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Rouhani-Putin-Azerbaijan meeting to set in motion regional convergence: ambassador

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Ali Kushki

TEHRAN — Iranian Ambassador to Baku Mohsen Paka'ein asserts that the tripartite meeting between presidents of Iran, Russia, and Azerbaijan in Baku on August 8 will open a new chapter in regional cooperation between the three countries.

During the two-day visit, both bilateral and tripartite meetings have been scheduled, where issues such as energy, fight on terrorism, and economy are high on agenda, the ambassador told the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

In what follows, a transcript of the interview has been given:

In a recent interview with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), your Excellency had hailed bilateral ties between Tehran and Baku as "strategic". How do you support your stance?

A: I reiterate my comment to describe relations between the two neighboring countries as strategic. The stance can be supported at least from three perspectives. Initially, the two countries share numerous cultural, religious, and historical bonds, not breakable easily.

Also, the two countries offer great capacities in the transportation sector in all four areas of maritime, land, rail, and air. In the energy sector also the two can have closest ties particularly in swapping Baku's gas to Nakhchivan and oil to the Persian Gulf and cooperation in joint oil fields in the Caspian Sea.

See page 2

Iran, Afghanistan exchange views on water, security, border control

TT POLITICAL desk **TEHRAN** — Talks on a wide range of mutual concerns, particularly water shortage, terrorism, border control, and drug smuggling were the main themes of a session between Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani and Mohammad Hanif Atmar, national security advisor to the Afghan president, on Saturday.

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Olympic Games begin with spectacular opening ceremony

Khabar online

Mitsubishi to hold aircraft sale talks with Iran in December

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** — A delegation from Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation will arrive in Tehran in December to continue talks on selling MRJ 100 (Mitsubishi Regional Jet) aircrafts to Iran, Iran's deputy transport minister Asghar Fakhrieh-Kashan said on Saturday.

"We offered purchasing 20 aircrafts under a finance lease agreement," IRNA quoted Fakhrieh-Kashan as saying.

The Japanese side is to announce its final decision in this regard after studying our offer in the second joint working group which is going to be formed in Tehran in December, he explained.

"Aseman Airline would be an appropriate choice for buying the MRJ 100 aircrafts," he added. As reported earlier, the unit of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries began market surveys into Iran last September, four months before the U.S. lifted sanctions. The Japanese company has been touching base with flag carrier Iran Air and Aseman Airlines, as well as the country's aviation authorities.

Mitsubishi Aircraft is partnering with the Japanese government in this endeavor, aiming to make use of state-backed financing. Because Mitsubishi Aircraft is developing the 90-seat model first, the company plans to deliver the 70-seater in 2019 at the earliest.

Because of economic sanctions, Iran had been unable to replace aging aircraft. Tehran is planning to expand its airports and transform the city into a Mideast hub.

Armenia-Iran visa-free travel deal enters into effect

The agreement lifting the visa requirements between Armenia and Iran entered into effect on August 6 to allow Armenian citizens to travel to the Islamic Republic without entry permits, Tert.am reported.

All border checkpoints across the country have already been notified of the measure, Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Seyed Kazem Sadjadi has said as he met with Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan for private talks, the Armenian government's press service reported.

Both sides have agreed the deal will promote tourism development, facilitating mutual visits.

(Source: PanARMENIAN.Net)

Sadi Foundation reviews Farsi learning in Persian Gulf region

TT CULTURE desk **TEHRAN** — Tehran-based Sadi Foundation's Strategic Council for the Persian Gulf Region convened on Saturday to explore ways to develop Persian learning in the region.

Islamic Culture and Relations Organization Deputy Director Abbas Khameyar, several university professors and other individuals who formerly served as cultural attaches and ambassadors in the region are the members of the council, which is headed by Seyyed Mohammadreza Darbandi, the deputy director of the Sadi Foundation.

The council is commissioned to monitor the status quo of Persian studies in the neighboring countries in order to enrich cultural relations, in particular educational courses, with the countries. The Sadi Foundation, tasked with promoting the Persian language and literature overseas, is currently hosting a select group of 200 Persian literature aficionados from around the globe during its 83rd Persian Language and Literature Refresher Course that started on Thursday.

ISIL almost completely' ousted from Syria's Manbij city

Battle for key military base rages in Aleppo

By staff & agencies

An alliance of Kurdish and Arab forces has reportedly managed to retake the strategic northern Syrian city of Manbij from ISIL (Daesh) terrorists.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) managed to take "almost complete control" of the area, located 446 kilometers (277 miles) north of the Syrian capital, Damascus, on Saturday.

The Britain-based group said there are still pockets of Daesh militants present in the center of Manbij.

The development came a day after SDF forces made significant advances in the city.

→9

Sports competition an opportunity to satisfy 'national pride': anthropologist

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — An anthropologist believes that many people consider sports competitions as good opportunities for countries to show their "national pride" and "confront each other".

"Sports competitions are far better than war, and can be just as satisfying for national pride," Prof. William O. Beeman, head of the anthropology department at the State University of Minnesota, tells the Tehran Times as the Rio de Janeiro Olympics began on Friday.

Following is the text of the interview:

Is there any relationship between politics and sports?

A: This varies from country to country. Some countries actually have a sports ministry, so the minister of sports is a government official. In Communist countries sports are an extremely important political factor in government. A great deal of government money is spent on training athletes, since the state views athletic victory as proof of national superiority. Under the old Communist German Democratic Republic, the East Germans used athletics as a way of proving that they were better than the West Germans. In the United States sports are very important for national and local pride, but no government money is spent on athletic training, or in sending athletes to the Olympics. All money spent is raised from private donations.

It is possible for sports participation to have a political meaning. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and had the Olympic Games in Moscow, the United States boycotted the games to protest the Soviet action, and to deny the Soviets a possible propaganda victory. In Atlanta, African American athletes who won their contests exhibited a "black power" salute to protest unfair treatment of African Americans. They were stripped of their medals for having politicized their position.

"Many people (many anthropologists!) point out that sports competitions are healthy ways for countries to confront each other."

One other area where sports and politics are intertwined has to do with building sports stadiums. In the United States no national money is spent on sports stadiums. However, local money from cities or even states may be used to support stadiums. This is a big controversy in some parts of the United States, since these are tax monies, and local taxpayers are sometimes very upset at the amount of money being spent, and at the fact that these stadiums benefit team owners who make millions and millions of dollars from sports events.

In Europe and Australia stadiums are usually supported through a combination of public and private funding.

→9

'Meeting between Iranian and Russian presidents will open new chapter in ties'

TT POLITICAL desk **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Sanai, Iran's ambassador to Moscow, said on Saturday that the meeting between the Iranian and Russian presidents in Baku on Monday will be a new chapter in relations.

The meeting between Hassan Rouhani and Vladimir Putin will promote the two countries' international role that could play an important part in helping settle the Syrian crisis, he told IRNA.

Rouhani is scheduled to leave Tehran for Baku on Sunday to attend a tripartite summit with Putin and Azeri President Ilham Aliyev.

The Iranian president plans to meet with the Russian president on the sidelines of the summit.

Rouhani will also hold a bilateral meeting with Aliyev on Sunday to discuss the implementation of agreements previously signed between Tehran and Baku. The Iranian and Azeri presidents will also exchange views about cooperation in different fields, including commerce, industry, energy and culture, six months after the two countries signed 11 agreements and memoranda of understanding in Tehran, Press TV reported.

Iran to reduce gas export to Armenia from September

Iran will reduce gas export to Armenia from next month, Iranian Deputy Oil Minister Hamidreza Araqi said while commenting on Iran-Armenia new gas discussions and reports by several media outlets.

According to him, Armenia needed more gas last month: "We accepted their proposal and increased gas export. But, we'll reduce gas export from next month because a certain volume is provided in the contract".

Araqi also touched upon sale of Turkmen gas to Azerbaijan through Iran: "This will be realized by a private Iranian company. This company is not linked with Azerbaijani and Iranian governments. The company will buy gas from Turkmenistan and deliver to us. And we plan to sell it to Azerbaijan. We are now discussing this issue".

Araqi stressed Azerbaijan and Iran are exchanging gas: "We deliver Azerbaijani gas to Nakhchivan".

(Source: apa.az)

The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

It can benefit a wide range of tastes from students to professional journalists.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

ARMAN

Hate cultivates Daesh: Hassan Khomeini

TEHRAN — "Let us be careful not to sow the seed of hate because after some ten years it will produce Daesh," Hassan Khomeini told a number of Afghan religious figures on Friday in Tehran.

He stressed the call for the unity of Islamic sects and warned against the sects contributing to the formation of such groups as Daesh by spreading hatred and unhealthy rivalry, the Arman newspaper reported.

FARS

Russians offer to launch Iranian satellites

TEHRAN — The Iranian minister of communications and information technology announced on Saturday that Moscow has offered to launch Iran's home-made satellites, Fars reported.

Mahmoud Vaezi also underlined Moscow's enthusiasm for cooperation with Tehran in building and launching remote sensing satellites. "We have pursued this issue in talks with (Russian) Roscosmos space corporation and reached an agreement on designing, building and launching the satellite.""We are in talks on the details for implementing the project and agreement on the price to implement it," Vaezi said.

TASNIM

Ex-Ukrainian president urges strategic ties with Iran

TEHRAN — Ukraine's former president Viktor Yushchenko has hailed Iran as a very powerful country with which his country should develop strategic relations.

The ties should not be confined to energy cooperation, but should also involve the exchange of scientific expertise, Yushchenko told Tasnim during a visit to Tehran on Friday.

He said the two nations are still unaware of one another's enormous capacities.

Referring to the escalation of tensions between Kiev and Moscow and the opportunities for closer ties with other parties in the region, Yushchenko said Iran can fulfill many of Ukraine's needs in the current situation.

NASIM

Iran imports AK-103's rifles from Russia

TEHRAN — Iran has imported AK-103's from Russia, a modern generation of Kalashnikov assault rifles with 30-round magazines.

Certain units of the Iranian Armed Forces are going to be equipped with the new weapons, Nasim reported on Saturday.

The AK-103 is currently a service rifle only in Russia, India, Venezuela, Libya and Namibia.

The machine gun is so versatile that is now being used by Russia's Special Operations Forces and also by the Special Police Units.

ISNA

MKO should leave Iraq in 45 days: ambassador

TEHRAN — The Iranian ambassador to Baghdad has said the remaining MKO (People's Mojahedin Organization) members in Iraq should leave the country within 45 days.

65 percent of the group members have already left, Hassan Danaeifar said on Friday, adding that a "pressure by the U.S. and its allies" has prevented the evacuation of the remaining, ISNA reported.

Rahim Safavi greets Vahidi on new post

YJC

TEHRAN — In a letter on Saturday Yahya Rahim-Safavi, Supreme Leader's military aide, congratulated former defense minister Ahmad Vahidi for being appointed as the dean of the National Defense University.

"Your fitting appointment which was ratified by the commander-in-chief was the cause of much happiness," Rahim-Safavi said, the YJC reported.

IRNA

Zarif: Diplomacy and media are twins in mission

TEHRAN — Speaking to a group of journalists on Saturday to mark Reporter's Day, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said diplomacy and media are "companions and twins in mission".

"We hope the cooperation goes on forever because both these parties care for the country," Zarif said, according to IRNA.

Rouhani-Putin-Azerbaijan meeting to set in motion regional convergence: ambassador

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Moreover, Tehran and Baku can expand bilateral trade considering that the each needs commodities produced by the other. This particularly becomes meaningful when factors such as short distance and low duty levied by the two states are taken into consideration.

One more opportunity is the tourism industry. Annually, as many as one million Azerbaijanis travel to Iran and we hope to ease visa regulations to encourage Iranians to travel to Azerbaijan as well.

The areas I referred to above are just opportunities which can make relations between the two countries strategic. But, there is also a second dimension to the strategic description I had of the bilateral ties. That is, Tehran and Baku are facing common threats, as well. Among these are terrorism and extremism as well as drug and human smuggling.

The opportunities and joint challenges with cultural, religious, and historical bonds together pave the way for the strongest ties between Tehran and Baku.

What is the importance of the tripartite meeting?

A: The tripartite meeting is in fact a new trend in regional cooperation between Iran, Russia, and Azerbaijan as three key countries in the region at a presidential level. Negotiations will focus on how to make the maximum use of each other's capacities to expand ties and address regional challenges and threats. This will be possible through adopting coordinated stances. In fact, the importance of the meeting lies in its emphasis on regional convergence. The more convergent policies regional countries adopt, the more peaceful the region will be.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev (L), Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (M), and Russian President Vladimir Putin

Iranian Ambassador to Baku says, "The more convergent policies regional countries adopt, the more peaceful the region will be."

How would the energy market and talks on the Caspian Sea legal regime be influenced by these negotiations?

A: We should remember that this is the first round of the tripartite negotiations and it won't be realistic if we expect to find solutions to all challenges and problems. However, back to your question, since the three countries are sitting on colossal gas reserves, energy will certainly be an interest. It is likely the sides will hold preliminary talks during the session. But further negotiations at different levels are required to come up with a definite conclusion. With regard to the Caspian Sea, yes there will be general discussion but I wonder if the sides will go into the details.

Iran tells the West it is firm in terror fight

TT POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — The Foreign Ministry on Saturday slammed the Western criticism of Iran for execution of a number of terrorists, calling it an instance of "interference".

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always adopted a firm policy on fighting terrorism and the terrorists groups which are being supported by the foreign countries," ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said.

Qassemi called on Western countries to avoid adopting double standards in fighting terrorism and instead focus on eradicating terrorism.

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry confirmed on Wednesday that 20 terrorists were executed after being sentenced to death. It said they had tried to carry out terrorist attacks in western Iran.

The executed were members of a terrorist cell which called themselves "Tawhid and Jihad" group.

"According to received information from the Judicial sources, the terrorists were accused of making efforts to form a Takfiri terrorist group, carry out armed operations inside the country, kill the innocent people and assassinate some of the religious scholars, especially the Sunni ones, and build and plant bombs in various cities," Qassemi explained.

He added Iran spares no efforts in providing security for its citizens.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein has condemned hanging of the terrorists and called it "injustice".

In June, Iran's Intelligence Ministry issued a statement announcing it had foiled one of the "biggest terrorist plots of Takfiri-Wahhabi groups" in Tehran and some other cities.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi

VP advises media to stay out of political disputes

TT POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — Iran's First-Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Saturday that the media should distance themselves from "political factions" and "psychological warfare".

"It is in the interest of the country that the national media, especially the media which are affiliated to state bodies, stay away from political factions and psychological warfare," Jahangiri told a graduation ceremony of students from the School of Media Studies.

Jahangiri's remarks came on Reporter's Day which is held to commemorate Mahmoud Saremi, an IRNA reporter who was killed along with eight Iranian diplomats by the Taliban when they occupied the Iranian consulate in Mazari Sharif on August 7, 1998.

