. to "stay out of conflicts worldwide."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said

Thursday she wouldn't seek to "meddle" in the U.S. election, AP reported. Asked at her summer news conference whether she was having nightmares about the prospect of a Trump presidency, Merkel said "I can answer that question with a clear, 'No,'" according to Bloomberg.

(Source: agencies)

JUMP

Did Paul Ryan just predict that Clinton will win in a landslide?

6 → "I like Paul, but these are horrible times for our country," Trump said in an interview with The Washington Post on Tuesday. "We need very strong leadership. We need very, very strong leadership. And I'm just not quite there yet. I'm not quite there yet."

Trump's campaign and Ryan's office have yet to respond to requests for comment. Katie Martin, a spokeswoman for the National Republican Congressional Committee, said the historical comparison is unfair. "There is no news here, nothing to read into, no secret message about the upcoming elections," Martin said in an email. The "possibility of giving Hillary Clinton a Congress led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi would be an unmitigated disaster for the American people — as it was 8 years ago with President Obama."

In the 1996 election, Republicans lost nine seats but managed to hold the House, the first time they had done so in consecutive elections in more than 60 years. This year, Republicans have a bigger cushion — their strongest House majority since 1930.

■ Standard-bearer

However, they also have a standard-bearer who is far more toxic. In 1996, Dole was viewed positively by most voters, even as he lost. Trump, on the other hand, has the most unfavorable ratings of any candidate ever to lead a major party ticket since the advent of polling.

Ryan's first use of the term "blank check" came during an interview with WTAQ radio in Green Bay, Wis., where Trump will hold a rally Friday night. Host Jerry Bader pressed Ryan on his support for Trump, despite the nominee's ongoing controversial utterances. Ryan said he would remain behind Trump while continuing to speak out when he disagrees with him.

When asked whether there would ever be a point at which he would abandon Trump, Ryan said of his endorsement: "None of these things are ever blank checks."

It was the standout line of the interview and appeared in numerous headlines. Hours later, the words popped up twice in Ryan's fundraising appeal that was sent to email addresses collected during Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's failed presidential campaign. The email reads: "96 days — that's all the time we have left before Americans head to the polls on Election Day, and much more is at stake than the presidency. If we fail to protect our majority in Congress, we could be handing President Hillary Clinton a blank check."

Clinton in the White House and Nancy Pelosi as the House speaker "would truly be devastating for our great nation," the email continues, and it urges donations of \$25 to \$100.

The email is signed "Speaker Paul Ryan" and includes this P.S.: "We cannot afford to give Hillary Clinton a blank check if she's elected president. We need a strong, conservative majority in Congress as our last line of defense."

(Source: The Washington Post)

The war candidates

7 → The sources of—not to put too fine a point on it—the dumb way a substantial portion of the electorate is currently approaching issues of war and peace and what this implies regarding how they should cast their votes go well beyond Donald Trump. Max Boot speaks directly and bluntly to this subject in an op-ed in which he discusses how the Republican Party has become the "stupid party" in fact and not just as an act to appeal to the poorly educated whom Donald Trump has said he loves. Boot correctly observes, "Trump is as much a symptom as a cause of the party's anti-intellectual drift."

Boot is one of those neoconservatives who has been tearing his hair out over Trump's rise because of the hints Trump has dropped that he might actually favor some restraint in foreign policy and because his nomination marks at least a partial loss of the lock that neocons have had in recent years on Republican Party foreign policy. Obviously Boot believes that making the anti-intellectual party more intellectual would mean hewing to the intellectual line of, to quote from his piece, "conservative think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation and publications like The Wall Street Journal editorial page and Commentary." But Republican anti-intellectualism is at least as much a rejection of sound and distinctly non-neocon reasoning regarding the need for a more restrained U.S. foreign and security policy. It is even more a rejection of that reasoning rather than of neocon thinking, given the conclusions that should follow from careful consideration of what has and hasn't worked in U.S. foreign policy in recent decades.

Mention of the neocons leads to a final observation about the way in which dissatisfied American voters are reacting to the Trump phenomenon. The inexcusable failure to plan better for what would follow in Iraq after the forceful overthrow of Saddam Hussein reflects how that neoconservative endeavor was based on the Jerry Rubin strategy of tearing things down and grooving on the rubble. So confident were the neocons in the power and appeal of the democratic and free-market values they were attempting to inject into the Middle East that they were sure whatever fell into place after Saddam's overthrow was bound to be better than what was there before. Today the people—including those on the anti-interventionist left and the libertarian right—who would like to tear down a militarist "establishment" or "blob" that has dominated American foreign-policy thinking and who see Trump as a vehicle for such destruction risk making a similar mistake.

