NATION 2 Nahavandian sees JCPOA as an international document, beyond a mere commitment

ECONOMY 4 Imports of U.S. from Iran stands at $36.9m in H1

SPORTS 11 Weightlifter Salimi hopes to defend his title in Rio

ART & CULTURE 12 Sadi Foundation to host Persian literature aficionados from Turkey

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Russian special envoy for Middle East to visit Iran on Monday 2

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Richard Nephew: 'I do not believe the United States will violate the JCPOA'

'Allies will seek reasons if U.S. violates nuclear deal'

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Richard Nephew, who served as the lead sanctions expert for the U.S. team negotiating with Iran, is of the opinion that Washington would not violate the nuclear deal with Iran.

"I do not believe the United States will violate the JCPOA," Nephew, now a fellow at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University, tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Nephew says even if the United States violates its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action then its allies will be asking "why and for what reason".

Following is the text of the interview with Nephew:

■ What is your prediction about the future of the JCPOA?

A: I believe that the United States and Iran will continue to implement their obligations under the JCPOA, as both have a national interest in the benefits they each receive from the deal. Of course, that does not mean there will not be issues of implementation along the way. That is simply to be expected from such a complex, long-term deal between countries that have been adversaries for so long.

■ Iran has fulfilled all its obligations under the JCPOA but the other side, particularly the United States, has not honored its commitments to terminate all sanctions. Why?

A: I disagree that the United States or its partners have not fulfilled their duties in removing sanctions.

See page 9

Zarif: Iran, Russia, Turkey should dialogue on regional challenges

TT POLITICAL desk **TEHRAN —** As the Syrian army is tightening the noose around militants in the northern province of Aleppo, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Friday that Iran, Russia, and Turkey, as three key powerbrokers, should engage in dialogue to contend with regional challenges.

Zarif made the remarks during a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu in Ankara.

See page 2

Iran's oil output rises 12,000 bpd in July: OPEC

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** Iran's oil production stood at 3.629 million barrels per day (bpd) in July, registering a 12,000-barrel increase compared to its preceding month, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced in its monthly report released in August 10.

Iran produced 3.617 million bpd of oil in June, the report said.

According to the report, Iran's heavy crude average price in July was $41.59 per barrel, showing $3.9 decrease compared to its previous month.

As Mohsen Qamsari, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s director of international affairs, said on July 12, Iran has regained about 80 percent of the market share it held before the U.S. and European Union tightened sanctions on its oil industry in 2012.

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

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

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

Turkey warns it could leave NATO

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has warned that the country would consider leaving NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) if the organization did not come to its defense, following the perceived lack of support following the failed coup.

In an interview with the state-run Anadolu agency, Mevlut Cavusoglu claimed the European Union was fuelled by anti-Turkish sentiment and hostility to Turkish Recep President Tayyip Erdogan.

He accused the EU of making grave mistakes in its response to Turkey's failed coup and said the union could only blame itself if the West 'loses' Turkey.

Turkey is NATO's second largest military power after the United States and is a crucial ally as the West faces unprecedented conflict and upheaval across the Middle East.

However NATO responded today by saying that Turkey's membership was not in question and that Ankara could count on its solidarity and support after the coup bid, which has triggered deep purges in the alliance's second-largest armed forces.

A statement released by NATO earlier said: 'Turkey is a valued ally, making substantial contributions to NATO's joint efforts.

"Turkey takes full part in the Alliance's consensus-based decisions as we confront the biggest security challenges in a generation."

"NATO counts on the continued contributions of Turkey and Turkey can count on the solidarity and support of NATO."

On the issue of support for the Turkish government after the failed coup, the statement added: "The NATO Secretary General spoke to the Turkish Foreign Minister on the night of the attempted coup and later with President Erdogan, strongly condemning the attempted coup and reiterating full support for Turkey's democratic institutions."

"He expressed support for the elected government of Turkey and respect for the courage of the Turkish people."

Foreign Minister Cavusoglu also said in his interview that Turkey is building a 'strong mechanism' with Russia to try to find a solution in Syria and a delegation including foreign ministry, military and intelligence officials will go to Russia for talks

Cavusoglu explained that Russian President Vladimir Putin had said Russia would lift embargos on Turkish products and that, if needed, additional agreements would be signed to ensure work goes ahead on the TurkStream gas pipeline project.

Putin and Erdogan took a big step towards normalizing ties on Tuesday, with their leaders announcing an acceleration in trade and energy links.

Their meeting in St. Petersburg came almost nine months after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane near the Syrian border, prompting Russian sanctions. *(Source: Daily Mail)*

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Bust of Omar Khayyam embellishes University of Baghdad

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** A bust of Persian poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) has been installed in the College of Languages of the University of Baghdad in collaboration with the Tehran-based Sadi Foundation.

The bust is scheduled to be unveiled during a ceremony to be attended by Iranian and Iraqi cultural officials, literati and students from the university at the beginning of the new academic year that will start in September.

The Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet Omar Khayyam is chiefly known to English-speaking readers through the translation of a collection of his quatrains in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (1859) by the English writer Edward FitzGerald.

Poland's Lotos expects Iran's oil to arrive in Gdansk on Aug. 14

WARSAW (Reuters) — Poland's second biggest refiner Lotos said on Friday that it expects oil supplies from Iran to arrive in Gdansk port at the Baltic Sea on August 14.

The state-run Lotos said that the tanker Atlantas with 2 million oil barrels has reached the Danish straits and due to draft limits it has to transfer around 700.000 of barrels on a smaller vessel before it enters the Baltic Sea.

The supplies are a result of an agreement signed earlier this year between Lotos and National Iranian Oil Company. The cargo is the first Iranian crude sold into this part of the Baltic Sea market since January's lifting of sanctions.

In June trade sources said and ship-tracking data showed that the supertanker with Iranian crude is heading towards Gdansk.

Lotos, which now refines mostly Russian oil, also said that it is prepared to take oil from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and other directions.

"Ultimately we want to select a few types (of oil) and form a stable mix, which would give us most advantages," Lotos chief executive officer Robert Pietryszyn was quoted in a statement.

Iran likely to take Mina case to international court

TT POLITICAL desk **TEHRAN —** An Iranian parliamentarian has said that if Saudi Arabia is not held accountable for the Mina tragedy, Iran must take the case to an international court.

Heshmatollah Falahat-Pisheh said after ten months families of the Iranian victims of the Mina stampede have not yet seen a tangible decision, Mehr reported.

"This tragedy is a legal issue and must be followed up accordingly," he added.

Happy Left Handers Day!

Left handed but live in a right-handed world

August 13 is designated International Lefthanders Day. It was first observed in 1976. As the name suggests, it is meant to promote awareness of the inconveniences faced by left-handers in a predominantly right-handed world.

■ Super lefties

According to the Left Handers Day website lefties have more brain symmetry than righties. Brain symmetry between all four hemispheres makes you more likely to be a champion and leader. In the past few decades, the U.S. presidency has veered more and more to the left not in policy, but in handedness, with 5 of the last 7 presidents being left-handed: Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama.

The lefty spacemen included two in the Apollo 11 crew that were first to land on the moon in 1969 Buzz Aldrin and Mike Collins.

Super innovators such as Bill Gates (Microsoft), Steve Jobs (Apple), and Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) are also left handers. Besides David Rockefeller, Lou Gerstner (Former IBM head), Oprah Winfrey, and Steve Forbes are super business heroes.

Researchers claim that lefties are more intelligent and eloquent than their right-handed counterparts. In tests conducted by Dr. Alan Searleman from St Lawrence University in New York, he found that left-handers can be considerably more intellectually gifted. There were a higher percentage of left-handed people with IQs over 140 than right-handed people which is the "genius" bracket. Some of the earliest works of western philosophy and science were written with a left hand. Aristotle, Leonardo Da Vinci, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Alan Turing are the super left handers geniuses.

→10

PERSPECTIVE
By Mehdi Sepahvand
Tehran Times journalist

Middle East to become more legitimate as Turkey moves closer to Iran

In a drastic turnabout, Ankara has recently grown more friendly toward Iran and its superpower buddy Russia, a move which seems likely to help make the Middle East a more legitimate entity on the global stage of power.

By "legitimate" here I mean for the Middle East to be able to exert more of a unified will over at least its own issues when a multiplicity of far and scattered powers play roles in crises ranging from Syria to Yemen and Iraq.

Ankara started its new approach a few months ago, which was hastened following a failed coup d'état on July 15-16. Shortly before the coup, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan apologized for the November 24 downing of a Russian jet, which already raised expectations that normalization with Moscow could facilitate Turkey's U-turn from its failed Syria policy.

On the other hand, Iran was swift to condemn the coup and voice support for the legally elected Turkish government. This was embraced warmly by Ankara, thanking Iran on various occasions for its support.

All these have so far boiled down to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif making a one-day trip to Turkey on Friday, meeting Erdogan as well as his counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. In a joint press conference, the two foreign ministers stressed that despite differences, Turkey and Iran "would strengthen cooperation for a lasting peace in Syria."

"Iran has always had good relations with both Turkey and Russia. All of the countries in the region must cooperate to bring peace to Syria and fighting against extremism," Zarif said during the event.

→2

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

FARS

Zarif, Lavrov discuss bilateral ties, Syrian crisis over phone

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in a telephone conversation on Thursday discussing bilateral ties as well as the latest developments in Syria.

In the phone talks on Thursday, the two sides called for resolving the regional crises through political means, Fars reported.

MEHR

Emami Kashani condemns Saudi crimes in Yemen

TEHRAN — Tehran's interim Friday prayers leader has condemned the Saudi regime for the continued slaughtering of civilians in Yemen, Mehr reported.