He said the government's policy is to promote the "language of national understanding" and defend "religious and national values".

The vice president also said the government attaches great importance to the role of journalists in helping promote the "culture of dialogue".

He added, "In the era of communications, those who have acquired knowledge of communications can be the best at proposing practical ways to improve capability of communicating at various levels."

He also said that the government seeks "fact-finding" and "transparent" approaches toward problematic issues and welcomes "free flow of information" in calm atmosphere.

"From the viewpoint of the government, media are a place to inform and boost criticism and not a place to undermine and deceive. Media are place of friendship and not animosity," the vice president remarked.

He also urged the media to promote dialogue among political, cultural, scientific and social bodies and groups.

Supporting resistance is our 'honor': Kharrazi

TT POLITICAL desk

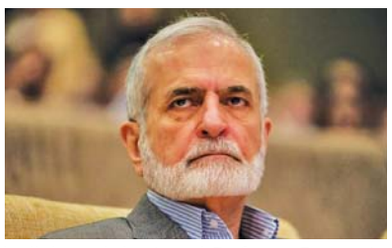
TEHRAN — Kamal Kharrazi, head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, has said that supporting the axis of resistance (Hezbollah, Palestine, and Syria) is Iran's "honor".

"We are proud of supporting the resistance and its forces in the region [the Middle East region] especially the Hezbollah," he told Mehr news agency in an interview published on Saturday.

On the anniversary of Hezbollah's victory over Israel in the 2006 war, he said that a Shiite Lebanese group defeated Israel through resistance.

Kharrazi who was foreign minister from 1997 to 2005 called "resistance" a key to victory.

The 2006 Lebanon War, also called the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah War, was a 34-day military conflict between Hezbollah and the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon, Northern Israel and the Golan Heights.



The Hezbollah victory shattered the myth of the invincibility of the Israeli army. It caused a political earthquake in Israel. Israel lost more than 100 soldiers in the war.

A five-member Winograd Committee, appointed to examine Israel's performance in the 2006 war, concluded in January 2008 that the war "was a big and serious failure" for Israel.

E-voting helps prevent vote buying: Guardian Council

TT POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — The Guardian Council spokesman has said electronic voting helps to "partially" prevent buying votes, ISNA reported on Saturday.

"Vote buying is one serious weakness of previous elections which needs to be addressed. One solution is electronic voting," said Abbasali Kadkhodaei.

Although no formal data on vote buying is available for previous elections, Kadkhodaei confirmed that this had been the case in some provinces.

He did not give details.

While it is not yet decided when the Iranians cast their votes electronically, the Guardian Council official said the upcoming presidential elections, salted for May 19 next year, can be the right time provided that the election law is revised and required hardware are available at voting booths.

"If infrastructures are provided and the election law is revised, we certainly embrace the initiative," the spokesman highlighted.

In July, the Rouhani administration wrote to the Guardian Council, proposing electronic voting in the next year's presidential and council elections.

Also, last week, Kadkhodaei said he was in talks with Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani on revising the election law, which include decision over whether the upcoming elections will be held electronically.

Iran, Afghanistan exchange views on water, security, border control

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"Water is the main source of development and prosperity at the two countries' borderlines and based on a joint framework, it should serve as a tool to expand friendship and cooperation to generate prosperity for the border people," Shamkhani told the visiting Afghan security official.

Located in an arid and semi-arid region coupled with low precipitation over the past years, the two countries have disagreements over the Hirmand River, a main basin for Sistan-Baluchestan province, southeastern Iran.

Border control, fight on terrorism depend on security talks

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shamkhani highlighted the importance of secure borders for economic prosperity and development of infrastructure. "Preventing terrorist moves and drug smuggling at borderlines won't be possible without purposeful collaboration and convergent strategies."

36 years of civil war and foreign aggressions have made Afghanistan's borders insecure. The country shares more than 900 kilometers of borders with Iran.

SNSC Secretary Ali Shamkhani (R) and Mohammad Hanif Atmar (L), national security advisor to the Afghan president

The borderlines also have been costly for Iran to guard against drug smugglers. Both countries are located across the 'Balkan' route which is one of the main heroin trafficking corridors.

The global increase in heroin seizures over the period 2006-2008 was driven mainly by continued burgeoning seizures in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey.

Only in 2014, Iran reported seizures of 393,013 Kilograms of opium, according to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, one of the highest seizure records in the world.

Of a total of an annual flow of 430-450 tons of heroin into the global heroin market, some 380 tons of heroin and morphine is produced exclusively from Afghan opium.

While approximately 5 tons are consumed and seized in Afghanistan, the remaining bulk of 375 tons is trafficked worldwide via routes flowing into and through the countries neighboring Afghanistan, including Iran.

'Need for comprehensive war on terrorism'

The Afghan official, for his part, called for closer cooperation between Tehran and Kabul, stressing the need for a "comprehensive fight against extremism and terrorism to secure the region."

He also urged expansion of ties to achieve sustainable border security and staunch the flow of drug smuggling.

ISIL fills 'vacuum of power' in Libya left by U.S.: VA senator

A Virginia state senator told RT that the U.S. campaign against the ISIL terrorist group in the coastal city of Sirte, Libya is nothing but "a political ploy," and that the White House is embarrassed at the "enormous vacuum of power" it created, which allowed terrorists to gain footing.

On August 1, the Pentagon reported that its troops conducted precision airstrikes against ISIL"at the request of the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA)."

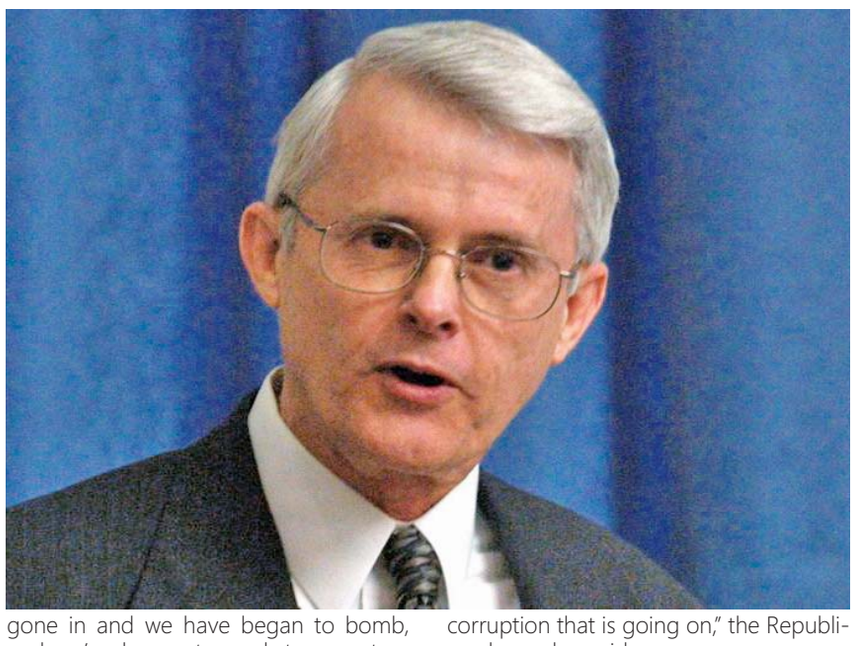
The department's press secretary Peter Cook stressed that the strikes had been authorized by President Barack Obama.

Recapturing Sirte from ISIL would be a significant advance for the Libyan forces. Located halfway between Tripoli and Benghazi, the city of Sirte has been one of the terrorists' strongholds since August 2015.

Pentagon officials say that "additional U.S. strikes will continue to target ISIL in Sirte in order to enable the GNA to make a decisive, strategic advance."

However, Virginia State Senator Richard Black (R-Loudoun) says there is another reason why the U.S. got involved in yet another military activity.

"We left this enormous vacuum of power - there is no legitimate government of Libya," he told RT. "I think it was an embarrassment to the Obama administration and as a consequence we have



gone in and we have began to bomb, and we've began to work to recapture that city. I think it's a political ploy."

'ISIL troops come from the U.S.'

This week, Wikileaks claimed that Hillary Clinton had been involved in shipping weapons to terrorists, including to terrorists in the ISIL.

The news was welcomed by Senator Black.

"I am very grateful to WikiLeaks because they have exposed a great deal of corruption that is going on," the Republican lawmaker said.

"Hillary Clinton should pay an enormous price for her support of terrorism," Black added.

"She has supported terrorism throughout her time as secretary of state. She has collected vast amounts of money, enormous sums of money," he stressed.

Yet, at the same time, Black says he has no doubt about U.S. involvement into guns movement across the borders.

"There is no question in my mind that the United States have been involved in guns running out of Libya, moving guns into Turkey and then across the border into Syria," the senator said.

Even more so, Black says, the U.S. has four terrorist training camps, one in each of the following countries: Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

"The purpose is that they give basic training to the terrorists and the terrorists in theory going to support moderates," Black said. "But in fact, they go on the open market and they are sold to the highest bidder. There have been testimony from ISIL that says 'There do you think out troops come? Face of the moon?' No, they don't come from the face of the moon. They come from training camps, from the United States."

'NATO's purpose – aggression'

Black also criticized NATO for losing its initial meaning "of a very responsible treaty organization."

"What happened is that NATO has metastasized from being a very responsible treaty organization into one that is searching for a purpose and the purpose is aggression," the senator told RT. "NATO has since engaged in wars of aggression against Libya, against Syria. They are evolved in Yemen."

(Source: RT)

Austrian far-right leader likens Turkish coup to Reichstag fire

Turkey's failed coup and President Tayyip Erdogan's subsequent purges of state institutions are reminiscent of the Reichstag fire in Nazi Germany and its use by Hitler to amass greater power, the head of Austria's far-right Freedom Party said.

The blaze in the German parliament building in 1933 was portrayed by the Nazis as a Communist plot against the government and it was used to justify curtailing civil liberties, consolidating Adolf Hitler's grip on Germany.

Austria's Freedom Party (FPO) leader Heinz-Christian Strache said he saw parallels in Erdogan's use of the July 15 coup by a faction within the Turkish armed forces to crack down on his opponents in the army, civil service, academia and the media.

"One almost had the impression that it was a guided putsch aimed in the end at making a presidential dictatorship by Erdogan possible," Strache told daily Die Presse in an interview published on Saturday.

"Dramatically, we have experienced such mechanisms elsewhere before, such as with the Reichstag fire, in the wake of which total power was seized," Strache said.

"And now, too, one has the impression that a bit of steering occurred," he added.

Erdogan has angrily rejected suggestions that he or the government might have been behind the coup, which he has blamed on the followers of a U.S.-based Muslim cleric. Erdogan narrowly avoided capture and possible death on the night of the putsch.

Turkey's foreign minister called Austria the "capital of radical racism" Friday after Chancellor Christian Kern suggested European Union leaders discuss ending Ankara's EU accession talks, citing democratic and economic deficits.

Kern's centrist coalition government is under pressure from Strache's resurgent FPO, which is currently leading in opinion polls. Its candidate narrowly lost a presidential election in May but may win a re-run set for Oct. 2 following irregularities in the ballot count.

Germany rejected Kern's suggestion on Turkey but Chancellor Angela Merkel, Europe's most powerful leader, and other EU politicians have expressed concern over the scale and speed of the mass purges in Turkey.

Erdogan and many Turks accuse the West of focusing more on the rights of the coup plotters and their suspected supporters than on the putsch itself, in which more than 230 people were killed as rogue soldiers

bombed parliament and seized bridges with tanks and helicopters.

The Turkish authorities blame preacher Fethullah Gulen and his followers in Turkey for the coup attempt. Ankara has demanded the extradition of Gulen from the United States, where he has lived in self-imposed exile since 1999.

Gulen denies any involvement in the coup attempt.

(Source: Reuters)

Japan marks 71st anniversary of Hiroshima atomic bombing

Japan has marked the 71st anniversary of the US military's deadly atomic bombing of the western city of Hiroshima, which still bears the scars of the disaster.

A peace bell tolled at 8:15 a.m. local time on Saturday (2315 GMT on Friday), the time a US B-29 bomber called the Enola Gay dropped the uranium bomb that exploded some 600 meters (1,800 feet) above the city.

About 50,000 took part in the memorial service and held a moment of silence for the tragedy in Hiroshima.

During the memorial ceremony, Mayor Kazumi Matsui renewed calls for a nuclear weapons free world, urging countries with such arms to "have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and pursue a world without them."

He further recalled a recent visit by US President Barack Obama to Hiroshima and called on world leaders to make similar visits to the sites of the disaster, saying such trips "will surely etch the reality of the atomic bombings in each heart."

"It is the time for us to make actions towards the abolition of the 'absolute evil', the ultimate form of inhumanity, united and with passion," he added.

The mayor further warned Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe against his controversial push to revise the country's pacifist constitution that would allow the military to engage in wars overseas for the first time since the World War II.

On August 4, Japan released previously-undisclosed footage showing the immediate aftermath of the tragedy in Hiroshima and Nagazaki.

The horrible impacts of the bombings made Japan surrender on August 15, 1945, bringing an end to World War II. The blasts also ushered in the Cold War era, a period of heightened tension between the West and the former Soviet Union.

Many in Japan believe that the US nuclear attacks amount to war crimes as

they targeted civilians.

Back in May, Obama made a visit to Hiroshima, but he offered no apology for the US bombings.

An association of atomic bomb survivors criticized the US president for his failure to explicitly mention Washington's responsibility for the bombing during his speech at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial.

(Source: AP)

Kuwait nabs 'Filipino ISIL member'

Kuwaiti authorities have arrested a Filipino accused of pledging allegiance to the ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group and planning to launch a terrorist attack in Kuwait.

Kuwait's Interior Ministry said in a statement that the Southeast Asian woman, whose name it did not release even as it published her image, was born in 1984 and had entered the country last June as a house maid.

Security forces monitored one of her email accounts and discovered messages in which she had contacted a Daesh offshoot in Libya by means of "a fake name and nickname to evade recognition."

"She confessed she was ready to carry out any terrorist attack once circumstances and means were ripe in order to undermine security and stability in Kuwait, as well as ignite sedition," the statement published by the state-run Kuwait News Agency read.

It did not say, however, if the detained woman would receive legal counsel.

Early last month, Kuwaiti security forces dismantled three purported Daesh terrorist cells that were preparing to carry out terror attacks in the Arab state.

One of the detainees was identified as 18-year old Talal Raja, who allegedly confessed to planning an attack on a Shia mosque and a government building at the end of the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

On June 26, 2015, at least 27 people lost their lives and nearly 230 others sustained injuries in a bomb attack that ripped through the Imam Sadiq (PBUH) Mosque in al-Sawabir, a busy residential and shopping district of Kuwait City.

Following the incident, the Kuwaiti Interior Ministry said the attack was carried out by Saudi national Fahd Suleiman Abdulmohsen al-Qaba'a. The self-proclaimed Daesh-affiliated group, Najd Province, later claimed responsibility for the attack in Kuwait.