(Source: The Interest National)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Smugglers holding 284kg of narcotics arrested

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Four smugglers have been caught while trying to trade some 284 kilograms of drugs in Yazd province, Mehr reported on Thursday.

Police force was informed through its sources that some smugglers are intended to trade a substantial amount of drug, Yazd province anti-narcotics police chief said.

Observing the drug dealers, police succeeded in finding their hideout and raiding them while trying to trade the cargo, Mohammad-Hossein Sotudehnia explained.

Sotudehnia noted that over this operation some 284 kilograms of drugs including 230 kilograms of opium and 54 kilograms of hashish were seized and the dealers were arrested.



Firuzkuh suffers \$430,000 loss due to flood

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Firuzkuh, located in eastern Tehran, bore some 15 billion rials (nearly \$430,000) loss due to the flood, the city governor has said.

Mentioning the persistent rain leading to the flood in the area, Nourollah Taheri told Fars news agency on Wednesday that thankfully no one died in the flood.

But unfortunately the flood resulted in Kangarkhani river overflow and caused loss to a transport company and the farming lands adjacent to the river, Taheri regretted.



Childhood obesity on the rise in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 30 percent of children in Iran are suffering from obesity which is on the rise due to lack of movement, an official with the Health Ministry has warned.

Childhood obesity is pretty worrying and is getting worse as children hardly move and healthy food are mostly replaced by fast food and junk foods, Davoud Khalili told IRNA on Friday. Unless the ministry takes effective measures to reverse this situation the future generation would face some serious health conditions, Khalili highlighted.

Generally some 60 percent of adults in Iran suffer from obesity which is more endemic among women than men, he added.

Wastewater treatment plant, 200-bed hospital inaugurated, costing \$670m

SOCIETY TEHRAN — A wastewater treatment plant and a 200-bed hospital costing 2,347 trillion rials (nearly \$670m) were inaugurated in Shahryar, western Tehran, on Wednesday, IRIB reported.

The wastewater treatment plant was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri and Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian. The project, financed by ECO Trade and Development Bank's 18-million-euro loan, is stretching over a land area of 23 hectares.

According to Fars news agency, the scheme would meet the needs of some 720,000 people by Iranian calendar year 1415 (2036-2037). The capital used to finance this totals some 38.5m euros.

The wastewater scheme is aiming at collection and treatment of household

wastewater in Shahryar district to boost environmental status of the area, protect water resources from contamination, stop groundwater from depletion, develop agriculture and industries, and create job opportunities.

Moreover, the inauguration ceremony was held concurrent with 14 other water projects aiming at providing water to 252 villages in 14 provinces of the country over a video conference.

Furthermore, the 200-bed Nour specialty and subspecialty hospital with various wards and 11 operation rooms was inaugurated with Jahangiri and Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi in attendance.

According to IRIB, some 1 trillion rials (nearly \$28.5m) was spent on the Nour hospital project to get off the ground.



Korean delegates in Iran to expand environmental co-op

A group of South Korean delegates visited Iran on Aug. 4 to support local environmental enterprises in making inroads into the largely untapped market.

The Ministry of Environment said it sent six public and private sector officials to meet with their Iranian counterparts, including the country's Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar who also heads Iran's Department of Environment.

During their visit to Tehran, the delega-

tion will discuss specific details in regards to a memorandum of understanding for environmental cooperation signed in May.

The visit follows just a few weeks after a group of environment-related Iranian government officials and experts visited South Korea for a week to receive environment business-related training as part of an effort to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

(Source: koreaherald.com)

Woman allows car to be destroyed to rescue kitten

A kitten was saved by chainsaw-wielding mechanics after it had crawled into a woman's car dashboard and wouldn't come out.

Denise Wilford-Neal of Vero Beach tried getting her newly adopted kitten to come out but the cat wouldn't emerge, so Wilford-Neal lobbied for help via Facebook.

"I was worried about the heat of the day, so I put a post on Facebook, 'Does anyone have suggestions'. People were

calling and coming by with tools and mechanics came."