"We see what they are doing to Yemen and how they created and trained Daesh," Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani said.

He added, "Saudi money is endangering Islam."

Emami Kashani said the U.S. and Israel are plotting to destroy the world of Islam with the Saudi help. "Now you see how they are achieving their goals with the help of the Saudi petrodollars."

ISNA

Iran sets April for presidential candidacy registration

TEHRAN — Iran's elections headquarters has set April 11-15, 2017 as the time for hopefuls to sign up for presidential candidacy.

According to the election headquarters director Mohammad Hossein Moqimi, presidential campaigns will also begin on April 28 and end on May 27, ISNA reported on Friday.

TASNIM

Official reaffirms Iran's support for Syria, resistance movement

TEHRAN — Parliament's General Director for International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has reaffirmed Iran's unconditional support for the Syrian government and the resistance movement.

"We stand with Syria, Iraq, and other countries that face terrorism," Tasnim quoted him as saying.

Amir-Abdollahian also said, "The United States and the Zionist regime have created Daesh (ISIS). Through this, they have posed a great threat to the region and even to Western countries."

MFA

Tehran raps Britain for contributing to loss of civilian lives in Yemen

TEHRAN — Iran has accused Britain of contributing to the killing of civilians in Yemen after British Minister for the Middle East and Africa Tobias Ellwood recently accused Tehran of arming groups in the war-torn Southwest Asian country.

"Britain has to be responsible to the world for arming a campaign led by the child-murdering Saudi Arabia," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said in a statement that appeared on the ministry's website on Friday.

"The British official would better explain this anti-human behavior and answer questions posed by the House of Commons representatives over extensive, irrefutable use of flamethrowers in killing civilians, including innocent Yemeni women and children."

INSTAGRAM

Daesh is brainchild of Wahhabism: Rezaee

TEHRAN — Mohsen Rezaee has drawn a comparison between the MKO, commonly called Monafeqin (hypocrites) in Iran, with Daesh, saying both behave savagely.

"Daesh and Monafiqin show similar behaviors as both of them bury children alive and torture people. They are similar in using cyanide to suicide," the secretary of the Expediency Council said.

"Daesh is the child of Wahhabism and Munafiqin are supported by Saudi Arabia and the United States," he added.

The MKO sided with Iraq's Saddam Hussein in the war against Iran in the 1980s. Also Daesh militants are now allying with the remaining Saddam supporters against the Iraqi people.

Nahavandian sees JCPOA as an international document, beyond a mere commitment

TT POLITICAL desk **TEHRAN —** Head of the Presidential Office has said the JCPOA is not only a commitment which the bargaining sides have to meet, but also it is an "international document."

Iran and the six global powers of the U.S., China, Russia, England, France, and Germany clinched a deal on Tehran's nuclear program, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, last July in Vienna.

The deal went into effect on January 16th, called the Implementation Day.

"The JCPOA now is not only a commitment between Iran and six countries but also it is an international document," Mohammad Nahavandian told ISNA in an interview published on Friday.

The comments by Nahavandian are a reply to opponents of the deal inside Iran as well as those in the U.S. who keep lambasting the Obama administration for signing the pact.

"The same people who created hurdles for the ratification of the deal continue to do so now," Nahavandian lamented.

Inside Iran, those ill-disposed toward the agreement have unleashed a barrage of sarcastic attacks on the Rouhani administration as the presidential election, slated for May 19, is approaching.

Tehran would expect economic gains following the deal. Opponents say the deal ironically has resulted in almost "nothing," citing Washington getting in the way of Iran's re-engagement with the global economic mainstream.

Driven by the "almost nothing" mindset, the opponents have been lobbying for reconstituting nuclear capabilities rolled back under the nuclear deal.

The situation in the U.S. is no better.

While Republican presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has backed the deal, her Democrat wayward rival Donald Trump has been threatening to "rip up" the JCPOA.

Although opponents of the deal inside both countries have always been each other's archenemies, both agree on one thing: the countries would have been better off without the deal.

Head of the Presidential Office Mohammad Nahavandian

Both camps, however, have failed to provide cogent reasons for their disagreement.

Zarif: Iran, Russia, Turkey should dialogue on regional challenges

Era of putsch and bullying has passed, Zarif says in reaction to July coup in Turkey

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"Iran, Russia, and Turkey are key players in the region and need to engage in dialogue and cooperation."

The one-day visit to Turkey of the senior Iranian diplomat comes weeks after the July abortive coup in Turkey and the meeting between Iranian and Russian presidents in Baku.

The meeting also comes after the visit to Russia of President Erdogan on August 9 in the Konstantin palace outside St. Petersburg.

Hinting at disagreements between the three countries over the Syrian crisis, Zarif said, "Even if there are any differences among regional countries, this can be ironed out via dialogue."

The Turkish minister, for his turn, stressed, "The security and stability of Iran is Turkey's security and stability and we believe this is the case with Iran, too."

Cavusoglu also said, "The two countries should pool efforts to counter extremism and terrorist groups of ISIS and al-Nusra, and achieve enduring peace in Syria."

Recently, Turkey has been adopting a more realistic policy in the region, starting with an apology call to Moscow, a thaw in bilateral ties after the shooting down of the Russian jet by the Turkish air force.

The country also learnt from the July coup which drew immediate condemnation messages from Tehran and Moscow even before it ended. This is while other countries including European and Arab ones were hesitant to send condemnation notes.

Era of bullying, putsch over

Also, pointing to the failed coup in Turkey, Zarif said, "We believe the era of bullying and coup has passed and this has no longer a place in our region. The people's vote and will cannot be suppressed by actions of a military group and for this, all Iranian dignitaries including the Supreme Leader, the president, the parliament speaker, and I condemned the coup attempt."

Zarif says, "Iran, Russia, and Turkey are key players in the region and need to engage in dialogue and cooperation."

"The Turkish people's move and their standing firm to destroy the roots of the abortive coup was a significant action. The people's participation gave coup plotters an important lesson."

Midnight of July 15 was quite disturbing moments for the Turkish government and nation as a group of senior military officials seized power using military machines. However, the coup failed as Turkish people took to the streets in reply to President Erdogan's call on the nation to take command of the unrest.

The Turkish foreign minister hailed Iran's stance on the failed coup, saying Tehran was the first to condemn it.

Russian special envoy for Middle East to visit Iran on Monday

TT POLITICAL desk **TEHRAN —** Mikhail Bogdanov, the Russian president's special envoy for the Middle East, is scheduled to take a trip to Iran on Monday for talks on the Syrian crisis.

Bogdanov plans to hold a meeting with Hossein Jaberi Ansari, the Iranian deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levan Dzhagaryan told the Tehran Times on Thursday.

Iran and Russia hold regular consultations on the Syrian conflict and Bogdanov's visit is in line with such a policy.

In May, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the then deputy foreign minister for Arab affairs, travelled to Russia and met with Bogdanov and discussed the Syrian war.

The visit by the Russian deputy foreign minister will take place amid fierce fighting between the Syrian army and militants over the control of Aleppo, the second largest city in Syria.

Iran and Russia have been backing the Syrian government against militants who are backed by certain Arab regimes, like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Turkey and some Western countries.

However, with a thaw in relation between Turkey and Russia it is expected that rivalry between the main power players in Syria to undergo some changes.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also visited Turkey on Friday with the Syria crisis on the top of the agenda.

Upon his arrival in Ankara, Zarif said Iran, Russia and Turkey are "important players in the Middle East region" and highlighted the importance of holding dialogue and cooperation to resolve problems.

Iran interested in acquiring latest Russian weapons: envoy

MOSCOW (Sputnik) — Iran shows an interest in acquiring the latest types of Russian weapons, Russian Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzhagaryan has said.

"Iran has traditionally shown an interest in acquiring the most modern types of Russian-produced weapons. The military equipment supplied to Iran is solely defensive and does not pose a risk of altering the balance of forces in the region," Dzhagaryan told RIA Novosti.

Russian, Iranian militaries closely cooperating on Syria settlement

Dzhagaryan also said Russian and Iranian militaries are closely cooperating on Syria settlement and Moscow hopes that its joint efforts with Tehran will help stabilize situation in the war-torn country.

"Russia and Iran are cooperating quite closely on the Syrian issue. As you know, our countries are members of the International Syria Support Group, in the framework of which we have established trustful contacts with Iranian partners. In addition, the two countries' deputy foreign ministers regularly hold bilateral consultations on the Middle East," Dzhagaryan noted.

Russian Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzhagaryan

"I have to note that close cooperation also has been established between our military departments. I hope that we will be able to stabilize the situation in Syria through joint efforts," he added.

Lifting of visa regime unlikely in near future

The ambassador also said Russia and Iran are currently not discussing fully lifting the visa regime between the two countries.

"During Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Tehran in November 2015, a bilateral intergovernmental agreement on easing conditions for mutual travel for certain groups of Russian and Iranian citizens was among the bilateral documents that were signed. Thus, a simplified visa regime is already in place for entrepreneurs, members of official delegations, persons participating in scientific, cultural and artistic activities, as well as in university-organized and other educational activities. There are no talks so far on abolishing the visa regime," Dzhagaryan explained.

Middle East to become more legitimate as Turkey moves closer to Iran

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In a telephone conversation with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani shortly after the failed coup, Erdogan had expressed his willingness to cooperate closely with Iran and Russia "to settle regional crises and restore peace and stability to the region."