(Source: Gulf News)

France bar fire: Blaze kills 13 at birthday party

A fire in a bar in the northern French city of Rouen has killed at least 13 people and injured six others, officials say.

The blaze broke out early on Saturday in the basement room of the Cuba Libre bar during a birthday celebration.

"According to an initial investigation, 13 are dead and six are injured, and more than 50 firefighters attended the scene," Bernard Cazeneuve, France's interior minister, said in a statement.

"An inquiry is under way to establish the cause of the fire."

The victims were aged between 18 and 25, according to local French newspapers.

One of the injured was in a critical condition, Yvan Cordier, secretary-general of the Seine-Maritime prefecture, told the AFP news agency.

Local official Laurent Labadie, who was at the scene of the fire, described the blaze as accidental.

One source close to the investigation said that candles on a birthday cake may have sparked the blaze.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Kerry presses on with Russian talks on Syria despite Aleppo setbacks

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is still pursuing an agreement with Russia on military cooperation in the fight against ISIL terrorist group in Syria despite major setbacks and skepticism from other administration officials and U.S. allies, U.S. officials with knowledge of the talks said.

"We believe this approach is still worth pursuing," State Department spokesman John Kirby said in an email response to Reuters questions, adding: "But it remains to be seen whether or not we can get there. "Kerry has been pursuing a proposal that envisions resuscitating a Cessation of Hostilities agreement, creating a center where the two countries would share intelligence for targeting air strikes, and prohibiting the Syrian air force from attacking U.S.-backed rebel groups.

Instead, Syrian and Russian warplanes have continued to pound rebels who are assaulting government-held parts of the northern city of Aleppo in an effort to reopen supply lines into opposition-held areas.

The task of identifying acceptable rebel targets has grown harder since a major extremist group said it had cut its ties to al Qaeda. That is leading some rebels to join the renamed group and made it harder to target hardliners without hitting other units.

"We've been very concerned about the situation in Aleppo and we have made those concerns plain to Russian officials," said Kirby, who noted that Kerry had spoken to his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in a phone call on Friday.

Speaking in Laos last week, Kerry said he hoped for an agreement early in August, but two U.S. officials said on Friday there had been "limited progress" toward a deal.

"Discussions will likely continue, but there is no illusion on how much can be achieved," said another U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Shared distrust

While Kerry shares other officials' distrust of the Russians, according to several U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity, he thinks the diplomatic channel must be kept open in case Russia can be persuaded to help end the violence in Syria, now in its fifth year.

U.S. President Barack Obama has supported Kerry's effort, but he, too, expressed concern on Thursday about Russia's commitment to ending the violence, saying he was under no illusions about Russia's motives and they would be put to the test.

"I'm not confident that we can trust the Russians and Vladimir Putin," he told reporters after a meeting with his national security team at the Pentagon. "We have to test whether or not we can get an actual cessation of hostilities that includes an end to the kinds of aerial bombing and civilian death and destruction that we've seen carried out by the Assad regime."

A senior U.S. official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said that during the meeting at the Pentagon questions were raised over whether to take Russia's word.

"There was an acknowledgement that we were not, nor should we, take the Russians at their word," the official told Reuters. "And if this moves forward we'll have to make sure it's in the best interests of the cessation of hostilities."

"No doors are closed but nothing has been decided," the official added.

The State Department's Kirby said the test for Russia was whether it was willing to use its influence over Assad to stop the violence and support a political transition in Syria.

"The test is to see if Russia is really willing to use its influence on the Assad regime to observe the cessation of hostilities, to stop killing its own citizens, to improve the delivery of humanitarian aid, and eventually contribute to the political process," Kirby said.

But a second U.S. official said progress in the talks was for now being overtaken by the battle for Aleppo.

The rebels are trying to break through a strip of government-controlled territory in an effort to reconnect their area of control in the west of Syria with the encircled rebel sector of eastern Aleppo.

The second official said another major factor was that Jabhat Fateh al Sham, which until last week called itself the Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, is leading the drive to break the government siege of opposition-held northern Aleppo, and its fighters have intermingled with other rebel groups.

(Source: Reuters)

SNIPPETS

Fire in Iran's gas pipeline blast detained after 5 hours

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** The huge explosion that hit a gas pressure boosting station in Bushehr southern province on Friday midnight was brought under control in five hours, IRNA reported on Saturday.

According to the reports, the explosion of the gas pipeline in the neighborhood of the port city of Genaveh was not an act of sabotage and the nearby villages have been evacuated as a safety measure.

The accident did not cause any fatalities but left three or four people wounded.

Witnesses said the raging blaze could be clearly seen from a distance of 30 kilometers.

Iran not definite about giving 2 oil projects to Chinese companies

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** Handing the development project of Yadavaran and North Azadegan oil fields to Chinese companies is not definite yet and negotiations are ongoing, IRNA quoted Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Ali Kardor as saying on Saturday.

According to IRNA, the official said that Chinese candidate companies, which have been given priority in the second phases of developing the two oil fields, offered their plans and suggestions and oil ministry is considering them but nothing has been finalized yet.

North Azadegan and Yadavaran are two of the five oilfields, dubbed the West Karoun oilfields, Iran shares with Iraq at the western part of Iran's southwestern region of Karoun.

Iran's 4-month non-oil exports to Iraq up 23%

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** Iran's non-oil exports to Iraq rose by 23 percent in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20- July 21, 2016), Iran's ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Danayeefar was quoted by IRNA on Saturday.

Iran exported some $2.460 billion worth of goods to Iraq during the mentioned period which rose by $494 million compared to the $1.966 billion of the same period last year.

Also Ebrahim Rezazadeh, Iranian commercial attaché to Iraq, said that the country's total non-oil exports to Iraq stood at $6.2 billion last year, which makes the country Iraq's third business partner after China and Turkey.

NEWS

We will fine-tune policy if needed, says China central bank

BEIJING (Reuters) – China's central bank on Friday reiterated it will fine-tune policy in a pre-emptive and timely way, but added that cuts to bank reserve requirements could put downward pressure on the Yuan and foreign reserves.

The People's Bank of China will stick to its long-standing prudent stance and keep the Yuan currency basically stable, the bank said in its second-quarter monetary policy implementation report.

China's economy grew faster than expected in the second quarter, easing worries of a hard landing.

But concern about debt and a build-up of cash on company balance sheets has led to speculation that further monetary easing would be limited, especially as China gets less return for each unit of credit growth.

The focus in the last five months of the year is expected to be on structural reform and fiscal measures to boost growth.

China will ensure adequate liquidity and will use multiple monetary policy tools, while ensuring credit grows at a reasonable rate, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) said.

The PBOC also repeated its stance that the Yuan would be kept basically stable and China would continue with interest rate and exchange rate reform.

The Yuan has fallen 2.26% against the dollar this year.

China's statistics bureau has said that economic growth will be stable this year, and the central bank in early June maintained its 2016 growth forecast of 6.8%. The economy grew 6.7% in the first half.

China will report July economic data next week, with expectations for broadly stable growth.

Iranian petchem complex's fire-hit unit to come online in 2-3 months

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** The fire-hit paraxylene unit of Bou Ali Sina Petrochemical Complex (BSPC) will resume operation within the upcoming two to three months, the Control Director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Ali-Mohammad Bosaqzadeh announced.

As Shana news agency reported on Friday, informing that various sections of the paraxylene unit are under study, Bosaqzadeh said that improvement of the installations in the fire-hit plant is on top priority.

A senior official in Iran Insurance Company Mohammad Rezaei put the sustained losses of Bou Ali Sina Petrochemical Complex in the recent inferno at €60 million, IRIB news reported on July 10.

A blaze which took over a storage tank in the plant on July 6, was contained early July 9.

The fire occurred in the Mahshahr Special Economic Zone in the southwestern city of Bandar Mahshahr but caused no fatalities. The fire had been most likely caused by a leakage in paraxylene, a highly flammable hydrocarbon.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said on July 8 that there were only technical reasons for the blaze at the BSPC. "Some individuals have said that the incident was the result of sabotage. Certainly, this is not true. It has had technical reasons," Zanganeh was quoted as saying by Shana news agency.

OPEC members to revive freeze talks in September

Several OPEC members want to revive the idea of setting new limits on oil production this fall as Iran regains much of the energy-industry might it lost during the years of Western sanctions, according to people familiar with the matter.

The nations—which include Venezuela, Ecuador and Kuwait—want to take another stab at cooperation between the 14-nation oil cartel, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, and nonmembers like Russia.

A similar initiative died back in April during talks in Doha, Qatar, when Saudi Arabia backed out over Iran's refusal to join in a so-called production freeze until it had reached pre-sanctions levels of oil production. Under the freeze, countries would have agreed to limit their production to certain levels in a bid to raise oil prices by constricting the amount of crude on the market.

Now, Iran's production has crept back up to 3.6 million barrels a day, about 180,000 barrels a day above its levels in April and almost 600,000 barrels a day higher since world powers lifted economic restrictions on the country over its nuclear program in January. That brings it within reach of the 4 million to 4.2 million barrels a day that Iranian officials said they would require before agreeing to a freeze.

A spokeswoman for Iran's oil ministry declined to comment on whether Iran could now consider joining an output freeze.

Some OPEC members said they believe they could seal a freeze deal as early as the week of Sept. 26, when oil producers meet for the International Energy Forum in Algeria. By then, Iran could be closer to 4 million barrels a day, OPEC delegates said.

Venezuela's Oil Minister Eulogio Del Pino has contacted the cartel's Secretary-General Mohamed Barkindo to propose a discussion on coordinating output, the country's president Nicolás Maduro said Thursday, according to state news agency Agencia Venezuela de Noticias.

Wilson Pastor Morris, Ecuador's OPEC envoy, is also set to meet Mr. Barkindo later on Friday in Vienna, according a person familiar with the matter.

Ecuador "will request a meeting to discuss coordinating production on the side of the IEF meeting," the person said. "It's now becoming necessary" with the drop in oil prices.

Breathing life into talk of an output freeze is also getting support from OPEC's traditional powerhouses in the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf allies will support any cooperation between OPEC and nonmembers as they don't want prices to fall further, according to people familiar with the kingdom's policy.

The renewed talk of an oil-production freeze comes as crude prices remain stuck at levels far below what most OPEC nations need to balance their budgets. Brent, the international benchmark, has fallen about 17% since June, when it reached a high of over $52.

Oil prices on Friday fell further, with Brent down 1% in London trading at $43.84.

In June, when prices were just above $50 a barrel, Saudi Arabia's energy minister Khalid al-Falih told reporters that the price then was too low. He also said prices of $100 to $110 were too high, causing a flood of supplies that sent the market screeching into a two-year long route.

The ideal price is "somewhere in between," he said. "And unfortunately we will go through cycles to find this out, it will not be a straight line."

The production freeze was an idea that had helped send prices rallying more than 50% from 12-year lows last winter.

(Source: Wall Street Journal)

Russia selling more oil to China than Saudi Arabia

Russia is challenging Saudi Arabia's spot as top oil exporter to China. In fact, Russia has sold more oil to China than the Saudis seven times since May 2015. According to statistics from China's General Administration of Customs, Russian oil exports to China increased nearly 42% to over 22 million tons from January to May. For the same period, Saudi oil exports to China totaled 21.8 million tons.

However, the big story isn't Russia's slight edge over Saudi Arabia for the first part of the year, but the increase in Russian oil exports to China over the past five years, which have doubled – up by 500,000 barrels per day (bpd). At the beginning of the decade, Saudi oil exports to China were around 20%, while Russian crude exports were below 7%.

Moreover, going forward Russia has a decided advantage over Saudi Arabia since Russian-Chinese oil pipelines are already in place, while the voyage for Saudi crude to China can take three weeks or more.

Sergey Andropov, the vice-president of Transneft, Russian's oil export monopoly, said in March that China was ready to import 27 million tons of Russian crude in 2016 via the Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline.

In May, state-owned China National Petroleum Corp., (CNPC), China's largest oil and gas producer, announced that it would start laying a second domestic oil pipeline to allow for increased Russian crude supplies to flow to China's northeastern city of Daqing. The 942 kilometer (585 mile) pipeline will run parallel to an existing spur off of the ESPO pipeline. Combined, both pipelines will be able to import 30 million metric tons of crude per year to China.

(Source: Forbes)

PICTURE OF THE DAY IRIB NEWS/*Behzad Haj-Abdolbaqi*

The 25th edition of Iran's International Exhibition of Home Furniture (HOFEX 2016) wrapped up on Saturday. The event, which was held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds from August 3 to 6, hosted Iranian exhibitors as well as six companies from Turkey and Lebanon.

UK sees oil, gas profits sink to 20 year lows

Numbers from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) show that the oil and gas sector in the United Kingdom experienced its least profitable quarter in two decades at the start of the year.

The Office said that the continental shelf companies in the UK saw profits fall to 0.2 percent in the first quarter of 2016. The 0.2 percent mark is significant—it is the lowest profit figure for the sector since the ONS started tracking the data in 1997, and shows a serious dip from 2011 numbers which showed sector profitability at more than 50 percent.

As with much of the other industry woes, the dip in oil prices is one of the primary culprits for the profit slump. The ONS recorded a drop of 32 percent between the first quarters of 2015 and 2016.

The issue is not a new one. In April, fast FT noted that the slump was noticeable in the waning months of 2015; fast FT also stated that in 2015, the shelf companies saw a drop to 3.5 percent in 2015, and a decrease on 14.3 percent in 2014.

(Source: oilprice.com)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Nissan in talks with Panasonic, others to sell battery operations: sources

Nissan Motor Co is in talks with Panasonic Corp and overseas companies including Chinese firms over the possible sale of its controlling stake in a car battery manufacturing venture, sources said.

The Japanese automaker wants to sell its 51 percent stake in Automotive Energy Supply Corporation, which makes lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles.

The Nikkei daily on Friday reported that Nissan was looking to sell the company because it would be cheaper to buy batteries for its electric vehicles including its Leaf model from other makers.

HMRC claims victory in film tax battle

HM Revenue and Customs claimed victory in a tax avoidance battle over schemes run by Ingenious Film Partnership and Icebreaker, worth more than £820m.

The Ingenious scheme tried to use artificial losses arising from backing a range of films, said HMRC.

They included Avatar, Life of Pi and Die Hard 4. The Icebreaker scheme attempted to create artificial losses from limited liability partnerships.

"In our opinion, the assumptions on which this conclusion is based reflect an arbitrary and subjective view of future film performance at the moment of green lighting, and are unreasonable," it said in a letter to investors.

Toyota shares rise despite weak earnings and outlook

Shares in Japanese carmaker Toyota have risen, despite the company reporting a weak outlook for profits in the current year.

On Thursday, Toyota reported a 15% drop in its first quarter net profit, with the strong yen weighing down the company's exports.

However, the results were not as bad as feared, and on Friday the carmaker's shares closed up 3%.