An attempt to take apart the dash proved unsuccessful, so Wilford-Neal gave the mechanics the green light to saw through the dash even though it would ruin her 1995 Monte Carlo.

After being freed, Wilford-Neal named the kitten "Monte" in tribute to her destroyed car, but says the kitten is doing well. (Source: wesh.com)

IN FOCUS Mehr/ Amir-Ali Razaqi



These selfies have been taken by villagers living in some areas of Ardebil province. Some of them may have not seen cellphones so far. The photographer who is the only one with a cellphone has asked these villagers to take their first life selfies with whatever they like.

LEARN ENGLISH Describing Chance and Probability

Raul: What are the chances that Rob will be here on time? Tiffany: I'd say it's **fifty-fifty**. You never know. He might surprise us and be early.

Raul: **Fat chance** of that happening. I've known him for three years and if I had to **stake my life on** whether he'll arrive early or not, I'd be in big trouble.

Tiffany: Don't **exaggerate**. Rob isn't completely **irresponsible**. I'd say there's a pretty good **probability** that he'll be here when he said he would, especially after he promised.

Raul: His **intentions** are good, but he **loses track of time** and doesn't know what day it is half the time.

Tiffany: He told me that he's trying to change.

Raul: Well, as I said, his intentions are good. He just needs to work on his **follow-through**.

Tiffany: Come on, he could be **on his way** right now.

Raul: **Don't hold your breath**. I'll believe his promises **when hell freezes over**.

Tiffany: Aren't you being just a **wee bit cynical**?

Raul: And aren't you just **indulging in wishful thinking**?

Tiffany: Hey, I think that's him coming down the road! I think you'd better **eat your words**.

Raul: And I think you'd better get glasses.

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

what are the chances: how probable or likely something is

fifty-fifty: if there is a fifty-fifty chance of something happening, it is equally likely to happen as not to happen

fat chance: used to say that something is very unlikely to happen

stake your life on: used when saying that you are completely sure that something is true, or that something will happen

exaggerate: to make something seem better, larger, worse etc. than it really is

irresponsible: doing careless things without thinking or worrying about the possible bad results

probability: how likely something is, sometimes calculated in a mathematical way, likelihood, chance

intention: a plan or desire to do something

lose track of time: to be unaware of what time it is

follow-through: the things that someone does in order to complete a plan

be on your way: travelling towards a particular place

don't hold your breath: used to say that you do not expect something to happen, even though someone has said it will

when hell freezes over: used to say that something will never happen

wee bit: to a small degree

cynical: unwilling to believe that people have good, honest, or sincere reasons for doing something

indulge in: to become involved in something

wishful thinking: when you believe that what you want to happen will happen, when in fact it is not possible

eat your words: to admit that what you said was wrong

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

3 costly cancer drugs produced in Iran

Iran succeeded in producing three of the 10 most expensive drugs in the world, Food and Drug Administration director Rasoul Dinarvand said on Wednesday.

Rituximab, Cantuzumab, and Bevacizumab, are the three monoclonal antibodies designed for treating cancers or autoimmune diseases, IRNA quoted Dinarvand as saying.

He explained that the first two drugs are now available in the market and the last one will be by the end of the current year (March 20, 2017).

The production of the drugs would save millions of dollars for the country and they would cost 50 to 60 percent less than foreign-made ones, he highlighted.

تولید ۳ دارو از گرانترین داروهای سرطان در ایران

رئیس سازمان غذا و دارو رسول دیناروند روز چهارشنبه از تولید سه داروی بسیار گرانقیمت که جزو ۱۰ داروی گرانقیمت دنیا هستند، در ایران خبر داد.

به گزارش ایرنا دیناروند توضیح داد: ریتوکسی مپ، کستوزومپ و بواسیزومپ سه داروی مونوکلونال آنتی بادی هستند که در درمان سرطان و بیماری های خودایمنی کاربرد دارند.

وی گفت: دو داروی اول در کشور تولید و به بازار عرضه شده است و داروی بواسیزومپ نیز تا پایان امسال وارد بازار می شود.