The two leaders there touched on the situation in the Middle East as a whole, and expressed consensus that there are global forces who are not satisfied with the idea of tranquility in the region. For his part, President Rouhani noted he has no doubt that together with the terrorists, there are also "some superpowers" trying to destabilize things.

As for Ankara-Moscow relations, against a backdrop of rising tensions between Turkey and the West, Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Erdogan pledged Tuesday to repair relations after nine months of open antagonism.

Although their meeting in St. Petersburg produced little beyond vows of friendship and cooperation, the symbolism of the two former antagonists coming together for a friendly talk was enough to raise alarms in Western capitals. Besides being a member of the NATO alliance, Turkey is vital to Europe's efforts to stanch the flow of migrants from Syria and Afghanistan.

Closer ties with Russia also carry the potential to create tensions within NATO that Mr. Putin would be happy to exploit. Ultimately, Moscow would like to draw Turkey into its orbit and into the security and trade organizations it is promoting in Asia, although such a shift is not expected anytime soon.

Turkey's positions on Syria used to be in stark contrast with Tehran and Moscow before Ankara adopted the new approach. While Iran and Russia pushed for either keeping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad or having him succeeded by a democratically elected president, Turkey worked with the side which first of all sought Assad's elimination.

This put Ankara in the league of Saudi Arabia as a major player in an extensive campaign against Assad. On September 22, 2014, the United States, Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates began their campaign by bombing positions in Syria. For whatever reasons, the campaign has not brought any significant change to the situation.

As Ankara moves toward Iran and Russia, there is hope that a new strategic triangle is in the making, and in due time it may begin to cause considerable influence not only on Syria, but on the entire Middle East region.

Together, Iran and Turkey as powerful and central forces in the Middle East can shift a great force behind the events and work for shared good. Although it is still a fledgling, the new friendship can create spectacular scenes of achievement that can alter the makeup of the Middle East and hopefully result in actual improvement of security situation in the restive area.

Thailand shaken by multiple bomb blasts

Thailand has tightened security after bomb attacks across the country killed four people and wounded many more, with authorities struggling to identify a motive and find the perpetrators.

Twin bombs exploded in the upmarket resort of Hua Hin late on Thursday, killing one woman and wounding more than 20 others. They were followed by two more on Friday morning that killed another person.

A further two blasts struck on Friday in the popular tourist town of Phuket, while two more bombs were reported in the southern provinces of Trang and Surat Thani, in each of which one person was killed.

Last week, Thailand voted to accept a military-backed constitution despite claims by opponents that it will entrench the military's power and deepen divisions.

Speaking to Al Jazeera from Bangkok, journalist Pailin Wedel quoted a police spokesperson as saying there is currently no evidence of any link between the different blasts.

"They are also sticking to the line that they still do not have enough evidence that there are any links to outside terrorism, southern insurgency or anything that may be [tied] to the current political situation," said Wedel.

Prayut Chan-o-Cha, the prime minister, called for calm and said that he did not know who was behind the attacks.

"The bombs are an attempt to create chaos and confusion," he said in a conversation with reporters. "We should not make people panic more."

The two bombs that went off in Hua Hin on Thursday evening were hidden in potted plants and went off within 30 minutes of each other in the bar district of the popular beach town.

While small bombings are common in Thailand during periods of heightened political tension, there have been few such incidents in the past year and it is rare for touristic areas to be targeted.

Hua Hin is home to the summer palace of Thailand's royal family and the blast came on the eve of Queen Sirikit's 84th birthday and just before the first anniversary of a Bangkok shrine bombing that killed 20.

Authorities were searching for leads on the attackers and a motive behind the latest blasts.

According to staff at local hospitals, German, Italian, Dutch and Austrian nationals were among the wounded.

Thailand is expecting a record 32 million visitors in 2016, with the tourism industry a bright spot in an otherwise lacklustre economy.

The latest blasts came just days before the first anniversary of the last major attack on tourists in Thailand - an August 17 bomb that killed 20 people, mostly ethnic Chinese tourists.

The blast struck a crowded Hindu shrine in the heart of Bangkok and stunned the country as the deadliest assault in recent history.

Two Uighur men from western China have been accused of the attack and are due to go on trial later this month.

Both deny any involvement in the bombing and mystery continues to swirl around the case, with authorities failing to catch a number of other suspects or offer a thorough explanation for a motive.

Thailand's military junta, which seized power in 2014 after a decade of at times violent political unrest, has touted an increase in stability in the kingdom as a major accomplishment of its rule.

Yet the generals have failed to quell a long-running conflict in Thailand's three southernmost provinces - a region far from Bangkok or Hua Hin.

The conflict is largely contained to the mostly Muslim far south although violence has occasionally spilled into other areas.

Speaking to Al Jazeera from Hua Hin, Thitinan Pongsudhirak, director of the Institute for Security and International Studies at Chulalongkorn University, said: "I think the timing is striking here. Today is the 84th anniversary of the birthday of Her Majesty [Queen Sirikit]."

"We had the referendum last Sunday, so it seems clear to me that this is a coordinated round of bomb attacks."

"I think this has to do with domestic politics. It has something to do with anti-regime sentiments - anti-regime people who want to send a message that they don't like the outcome of the referendum."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Canada terror threat ends in death of suspect

Police shot and killed a 24-year-old man they say was in the final stages of a terrorist attack targeting a Canadian urban center during rush hour, authorities said on Thursday.

The suspect, with whom police were familiar from past terrorist investigations, was identified as Aaron Driver, said Mike Cabana, deputy commissioner of federal policing for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Driver was killed on Wednesday outside his sister's home in Strathroy, Ontario, just after entering a cab around 4:30 p.m., Cabana said. Police engaged Driver, who detonated an explosive device inside the cab, injuring the driver, he said.

It's unclear if Driver, who was wearing a backpack, was carrying the explosive on his body or elsewhere, said RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) Assistant Commissioner Jennifer Strachan, commanding officer of the Ontario division.

Police believe Driver was planning to stage an attack within 72 hours, Cabana said.

The United States FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and RCMP had been monitoring Driver since at least 2014, well before he granted an interview to The Toronto Star using the name Harun Abdurahman, Cabana said. In the interview, he justified the 2014 attacks on Parliament Hill in Ottawa that left an unarmed soldier dead, and he expressed support for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

He was in contact with alleged terrorists in the months following, but police "were never able to establish the nature of the communications" because they were encrypted, the deputy commissioner said.

Police arrested Driver in June 2015 and charged him with knowingly participating in the activities of a terrorist group and a search of his computer yielded a recipe for explosives, Cabana said.

A court granted him a peace bond, requiring he maintains good behavior for a certain period, and ordered him to be electronically monitored.

He moved from Winnipeg to his sister's home in Strathroy in July 2015, Cabana said.

When the RCMP recently received information from the FBI, including "a video of a man in the final stages of an explosives attack," they reached out to law enforcement partners across the country and identified the man in the video as Driver.

In the video, a man in a black balaclava appears to be reading something to the side of the camera. He invokes "the bodies of filthy French lying in the street" and says Canada has received many warnings to stay off Muslim lands and discontinue its participation in the fight against ISIL.

Leonard Tailleur, who represented Driver in the previous case on which he was granted the peace bond, said he hadn't spoken to Driver since February, nor has he spoken to police.

He said he was shocked to learn of his former client's death.

"He was going to get married to a gal in Toronto," the attorney said.

Regarding the previous case, he said police had intended to charge Driver with terrorism threats based on his social media postings, but Driver and police reached a peace bond settlement allowing the RCMP to monitor Driver for up to a year.

The last Tailleur heard, he said, Driver was supposed to keep the phone until the end of August and the RCMP would continue to monitor him through December.

(Source: CNN)

Most ferocious Saudi air raids in recent months hit Yemen

Mass rally held in Sana'a against Saudi onslaught

At least eight Yemeni civilians have lost their lives as the House of Saud regime warplanes ramp up airstrikes against the capital, Sana'a, and other cities in the neighboring state.

Local Yemeni media reports said on Friday that five people, including three children, were killed in the latest Saudi air raid on the Baqim district in the northern province of Sa'ada.

Another Saudi airstrike on a residential area in al-Maton district of northern al-Jawf Province left a woman dead. Saudi jets also targeted a car in the same region, killing two civilians and injuring several others.

The airstrikes come in violation of the truce agreement that came into effect in April before the start of United Nations-backed negotiations between Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement and the Saudi-backed government of former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The talks to end Yemen's conflict once again broke down over the weekend, with pro-Hadi militants announcing a new Riyadh-backed military operation near Sana'a.

Reports say Saudi fighter jets carried out 20 strikes against Sana'a alone on Friday morning. Riyadh's military aircraft have also bombed the capital and other areas across the country 70 times over the past hours.

Responding to the Saudi raids on Friday, Yemeni snipers shot and killed a Saudi soldier in the kingdom's Jizan region.

This come as Saudi officials have ordered Jizan residents to immediately evacuate their homes in the wake of Yemenis' retaliatory attacks. The officials have threatened to strip the locals of their citizenship if they refuse to leave.

Mass rally against Saudi onslaught

In another event, dozens of members of Yemen's Ansarullah movement have taken to the streets in the Yemeni capital city of Sana'a to express outrage over Saudi Arabia's aerial bombardment campaign against the impoverished country.

On Thursday, Ansarullah movement fighters, carrying Yemeni flags and banners in condemnation of the Saudi aggression, vowed to remain steadfast in the face of Riyadh's atrocious military offensive.

Bakil al-Qatwani, an Ansarullah fighter, described the rally in protest at the 16-month-old Saudi offensive as a show of support for the combatants fighting against the House of Saud regime and Riyadh-sponsored militiamen loyal to Yemen's resigned president, Hadi, at various battle fronts across Yemen.