Overall Japan's Nikkei 225 index finished flat at 16,254.45.

Like many Japanese exporters, Toyota has been suffering from the strengthening yen.

In Presence of 1st Vice President, Energy Minister and Fars Province Governor General:

Seven Large Rural Water-Supply Projects Go on Stream in Fars Province, Costing over 87b Rials

A number of seven large rural water-supply projects were put into operation in Fars Province in the presence of Eng. Seyyed Mohammad-Ali Afshani Governor General of Fars Province, Eng. Boostani Chief Executive of Fars Rural Water and Wastewater Company, a number of representatives of people of Fars in the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iranian Parliament also called Majlis), provincial managers within the framework of joint video conference, First Vice President Eng. Es'haq Jahangiri, Eng. Chitchian Energy Minister and Eng. Janbaz Managing Director of State National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company (NWWEC).

It should be noted that these seven water-supply projects were put into operation, costing 87 billion rials, at large.

Eng. Seyyed Mohammad-Ali Afshani Governor General of Fars Province was the first speaker in the inaugural ceremony who said: "Seven rural water-supply projects in this province cover 24 villages which are home to 4,054 families with total population of over 16,205 people."

In recent trip made by 1st Vice President Eng. Es'haq Jahangiri to Fars Province, it was envisioned that credit would be earmarked for supplying water to 350 villages of this province, construction operation of which are underway."

Given the above issue, 350 villages, which are home to 245,000 families, would be supplied with potable and drinking water, he maintained.

He put the total credits earmarked for these water-supply projects at 87 billion rials which has been provided out of National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI).

National credits have been provided for fulfilling modern irrigation on land area as large as 30 ha, he said, adding: "Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God and in cooperation with industrious personnel of provincial Agricultural Jihad Organization, construction operation of these projects would be completed in due date."

The amount of 274 billion rials was

previously pledged by the government to be paid to this province in order to deal with drought problem but unfortunately, the said amount of credit was not paid and urged official to take effective steps in paying the said amount, he observed.

He called on responsible official to take effective steps for earmarking the said amount of fund to this province in order to solve drought problem.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the governor general of Fars Province pointed to sewage effluent and treated wastewater as one of the most stable and sustainable available waters in this province and said: "Sewage effluent is not vulnerable at all, rather it is stable and sustainable."

The provincial Water and Wastewater Company will make hefty investment in this regard in future, he said, adding: "A considerable portion of water requirement of this province in the field of green area will be supplied from this water source while the current water will be used for drinking and agricultural purposes."

He placed special emphasis on the necessity of expansion and development of greenhouse cultivation and said: "There is no limitation for greenhouse cultivation in this province, so that facilities with 15% interest will be paid for this aim."

Supplying initial feedstock of petrochemical complexes in Firouzabad, Darab, Fasa and Jahrom was one of the other bylaws ratified during 1st Vice President's visit to this province in pervious, he said, adding: "Oil Ministry pledged to provide feedstock to Mamasani and Kazeroun petrochemical complexes from west line."

Moreover, the Oil Ministry is committed to complete construction operation of initial feedstock conveyance line of these petrochemical units one month earlier, he ended.

Eng. Boostani Chief Executive of Fars Province Rural Water and Wastewater Company was the other speaker who expressed his special thanks to the state and provincial officials who supported objectives of the plan for construction operation of seven water-supply projects in this province and said: "These seven water-supply projects will cover 24 villages of this province which are home to 4,054 families with 16,205 people at

large."

These water-supply projects will be inaugurated in cities of Rostam, Fasa, Firouzabad, Laar, Marvdasht, Eqlid, and Abadeh, he said, adding: "The inaugural ceremony of water-supply project was observed symbolically in villages of Hassanabad and Sanjarloo."

He elaborated on these projects and said: "Water-supply project in one village of this province, home to 305 families with the population of 1,333 people, was provided with healthy potable water."

Another village of this province in Najafabad – Firouzabad was supplied with drinking water, home to 73 families with the population of 312 people, including digging of water well, electrification, equipping well costing two billion rials at large, he opined.

Moreover, another village of this province in Hormod Mehrkhouei of Lar, was supplied with hygienic potable water including digging well, electrification, equipping and constructing water conveyance line as long as 2 km, costing eight billion rials.

In Hasanloo Sanjarloo Marvdasht water-supply project, a number of six villages, home to 990 families with the population of 4,158 people, were supplied with sanitary drinking water, he said, adding: "This project was put into operation as follows: construction of water conveyance line as long as 19 km, construction of concrete-based reservoir (500 cubic meters), digging one water well, electrification, totally costing at 27 billion rials."

In Firouzi Abadeh Water-Supply Project, a number of five villages, home to 225 families with the population of 675 people, were supplied with sanitary drinking water which include construction of water conveyance line as long as 7.5 km, construction of concrete-based 500-cubic meter tank, costing eight billion rials at large, the managing director declared.

It should be noted that a number of nine villages in Imam Reza (AS) Water-Supply Project in Eqlid were equipped with sanitary and hygienic potable water, which is home to 1,79 families with the population of 4,479 people, he said, adding: "This project includes digging a water well, construction of water conveyance line as long as 18 km, construction of water distribution network as long as 20 km, construction of concrete- based tank (500 cubic meters), totally costing at 27 billion rials."

Totally, a number of 24 villages, home to 4,054 families with the population of 16,205 people, were equipped with sanitary and potable water as a result of inauguration of seven water-supply projects in this province, the senior official of the company observed.

In the end, he pointed to the details of these water-supply projects inaugurated in this province as follows: - Digging a number of five water wells, construction of water conveyance and distribution network as long as 73.5 km, equipping and electrifying villages (five cases), constructing concrete- based tank (1,500 cubic meters), totally costing at 87 billion rials.

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Poland takes aim at Putin's pipe dreams

This summer hasn't seen a lot of setbacks for Russia, not even for its Olympic hopefuls. Crimea has been annexed and fully absorbed, with the blessing of Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump, who also calls NATO "obsolete." Russian intelligence services have allegedly been pawing through the emails of U.S. political parties, and releasing them at their leisure. Turkey, in the wake of a failed coup attempt, is rushing to mend fences with Moscow.

All of which makes last month's decision by the Polish antitrust regulator to file a formal objection against Russia's proposed "Nord Stream 2" gas pipeline more noteworthy. That regulatory spanner could be Europe's last and best chance to halt construction of a pipeline that critics say will divide Europe, beggar Ukraine, and reinforce Moscow's energy dominance for another generation.

For years, Russia has sought to keep Europe dependent on its exports of energy, especially through natural gas pipelines. But Moscow is also desperate to cut out potentially meddlesome middlemen, like Ukraine, which sits smack between Russia's natural gas fields and millions of European consumers. That gives Kiev the ability to interrupt Russian gas flows headed to Europe, infuriating Moscow, but also earns Ukraine billions of dollars in much-needed transit fees.

A decade ago, Russia enlisted former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder to help it build a pipe across the Baltic from Russia to Germany, sidestepping Ukraine: Nord Stream. Then Russia tried to build another pipeline, "South Stream," across the Black Sea

from Russia to Bulgaria, also bypassing Ukraine, but that was quashed by the European Union in 2014. Then, Moscow invented the idea of a "Turkish Stream," another proposed Black Sea pipe, one landing in Turkey, outside of Brussels's reach. But last fall, Turkish F-16s shot down a Russian jet, and with it hopes of any immediate Russo-Turkish energy cooperation.

→9

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Despite Rio Olympic woes, Brazil may still be a winner with investors

The Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro are here! For the next two-and-a-half weeks, more than 10,000 athletes representing 204 countries will compete in 28 different sports, entertaining billions of spectators across the globe. Reports of poor-quality facilities and last-minute construction travails by the host country will likely soon give way to the drama of the elite athletes competing for glory.

But for all the Games' pomp and circumstance, academic literature is unequivocal about the costs and benefits of hosting the event. The overwhelming evidence is that, in nearly all cases, the Olympics are a money-losing proposition for host cities, even more so for those in developing countries. With a price tag of well over $10 billion, the Rio Olympics are not likely to buck the trend.

But perhaps hosting the Olympics is like having a retail store on New York's Fifth Avenue: It may be a financial loss, but it greatly advertises the brand. With Brazil's hosting prowess once again under scrutiny — the last time was two years ago when it hosted the FIFA World Cup — it is worth asking what sort of "brand" Brazil will show.

"We rate Brazilian equities as 'most preferred' relative to emerging-market peers."

To be sure, Brazil is trying to create a new image. After more than a decade of government dominance over economic management under previous administrations, Brazil is trying a new, fiscally prudent approach under acting President Michel Temer. The fix will neither be quick nor easy. The recession, with GDP likely to contract 3.5 percent this year, makes fiscal austerity a bitter medicine. Yet taming the unsustainable national debt is just what Brazil needs to return to growth.

Temer has made fiscal rectitude the priority of his administration, but with less than two years before his term ends (though he could run for re-election in 2018), he may not get to see it cross the finish line. However, he is running a strong race, and assuming he passes the baton to a good relay, Brazil may very well end up earning a gold medal for a most-impressive fiscal turnaround.

For financial markets, the new brand of Brazilian policy has not gone unnoticed. This year the stock market is up more than 50 percent in U.S. dollar terms, and the Brazilian real over 20 percent against the greenback. We do not think the party is over. Consumer and business confidence is on the rise, and we expect the economy to emerge from recession late this year and grow about 1 percent next year. If we are correct, that would mean a 4.5-percentage point swing in GDP growth.

On the political front, the corruption investigations against public and private- sector figures, and the final verdict on the impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff later this month, still pose unpredictable risks. But these developments speak to the independence of the country's judiciary and the credibility of its institutions, leading to lower risk premiums.

In this context, we believe Brazilian assets offer some of the most interesting opportunities in global markets. We rate Brazilian equities as "most preferred" relative to emerging-market peers. Valuations are not stretched, and a monetary easing cycle of at least 250 basis points (2.5 percentage points) is expected to start this fall. Combining this with a broad-based economic recovery, earnings should bottom out in the second half of this year.

Brazil may not win the gold from hosting the Olympics, but Brazil may still win where investments matter.

We also believe hard-currency sovereign and quasi-sovereign bonds will continue to perform well. The Brazilian-U.S. dollar curve is trading wider than that of its emerging-market peers, leaving room for spread compression. We also like local-currency bonds, which should benefit from the expected monetary easing cycle.

Finally, we favor the Brazilian real against the euro and the U.S. dollar. A long Brazilian real (BRL) versus short euro or U.S. dollar position looks attractive due to its double-digit percentage carry, and our USD-BRL target of 3.0 in 12 months implies an additional 8-percent return potential on the spot price.

So Brazil may not win the gold from hosting the Olympics, but Brazil may still win where investments matter.

(Source: CNBC)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Investors pile into emerging equities as post-Lehman rate cuts reach 666: BAML

Emerging market bond funds chalked up their largest five-week inflow on record this week as the number of central bank rate cuts around the world since the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 reached 666, Bank of America Merrill Lynch said on Friday.

The hunt for returns in a world of rapidly shrinking yields and interest rates intensified in the week to August 3 as investors poured $2.2 billion (1.6 billion pounds) into EM bond funds, bringing the total over the last five weeks up to $16.6 billion.

As interest rates and yields evaporate, investors are scrambling not only for the returns offered by emerging market bonds but also the safety from deepening economic uncertainty offered by higher quality government and corporate bonds.

Inflows into wider bond funds in the week reached $10.2 billion, the highest since February last year. That was largely driven by the $9.2 billion inflow into high-grade corporate bonds, the most in almost two years.

The central banks of Australia and the United Kingdom cut interest rates this week, bringing the total number of rate cuts since Lehman's September 2008 collapse to 666.

Since then, bond fund inflows have reached $1 trillion, far outstripping the $375 billion total inflow into equity funds over the period, BAML said. *(Source: Reuters)*

Moody's continues review of Turkey long-term debt rating after coup attempt

Moody's announced the review of Turkey's Baa3 long-term debt rating on July 18, 2016. According to the rating agency, the review should be concluded within 90 days of the date of the announcement.

"Although the military coup in Turkey on 15 July 2016 failed, events are still unfolding so Moody's will continue to assess the medium-term impact of the failed coup and its aftermath on: Turkey's policymaking institutions and business climate; its external buffers to absorb potential shocks, such as the impaired investor sentiment on which Turkey is very reliant; and ultimately its growth prospects," Moody's said on Friday.

On July 15, an attempted coup took place in Turkey that was suppressed the following day. Over 240 people were killed during the coup attempt and an estimated 2,000 were wounded. Ankara has accused US-based dissident Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen and his followers of playing a key role in the coup.

(Source: Sputnik)

NEWS

NASA's planet-hunting Kepler spacecraft bouncing back from glitch

NASA's planet-hunting Kepler space telescope apparently suffered a mysterious glitch last week but is now on the mend, agency officials said.

During a scheduled contact session on July 28, Kepler's handlers discovered that the observatory's photometer — the camera-like tool it uses to detect alien planets — had turned off. But the instrument powered back on again, and Kepler resumed "autonomous science operations" on August 1, mission team members said.

"We will confirm that (normal) science operations have been resumed within a week," Kepler mission manager Charlie Sobeck, of NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California, wrote in an update on August 5.

The "team is currently investigating the cause; the spacecraft is otherwise operating normally."

The $600 Kepler mission launched in March 2009, tasked with determining how common Earth-like planets are throughout the Milky Way galaxy. The spacecraft detects alien worlds by noting the tiny brightness dips they cause when crossing their host stars' faces from Kepler's perspective.

Kepler's primary observing campaign came to a halt in May 2013, when the second of its four orientation-maintaining "reaction wheels" failed, robbing the telescope of its superprecise pointing ability. But Kepler's handlers soon figured out how to stabilize the observatory using sunlight pressure and the two remaining wheels, and, in May 2014, Kepler embarked on a new mission called K2.

The spacecraft is still hunting for exoplanets during K2, but on a more limited basis. It's also studying a wide variety of cosmic objects and phenomena, during a series of shifting 80-day "campaigns." Kepler is currently in the middle of K2's 10th campaign.

(Source: space.com)

Women without appendix or tonsils might get pregnant easier

A new study shows that women who have had an appendectomy and tonsillectomy may be able to get pregnant more easily. Women who've had their appendix or tonsils removed get pregnant faster, according to a new study.

The study by the University of Dundee, UK, looked at data compiled over 15 years.

Sami Shimi, co-author of the University of Dundee, UK, study, began research thinking women who have had an appendectomy might be less likely to have a child.

"Our first study produced such a surprising result - that women who had had their appendix removed actually appeared more likely to become pregnant - that we wanted to look at a wider group to establish whether this was really related to the removal of the appendix, which if left can be a cause of inflammation," Shimi told Medical News Today.

Researchers pored over medical records of more than 530,000 women in the United Kingdom to find a connection between fertility and the removal of an appendix or tonsils.