دیناروند افزود: تولید این سه دارو در کشور میلیون ها دلار صرفه جویی ارزی برای کشور خواهد داشت و قیمت تمام شده هر یک از این داروها در داخل معادل ۵۰ تا ۶۰ درصد ارزانتر از نمونه خارجی است.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Justice delayed is justice denied

Explanation: if the law is applied too late, there is no justice
For example: It has now been four years that the court has not decided whether Lobato is a murderer or not, justice delayed is justice denied.

PHRASAL VERB

Write something down

Meaning: note something on a piece of paper
For example: He wrote down the address of the hotel.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Get your act together

Explanation: to tell someone to organize their affairs more effectively in order to be more successful
For example: You'd better get your act together if you want to find a job!

Archer Zahra Nemati aims to make splash in Rio

SPORTS Iranian archer Zahra Nemati is ready to make splash at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

She made history by securing a spot for Iran not only at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, but Olympics as well.

Nemati is the first Iranian woman to win an Olympic or Paralympic gold medal at London 2012.

"I am ready to make a splash in my first Olympic experience. After the 2012 Paralympic Games, I thought about taking part in Olympics and in the 2014 Asian Para Games, I made final decision and partook in Olympics qualification," Nemati said.

"I cannot promise of winning a medal in Rio because in the archery, your first mistake will be your last. The best archers are here to win a medal and I cannot promise but I will do my best," she added.

Asked her after winning a gold medal at previous Paralympics, is she ready to add an Olympic medal to her collection, Nemati said, "The abled archers are stronger than disabled people and to win a gold medal will be difficult. So, I know I can make a huge impact on others as a disabled athlete and this is a great victory for me," Nemati added.

"It's a great honor to be the flag bearer of Iran and I would thank the Iranian officials who chose me to carry the flag," Nemati said.



Azmoun and Co to play Ajax in Champions League play-offs

SPORTS Last season Russian Premier League surprise has been drawn with Dutch giant Ajax in the play-offs for a place in the UEFA Champions League group stage competition.

Rostov, who survived from relegation to the Russian second division league after a win in play-offs against FC Tosno, is now two games away from the Champions League group stage.

Kurban Berdyev's men, who finished second in the league behind CSKA, beat Belgian side Anderlecht 4-2 on aggregate to reach the play-offs.

A second half goal by Iranian gem Sardar Azmoun helped FC Rostov securing a 2-0 second leg away victory and a 4-2 win on aggregate over RSC Anderlecht in UEFA Champions League qualifying on Wednesday evening.

The Iranian youngster started the game and scored his first goal in Europe's elite competition early in second half, when a decent through ball by Bukharov found Azmoun in the box, who finished calmly.

While Azmoun, who missed most of the pre-season training due to a transfer dispute between Rubin Kazan



and Rostov, was subbed out shortly afterwards, Iranian teenage midfielder Saeid Ezatollahi was subbed in for the final 17 minutes of the match.

Ezatollahi had started the first leg and scored his team's first goal in the 2-2 draw in Russia.

Next step for Azmoun and Ezatollahi is Dutch giants Ajax who has won the European championship four times and is a regular team at Champions League group stage.

Rostov and Ajax will first meet on August 16 in Amsterdam. The return leg in Russia takes place on August 24.

The winner will join the draw for a place in the Champions League group stage.

The two sides have never met before.

Ajax coach Peter Bosz said in a reaction on the Ajax website: "I know nothing about them. We do know they came second in the Russian competition last season and they put out Anderlecht in the previous qualification round."

Also in the final round of qualification is Croatian side Dinamo Zagreb, who also won their return leg 0-1 against Dinamo Tbilisi. Again, Ali Karimi was not in the roster as his international transfer card has only arrived in Croatia this week.

Dinamo Zagreb handed a good draw as they will take on Austrian side Salzburg in the play-offs.

On Thursday, Alireza Jahanbakhsh helped AZ Alkmaar past Greek outfits PAS Giannina in UEFA Europa League qualifying. After the 1-0 home victory, AZ fell behind in Greece, but thanks to a brilliant Jahanbakhsh assist, found back into the game and eventually won the return leg 2-1.

AZ has drawn against Serbian side Vojvodina in the UEFA Europa League play-off.

Iran joins ATT, to host first tournament



Iran has become the latest country to join the Asian Tennis Tour (ATT) and are set to host their first event on the newly-launched platform, from August 6.

There will be back-to-back events tournaments in the Iran leg of the ATT.