Unrelenting Saudi airstrikes

Meantime, Yemeni sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, reported early on Friday that the Saudi military aircraft had carried out nearly 20 airstrikes against various neighborhoods of Sana'a and elsewhere in Yemen.

The sources said the warplanes launched three aerial attacks against al-Nahdain neighborhood in central Sana'a and two airstrikes at the Sabaha military base on the outskirts of the capital.

The Saudi fighter jets struck Shara' district and the camp of the 62nd Infantry Brigade on seven occasions.

International concerns are rising over the upsurge in the conflict in Yemen after the United Nations-brokered peace talks in Kuwait between representatives of the former government and the Ansarullah movement failed to make a breakthrough and were suspended on August 6.

The House of Saud regime launched a military aggression against Yemen in March 2015 in a bid to bring Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh, back to power and undermine the Ansarullah movement.

About 10,000 people have been killed and at least 16,000 others injured since the onset of the aggression.

The Saudi strikes have also taken a heavy toll on the country's facilities and infrastructure, destroying many hospitals, schools, and factories.

(Source: agencies)

Syrian army establishes control over sites in southern Aleppo

The Syrian Army continued heavy military operations against terrorist groups across the country, mainly in Aleppo, inflicting heavy losses upon them in personnel and equipment.

The army's air force destroyed tens of armored vehicles and explosives for terrorist organizations and killed a large number of terrorists, among them leaders in the surroundings of Ramousah, Ameriya and Khan Touman in Aleppo countryside.

Units of the army and armed forces in cooperation with the allied forces on Thursday continued to advance in the southern countryside of Aleppo central province, establishing control on a number of positions in the area surrounding the military academies and 1070 Apartments Project.

A military source told SANA that units of the army, in cooperation with the allied forces, advanced in different directions in the southern countryside of the province under an air and artillery cover, establishing control on a number of positions in the surroundings of the military academies and 1070 Apartments Project after killing a large number of terrorists.

Earlier, the source stressed that units of the army working to the south of Aleppo, in cooperation with the allied forces, foiled a wide attack by the armed terrorist groups on Wednesday evening from different directions.

The source indicated that heavy losses were inflicted upon terrorists in personnel as a number of their armored and machinegun-equipped vehicles were destroyed.

Meanwhile, the terrorist organizations acknowledged on their social media pages that the "military commander of the so-called Jaish al-Mujahidin" terrorist Yusuf Zou'a was killed.

A military source said on Friday that the Air Force destroyed several sites for terrorists and a large number of armored cars, car bombs, vehicles equipped with machine guns and others loaded with ammunition and killed tens of terrorists in areas south of the military academies, south of al-Hikma School, in the vicinity of Project 1070 (departments), in the area surrounding al-Ramousa, Kafr Naha, Kafr Hamra, al-Ameriyeh and south of the gas plant in Aleppo.

Battle for Raqqa

Further east, Russian raids hit Raqqa, the stronghold of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) terrorist group.

Russia said the raids destroyed a "chemical weapons factory" on Raqqa's outskirts as well as a weapons storage facility and ISIL training camp to the north and southeast.

Its defense ministry said ISIL suffered "significant material damages" in the strikes and that "a large number of fighters have been killed".

(Source: SANA)

Turkey seeks 32 fugitive diplomats in post-coup inquiry

Turkey is seeking the extradition of 32 diplomats who went on the run after they were recalled by Ankara as part of investigations into last month's failed coup attempt, the foreign minister said on Friday.

Turkish authorities have arrested, detained or dismissed tens of thousands of people, including military personnel, civil servants, judges and teachers, following the July 15 coup bid which President Tayyip Erdogan has blamed on a network led by a U.S.-based cleric.

The purge is worrying Western allies concerned about stability in the NATO member and partner in the fight against ISIL terrorist group. But Turkish officials are angered over a perceived lack of sympathy by Western officials who they say are more worried about the crackdown than the coup itself.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, speaking at a news conference in Ankara with his Iranian counterpart, said a total of 208 Turkish diplomats had been recalled as part of the coup investigation, but 32 of them had fled to other countries.

"We have been in contact with the countries where they fled and are working on their extradition," he said.

Three military attaches have also gone on the run, including two who fled from Greece to Italy, and another who fled Bosnia, the minister said, without specifying where the third attaché had gone.

Two Turkish generals based in Afghanistan who traveled to Dubai and another attaché who was working in Saudi Arabia have all already been sent back to Turkey.

The extradition moves expand a domestic purge that authorities say targets a "parallel state" set up by followers of U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Turkey accuses of orchestrating the coup plot.

Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the United States for years, denies any part in the putsch.

"If a tenth of accusations against me are established, I pledge to return to Turkey and serve the heaviest sentence," Gulen said in an opinion piece in French daily Le Monde on Friday.

(Source: Reuters)

Oman says to change Iran gas pipeline route to avoid UAE

Oman and Iran have agreed to change the route and design of a planned undersea natural gas pipeline to avoid waters controlled by the United Arab Emirates, Oman's Minister of Oil and Gas Mohammed bin Hamad al-Rumhy said on Wednesday.

The planned pipeline would connect Iran's vast gas reserves to Omani consumers as well as liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants in Oman that would re-export the gas.

After international sanctions on Tehran were lifted in January, the two countries renewed efforts to implement the project, but it has also been delayed by disagreements over price and U.S. pressure on Muscat to find other suppliers.

In an interview, Rumhy said Oman and Iran were at an advanced stage of designing the pipeline and had agreed on a deeper option than originally envisaged to avoid crossing any third country's borders.

"Instead of the shallower option at around 300 meters (985 feet) deep, the pipeline is to plunge close to 1,000 meters below the sea's surface. And it will be slightly shorter," he said.

Rumhy did not say why the pipeline would avoid UAE waters. Omani and UAE officials have discussed the project but it is not clear if the UAE has given its blessing to the project or has objected to a route that would pass through its waters.

UAE officials have not discussed the matter publicly.

Oman still expects to invite companies before the end of 2016 to bid for the engineering, procurement and construction part of the project, Rumhy said without giving an estimate for the cost. The pipeline would be financed on a 50-50 basis by Oman and Iran.

"Oman has started talking to Japanese, Korean and Chinese parties to raise finance. And this option has been received very well. We are looking to receive finance for LNG as per the initial understanding.

"So finance will not be an issue, but we won't have to go to the ministry of finance. We are looking at it as a self-funding project," Rumhy said.

The minister predicted the pipeline would be commissioned two years after the award of contracts, but conceded that the level of gas prices might delay the project, adding that the pipeline would not be profitable in today's market environment.

"I am not optimistic about the future of oil and gas prices, and we have an understanding with our partners that the market is not very encouraging."

In 2013, the two countries signed an agreement supplying gas to Oman through the pipeline in a deal that would be valued at $60 billion over 25 years.

(Source: Reuters)

SNIPPETS

Iran ready to swap 300,000 bpd of oil at Neka terminal: NICO official

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** "Iran is fully ready for a daily swap of around 300,000 barrels of oil at Neka terminal," Mahmoud Astaneh, a board member of Naftiran Intertrade Company (NICO), announced.

As he told ILNA on Friday, all the required domestic preparations are made due to the order of Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh and necessary negotiations with foreign counterparts are underway to restart oil swap at northern port city of Neka.

"Caspian littoral states deliver oil to Iran in Neka terminal and will receive it at Iranian southern ports in the Persian Gulf," he said.

Imports of U.S. from Iran stands at $36.9m in H1

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** The imports of the U.S from Iran in the first half of 2016 was $36.9 million, while the figure was equal to zero in the first six months of 2015, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

Iran-U.S. trade value stood at over $140.8 million from January to June in 2015, however, experiencing a 22 percent decline, the number dropped to $108.8 million in the corresponding period in 2016.

In the first half of the current year, the U.S. exported $71.9 million of goods to the Islamic Republic, the report said, showing 49 percent drop from its previous level of $140.8 million in the first half of 2015.

Iran adds 530 new industrial units to its production cycle

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** The managing director of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced that 530 new industrial units have come online during the first four months of the current Iranian year 1395 (March 20-July 21, 2016), IRNA reported on Friday.

"In the same period, 430 inactive units have also been revived," Ali Yazdani said.

"The administration plans to make 12,000 of inactive industrial units as well as projects with less than 60 percent of physical development operational by the current yearend (March 20, 2017)," he added.

NEWS

Asia rises on Wall Street's record, China data prompts stimulus bets

Asian stocks inched up on Friday, after a surge in oil prices helped propel Wall Street to record highs , while mainland shares held on to gains on hopes that weaker-than-expected Chinese economic data would spur policy easing.

Chinese shares extended gains after fixed asset investment, retail sales and industrial output all rose but were below expectations.

The fixed asset investment data "suggests that we could see Beijing being pressed harder to roll out fiscal stimulus," said Bernard Aw, market strategist at IG in Singapore. "The prospects of fiscal pump-priming might have buoyed the equity traders."

China's fixed asset investment from January to July increased by 8.1 percent from a year earlier, the slowest rate in more than 16 years, compared with expectations for 8.8 percent.

Hong Kong shares rose 0.9 percent to their highest level in more than eight months, up 2.8 percent this week.

Japan's Nikkei closed up 1.1 percent on a slightly weaker yen, ending the week 4.1 percent higher.

Australian stocks ended the day 0.4 percent higher.