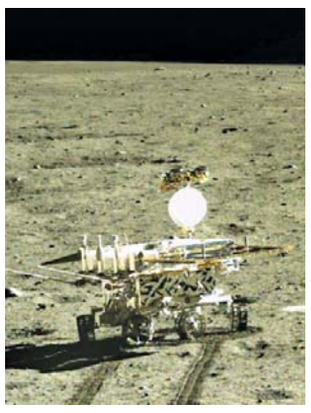
The pregnancy rate of an average woman is 43.7%. The rate of women in the study who had an appendectomy or tonsillectomy was around 54%. For women that had both procedures, that rose to 59.7%.

(Source: USA Today)

China's Jade Rabbit lunar rover ends mission after 31 months

China's Jade Rabbit lunar rover, which won a large following on social media, has been retired after a record 31 months of collecting data from the moon's surface, state media reported Wednesday.

The rover arrived on the moon on December 14, 2013, aboard the Chang'e 3 lunar lander and was designed to operate for just three months.



On July 28, Chang'e 3 went into hibernation for the 14-day lunar night and Jade Rabbit ceased operations, state media reported, citing the State Administration for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.

Jade Rabbit, or Yutu in Chinese, posted a final farewell on its Twitter-like Weibo microblog, questioning whether it would one day be returned to Earth. "I'm a rabbit that has seen the most stars!" the post said.

The rover's cameras, telescopes and radar made it a key part of the mission. Data it produced offered insights into the geological evolution of the moon.

China will attempt to land an unmanned spaceship on the moon next year that would return to Earth with samples. Only the United States and Russia have previously carried out such a maneuver successfully.

China sent its first astronaut into space in 2003 and has powered ahead with a series of methodically timed steps, including the deploying of an experimental space station.

(Source: AP)

Lillium promises an electric vertical take-off personal jet by 2018

If you live in suburbia and have a long commute to work, wouldn't it be nice to have your own plane? But, oh yeah, you need a runway and your kids and the neighbor's kids are always leaving things in the yards and in the streets. What you really need is maybe a helicopter, but they're harder to fly and so noisy the neighbors won't be happy (not to mention the FAA and your town zoning board).

Well, get ready to toss your aviator scarf around your neck because start-up company Lilium Aviation expects to start selling the Lilium all-electric VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) personal jet aircraft in 2018, according to International Business Times. So start saving.

Previously, VTOL aircraft were only for the military. In an effort to bring the technology to the masses, or at least the affluent, engineers and students from the Technical University of Munich founded Lilium Aviation, which is backed by the European Space Agency (ESA).

The all-electric plan will have a 320kW battery to power the fan engines, retractable landing gear, fly-by-wire joystick controls, wings doors, and windows all around.

Producing quiet planes

The goal is to design and produce planes that are quiet, environmentally clean, and relatively easy to fly. Oh, and they can go straight up and down as well as forward.

The two-seat Lilium will have a top speed just under 250 mph and a range at cruising speed of about 310 miles.

The all-electric plan will have a 320kW battery to power the fan engines, retractable landing gear, fly-by-wire joystick controls, wings doors, and windows all around.

You won't have to worry too much about landing and taking off, the two most troublesome parts of flying, because an onboard computer will handle both. You'll also have help staying on course with GPS-assisted navigation.

The ESA's plans are for the Lilium to fly only on good days, meaning daytime with good weather, and only up to 3km, about 1.8 miles, where the airspace isn't very crowded. But not just anyone can fly one. You'll need a valid pilot's license and a minimum 20 hours training.

(Source: Digital Trends)

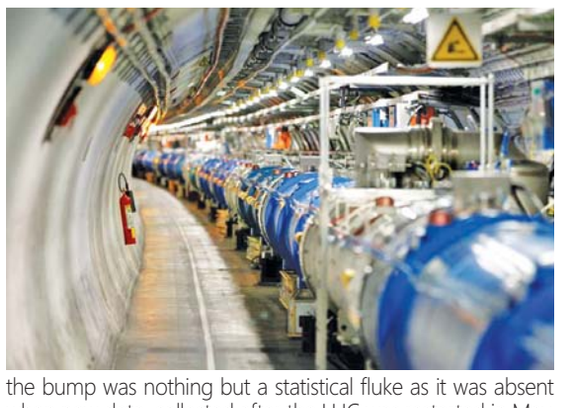
LHC's bump disappears, dashing hopes of discovering new particle

Eight months ago, two teams of physicists working at CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) reported sighting what might have been traces of a new particle which was not part of the Standard Model of particle physics. The sighting sent physicists into a frenzy.

Scientists cautioned at the time that the "bump" on the graph which indicated an excess pair of gamma rays may just be a statistical fluke but that didn't prevent researchers from writing over 500 papers discussing this new fundamental constituent of nature. Some speculated that the new particle could be related to the Higgs boson, one of the heaviest elementary particles known. If the new particle was heavier than the Higgs boson, it would mean discarding the Standard Model since the Higgs particle was the last missing piece of the theory.

Several blips reported

However, on Friday, CERN physicists reportedly announced



the bump was nothing but a statistical fluke as it was absent when new data, collected after the LHC was restarted in May, was reviewed. Several such blips had been reported but what was unique about the one causing the frenzy was that it was spotted by two different teams of physicists working on two different CERN experiments, ATLAS and CMS.

Spokesman for CMS detector team Tiziano Camporesi reportedly said, "We don't see anything. In fact, there is even a small deficit exactly at that point."

Speaking at a press conference in the International Conference on High Energy Physics in Chicago, Camporesi added, "It's disappointing because so much hype has been made about it." He also said that scientists have reiterated the possibility that the bump could just be a fluke since its sighting. "We have always been very cool about it," he said.

Member of the ATLAS detector team from the Ohio State University James Beacham said, "As it stands now, the bumplet has gone into a flatline. This is the success of science, this is what science does."

(Source: ibtimes.com)

Breastfed babies might live longer, healthier lives due to a part of their DNA

Breastfeeding has lots of great benefits for both mom and baby, but a new report from The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition suggests that babies who are breastfed might live longer, healthier lives than their friends who weren't. And it all comes down to a part of our DNA called telomeres.

Telomeres are these little caps wrapped around the end of each strand of our DNA (like that plastic aglet at the end of your shoelace) that protect the genes from damage and may increase our life span, according to the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. As we get older, our telomeres get shorter, but some people actually have longer than average telomeres to begin with, which helps protect them from chronic diseases like diabetes, which could shorten their lives.

For a long time science wasn't sure if humans were born with their telomeres at full-length or if there was a period early in their lives when they could extend them to their maximum, most protective length.

Window of time

This new study says that there does seem to be a window of time for babies when telomere length can change. And something that helps promote longer, stronger telomeres? Breastfeeding.

Researchers followed a group of babies from birth to about 5 years

who were born in San Francisco to low-income mothers, all of whom were Latina and who qualified for a government food program. They measured the kids' telomere lengths and took notes about what early life factors they had been exposed to — specifically, if they were breastfed or given exclusively milk, tea, juice, or sugar water.

The study found that children who had been drinking only breast milk for the first four to six weeks of their lives had significantly longer telomeres than babies who had been given formula only. Also interesting? The children who had been given a lot of fruit juice or soda as toddlers actually had short telomeres.

All the kids in the study were part of a much larger study called the Hispanic Eating and Nutrition study, which included 201 babies born in San Francisco to Latina mothers, all of whom were recruited in 2006 and 2007 while they were still pregnant.

(Source: romper.com)

Sickle cell trait doesn't raise the risk of death

If you pay attention to sports, you've probably heard a growing number of stories about athletes dropping dead from a condition called exertional rhabdomyolysis, which ravages muscles and damages kidneys.

Now, researchers report that sickle cell trait, a genetic condition related to sickle cell anemia, increases the risk of exertional rhabdomyolysis, but doesn't raise the risk of death, as many had previously thought.

There's no doubt exertional rhabdomyolysis is bad news. It comes on when very strenuous exercise leads muscle cells to fall apart.

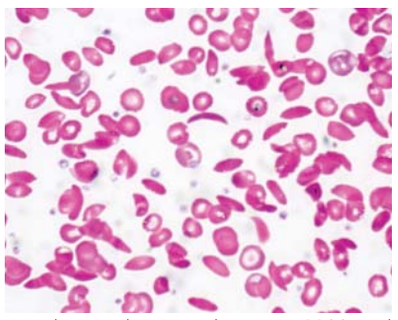
The resulting debris flows into the bloodstream and clogs kidneys. In the worst cases, rhabdomyolysis ends in death, although it's widely known to be preventable through proper training regimens, hydration, among other precautions.

But whether being a carrier of the sickle cell gene—what doctors call sickle cell trait—actually raises the risk of exertional rhabdomyolysis and death is less clear. The evidence, Stanford University researchers Alan Nelson, Lianne Kurina, and their colleagues write in the New England Journal of Medicine, is largely anecdotal or otherwise incomplete, often because researchers didn't have adequate information on their subjects' sickle cell status.

Sickle cell trait raised the risk of exertional rhabdomyolysis by 54 percent.

Remedying the problem

To remedy that problem, the researchers looked at the health records for 47,944 African-American soldiers on active duty in the Army between 2011 and 2014. (Although sickle cell trait and sickle cell disease are not unique to people of African descent, they are both more common in that group compared to others.) Crucially, each of those soldiers had undergone testing for sickle cell trait, as is now standard practice in the Army and other branches of the military.



After adjusting for sex, age, physical fitness, and other factors, the team found that sickle cell trait raised the risk of exertional rhabdomyolysis by 54 percent, on par with the increased risk associated with obesity and smoking, the researchers write. Meanwhile, sickle cell trait did not increase the risk of death.

"These findings are compelling because case reports dominate the relevant literature and emphasize the presence of sickle cell trait as a risk factor for adverse outcomes, including exertional rhabdomyolysis and sudden death," the researchers write, and a large, controlled study was sorely lacking.

(Source: Pacific Standard)

How ancient whales turned sound into a killing tactic

Researchers from the New York Institute of Technology and the National Museum of National History in France describe a new species of whale, called Echovenator sandersi (meaning "echo hunter"), that's providing important new clues about the evolution of high-frequency hearing in aquatic mammals. This research pushes the origin of ultrasonic hearing in whales about 10 million years earlier than previous estimates.

E. sandersi was an ancient relative of the dolphin, and it could hear frequencies well above the range of human hearing. A team led by NYIT professor Morgan Churchill came to this conclusion after analyzing a 27 million-year-old skull that was discovered in a South Carolina drainage ditch in 2001. Analysis of the bony support structures in its inner ear membranes, along with other measurements of the inner ear, indicate that this ancient sea creature had ultrasonic hearing capabilities.

Fossilized ear

After analyzing the fossilized ear with a CT scanner, the researchers compared it to those of two hippos and 23 known cetaceans. They uncovered several features also found in modern dolphins, which can hear at ultrasonic frequencies. These whales were able to detect high-frequency echoes by sensing vibrations first through the mandible, and then in the inner ear. In fact, these hearing organs were so well defined, and so modern, that the researchers suspect ultrasonic hearing emerged even earlier than 27 million years ago.

As a hunting technique, echolocation requires two things to work. First, an animal — whether it be a bat, a dolphin, or a whale — needs to be able to hear high-frequencies. Secondly, it requires the ability to produce a high frequency sound, and then interpret those reflections to pinpoint the exact location of prey. "Our study suggests that high-frequency hearing may have preceded the emergence of echolocation," noted Churchill. What's more, the discovery of E. sandersi suggests both of these capacities existed at least 27 million years ago.

"This was a small, toothed whale that probably used its remarkable sense of hearing to find and pursue fish with echoes only," noted study co-author Jonathan Geisler in a statement. "This would allow it to hunt at night, but more importantly, it could hunt at great depths in darkness, or in very sediment-choked environments."

(Source: The CSM)

ISIL almost completely' ousted from Syria's Manbij city

1→ Manbij lies along the only supply line of Daesh between the Syrian-Turkish border to the north and the group's main stronghold in Syria, Raqqah, which lies to the southeast.

Its liberation marks the biggest strategic defeat for Daesh in Syria since July 2015, when the terrorist group lost the strategically important town of Tal Abyad on Syria's border with Turkey.

The Syria Democratic Forces launched an operation to retake Manbij two months ago. The city had been under Daesh control for more than two years.

Battle in Aleppo

Meanwhile, Syrian rebels say a coalition of armed anti-government groups, the Army of Conquest, has captured all of a strategically important military base in the northern city of Aleppo.

However, Syrian state television disputes the claim, saying that government forces pushed the rebel fighters back, killing hundreds of them in the process.

The opposition forces, who already control the countryside and areas southwest and east of Aleppo, insist they are still control of the base in the Ramosa quarter in southwestern Aleppo.

Saturday's conflicting claims came a day after the Army of Conquest said they had stormed the major army artillery base, and were fighting to take the other military academies adjoining it.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The United Nations (UN)'s Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimates that over 400,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

Back in 2014, the UN said it would no more update its death toll for Syria because it could not verify the figures that it received from various sources.

Animals

In another event, Russia has lambasted the United States over its support for Takfiri militant groups that launch toxic gas attacks against civilians in Syria, referring to the militants as "animals."

"The United States is supporting these animals, who used poison gas against the civilian population," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova wrote in a statement posted to social media on Thursday.

She added, "Unfortunately it's not the only tragedy which the 'moderates' backed by Washington stand behind."

Zakharova was making reference to Tuesday's chemical attack by U.S.-backed Takfiri militants in the Old City of Aleppo, where artillery shells containing toxic gasses slammed into a residential neighborhood.

As Turkey's coup strains ties with West, detente with Russia gathers pace

As Turkey's relations with Europe and the United States are strained by the fallout from its failed coup, President Tayyip Erdogan travels to Russia on Tuesday to meet Vladimir Putin in a trip he may hope will give the West pause for thought.

Turkish officials insist Erdogan's visit to St. Petersburg is no sign that the NATO member and European Union membership candidate is turning its back on the West. Rather, they say, it is the next step in a rapprochement with Russia that started weeks before the July 15 attempted putsch.

But the thaw with Moscow, which imposed trade sanctions nine months ago after Turkey downed a Russian fighter jet near the Syrian border, comes as Ankara's relationship with the West could scarcely be more fractious.

Erdogan and many Turks have been incensed by what they see as Western concern over a post-coup crackdown but indifference to the bloody events themselves, in which more than 230 people were killed as rogue soldiers bombed parliament and seized bridges with tanks and helicopters.

The Turkish government has blamed the coup on followers of a cleric in self-imposed exile in the United States, and purged tens of thousands of his suspected followers from positions as teachers, police, judges and soldiers. Western countries say the purge has been too fast and indiscriminate.

So damaged are relations that Germany's foreign minister said this week there was no basis for discussions and that "we are talking with each other like emissaries from two different planets." Austria's chancellor suggested talks on Turkish membership of the EU should be suspended.