Countries such as India and Thailand have already hosted many events and in such short time and close to 500 players, 491 to be precise, both men and women, have registered themselves with the Tour which is gradually making strides in realising the aim of benefiting the Asian players.

Out of 491 players from 22 countries registered with ATT, 144 are women. India (125 men and 86 women) and Thailand (40 men and 46 women) have highest

number of players registered.

Interestingly, Iran has the maximum number of men's players registered.

"ATT is encouraged with the response from players in Iran and had a voluminous acceptance list of 79 players from Iran, Iraq, India, and Afghanistan for the events. ATF compliments the efforts and initiative of the local organizers and Iran Tennis Federation for hosting the development events.

"The ATF - ATT have conducted seven tournaments starting from mid April and is gradually making strides with 36 more tournaments lined up from September to December," a press release stated.

The players have come forward in voicing their support for the initiative launched by the Asian Tennis Federation President Anil Khanna, who is also ITF Vice President.

The current champion of three events held in Hua Hin, Thailand Pruchya Isarow said, "I would like to thank all the sponsors and big thank you to ATT for great tournament. Hopefully this tournament will be stairway to develop for my future and all next generation for Asian tennis players and I hope to be back this great tournament again next time.

(Source: business-standard)

Van Gaal was contender for Belgium job, newspapers say



Louis van Gaal was a contender to take over as Belgium's coach but in the end made himself unavailable, Belgian newspapers reported on Friday two days after Roberto Martinez was handed the post.

Van Gaal, dismissed by Manchester United despite winning the FA Cup in May, had a discussion about the job with Belgian football association vice president Bert Verhaeghe, according to Het Nieuwsblad.

He decided not to pursue discussions, saying he would keep a promise to his wife to take a year away from the game, but a future role was not ruled out, reports added.

(Source: Reuters)

FIFA president Infantino cleared of wrongdoing in ethics probe

FIFA President Gianni Infantino, elected in February to lead the global soccer body into calmer waters after a series of corruption scandals, was himself cleared of possible ethics violations on Friday.

FIFA's independent ethics committee said it had concluded a formal investigation into Infantino's conduct which focused on some of the flights he had taken during the opening months of his presidency and his failure to sign an employment contract.

"It was found that no violation of the FIFA Code of Ethics (FCE) had been committed by Mr Infantino," the ethics committee said in a statement.

It said investigations were carried out "diligently over several weeks" and included "a large number of interviews with witnesses and Mr Infantino himself."

Infantino, in a statement issued by FIFA, said he was "pleased" with the outcome.

German media have been reporting for several weeks that Infantino, whose predecessor Sepp Blatter has been banned for six years for ethics violations, was under investigation over flights he had taken on private jets.

FIFA has been in turmoil after a wave of indictments



of football officials in the United States last year, including former members of its executive committee, on corruption-related charges.

The football body has also been forced to investigate controversies surrounding the awarding of its showpiece, the World Cup finals, especially the decision to grant the 2018 tournament to Russia and the 2022 finals to Qatar.

Blatter was banned by FIFA's own ethics committee

along with former European soccer boss Michel Platini, who is serving a four-year suspension.

The ethics committee said that preliminary investigations had focused on several flights taken by Infantino, the hiring process for positions in the president's office and his refusal to sign the contract specifying his employment relationship with FIFA.

Infantino's conduct might have breached articles on code of conduct, loyalty, conflicts of interest and offering and accepting gifts, it said.

However, after formal proceedings were opened, it was concluded that the flights "did not represent ethics violations" and that benefits enjoyed by Infantino were not "improper" in the light of applicable FIFA rules and regulations.

It said the hiring process and Infantino's employment contract were internal compliance issues rather than ethical matters.

FIFA's statement said Infantino and his administration would "continue to focus on developing football as well as their efforts to improve the organisation."

"This critical work will continue," it said.

(Source: Reuters)

OLYMPICS

Iranian wrestlers go for the gold in Rio

When the Olympic Games kick off in Rio de Janeiro on Aug. 5, 64 Iranian athletes will be competing, among them 12 wrestlers.

Alireza Moradi, the head of the cultural committee for the Islamic Republic of Iran's Wrestling Federation, told Al-Monitor in an email that Iran — which won nine medals in wrestling at the last Olympics — has high hopes for Rio in both the freestyle and Greco-Roman categories.