"With central banks doubling down on easing bets, investors appear to be betting strongly that we could well see further gains given the ability of markets to absorb any number of setbacks, from concerns about China, Brexit, a slowdown in European GDP in Q2 against a backdrop of concern about the solvency of European banks," wrote Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at CMC Markets.

Also supporting investor appetite for risk, oil prices climbed more than 4 percent overnight after a Saudi oil minister hinted at possible action to stabilize prices and the International Energy Agency said it expected the supply and demand balance to tighten towards year-end.

(Source: Reuters)

Poor figures for July strengthen fears that China's economy still losing steam

A raft of official figures released on Friday showed China's economy is still losing steam and government efforts to boost growth have yet to show much impact.

Economists said the disappointing data may prompt the government to introduce more measures to bolster the world's second largest economy.

A bad start to the second half of 2016 in the economy also creates fresh challenges for China's decision-makers, who are now gathering at the resort of Beidaihe to talk about the country's economic and political future as the old method of pumping in credit to bolster growth has lost its shine.

Private sector and property investment growth continued to slow last month, while retail sales and industrial output figures were slightly lower than market analysts expected.

Private sector investment, a recent policy focus, continued to deteriorate despite Beijing's efforts to revitalize the impetus of private capital.

Growth hit 2.1 percent in the first seven months of the year, the lowest on record since China started to publish the indicator in 2012, compared with 2.8 percent in the first half of 2016.

It dragged down the pace of overall investment in the economy, which rose 8.1 percent in the first seven months, down from a nine percent rise in the first half.

Property investment growth slowed to 5.3 percent, after seeing a 6.1 percent gain during the first six months of the year.

Retail sales growth slowed to 10.2 percent in July, compared with 10.6 percent in June.

Flooding in China and lackluster market demand at home and abroad contributed to slowing growth in July, said Sheng Laiyun, a spokesman for the government's National Bureau of Statistics.

He told a briefing in Beijing on Friday that China was still in the throes of restructuring its economy, which still faced downward pressure.

(Source: South China Morning Post)

Foreign bankers expect BOK to cut key rate in October

SEOUL (Yonhap) — Global investment banks (IBs) predict that South Korea's central bank will slash the benchmark interest rate once again within this year amid unfavorable economic conditions, a survey showed Friday.

Some expect the Bank of Korea (BOK) to lower the rate a few more times before July next year, as the slump of Asia's fourth-largest economy persists, according to the report by the Korea Center for International Finance.

The BOK cut the policy rate to a record low of 1.25 percent in June but kept it unchanged in its latest monetary policy meeting earlier this week. BOK officials cited worries mainly about mounting household debts.

Major foreign IBs said the freeze seems to be attributable to mixed economic data released in the wake of the June rate cut.

They said the BOK, however, will likely be forced to lower the rate around in October as global trade shrinks, employment data keep worsening and the local economy feels the full-scale impact of corporate restructuring.

Standard Chartered and Credit Suisse raised the possibility of additional cuts in the mid to long term amid the constant strengthening of the local currency.

Goldman Sachs, BNP Paribas and Barclays pointed to sluggish exports and investment, saying the BOK is forecast to cut the rate in October and also revise down the growth outlook for South Korea's economy this year.

The BOK issues the outlook every three months. In its July report, the bank expected the economy to grow 2.7 percent in 2016, down 0.1 percentage point from the previous figure.

HSBC did not rule out the possibility that the BOK will delay an adjustment to the rate out of concern about household debt and on expectations of aggressive budget spending next year.

Morgan Stanley said the BOK may trim the rate three times before the end of the first half of next year.

Oil edges up on talk of possible exporter moves to prop up market

Oil prices edged up on Friday, remaining near the previous day's highs, on the prospect of talks by exporters about ways to prop up a market grappling with a supply overhang.

Brent crude futures were trading at $46.12 per barrel by 06:45 GMT, receding from a three-week high of $46.66 earlier in the day, though still up 8 cents from their last close.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude stood at $43.70 a barrel, up 21 cents after touching its highest since July 25, at $44.17 per barrel.

Both price benchmarks rose more than 4 percent on Thursday.

Markets were pushed up as Saudi Arabia's energy minister Khalid al-Falih said late on Thursday that oil producers would discuss potential action to stabilize oil prices during a meeting next month in Algeria.

"Talk of production cuts in the oil market saw prices surge overnight," ANZ bank said on Friday.

An outlook published by the International Energy Agency (IEA) that said it expected the supply and demand balance to tighten towards year-end also supported prices.

Traders said a drop of 8.1 percent in China's oil output in July, to a five-year low of 16.72 million tons, also lifted prices because it would mean Asia's biggest economy has to import more crude.

However, China's implied oil demand fell 0.1 percent from a year ago to 10.11 million barrels per day, its lowest since August 2014.

And oil prices are still more than 12 percent below their last peak in June, as brimming storage tanks and production that exceeds consumption weighs on markets.

In physical oil markets, Iran set its September official selling price for light crude to Asia at a discount of $0.85 per barrel versus benchmark Oman/Dubai prices.

This made the Iranian light grade $1.30 a barrel cheaper than in the previous month, the latest sign that exporters are willing to accept discounts in return for market share.

AB Bernstein said global oil production rose almost 0.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in July from the previous month, to 97.01 million bpd, while commercial inventories increased by 5.7 million barrels to 3.09 billion barrels in June.

Despite cheap crude feedstock prices, analysts said refinery margins, known as cracks, were poor as refiners continued to make more fuel than the market can absorb.

For July, Bernstein put Brent cracking margins at $3.02 per barrel (down $1.83 from June); U.S. Gulf Coast cracking margins at $5.06 a barrel (down $0.03); and Singapore cracking margins at $4.74 per barrel (down $1.03).

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Macy's to close more stores in turnaround push, stock jumps

Macy's Inc said it plans to shutter 100 more stores, representing about 14 percent of its total, as it tries to turn around its business after six quarters of falling sales.

The closures are the latest in a long list of moves to spur growth as department stores such as Macy's continue to battle with online retailers such as Amazon.com Inc and discount stores like TJX Cos Inc.

Consumers are also spending more on big-ticket items such as electronics and cars than they are on clothes, further pressuring sales at department stores.

Macy's sales fell nearly 4.0 percent during the second quarter, it said on Thursday, but that was better than analysts had expected and helped to send its shares and those of other department stores higher.

Email campaign asks McDonald's to take U.S. antibiotic curbs global

A charity looking to fight the rise of dangerous, drug-resistant bacteria on Thursday asked the public to help convince McDonald's restaurants around the world to stop serving meat and milk from animals raised with routine use of medically important antibiotics.

A week after the world's biggest fast-food company took that step with poultry at its U.S. restaurants, U.K.-based ShareAction launched an online campaign enabling people to email McDonald's Corp CEO Steve Easterbrook.

The group, which promotes socially responsible investing, wants Easterbrook to prohibit the use of antibiotics important to human medicine in McDonald's global chicken, beef, pork and dairy supply chains, for purposes other than disease treatment or non-routine control of veterinarian-diagnosed illness.

Electronic Marlboro sucks Japanese smokers away from Japan Tobacco

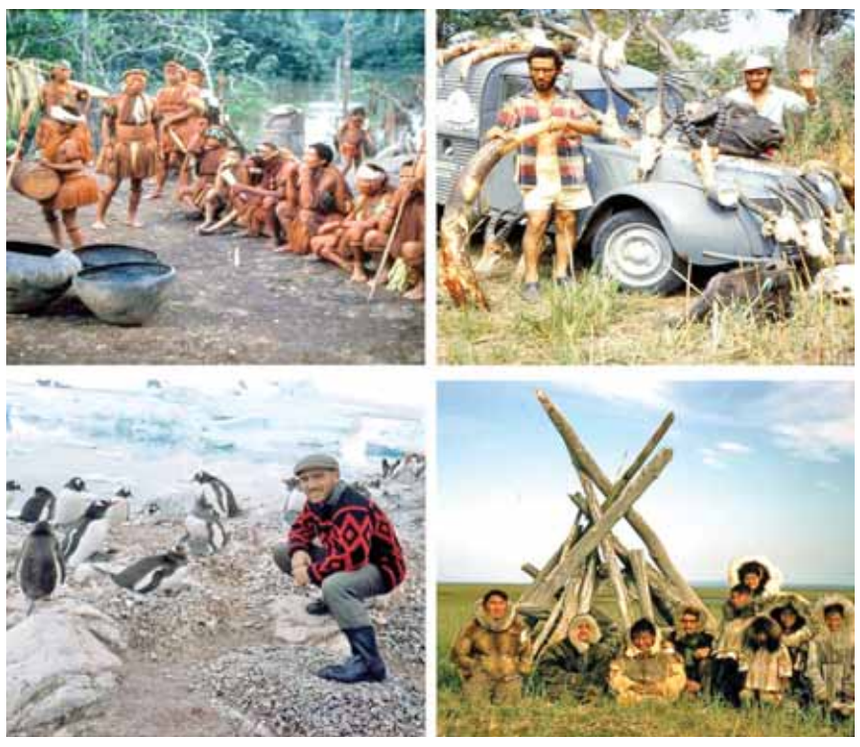
Marlboro maker Philip Morris International says its e-cigarette has rapidly captured close to 3 percent of Japanese tobacco sales, making inroads into a market Japan Tobacco relies on for 40 percent of its profit.

In what may be an early vindication of Philip Morris's e-cigarette strategy, the iQOS accounted for 2.2 percent of Japan's tobacco sales in the quarter ended June 30, a company spokesman said.