"For Erdogan, this meeting with Putin is certainly an opportunity to signal to Turkey's partners in the West that it could have other strategic options," said Sinan Ulgen, a former Turkish diplomat and analyst at the Carnegie Europe think tank.

"There is this perception game that Turkey could strategically gravitate toward Russia if the relationship with the West cannot be maintained. There is also an incentive on the side of Russia to use the crisis between Turkey and the West to undermine NATO's cohesiveness," Ulgen said.

Erdogan's meeting with Putin will be only his second with a foreign head of state since the coup, following a visit to Ankara by the Kazakh president on Friday. Turkish officials have questioned why no Western leader has come to show solidarity.

"Both Russia and Turkey are outcasts as far as the West is concerned," said Andrey Kortunov, director general of the Russian International Affairs Council, a foreign policy think tank close to the Russian Foreign Ministry.

"On the face of it, the failed coup has pulled Turkey closer to Russia. But there still remain serious differences between the two countries," he told Reuters.

Disagreements persist over Syria, where Moscow backs President Bashar al-Assad but Ankara wants him ousted, as well as the South Caucasus, where Turkey has backed Azerbaijan in a conflict with Armenia, a Russian ally, over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region.

"The meeting between Putin and Erdogan ... will show how far both sides are willing to compromise. The question is whether the current tactical de-escalation can translate into a deeper strategic partnership," Kortunov said.

Signal to the west

Washington is likely to be watching closely. Its ties with Ankara are strained over the continued presence in the United States of Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen, accused by Erdogan of orchestrating the attempted coup.

Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania since 1999, denies involvement in the coup and Washington has said it will extradite him only if Turkey provides evidence, much to the Turkish government's frustration.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is expected to visit Turkey in late August, officials have said, with Gulen's case likely to be high on the agenda.

"At a time like this, Turkish public psychology expects expressions of solidarity and togetherness, but that's not what is forthcoming from the West," said Faruk Logoglu, a former Turkish ambassador to Washington and until recently a senior lawmaker in the main secularist opposition.

(Source: Reuters)

Sports competition an opportunity to satisfy 'national pride': anthropologist

1→ Because the Olympics are seen as being of great economic benefits to the cities that host them, there have been scandals involving bribery of the Olympic Committee members, but this is a matter of local politics and common corruption at the local level.

Some claimed that political motives were behind efforts to remove Russia from Olympic Games. What is your view?

A: If there was any pressure on the Olympic committee to remove Russia from the games, it was on an informal basis, and not a matter of official government policy on the part of any government. Actually, we have no evidence at all that the Committee was pressured by anyone.

The Russians were clearly in violation of Olympic rules for using illegal performance-enhancing drugs. The elimination of Lance Armstrong, American bicyclist, from his Tour de France victories because of illegal performance enhancing drugs was widely supported in the United States.

Many American baseball and football players have been fined or removed from their teams for steroid use. So, I really don't think there was any specific political motive. The Russians should not have used performance enhancing drugs. It is cheating, and everyone knows that cheating should not be allowed in the Olympics. There is one distinction one could make. In the past there was not the kind of extensive testing we find today, and the testing was not done very seriously. Today there are both more drugs available and better testing methods, so both drug use and rigorous testing have increased.

Have sports games changed into a tool for countries to confront each other?

A: Sports competition was always a matter of both national and local pride. Soccer teams like Manchester United have rabid fans, and countries always look at sports victories as a sign of superiority. Famous contests between national sports teams in the World Cup for soccer get all tied up with national prejudices. For example, Brazil and Argentina have a tremendous rivalry. When Brazil lost in the World Cup, the Brazilians actually rooted for Germany in their contest with Argentina because the Brazilians wanted to see the Argentinians lose.

Many people (many anthropologists!) point out that sports competitions are healthy ways for countries to confront each other. Sports competitions are far better than war, and can be just as satisfying for national pride.

IKCO & German Mahle to Co-produce Powertrains

TT ECONOMY desk

The world's automotive industry has shifted toward three-cylinder turbocharged pwertrains which produce more power and less emission and are less thirsty.

Approaching the idea, IKCO signed a new contract with the German company – Mahle GmbH- to design and develop three-cylinder engines.

According to this around-125-million-euros contract, the output of these powertrains will be 120hp to 160hp with 285 Nm, the emission of which will at least cover Euro6 standard with the fuel consumption of 4 L/100 KM.

During the ceremony, IKCO CEO declared that such contracts will lessen the technological gap between Iran's automotive industry and global car makers and added, "We will design and develop four powertrains that can mostly cover our need for our future cars."

"These powertrains will meet the world's latest technologies and the contract includes full technology transfer, while the second powertrain onwards will be designed and manufactured by IKCO experts," claimed Hashem Yekehzare and sited, "the design will take 30 to 33 months and the pre-production phase will come next, following which 350,000 powertrains will be mass produced annually." Referring to the reduced time in product development from 46 to 30 months as one of the outcomes of this contract, IKCO CEO emphasized, "57 million euros of the whole project will be accomplished by IKCO."

In the meantime, Yekehzare noted that the mentioned automotive engines could meet Iran Khodro Industrial Group's demand, whereas some performance specifications of them as power, torque, and fuel consumption overtake those of other rivals in the market. The German Mahle Company is one of the top 20 powertrain designers and producers with 75,000 employees and more than 170 production sites around the globe, presenting its engineering services in countries as America, Germany, Brazil and England.

MTN Irancell launched the first TD-LTE network in Iran

TT ECONOMY desk

The First Wireless Home and Office Broadband network (TD-LTE) in Iran was launched by MTN Irancell on Wednesday Aug. 3, 2016 during a press conference in the Iranian holy city of Mashhad.

According to MTN Irancell Public Relations Dept., the event was held at the presence of media reporters as well as MTN Irancell CEO and executive managers. TD-LTE network launched simultaneously in Mashhad and 24 other cities across the country.

TD-LTE is the last generation of fixed broadband and the best wireless choice to provide homes and offices with internet service. Using this technology, users can experience a high stability rate in upload and download and a higher internet speed compared to the former technologies such as Dial-up, ADSL and WiMAX while some limitations such as old technology, movement limitation, requirement of a phone line, etc. have been lifted.

MTN Irancell received 'The Country-wide TD-LTE License' on 23 Aug 2015. The pilot phase was launched the next day in an event attended by Iranian ICT minister.

"1038 areas in the country, including 527 cities, enjoy MTN Irancell 3G network, while there are 4G coverage in 239 areas including 203 cities. This is just after less than 2 years of receiving the 3G and 4G license," Alireza Ghalambor Dezfouli, MTN Irancell CEO announced the above statement in shrine city of Mashhad.

He added that MTN Irancell broadband subscribers are now 17 million people while there are 25 million data subscribers in the network, increased by 50 percent during the last year and the increase of data usage per subscriber have gone 3.5 times higher.

In the end, he said: "Subscribers can buy TD-LTE service by going to MTN Irancell service centers or dealer shops, calling 600 call center or referring to MTN Irancell website."

JUMP

Poland takes aim at Putin's pipe dreams

6→ "They've had anything but success at bypassing Ukraine," said Sijbren de Jong of The Hague Center for Strategic Studies. "They keep launching very large, very capital-intensive infrastructure projects, time and time again," with little to show for it, he said.

Russia back to basics

This sent Russia back to basics — and to the Baltic — with the announcement last year of Nord Stream 2. The project proposed to double the existing, under-utilized pipeline that would directly connect Europe's biggest gas supplier and Russia's biggest gas customer, Germany.

The project, a 10 billion-euro brainchild of Russian gas giant Gazprom and a handful of Western energy companies, has unleashed torrents of political abuse. Politicians in central and Eastern Europe — who'd suffer the most if Ukraine is cut out as a transit country — have railed against the pipeline for a year. The European Union's top energy official has gone red in the face opposing Nord Stream 2, especially since it would directly undercut the EU's entire energy strategy. Just this week, America's top energy diplomat, Amos Hochstein, said the pipeline would "resurrect" the Cold War divisions in Europe.

Germany, though, loves the idea, which could turn it into Europe's gas hub. Top officials including Chancellor Angela Merkel and Sigmar Gabriel, the economic and energy minister, publicly and privately back the project. The European Commission has said that Nord Stream 2 must comply with all European laws and regulations, but has not taken any steps to block the pipeline, even though those laws and regulations are what sunk South Stream. The pipeline's backers say they aren't feeling any pressure from the European Commission. Nordic countries through whose waters the pipeline must travel have been mum.

But the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection last month determined that Nord Stream 2 — which wouldn't even touch Polish territory — could harm consumers. The " Office found that the concentration might lead to restriction of competition," it tentatively concluded, adding that the project could "further strengthen" Gazprom's "dominant position."

Antitrust concerns

The regulator has until the end of the year to make a final decision on the project. Gazprom and its partners on the project have one month to answer the Polish regulator's objections; at the very least, the antitrust concerns threaten to set back construction of the pipeline.

"Poland basically threw a wrench down the pipe, so to speak," said de Jong. "Gazprom is trying very hard to circumvent all these pesky transit states but they keep biting back. Some days you're the dog, some days you're the tree."

Why does a gas pipeline raise so much dander on both sides of the Atlantic? For U.S. officials, who have spent a lifetime trying to help Europe reduce its dependence on Russian energy — and the geopolitical leverage that comes with it — Nord Stream 2 is the opposite of helpful. For many in central and Eastern Europe, who've repeatedly been subjected to Russian strong-arming, often times with their gas supplies cut off entirely, giving Moscow a direct route into the heart of the Continent is downright scary.

And for plenty of folks in Brussels, which has spent the better part of a decade trying to liberalize the Continent's energy markets, Nord Stream 2 represents a frontal challenge to EU law; even before Nord Stream 2, the EU competition office was investigating Gazprom for alleged non-competitive behavior throughout the European market. Alan Riley, a British law professor and fellow at the Atlantic Council, has argued that the pipeline likely violates crucial EU regulations, especially rules meant to pry open the energy sector and reduce the power of monopolies.

But some energy experts say that an expanded pipeline straight into Germany could actually help competition, by bolstering and expanding central Europe's gas markets, making them function more like U.S. gas markets. One recent study, funded by the companies hoping to build Nord Stream 2, says the project amounts to a test case for European regulators, who have to decide whether to apply rules impartially, or with a political agenda.

Ultimately, if Europe does manage to knit together its fragmented energy market by laying new pipelines connecting one country to another, then another Gazprom pipe might not be that big a deal. If Europe were fully interconnected, other sources of gas — such as liquefied gas shipped over from the United States or Qatar, or even the eastern Mediterranean — could be pumped throughout the continent, wherever they are needed, and consumers would benefit from low prices. Without that connective tissue, though, Nord Stream 2 could just tighten Moscow's stranglehold even more.

"It's certainly Russia's right to be able to choose how it wants to deliver its gas to Europe, so long as whatever pipelines it builds conform to EU regulations," said John Roberts, an energy consultant at Methinks Ltd. and also a fellow at the Atlantic Council.

The project is fine, he said, "so long as it's not simply reinforcing a monopoly in southern and Eastern Europe, and to avoid that, more has got to be done." *(Source: Foreign Policy)*

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Intl. science Olympiad opens today in Tehran

TT SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — An international Olympiad of math, chemistry and statistics will open today in Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University, Tasnim news agency reported.

Starting from Sunday the event will last for five days and students from Russia, Tatarstan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Aljazeera, India, Iraq, Poland, and Slovenia along with Iranian students will compete against one another for the first three places.

50 foreign students, 12 foreign professors and 15 Iranian students will take part in the examination.

Students will take the exams for two days and get the final results after two days on Thursday and those come into first three places in each field will be awarded with medals on the closing ceremony of the event.

Some 17,000 foreign nationals residing in Iran enroll for literacy

TT SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — About 17,000 foreign nationals residing in Iran have enrolled for literacy schemes for the current school year starting on September 22, 2016, director of the Literacy Movement Organization of Iran has said.

Last year some 24,900 foreign nationals took part in literacy courses, Ali Baqerzadeh said, Fars news agency reported on Saturday.

This year 13,700 of the students are chosen by the Literacy Movement Organization and the rest by the United Nation Refugee Agency, he added.

More than 680 thousand foreign nationals became literate in Iran from 1984 to 2011 and the $1.8-million costs of the 27-year program were all covered by Iran. Moreover from 2011 to 2015, 52,351 foreign nationals were provided with the literacy program coverage at a cost of $75 million.

LEARN ENGLISH

Getting a Second Opinion

Greg: Where are you going?
Anne: I'm going to see another doctor to get a **second opinion**. My doctor **diagnosed** me with a serious **medical condition** and I don't want to **take it at face value**.
Greg: You're **second-guessing** your doctor?
Anne: No, I just want to make sure he's right. He's also recommending a **conservative treatment** for this condition, and if I really have it, I want to be more **aggressive**.
Greg: Doesn't your doctor mind that you're getting a second opinion?
Anne: No, he even gave me a recommendation for another **specialist**.
Greg: What's all of that?
Anne: This is a complete set of my **records** along with my **test results**. I'm hoping he'll have a **fresh perspective** when he looks at all of it and my **patient history**.
Greg: What are you hoping he'll find?
Anne: The **best-case scenario** is that he'll find that my doctor was wrong and that I don't really have this condition.
Greg: If he tells you that, wouldn't you be **dubious**? You'll have one doctor telling you that you have it and one telling you that you don't.
Anne: Then, it would be time for a third opinion.

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

second opinion: advice from a second doctor to make sure that the first advice is right
diagnose: to find out what illness someone has, or what the cause of a fault is, after doing tests, examinations etc.
medical condition: an illness or health problem that affects you permanently or for a very long time
take something at face value: to accept a situation or accept what someone says, without thinking there may be a hidden meaning
second-guess: to try to say what will happen or what someone will do before they do it
conservative treatment: treatment that doesn't include any operation or intervention
aggressive: used to describe a very strong treatment for a serious condition such as surgery
specialist: a doctor who knows more about one particular type of illness or treatment than other doctors
record: a patient's medical information (as medical history, care or treatments received, test results, diagnoses, and medications taken)
test result: a medical examination on a part of your body, or a substance taken from your body, to check your health or to discover what is wrong with you
fresh: good or interesting because it has not been done, seen etc. before
perspective: a particular way of considering something
patient history: information gained by a physician by asking specific questions, either of the patient or of other people who know the person and can give suitable information
best-case scenario: being, relating to, or based on a projection of future events that assumes only the best possible circumstances
dubious: not sure whether something is good or true; doubtful

Healthcare reform in underprivileged areas 'exceptional': minister

TT SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — Offering services within the framework of the healthcare reform plan in underprivileged areas across the country has been exceptional, Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi said.