"We are optimistic about earning medals in Greco-Roman, counting on a couple of gold, and in freestyle we have two top wrestlers — Hassan Rahimi and Reza Yazdani — who are medal contenders," Moradi said.

Rahimi, 27, who is competing in the 57-kilogram division, won an Asian championship for juniors in 2008, and in 2009 he became junior world champion. Two years later, he took the bronze at the world championships, and in 2013 he became a world champion. Yazdani, 31, is a two-time world champion (in 2011 and 2013) in the 96-kilogram division and took silver in the 2015 world championships in Las Vegas.

"Our biggest challenge will come from Russian and American wrestlers," Moradi told Al-Monitor. "Only one top Russian wrestler was disqualified due to doping charges; the Russians will have their full roster and will be a challenge for us."

Bahman Baktiari, executive director of the International Foundation for Civil Society, a Salt Lake City, Utah, nonprofit that facilitates US sports exchanges with Iran, told Al-Monitor that Yazdani "has the biggest challenge in front of him. To win a gold medal he must defeat the top American wrestler, Jordan Burroughs, who won the gold in 2012 London Olympics."

Yazdani, who is known in Iran as the "panther of Mazandaran," has also had to overcome injuries to get ready for Rio, Baktiari said. "Yazdani won the Olympic trial in Tehran by defeating another top wrestler and now is looking to go against the world's top wrestler in the Rio Olympics. If Burroughs wins the gold in Rio he will be the third wrestler in history to have won two golds in consecutive Olympics."

The other members of the Iranian team in freestyle are Meisam Nassiri, Alireza Karimi and Komeil Ghasemi. Members of the Greco-Roman team are Hamid Sourian, Omid Norouzi, Saeid Abdevali, Habibollah Akhlaghi, Ghasem Rezaei and Bashir Babajanzadeh.

Wrestling is extremely popular in Iran, and the country has been a powerhouse in the sport since ancient days. The sport has also become an important element of Iranian "soft power" and figured in people-to-people diplomacy with the United States.

American wrestlers in 1998 became the first US athletes to compete in Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and have returned to Iran repeatedly for competitions and exhibition matches. Many Iranian wrestlers have also visited the United States repeatedly. In 2013, American, Iranian and Russian wrestling federations joined to oppose a decision by the International Olympic Committee Executive Board to end wrestling as a core sport in the Olympic Games.

The Semnani Family Foundation, a Utah-based nonprofit set up by Iranian-American entrepreneur Khosrow Semnani, was instrumental in the campaign to keep wrestling in the Olympics. This year, the foundation is offering cash awards to US and Iranian wrestlers who win medals in Rio and also to their coaches. Gold medalists will get \$20,000, silver medalists \$10,000 and bronze medalists \$5,000, with their coaches receiving \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 respectively.

"Wrestling is an essential Olympic sport and tradition," Semnani said in a press statement. "It's a competition where excellence and sportsmanship combine in a culture of fair play. As an Iranian-American I am proud of the way athletes from my birth and adopted homelands strive for excellence while building mutual respect and bonds of friendship. These incentives, I hope, will strengthen not only the sport of wrestling, but the friendship between the citizens of the two countries."

Asked by Al-Monitor if the Iranian team was concerned about the prospect of contracting the Zika virus in Rio, Moradi said, "Our medical team has held special training sessions for our wrestlers, and we have informed them about taking precautions and carrying anti-mosquito repellents with them."

Wrestling competition begins Aug. 14 in the second week of the Olympics. (Source: Al-Monitor)

Ronaldo, Bale and Griezmann compete for UEFA Best Player in Europe award

Real Madrid duo Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale are in the running with Atletico Madrid striker Antoine Griezmann for the UEFA Best Player in Europe Award, while Barcelona pair Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez have missed out on nomination.

Ronaldo, who will be the favourite for the prestigious award, led Real to their 11th Champions League win before playing a pivotal role in guiding Portugal to their first major international trophy at Euro 2016.

Ronaldo's team mate Bale, who also won a Champions League medal, inspired Wales to reach the semi-finals at June's European Championship.

France striker Griezmann lost the Champions League final with Atletico, and was also on the losing side in the Euro 2016 final, although he was crowned top scorer with six goals and was named player of the European Championship.

The three finalists for the award were chosen by journalists from UEFA's member nations.