That share had climbed to 2.7 percent by the end of June after Philip Morris rolled out the 9,980 yen ($98.53) electronic smoker in late April accompanied by "HeatSticks", which cost the same as regular cigarettes.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY TEHRAN TIMES

How Iranian brothers created one of the world's first travel documentaries



In the 1950s, the Omidvar brothers travelled the Congo, the Arctic and the Andes on motorbikes and in a 2CV.

It would take a brave soul to set out today on a 10-year journey around the world on a motorbike, a journey that deliberately passed through places that include Congo, the Arctic Circle and the entire length of the Andes. That is exactly what the Omidvar brothers from Tehran did back in 1954. Throwing their film-making kit on their bikes and with just $90 each to spend, they set out to see the most remote people they could possibly find. En route they created a visual record that is now a milestone in film history, a documentary record of a vanished world: peoples, cultures and even entire countries that no longer exist.

Heading east they first passed through Pakistan, India, south-east Asia and Australia, eventually crossing the Pacific and heading up through Alaska and Canada into the Arctic. A vast sweep all across and down the Americas ended with a trip to Antarctica then, after a brief trip home, a new round of exploration in a 2CV, which they drove through Africa, somehow managing to get the vehicle through the Congo and the formidable barrier of the Ituri forest.

The films they made along the way are full of the wonder and excitement of exploration. They also bring an interesting counterpoint to a visual media that was, at the time, dominated by America and Europe. While the rest of the world was racing to modernity and feeling smugly superior to so-called primitive peoples, Abdullah and Issa Omidvar had an easy affinity and respect for those they met, something that gave them unique access to sights and sounds that were soon to be lost.

What we also see is a world in a far better condition than might be imagined: forests seem endless, remote people seem happier and more secure in their lives; it is a world before globalization, and a place cleaner and far less hectic.

When their journeys ended, Abdullah settled in Chile, founding a successful film company and cinema, while Issa returned to Iran as something of a celebrity. There in Tehran, in an 18th-century Pahlavi palace, he built a museum to house all the artefacts that he and his brother had collected. It's a place very much worth a visit (Omidvar Brothers Museum).

It is the films, however, that are the most significant artefacts. At a moment in history when many Iranians want to end their country's isolation, it seems appropriate to watch these two intrepid explorers embark on a journey that became a marathon celebration of how humanity can defeat its tendency towards fear of outsiders and foreigners. That, after all, is when travel is at its best.

(Source: The Guardian)

Why travel is the best test for any relationship?

Travel with a companion and you'll learn about a lot more than just the destination.

Psychologists have said the best way to test your compatibility with someone is to take a trip with them, and the U.S. Travel Association has found that traveling couples are typically happier and have more sex than non-traveling couples. Whether you want to strengthen a romantic relationship or test the waters of a new one, setting out on a journey together might be the best thing you can do.

Here are some of the ways traveling will challenge you and your partner, and why that's good for your relationship in the long run.

Constant communication

When you're spending every waking hour with someone in an unfamiliar place, trying to make decisions about every little thing—from where to sit on the plane and what to eat to leisure activities and the lodgings—requires constant communication.

Not voicing your wants and needs, or ignoring the other person's, is a surefire way to ruin a trip. Want to rest instead of taking on another walking tour or hike? Say so—you'll probably regret it later when fatigue makes you crabby and ignites a fight. Feel uncomfortable or unsafe in your lodging or mode of travel? Speak up—your travel buddy might even be thinking the same thing. Listening and being heard is a fundamental need in any relationship, too.

Compromise

Disagreements happen, and they often require compromise—another core pillar in healthy relationships and in life in general. Meeting in the middle when you have a disagreement with anyone is essential to being equals—no one wants to travel with someone who rigidly dictates the plans based solely on their own desires.

Relinquishing a little power and agreeing to something less than ideal is fine as long as you're OK with it, and is preferable when your travel companion is willing to do the same for you. On a weekend trip to Montreal, I once agreed to accommodations my travel buddy made that I felt reluctant about. Why? Because he agreed to let me take the reins on booking an early-morning French food tour he would rather have skipped. We both ended up loving the things the other chose despite our initial disagreement. And even if this hadn't worked out as well, we both knew the trade-off was fair.

It's truly the best and worst of times

In my opinion, the biggest reason to travel with someone close to you is the chance to share some of your absolute best moments, and to help each other out when you're at your worst. While there are all kinds of nightmares that can strike while traveling—a missed flight, lost or stolen valuables, sickness, injury—being vulnerable isn't so bad when you're with someone who supports you. Even the worst travel nightmares don't compromise the thrill of seeing incredible new places together, much like the difficult parts of a great relationship or friendship don't compromise the highs.

(Source: Smarter Travel)

A CLOSER LOOK

Best apps to brush up on language skills

We get it. One of the hardest parts about traveling is the language barrier. But that doesn't mean you have to butcher phrases or use elaborate hand gestures to get your meaning across. Here are seven apps to brush up on your skills, whether you're looking to learn the basics or become bilingual. Sayonara, lost in translation.

Duolingo

Not to sound like an inspirational education poster, but learning can be fun, guys! Try Duolingo, a free app that teaches languages like a game. You're awarded points when you complete a lesson (and bonuses if you ace it), then you can compare your progress with friends and try to beat their score. Plus, there's cheeky side skills like pick-up line exercises. Hey, they don't call them romance languages for nothing.

Busuu

Practicing a language with someone who's fluent can be daunting. Enter Busuu, an app with an international community of 40 million native speakers who act as coaches and mentors. Beginner lessons include flashcards to learn new words, while intermediate and advanced lessons involve writing, answering questions and having conversations with a live volunteer.

Pilot

Ok, you got us — Pilot isn't exactly an app. The smart earpiece and its app, which comes out in 2017, use speech-recognition technology to translate conversation in real-time, so you won't have to worry about miscommunication ever again. Here's how it works: When one person speaks, the other person hears it in their own language through the earbud. Science fiction? Meet reality.

Memrise

Everyone learns their own way; some are great at memorizing while others learn by practicing. Visually-inclined students will love Memrise, which teaches both formal and colloquial phrases through mnemonic flashcards. The app features crowdsourced card categories called "mems" that use graphics and humor to teach new vocabulary.

Mindsnacks

Let's play a game. MindSnacks's nine colorful puzzles (like match the picture to its name) help users become proficient. The best part? It's not just for children. Choose from seven different languages and start playing; the more you "win" the harder the puzzles will become.

AnkiApp

Remember studying a dreaded stacks of flashcards in school? Well, AnkiApp condenses those into (you guessed it) an app that lets you flip through common phrases and images with the press of a button. Note: the original Anki app is $24.99, but there's a free version (AnkiApp Flashcards) available for iPhone and Android.

(Source: Trip Advisor)

Clinton's fibs vs. Trump's huge lies

By Nicholas Kristof

One persistent narrative in American politics is that Hillary Clinton is a slippery, compulsive liar while Donald Trump is a gutsy truth-teller.

Over all, the latest CBS News poll finds the public similarly repulsed by each candidate: 34 percent of registered voters say Clinton is honest and trustworthy compared with 36 percent for Trump.

Yet the idea that they are even in the same league is preposterous. If deception were a sport, Trump would be the Olympic gold medalist; Clinton would be an honorable mention at her local Y.

One metric comes from independent fact-checking websites. As of Friday, PolitiFact had found 27 percent of Clinton's statements that it had looked into were mostly false or worse, compared with 70 percent of Trump's. It said 2 percent of Clinton's statements it had reviewed were egregious "pants on fire" lies, compared with 19 percent of Trump's. So Trump has nine times the share of flat-out lies as Clinton.

Likewise, The Washington Post Fact-Checker has awarded its worst ranking, Four Pinocchios, to 16 percent of Clinton's statements that it checked and to 64 percent of Trump's.

"Essentially, Clinton is in the norm for a typical politician," says Glenn Kessler, who runs Fact-Checker, while Trump "is just off the charts. There's never been anyone like him, at least in the six years I have been doing this."

Inveterate liar

When I speak with Trump voters, they often argue that Clinton is an inveterate liar and crook, yet when pressed they draw from the same handful of examples. One is Clinton's 2008 claim that she landed in Bosnia in 1996 "under sniper fire" and "ran with our heads down" from the plane. The Washington Post dismantled that claim; video shows that Clinton was greeted not by gunshots but by a crowd of dignitaries that included an 8-year-old Bosnian girl. Sign up to receive my emails about each column and other occasional commentary.

But it's also true that as the plane prepared to descend, security officials gave a spine-chilling briefing of the risks of sniper fire, and Clinton wore body armor in case of shooting.

Critics also claim that Clinton lied to the families of the four Americans killed in Benghazi, but fact-checkers have said the evidence is unclear. Harder to defend is her disingenuous explanation of flip-flopping on the Asian trade agreement. And her accounts of her use of private email servers have been consistently false or misleading; astonishingly, she continues to mislead by claiming that the F.B.I. director, James Comey, judged her answers truthful (he didn't).

You don't need to go back eight years to find a Trump embellishment; eight minutes is more than sufficient. In March, Politico chronicled a week of Trump remarks and found on average one misstatement every five minutes. The Huffington Post once chronicled 71 inaccuracies in an hour-long town hall session — more than one a minute.

If Clinton declares that she didn't chop down a cherry tree that might mean that she actually used a chain saw to cut it down. Or that she ordered an aide to chop it down. As for Trump, he will insist, "I absolutely did not chop down that cherry tree," even as he clutches the ax with which he chopped it down moments earlier on Facebook Live.