One of the most important changes occurred within the framework of the healthcare reform plan was the reduction of out-of-pocket expenses for those living in rural areas to less than 3 percent and their insurance coverage free of charge, the minister noted.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of his trip to underprivileged villages in West Azarbaijan province with a group of philanthropist doctors to perform surgeries and provide them with other free of charge healthcare services, Nasim news agency reported on Friday.

Mentioning more than 2,000 healthcare centers located in deprived areas of the country Qazizadeh-Hashemi explained that all these centers now enjoy having doctors while some two years ago merely 40 percent of them had doctors working in them.

One of the most effective laws adopted by the parliament was to allocate 30 percent of medical sciences universities' capacity to admit the local students which will ultimately result in solving manpower shortage in all areas of the country in the next 10 years, he highlighted.

In addition to free vaccination the underprivileged areas' dwellers are provided with 420 different kinds of drugs for free, he said, adding, "We are not short of mid-wives in poor areas and outskirts of the cities and pregnant women and infants are well provided with supplement."

"We believe those who live in the outskirts of the cities are much more in distress than those living in underprivileged areas and that's why we first provided some 11 million living on the outskirts with healthcare services," the minister stated.

The healthcare reform plan kicked off on May 4, 2014 with the main goals of decreasing the out-of-pocket expenses for the patients, promoting natural birth, and supporting underprivileged patients suffering from rare or incurable diseases.

The medical caravan, which has travelled to deprived areas of West Azarbaijan province, performs eye exams, diagnose and treat eye-related diseases for free. (photo by Mohammad Nasimi/ Health Ministry official website)

Donald Trump: 'I don't throw babies out. Believe me. I love babies'

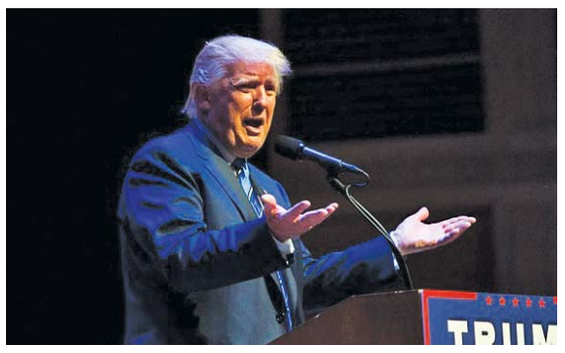
Donald Trump took several minutes at an Iowa rally on Friday to reaffirm his love for babies after ejecting one who was crying at a rally earlier this week.

"At one of the events, a beautiful baby was crying. And I mean crying like you wouldn't believe," Trump explained.

"This baby could have been Pavarotti. In fact, I'm going to find out who that baby is — I'm going to make a deal with the parents because we can take that baby to training school and it'll be the next great Pavarotti."

He continued: "This was a beautiful baby and a beautiful mother. And the baby was crying and I jokingly said 'You know what, that's OK, let the baby cry, we love babies.' You know, something to that effect. We love babies."

Trump explained to the Iowa crowd that he initially told the mother holding the child to stay at the event.



"Then after about two minutes, I said, 'you know what, I'm going to counteract my order. Beautiful baby, if you take her outside, that's not so bad.' That was it. The whole place laughed. We had a good time," Trump said. "The press came out with headlines: 'Trump throws baby out of arena.' So dishonest. I mean these are dishonest people."

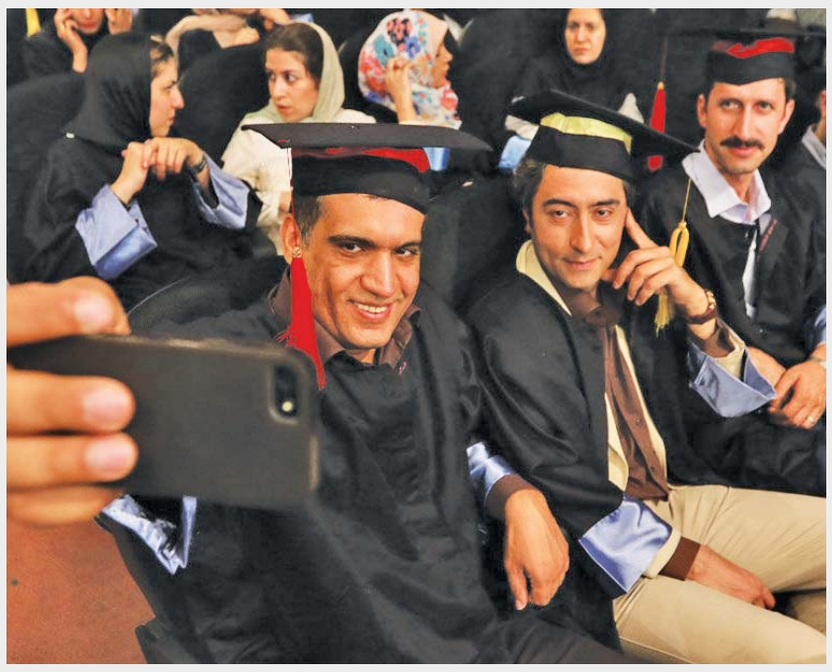
He added: "I could give you 20 stories like that. But think of it. Everyone's having fun, we're smiling, and I'm waving. Everyone's having fun, but they say Trump throws baby. You know how terrible that is? It's such a lie. And they know it's a lie."

Trump said that he had "heard so much about that beautiful baby."

"I don't throw babies out. Believe me. I love babies. I love my children, I love babies," he insisted. "I don't throw babies out, believe me."

(Source: Business Insider)

IN FOCUS TehranTimes/ Abolfazl Arabjavadi



On the occasion of Journalist Day, August 7, a graduation ceremony for students of News University was held in Tehran on Saturday with First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri and Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Ali Jannati in attendance.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◄► ج

Iranian hemodialysis center soon in Tajikistan

Iran will open a hemodialysis center in Tajikistan in the near future, the head of Iran's Red Crescent Society, Amir Mohsen Ziaee, has said.

"Due to some issues we still have with the government of Tajikistan we don't know when exactly the center will be opened, but we are completely ready and are waiting for the foreign ministry to provide necessary coordination," Ziaee said, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

Soon in case we reach a final agreement, Iran's Red Crescent Society hemodialysis center will be inaugurated in Tajikistan, he noted.

راه‌اندازی مرکز همودیالیز ایران در تاجیکستان

محسن ضیایی رئیس جمعیت هلال احمر ایران از راه‌اندازی مرکز همودیالیز کشورمان در آینده ی نزدیک در تاجیکستان خبر داد.

به گزارش روز جمعه ی خبرگزاری تسنیم، ضیایی گفت: با توجه به موضوعاتی که با تاجیکستان داریم هنوز زمان دقیق برای این افتتاح مشخص نیست ولی ما کاملاً آماده‌ایم و منتظر هماهنگی وزارت خارجه هستیم.

وی خاطرنشان کرد: به زودی درصورت توافق نهایی مرکز همودیالیز هلال احمر ایران در تاجیکستان افتتاح خواهد شد.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Kill not the goose that lays the golden egg

Explanation: do not destroy the source of your good fortune
For example: If you sell your shares now, you could be killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

PHRASAL VERB

Abide by

Meaning: accept or follow a decision or rule
For example: You have to abide by the referee's decision.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Add fuel to the flames

Explanation: do or say something that makes a difficult situation even worse
For example: He forgot their wedding anniversary, and his apologies only added fuel to the flames.

Iran's wrestler Reza Yazdani confirmed for Olympics

TT SPORTS desk Iranian freestyle wrestler Reza Yazdani has confirmed that he will be competing at the 2016 Rio Olympics despite struggling with an ankle injury.

Yazdani, nicknamed "Leopard of Juybar", has been sidelined since April after suffering an ankle sprain which occurred in training.

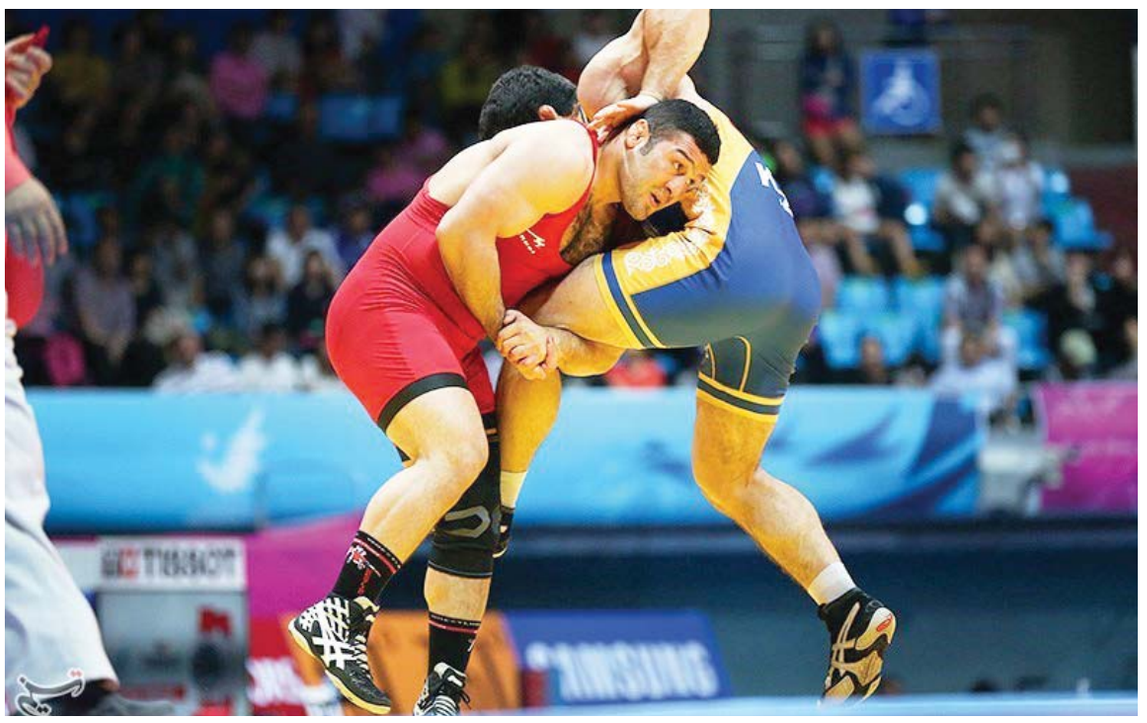
The 97kg wrestler returned to training early in June but he is not 100% fit yet.

"I'm ready enough to compete at the Olympics. The Olympic medal is what I've missed during my whole career and I hope to win it in Rio with the support and pray of Iranian fans," Yazdani said.

It's been an up and down couple of years for Reza Yazdani, the 97kg superstar from Iran. Injuries are not unfamiliar for Yazdani, who suffered a brutal knee injury in the semi's of the Olympics back in 2012. At that time, Yazdani was widely regarded as among the best wrestlers in the world at any weight.

Since that time, Yazdani had come back and looked strong. At the Club World Championships Yazdani teched USA's Olympic Champion in 2012, Jake Varner. Since suffering his most recent injury, Yazdani is back on the road to recovery.

Two-time world champion competed in the London 2012 Olympics but was injured in the semi-final, in the match against Ukrainian competitor Valeriy Andriytsev.



Rio Olympics 2016: Iran's Ahmadi comes sixth in women's 10m air rifle

TT SPORTS desk Elaheh Ahmadi of Iran finished in sixth place, scoring 122.5 in the women's 10m air rifle on Saturday.

"I worked hard for two years to earn my first Olympic medal but unfortunately finished in sixth place," Ahmadi said.

"I was under pressure for months because the level of the competition was very high," she added.

America's Ginny Thrasher, 19, won the first gold medal of the Rio Olympic Games amassed 208 points across the nine rounds at the Olympic Shooting Centre.

Du Li of China bagged the silver medal with a score of 207.0.

Yi Siling picked up the bronze for China in the event after finishing with 185.4.

Iran futsal team roster announced

Iran futsal coach Mohammad Nazemosharia has invited 22 players to participate in the training camp.

The Iranian team is preparing for the 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup which will be held in Colombia from 10 September to 1 October 2016.

The Iranian squad in full:

Alireza Samimi, Sepehr Mohammadi, Javad Esfandiari, Mohammad Keshavarz, Hamid Ahmadi, Farhad Tavakkoli, Ali Asghar Hassanzadeh, Mohammad Reza Sangsefidi, Mohammad Taheri, Ghodrat Bahadori, Mehran Alighadr, Mehdi Javid, Hossein Tayyebi, Afshin Kazemi, Saeid Afshar, Behrouz Jafari, Meysam Barmshouri, Saeid Ahmadi Abbasi, Mohammad Shajari, Majid Hajibandeh, Hamid Reza Rahanjam, Morteza Farahani.

The 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup will be the 8th edition of the FIFA Futsal World Cup, the quadrennial international futsal championship contested by the men's national teams of the member associations of FIFA.

(Source: Tasnim)

Ibrahimovic: I did not come to Manchester United to waste time

Zlatan Ibrahimovic is targeting immediate success at Manchester United after joining from Paris Saint-Germain.

The Swedish striker claimed 12 trophies during his four-year spell at PSG but made the move to United in July following the expiration of his contract at the Parc des Princes.

Ibrahimovic, who scored four minutes into his maiden United appearance in a friendly against Galatasaray last week, is now looking to win his first piece of silverware with the club on Sunday, when Jose Mourinho's men take on Leicester City in the Community Shield.

"I believe that the first game in which we can win a trophy is against Leicester," Ibrahimovic told MUTV.

"One game, one trophy. I'm used to winning trophies - I didn't come here to waste time. "That is our first trophy game and that is the first trophy we will bring home. For me, every trophy is serious.

"I have collected 30 trophies and I want to win more of them. I'm not satisfied until I win everything - that is what we play for, I play to win.

"I didn't come here to lose time, I came here to win. I believe the philosophy is the same for the club, especially a club like this."

(Source: Goal)

Paul Pogba to return to Juventus training - Massimiliano Allegri

Juventus manager Massimiliano Allegri has said there is "no point" in talking about a replacement for Paul Pogba, adding that the France international would be back in training with the club on Monday.

Midfielder Pogba is reported to be on the verge of a record-breaking move from Juventus to United in a deal that will reach more than £100m when agents' fees are included.

On Saturday, the Manchester Evening News reported that United manager Jose Mourinho wants the 23-year-old to fly to England this weekend to wrap up his move, which it said the Premier League club had hoped to announce last Thursday.

But speaking at a news conference ahead of his side's friendly at West Ham United on Sunday, Allegri said: "Mourinho rightly says he's not talking about Pogba because he's a Juventus player.