Last year's winner Messi finished fifth in the voting, one place below his Barcelona team mate Suarez, who missed out on the top three despite scoring 59 goals in 53 appearances for the Spanish side.

The winner will be announced on Aug. 25, the day of the draw for the Champions League group stage. (Source: Reuters)



Poem of the day

O soul! whose lot it is to bleed with pain,
And daily change of fortune to sustain,
Into this body wherefore didst thou come,
Seeing thou must at last go forth again?

Khayyam

Prayer Times

Noon:13:10 Evening: 20:23 Dawn: 4:42 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:17 (tomorrow)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Digital artworks by Austrian artist on display at Tehran gallery

ART TEHRAN — Works of digital art by Austrian artist Arnold Postl are currently on display in an exhibition at Tehran's Vista Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Everything in Front of Me Is Mine" is being organized in collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Forum in Tehran.

The exhibition runs until August 15 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



"Jacob's Room" at Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian version of prominent English writer Virginia Woolf's "Jacob's Room" has recently been published by Chatrang Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Soheil Somi, the novel begins with Jacob's childhood and follows him through college into adulthood. The story is told mainly through the perspective of the women in Jacob's life.

Published in 1922, "Jacob's Room" is Woolf's third novel.



Iranian, Malaysian cultural officials meet

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian cultural attaché Aliakbar Ziai met yesterday with National Archives of Malaysia Director Azemi Bin Abdul Aziz in Kuala Lumpur.

The officials reviewed ways to expand bilateral cultural ties especially in the areas of preserving and restoring historical documents, rare books and manuscripts.

They also exchanged views on a roadmap for boosting ties between the National Library and Archives of Iran and the National Archives of Malaysia.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Multimedia

■ A collection of videos and photographs by Naghmeh Jahani is currently on show in an exhibition at Gallery 26.

The exhibit titled "A Moment of My Own" runs until August 10 at the gallery located at 26 Salmanpur-Zahir St., in Farmanieh Sharqi neighborhood.

■ O Gallery is hosting an exhibition of drawings and sculptures by Fazel Mosallanejad, Mohammad Alizadeh and Mohammad Haqverdi.

The exhibit runs until August 16 at the gallery located at 44 Khosro Alley, off Ostad Nejatollahi St.

■ Photos and Sets of installation art by Amir Farsijani are on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Foldings" runs until August 10 at the gallery that can be found at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

Photo

■ An exhibition of photos by Seyyede Fatemeh Hosseini is currently underway at Shalman Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Where Are You Going" runs until August at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

Drawing

■ Drawings by Lohrasb Bayat are on display in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery.

The exhibit runs until August 13 at the gallery, which can be found at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.

Statue of Khayyam embellishes Russian city of Astrakhan

ART TEHRAN — The statue of Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) was unveiled in the southern city of Astrakhan (1,000 miles south of Moscow) during a ceremony on Thursday.

Attending the ceremony were a number of Iranian and Russian officials, including Astrakhan Regional Governor Aleksandr Zhilkin, Governor-general of Iran's Gilan Province Mohammad-Ali Najafi and Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Sanai.

The 4.5-meter-tall bronze statue has been situated in the student garden in front of the Astrakhan State University, Persian media reported on Friday.

Commissioned by the Gilan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, the 1.5-tonne statue was cast in Yekaterinburg, the fourth-largest city in Russia.

Speaking at the ceremony, Zhilkin called the monument of the great Persian poet a symbol of sincere friendship between the two countries.

For his part, Najafi said that the two countries and the two provinces of Gilan and Astrakhan have begun to experience a new era of developing relations in the cultural and economic arenas.

Sanai also remarked that situating the statue of Khayyam in Astrakhan reveals the lengthy friendship between the two countries.

The statue has been located near the greatest Turkmen poet, Makhtum-Qoli Faraghi (1733-1790), who is considered to be the founder of authentic Turkmen literature.

Khayyam, a Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet, was renowned in his own country and



A man in Astrakhan gets a look at a statue of Persian poet Omar Khayyam after it was unveiled in the Russian city on August 4, 2016.

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

Land artist Ahmad Nadalian to hold workshop in South Korea

ART TEHRAN — Iranian land artist Ahmad Nadalian is scheduled to travel to South Korea in two weeks to hold a workshop for children at the 7th Geumgang International Nature Art Biennial.