Trump, Putin buddies

Trump used to boast that he and Vladimir Putin were buddies — "I spoke directly and indirectly with President Putin" — only to acknowledge later that they had never met or spoken. He retweeted an incendiary graphic indicating that 81 percent of murdered whites are killed by blacks (the actual figure is 15 percent). He denied telling The New York Times's editorial board that he would impose a 45 percent tariff on China; The Times then released the audio of him saying just that. Then there was Trump's claim that he had seen thousands of people celebrating in New Jersey after 9/11. That was preposterous, but he then claimed that an article from the time backed him up (it didn't), mocked the disabled reporter who wrote it, and denied he had done so. Lately he stitched yet another quilt of lies about all this.

Equally brazen were Trump's claims about his fund-raiser for veterans in Iowa: He said on video that he had raised $6 million for them, then when the money didn't show up he denied ever saying that. He claims to have been "among the earliest" to oppose the Iraq war, even though interviews from 2002 and 2003 show he then supported the war.

The "man lies all the time," says Thomas M. Wells, his former lawyer. Wells recalls being curious that newspaper accounts varied as to the number of rooms in Trump's apartment in Trump Tower — eight, 16, 20 or 30. So Wells asked him how many rooms were actually in the apartment. "However many they will print," Trump responded.

Tony Schwartz, the co-writer of his book "The Art of the Deal," told Jane Mayer of The New Yorker, "Lying is second nature to him."

In short, Clinton is about average for a politician in dissembling, while Trump is a world champion who is pathological in his dishonesty. Honestly, there is no comparison. *(Source: The NYT)*

Over all, the latest CBS News poll finds the public similarly repulsed by each candidate: 34 percent of registered voters say Clinton is honest and trustworthy compared with 36 percent for Trump.

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

New Apt. in Niavaran
6th Fl., 210 sq.m, 3 bdrs, lobby, Pkg, balcony, near to Jamshidieh park, fantastic view, SPJ, ***Suitable for Residency & Ambassador***
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt. in Elahieh
280 sq.m, 4 bdrs, unfurn, $3300
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Apt. in Velenjak
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Apt. in Andarzgoo
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160 sq.m, 2 bdrs, furn, **$2300**
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Apt. in Elahieh
200 sq.m, 3 bdrs, fully furn, balcony, nice view, **$2300**
Mr.Arvin: 09128103207

Apt. in Qeytarieh
120 sq.m, 2 bdrs, furn, View of park, nice & cozy, ***International Bldg.,*** **1200 USD**
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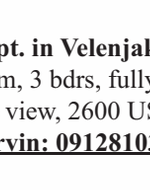
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INTERNATIONAL DAILY TEHRAN TIMES 7

Philippine president's shocking attack on U.S. ambassador -- and democracy

By Frida Ghitis

Imagine a presidential election campaign in which a bombastic candidate campaigns by insulting people, and by making promises and threats that sound so outlandish that people think, surely, he must be exaggerating.

Welcome to the Philippines, where Rodrigo Duterte, also known as "The Punisher" assumed the presidency on June 30. The experience should prove informative for people considering the election of another "tell-it-like-it-is" politician, America's very own Donald J. Trump.

Duterte just caused an international incident when he called the U.S. ambassador a "gay son of a bitch," during a recent speech to a military group. He claimed he used those words in a conversation with Secretary of State John Kerry when Kerry was visiting the Philippines. Duterte recounted for his audience how he complained to Kerry about Ambassador Philip Goldberg, one of America's most senior diplomats, because he interfered with the election by "giving statements here and there."

The State Department immediately called in the Philippines' representative in Washington to seek "a better understanding of why the statement was made," according to spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau. What's to understand? The candidate who campaigned with insults and threats is now governing with insults and threats. Much worse, it turns out his campaign threats, even the most outrageous, were not empty.

■ Philippines' international relations

Damage to the Philippines' international relations and diplomatic crises are the least of it.

Duterte's brand new administration already has the worst traits of an emerging fascist dictatorship. Cross the thin-skinned strongman at your own risk.

Like Trump, Duterte came across as a plainspoken strongman. He attracted voters with promises to tackle the country's problems without regard for the niceties of human rights or the trivial objections of the elites. He vowed to clean the streets of criminals and drug dealers. He said he would fill Manila Bay with the corpses of criminals.

His previous pronouncements were just as shocking, and he refused to apologize for anything he had said or done.

Duterte refused to apologize, and when his party expressed regrets on his behalf he disavowed the apology.

Apologizing is anathema to would-be strongmen, who portray themselves as infallible and all-powerful.

To those who could not conceive of Dutarte's scandalous, lawbreaking promises becoming reality, his 5-week-old administration is coming as a shock. Those who feared it would be bad are watching in astonishment as the reality surpasses their fears.

On June 25, several days before taking office, he addressed a crowd gathered in Davao to celebrate his victory. In the speech, broadcast nationwide, he announced a crackdown on drug dealers, telling people to turn them in or just kill them. "Shoot him," he said, "and I'll give you a medal."

In the five weeks since he took office, hundreds have been murdered, killed without facing a judge, a jury or a trial. A local newspaper has a regularly updated "Kill List," to track "the casualties of Duterte's war on crime." Their count is 611 since the election. Other tallies top 1,000.

A few days ago, the President released a new list of judges, politicians and military figures who he claims are involved in drug trafficking.

Like Trump, Duterte came across as a plainspoken strongman. He attracted voters with promises to tackle the country's problems without regard for the niceties of human rights or the trivial objections of the elites. He vowed to clean the streets of criminals and drug dealers.

The stunning provocation alarmed many Filipinos, including Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Maria Lourdes Sereno, who issued a letter politely urging the President to respect the "constitutional order."

Duterte responded by unleashing new and even more alarming threats.

The President warned the Supreme Court that if it gets in his way he would order the executive branch not to obey the court. And he said he might declare martial law. That, in effect, would make him a dictator.

In less than two months, the President is threatening to dismantle democracy and set supposedly co-equal branches of government at war with each other. One member of Congress implored the President and the justice to "work together for the good of the country."

The President is not content to attack judges, criminals, and others in government who might interfere with his plans. If Duterte doesn't like you, whatever the reason, the future looks bleak. He has already declared that some journalists should be killed. And refused to apologize.

If the business community thought they'd have a champion in the executive mansion they're thinking again.

Can the Philippines' hard-won democracy survive the Duterte autocracy? We will see. But for voters in others countries, enticed by this global wave of alluring autocrats -- including the United States and Donald Trump -- the disturbing news from the Philippines is a cautionary tale. Sometimes the hyperbole of the campaign trail is not hyperbole. Sometimes what you hear on the trail is just a preview of worse to come.

(Source: CNN)

COMMENT

Is selling tanks to Saudi Arabia such a good idea?

Washington has made another major arms sale to Saudi Arabia to replace tanks destroyed in the war in Yemen. The sale underscores the Obama administration's deep role in backing the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthi Ansarullah fighters as the war is escalating.

The State Department this week notified Congress of an impending sale of 153 M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks and twenty heavy tank recovery vehicles plus assorted ammunition, weapons and other kit to the Saudi army. Buried in the fine print of the notification is the statement that twenty of the Abrams tanks are intended to replace tanks destroyed in combat. The only place Saudi tanks are in combat are along the Saudi–Yemeni border in the Kingdom's southwest where the Houthi fighters have been surprisingly effective in striking targets inside Saudi Arabia since the start of the war sixteen months ago. It's probably a good bet that more than just twenty Saudi tanks have been damaged. The Kingdom has an inventory of 400 Abrams.

The Saudis have used Patriot missiles to intercept at least a dozen Scuds, and last week reported two more ballistic missiles were intercepted by Saudi defense measures.

The Houthis fighters have been a thorn in the Saudis' side for over a decade. Before the Arab Spring toppled Saleh, the Houthis fought a series of small border clashes with Saudi forces along the border and generally got the best of the fighting. The Houthis have their own strongholds right across the border in Sa'ada province.

Another indication of the war's cost to Riyadh came last month when the Grand Mufti Abdul-Aziz Al ash-Sheikh, the top Wahhabi cleric in the Kingdom, called on private firms, banks and businesses to donate money to help support the families of soldiers killed in the war and on the country's universities to give their children free tuition. He also appealed for donations to help the border towns under attack. This appeal underscores the expense of the war and the government's challenge in paying for what is an open ended quagmire.

→9

NEWS

Researchers find Android apps can secretly track users' whereabouts

Any Android phone can be turned into a tracking device using its sensors without the user knowing, according to researchers at Northeastern University.

Apps can access the motion and orientation sensors in an Android phone without explicitly asking for permissions, as sensors such as GPS do. This information can be used to generate an accurate picture of where someone is travelling and even where their phone is stored.

An "app in fact does not need your GPS or Wi-Fi to track you," said Guevara Noubir, the lead researcher behind the study.

Noubir's team of researchers demonstrated this using an app that had access to the phone's accelerometer, gyroscope and compass without being granted permission in the normal way.

"Just using these sensors, which do not require permissions, we can infer where you live, where you have been, where you are going," said Noubir.

The researchers tested the app by simulating road trips around 11 cities, including Berlin, London, Rome, Boston and Atlanta, while the app tracked their phones' position, the angles of turns and the trajectory of curves.

The app then suggested five routes it thought they could have travelled, 50 per cent of the time one of which was the actual journey.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Pools linked to outbreak of diarrheal disease

A dip in the pool is one way to beat the heat this hot, humid summer, but it also can spread illness.

Mother Amy Howard and her 2-year-old son have spent much time this summer at a public pool.

"We come here every day. We like to get out of the house and spend time out in the sun, and we have a great time," said Howard, of Xenia. She keeps a close eye on her son to keep him safe in the water, but it's what she doesn't see that could make them both sick.