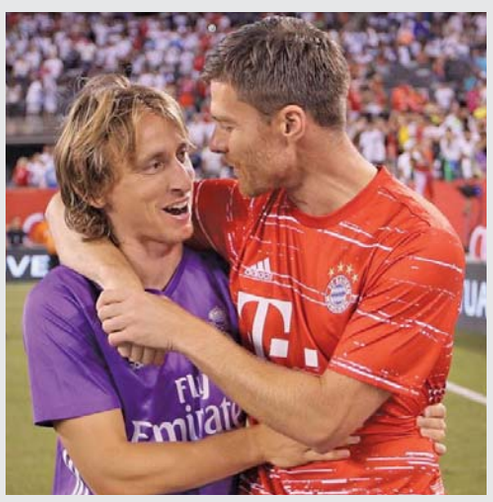
"I've summoned Pogba together with [Patrice] Evra [to report for preseason duty] tomorrow night, so that means he has training here in Vinovo on Monday.

"It makes no sense at the moment talking about potential replacements for Pogba because, right now, Pogba is a Juventus player."

(Source: ESPN)

INSTAGRAM

@marcelotwelve *The reason of my life #ENZOBOY & #LIAMBOY*



@lukam10 *Great to be back on to the pitch with @realmadrid after and to see my friend, @xabialonso*

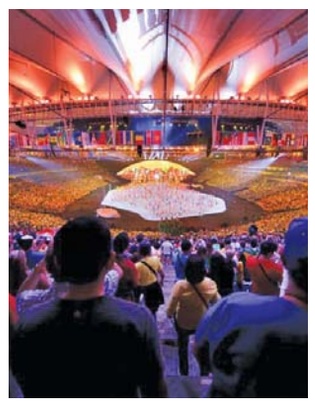
@rafaelnadal *Proud to represent #Spain in #Rio2016!!*

OLYMPICS

Brazil casts aside crisis in rousing Rio Games opening

Brazil unfurled a vast canvas celebrating its rainforest and the creative energy of its wildly diverse population in welcoming the world on Friday to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, all to the pounding beat of samba, bossa nova and funk.

Brazil's interim President Michel Temer declared open the first Games ever in South America. But in a display of the deep political divisions plaguing Brazil, he was jeered by some in the crowd at the famed Maracana soccer stadium.



The opening ceremony was decidedly simple and low-tech, a reflection of Brazil's tough economic times. In one of the world's most unequal societies, the spectacle celebrated the culture of the favelas, the slums that hang vertiginously above the renowned beaches of Rio and ring the Maracana.

There was no glossing over history either: from the arrival of the Portuguese and their conquest of the indigenous populations to the use of African slave labor for 400 years. The clash of cultures, as the ceremony showed, is what makes Brazil the complex mosaic that it is.

Home to the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, Brazil used the ceremony to call on the 3 billion people watching the opening of the world's premiere sporting event to take care of the planet, plant seeds and protect the verdant land that Europeans found here five centuries ago.

Brazilian marathon runner Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima, a bronze medalist in Athens in 2004, lit the Olympic cauldron, a small and low-emission model befitting the environmental theme of these Games.

THE 'ANALOG' SHOW

Unlike the opening ceremonies in Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012, a financially constrained Brazil had little choice but to put on a more "analog" show, with minimal high-tech and a heavy dependence on the vast talent of Brazil and its Carnival party traditions. In the nearly four-hour event, nothing appeared to go awry.

While the Rio 2016 organizing committee has not said how much the ceremony cost, it is believed to be about half of the $42 million spent by London in 2012.

The show drew homegrown stars, like supermodel Gisele Bundchen, who walked across the stadium to the sound of bossa nova hit "Girl from Ipanema" and tropicalia legends Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. Everyone performed for free.

Loud cheering erupted when two of the last teams entered the stadium: the first Refugee team in Olympic history and finally a samba-dancing Brazil contingent.

The joyful opening contrasted with months of turmoil and chaos, not only in the organization of the Olympics but across Brazil as it endures its worst economic recession in decades and a deep political crisis.

Temer, flanked by dozens of heads of state, played a minor role in the ceremony, speaking just a few words. The leader who was supposed to preside over the Games, President Dilma Rousseff, was suspended last May to face an impeachment trial and tweeted that she was "sad to not be at the party."

The $12 billion price tag to organize the Games has aggrieved many in the nation of 200 million and in Rio, where few can see the benefits of the spectacle or even afford to attend the Games.

Due to Brazil's most intense security operation ever, some among the 50,000 attendees faced two-hour-long lines as Brazil staged its most intense security operation ever.

PEOPLE ON THE PERIPHERY

The creative minds behind the opening ceremony were determined to put on a show that would not offend a country in dire economic straits but would showcase the famously upbeat nature of Brazilians.

It started with the beginning of life itself in Brazil, and the population that formed in the vast forests and built their communal huts, the ocas.

The Portuguese bobbed to shore in boats, the African slaves rolled in on wheels and together they plowed through the forests and planted the seeds of modern Brazil.

"They're talking about slavery? Wow," said Bryan Hossy, a black Brazilian who watched the ceremony in a bar in Copacabana. "They have to talk about that. It's our story."

The mega-cities of Brazil formed in a dizzying video display as acrobats jumped from roof to roof of emerging buildings and then on to the steep favela that served as the front stage for the ceremony.

From the favela came Brazilian funk, a contemporary mash-up of 20th century rhythms, sung by stars Karol Conka and 12-year-old rapper MC Soffia.

"This is a conquest. The people on the periphery are having an influence, it's a recognition of their art," said Eduardo Alves, director of social watchdog Observatorio de Favelas.

Before the entry of a few thousand of the 11,000 athletes that will be competing in the Games, the playful rhythms of the ceremony gave way to a sober message about climate change and rampant deforestation of the Amazon.

Each athlete will be asked to plant seeds that will eventually grow into trees and be planted in Rio in a few years.

The party wrapped up with a rousing parade of the city's samba schools that compete in Carnival. Hundreds of drummers donned their colors and played out Brazil's trademark beat, as athletes from over 200 countries tried out their first steps of samba.

(Source: Reuters)

TEHRAN TIMES

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SINCE 1979

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Poem of the day

Art thou with grief afflicted, with the smart
Of absence, and is bitter toil thy part?
Thy lamentations and thy tears, oh Heart,
Are not in vain.

Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon:13:10 Evening: 20:22 Dawn: 4:43 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:18 (tomorrow)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

"Zero K" translated into Persian

TT CULTURE desk **TEHRAN** — "Zero K" by American author Don DeLillo has recently been translated into Persian by Soheil Somi.

The 2016 book tells the story of a billionaire, Ross Lockhart, who is inspired by terminal illness of his wife to seek immortality for both of them.

Chatrang Publications in Tehran is scheduled to publish the book in the near future.

Books on architecture and urbanism on display at Tehran center

TT CULTURE desk **TEHRAN** — Tehran's Arasbaran Cultural Center is playing host to an exhibition of books on architecture and city planning.

A total of 600 have been selected for the fair, which is being organized in collaboration with Avval-o-Akhar Publications.

The book fair runs until August 11 at the center located on Jolfa St., off Shariati Ave.

"Rabies" to compete in Canadian festival

TT ART desk **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Amir-Ahmad Ansari's movie "Rabies" will be screened at the 40th the Montreal World Film Festival, which will be held in the Canadian city from August 25 to September 5.

"Rabies" will compete in the First Films World Competition of the festival, Elaheh Nobakht, the CEO of Image Film, the international distributor of the movie, told the Persian service of ISNA on Saturday.

Three films will be awarded the Golden Zenith, Silver Zenith and Bronze Zenith in this section.

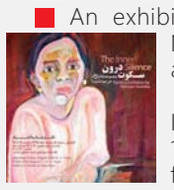
WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

■ Paintings by Shiva Saqafi is on show in an exhibition at Ehsan Gallery.

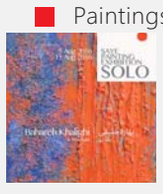
The exhibit will be running until August 10 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Maryam Nashiba is currently underway at Atashzad Gallery.



The exhibition titled "The Inner Silence" runs until August 14 at the gallery, which can be found at 23 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St., near Vanak Sq.

■ Paintings by Bahareh Khaliqi are on display in an exhibition at Sayeh Gallery.



The exhibit entitled "A Woman" runs through August 15 at the gallery located at 3 Aqakhani Alley, Omidvar St. in the Niavaran neighborhood.

Photo

■ Photos by Maryam Esfandiari, Samaneh Eqbali and several other artists are on display in an exhibition at Hepta Gallery.

The exhibit named "Four Looks" runs until August 10 at the gallery located at 30 Razeqi Shemirani Alley, Ekhtiarieh St.

Multimedia

■ Aria Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of videos and photographs by Shahla Etemadi.

The exhibit entitled "Asleep and Awake" runs until August 10 at the gallery, which can be found at 10 Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St., Vali-e Asr Ave.

Art elites pay tribute to Parviz Kalantari

TT ART desk **TEHRAN** — Colleagues, friends, fans and cultural officials gathered at Tehran's Art Center Gallery 2 on Friday to commemorate the memory of Parviz Kalantari (1931-2016), who was famous for his paintings of Iranian indigenous nomadic life.

The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Ali Jannati, Deputy Culture Minister for Artist Affairs, Ali Moradkhani, Managing director of Iran's House of Music Mohammad Sarir and Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art Director Majid Mollanoruzi were among the officials attending the program.

Also included were actors Reza Kianian and Saeid Pursamimi, artists Ali-Akbar Sadeqi and Hossein Mahjubi and musician Abdolhossein Mokhtabad.

Jannati regarded Kalantari as an eternal artist who brought honor to his country and was active in the international arena with his works.

"His paintings and drawings of deserts and nomadic life in the country portraying the lives of locals were created with love and interest," the minister said.

"We have lost many great artists over the past few months, but two of them had many similarities: Parviz Kalantari and (filmmaker) Abbas Kiarostami," Kianian next said at the ceremony.

"As we see a single tree on top of a hill or a winding road ahead of us, we remember Kiarostami, when we see desert and thatch, we automatically think of Parviz Kalantari," he added.

"When Kalantari held his first exhibition "Black on Black" (many years ago), it was clear we were confronted by a curious and brave artist, and afterwards his desert works with houses in the hearts of the desert appeared, all of which bore his signature.

"Later when he worked on the migrations of the nomads, his works were beautiful but did not bear as many secrets. It is his deserts and thatched works that have captured secrets and mysteries forever.

Culture Minister Ali Jannati (2nd L) and his colleagues visit an exhibition of paintings by Parviz Kalantari at Tehran's Art Center Gallery 2 on August 5, 2016. (Mehr/Moahammd Moheimani)

"Kalantari was bound to traditions and his paintings always bear a silence, and this silence is the secret of his works, as if the world has totally stood still and only this piece of art is left to be seen. This wilderness, silence and loneliness are the secrets that have made him eternal," Kianian concluded.

Copies of Kalantari's illustrations hanging from the branches of the trees in the courtyard of the center, and playing the voice of Kalantari for the participants made the event a memorable honoring ceremony for the master.

In addition, the exhibition of Kalantari's artworks will be running until August 16 at the gallery located at North Salimi St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

"Bab'Aziz" star Parviz Shahinkhu dies at 101

TT ART desk **TEHRAN** — Parviz Shahinkhu, the Iranian star of Tunisian filmmaker Nacer Khemir's 2005 acclaimed drama "Bab'Aziz - The Prince That Contemplated His Soul", died of respiratory problems at his home in Tehran on Saturday. He was at 101.

"He passed away in the early hours of Saturday while he was bedridden over the past month," his daughter, Mina, told the Persian service of MNA.

Shahinkhu's last public appearance was in last September when he attended the 17th Iran Cinema Celebration, during which his 100th birthday was also celebrated.

Shahinkhu was also famous for his parts in the popular series "Qarib's Life", filmmaker Kianush Ayyari's biopic on Mohammad Qarib (1909-1974), the founder of pediatrics in Iran, and Amrollah Ahmadju's "Once Upon a Time" about Hesam Beik and Morad Beik, the leaders of two major bandit gangs that attacked travelers before Reza Shah came to power in Iran in 1925.

Born in 1915, he acted in "Haji Agha, the Cinema Actor" (1934) and "Abi and Rabi" (1935) Iran's first and second movies directed by Ovanes Oganians, a Russian-Armenian migrant.

He played the parts of many wise characters in dozens of movies, telefilms and series.

Actor Parviz Shahinkhu (R) blows out the candles on his 100th birthday cake during a celebration that the organizers of the 17th Iran Cinema Celebration held in Tehran on September 12, 2015. Filmmaker Homayun Asadian, whos was the director of the celebration, is also seen in the photo. (Mehr/Majid Haqdust)

PICTURE OF THE DAY Mehr/*Hossein Razzaqnejad*

Iranian vocalist Shahram Nazeri (L) and his son, Hafez, give an open-air concert at the foot of Tehran's Milad Tower on August 5, 2016. A repertoire of songs from their 2014 album "Untold", which was recorded in four countries with over 35 Grammy Award winning artists, was performed during the concert.

Actress Redgrave urges British government to take in Calais child refugees

LONDON (Reuters) — Actress and activist Vanessa Redgrave delivered a letter to Britain's prime minister on Friday calling for unaccompanied child refugees in Calais to be brought to Britain if they have families in Britain.

The letter, signed by the 79-year-old screen and stage veteran and politician Alf Dubs, called for an immediate amnesty for the minors identified by Citizens UK, which since last year has been working in the northern French city with child refugees who have family in Britain.

Earlier this year, French authorities dismantled the southern half of the Calais camp, known as "The Jungle", where thousands of migrants fleeing war or poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia have massed, hoping to go to the UK.

"There's 170 children who have relatives in this country and they've been in Calais under terrible conditions, for about nine months some of them. It's an appalling situation," Redgrave told Reuters.

"(Prime Minister) Theresa May has stated that she's going to allot money against the slavery programs. Well, these children are being abandoned to slavery whatever form it is."

David Huddleston, actor who played "The Big Lebowski", dies at 85

NEW YORK (Guardian) — David Huddleston, best known for playing the title role in "The Big Lebowski", has died at the age of 85.

The actor, who amassed more than 100 screen credits since the 1960s, died of advanced heart and kidney disease.

Huddleston's role as the cranky millionaire in the Coen brothers' cult classic was small but remains his most recognizable work. He also gained fame for playing the titular character in 1985 family film "Santa Claus: The Movie alongside Dudley Moore and John Lithgow", as well as for roles in the 2005 remake of "The Producers, Smokey and the Bandit II" and Roman Polanski's "Frantic".

He also appeared in the Mel Brooks comedy "Blazing Saddles", an experience he referred to as "probably the most fun I have ever had on a set".

"It was a great privilege to work with David Huddleston on Blazing Saddles," Brooks said in a statement to the Hollywood Reporter. "His performance was sublime. He helped make all those Johnsons of Rock Ridge immortal. He was one of a kind and will be greatly missed."

Huddleston also worked on stage and the small screen, with roles in "The West Wing", "The Wonder Years", "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia" and "Ironside".

"Things were not important to him – people were," Sarah Koeppe, his wife of 32 years, told the Los Angeles Times. "He loved entertaining and would rather sit down and talk with someone over dinner."