Many artists from around the world are participating in the biennial, which is being organized by Yattoo, the Korean Nature Art Association.

Land artist Karim Allahkhani from Iran has also created two works for the biennial. The artists live together for three weeks, creating their works at Ssangshin Park. The works are scheduled to be showcased in an exhibition, which will open to the

public from August 26 to November 30.

Nadalian also noted that his participation in the exhibit "Small Gestures" now underway at the Kunsthalle in Budapest, Hungary was a good experience, the Persian service of MNA reported on Friday.

Curated by art historian Katalin Keseru and art critic John K. Grande, "Small Gestures" is a multi-dimensional show of some forty Hungarian and international artists and groups who explore the relationship to nature through materials, various processes and concepts.

The exhibit, which opened on July 26, will be running until October 16.

World Youth Orchestra's conductor praises Iranian performance

ART TEHRAN — The World Youth Orchestra's Italian conductor Damiano Giuranna praised the concert by the renowned pianist and composer Saman Ehteshami performed at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on August 4.

Giuranna said that this is the first time he has heard an Iranian concert and has experienced moments of wonder, Iran's Rudaki Foundation announced in a press release on Friday.

Ehteshami, accompanied by the Iran Philharmonic Choir conducted by Alireza Shafaqnejad, performed selections from Iranian classical music.

The Italian conductor also remarked that the concert was one of the best and



Italian maestro Damiano Giuranna conducts musicians from the World Youth Orchestra and the Tehran Symphony Orchestra during a joint rehearsal at Tehran's Rudaki Hall on August 3, 2016.

happiest he has ever heard, and that its good memory will remain in his mind forever.

Iranian music is comprised of different sections, each part of which is beautiful and fascinating, Giuranna added.

PICTURE OF THE DAY

IRNA/Marzieh Soleimani



Members of a troupe led by director/writer Hamidreza Hedayati act in a scene from "Antigone" at Tehran's Baran Hall on August 3, 2016.

Comic actress Lily Tomlin to get Screen Actors Guild lifetime award

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Lily Tomlin, one of America's most enduring comic actresses, will receive a lifetime achievement award in January from the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), the group announced on Thursday.

Tomlin, 76, who rose to fame in 1969 through television's "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In" weekly show, went on to headline movies like "Nashville", and Broadway shows that have brought multiple Emmy and Tony awards.

SAG President Gabrielle Carteris in a statement called her "an extraordinary actress, as equally adept at narrative drama as in comedy roles. But it is through her many original characters that Lily's creative genius fully shines."

Tomlin, who also has two of America's highest artistic awards with a Kennedy Center Honor and Mark Twain Humor Prize, is currently co-starring in the Netflix comedy series "Grace and Frankie" with Jane Fonda.

Tomlin will receive her lifetime achievement honor at the SAG annual awards ceremony in Los Angeles on Jan. 29. Previous recipients include Mary Tyler Moore, Carol Burnett, Clint Eastwood and Elizabeth Taylor.

Harry Potter casts spell again with "Cursed Child" sales

LONDON (Reuters) — "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child", the script for a new London play telling the eighth story in the boy wizard series, has sold more than 2 million copies in its first two days on the market in the United States, publisher Scholastic said on Wednesday.

The book - a script instead of a narrative novel like author J.K. Rowling's previous Potter books - was published at midnight on

Sunday, shortly after the play's gala opening. The play is sold out through May 2017.

"Cursed Child", written by Rowling, screenwriter and playwright Jack Thorne and director John Tiffany, is set 19 years after "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows", the final book in the original series, released in 2007.

Scholastic, the U.S. and Canadian publisher of "Cursed Child", said the sales

figures were unprecedented for a script book. Prior to its release, Barnes & Noble said "Cursed Child" was the most pre-ordered book since 2007's "Deathly Hallows".

Scholastic said it had ordered 4.5 million first printing copies of "Cursed Child" and retailers had reported "fast-paced, record-breaking pre-sales" ahead of the release date.

Full first-week U.S. sales figures of "Cursed Child" from Nielsen BookScan are not

expected until next week.

U.K. publisher Little, Brown Book Group said "Cursed Child" sold 680,000 print copies in the U.K. in three days.

U.K. book industry magazine and website The Bookseller said if the sales rate continued, the script book would "be the second biggest-selling single week for one title since records began, with 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows' as the first."