Cryptosporidiosis, or crypto, is a gastrointestinal illness is caused by a microscopic parasite and is most commonly spread through water. This year, Ohio has seen a 50 percent increase in cases, and officials in Central Ohio on Thursday declared an outbreak. Columbus Public Health reported 107 cases in Columbus, Franklin and Delaware counties, which is more cases than the health departments saw in the last three years combined.

The couple of cases so far this year in Greene County is typical, but public health nurse Amy Schmitt said that number could rise. "This organism is pretty hearty and it can continue to shed for a very long time." The best way to reduce risk is for people, especially children, to avoid ingesting pool water, and for anyone who is sick to stay out of the water.

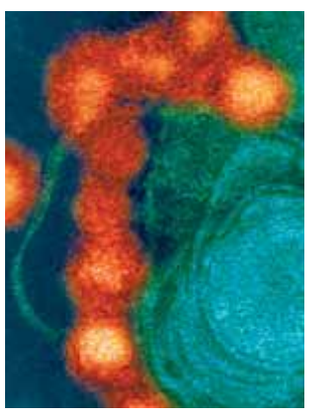
"We want to make sure that if they're sick, particularly with diarrhea, they really shouldn't be swimming," Schmitt said. "And if they're diagnosed with this infection called crypto — and that's done by lab test — they should not swim for two weeks after the diarrhea has stopped."

(Source: WHIO)

Two Zika proteins responsible for microcephaly identified

USC researchers have tracked down two Zika proteins potentially responsible for thousands of microcephaly cases in Brazil and elsewhere -- taking one small step toward preventing Zika-infected mothers from birthing babies with abnormally small heads.

The Zika virus contains 10 proteins, but only NS4A and NS4B matter when it comes to microcephaly, according to a USC-led study published in the journal Cell Stem Cell on Aug. 11. These



miscreant proteins, researchers discovered, have two shared life goals: to handicap fetal brain formation and to mobilize their malevolent forces.

Researchers said they are the first to examine three strains of Zika in second trimester human fetal neural stem cells. Previous studies created tiny neural stem cell organoids from adult origin.

The USC-led study, a collaborative effort between the virology and neurobiology disciplines, is also the first to examine Zika virus on the molecular level, said Jae Jung, senior corresponding author and distinguished professor and chair of the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in April confirmed that Zika virus causes microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects, but it was unclear how. Jung and his colleagues explained the molecular mechanisms that lead to the devastating condition.

"This field moves so fast; however, no one has examined the viral proteins in Zika before," said Jung, holder of the Fletcher Jones Foundation chair in molecular microbiology and immunology.

(Source: EurekAlert)

China is developing a hypersonic space plane that makes the Space Shuttle look primitive

China is developing a space plane that'll go from runway to orbit and back down again at hypersonic speeds, reports Popular Science. When it is completed, the hypersonic space plane will boost the Asian country to the forefront of the aerospace industry — eclipsing the capabilities of the now retired Space Shuttle and competing with the cutting-edge British Skylon.

The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CATSC) is mining the best talent and technology in the aerospace field to create the next generation hybrid plane and spacecraft. The space plane will use a combined cycle engine that allows it to take off from an airport landing strip and blast into orbit.

The horizontal takeoff will be powered by a turbofan or turbojet engine, followed by a ramjet engine that will propel the plane upward toward through atmosphere. As the spacecraft reaches supersonic speeds, it then will switch to a scramjet engine that will push it through the "near space" portion of the atmosphere that lies between 20 kilometers to 100 kilometers above sea level. Once it is through this "near space" environment, the space plane finally will use its onboard rocket motors to maneuver itself into orbit.

The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CATSC) is mining the best talent and technology in the aerospace field to create the next generation hybrid plane and spacecraft.

Just like the U.S. space shuttle, the Chinese version will be reusable, allowing the astronauts to orbit, land, and take off again with only minimal repairs. This reusability will lower costs for the space program and allow Chinese astronauts to access Earth's orbit more frequently. In a broadcast on China state television broadcaster CCTV, CASTC engineer Yang Yang also alluded to a possibility of using the space plane for tourism.

Because of its combined cycle engine, the space plane will propel itself into space much more gradually than a rocket engine-powered craft. This gentle launch reduces the physical strain on passengers, improving the "ease of access to space for untrained persons."

China's hypersonic shuttle is slated for development and testing over the next three to five years, with a target service date of 2030. The space plane is very similar to the British Skylon, which also will use a combined cycle engine and rocket motors to achieve hypersonic launches.

(Source: Digital Trends)

There is a shark that can live for 400 years

Although the Greenland sharks are not a newfound species, their absurdly long lifespan has only now been discovered. Julius Nielsen, a marine biologist at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, and a team of fellow researchers have found that the mysterious sharks don't even reach maturity until 150 years. The slow-swimming sharks are endemic to the cold polar waters of the north Atlantic and Arctic oceans and can grow up to 17 feet in length. The scientists describe how they discovered the Greenland sharks' lifespan today in the journal Science.

"We were blown away by the lifespan of these sharks," says Peter Bushnell, a biologist with the team at Indiana University, South Bend. "Frankly, we sort of looked at this at first and asked ourselves, OK, so where did we go wrong?"

While relatively little is known about the elusive Greenland shark, Nielsen demystified their long lifespans by performing a fascinating experiment with 28 dead sharks -- each accidentally netted by Scandinavian fishermen as bycatch.

You're probably heard about it in reference to dating old artifacts or bones. Here's how the process works: Certain isotopes of carbon over time will naturally and spontaneously decay.

Carbon atoms

Because scientists know how frequently this decay happens, they can tell how old something is based on its ratio of carbon atoms. The older it is, the more heavy isotopes have transformed away.

So why the lenses of the eyes? Unlike like cartilage, teeth, scales, or various other tissues, the center of the sharks' eye lens doesn't keep growing as the creature ages. That would give the scientists a false reading. For example, you may be in your 20s, 40s or 60s, but your fingernails and skin are mere weeks old, which wouldn't tell future scientists much about your age. These shark eye lenses are formed of an inert crystal-like protein, which is first formed while the shark is still in its egg.

"One traditional way to age fish is to look at the cartilage and bone, which is grown in a regular pattern, and basically read the tissue like you're counting the rings on a tree trunk," Bushnell says.

(Source: Popular Mechanics)

VR and exoskeletons restore feeling to paraplegics

We've only just begun to tap the potential of virtual reality (VR) and brain-machine interfaces, but already they're making waves in some unexpected areas. One of those is physical rehabilitation -- treating people with injury-related paraplegia.

We've seen a few examples of them being used, such as the paralyzed man who used VR and electroencephalography to walk on his own legs without the use of an exoskeleton. Now, researchers from Duke University, led by neuroscientist Miguel Nicolelis, have achieved success with eight patients.

Using virtual reality and a robotic exoskeleton controlled by the patient's neural activity, the Walk Again Project has seen these patients regain some sensation and muscle control in their legs.

"We couldn't have predicted this surprising clinical outcome when we began the project," Nicolelis said in a statement.

"What we're showing in this paper is that patients who used a brain-machine interface for a long period of time experienced improvements in motor behavior, tactile sensations and visceral functions below the level of the spinal cord injury. Until now, nobody has seen recovery of these functions in a patient so many years after being diagnosed with complete paralysis."

Virtual reality

The virtual reality allowed the patients to learn how to control the exoskeleton. The electrical signals specific to thinking about walking can be read using a non-invasive EEG electrode cap, but it's not

as simple as it sounds. Everyone's brain works differently, with neural activity a sort of fingerprint.

To program the controls the patients were fitted with the cap, then had to learn to control an avatar of themselves walking in a virtual environment. The researchers could then generate a specific set of commands for the exoskeleton based on the activity of an individual patient's brain, while the patient practiced finessing the sort of control they would need for the exoskeleton.

As part of this process, the patients graduated from full virtual reality to harnesses and exoskeletons that also required them to exert more control over their arms, their posture and their balance.

After seven months, some of the patients saw changes. After a year, four saw significant enough changes that their conditions could be reclassified from complete paralysis to partial paralysis. Most of the patients had improved control over their bladder and bowel function.

(Source: cnet.com)

Volcanic eruption affects sea level rise

A new study in the journal Scientific Reports suggests that the evidence to pinpoint expected acceleration of sea-level rise due to climate change was hiding behind the effects of a 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo. This eruption sent tens of millions of tons of sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere and may have masked the effects of industrial pollution on global sea levels during the two decades since.

"What we've shown is that sea level acceleration is real, and it continues to be going on, it's ongoing, and we understand why you don't see it in the short satellite record," said John Fasullo, who conducted the research along with scientists from the University of Colorado in Boulder and Old Dominion University. The data from satellite observations that scientists have used to track sea-level rise began in 1993, two years after the eruption, which temporarily cooled the planet. These data indicated that the rate of sea-level rise was holding fairly steady at about 3 millimeters per year.

Climate model

"When we used climate model runs designed to remove the effect of the Pinatubo eruption, we saw the rate of sea level rise accelerating in our simulations," Fasullo said. "Now that the impacts of Pinatubo have faded, this acceleration should become evident in the satellite measurements in the coming decade, barring another major volcanic eruption."

A portion of last week's opening Olympic ceremonies in Rio de Janeiro focused squarely on climate change. A video offered a glimpse of climate change effects and an accompanying graphic showing the incursion of sea-level rise on cities around the world if the average global temperature were to increase 3-4 degrees. Fitting perhaps, suggested The Washington Post, given warming could help accelerate outbreaks of mosquito-borne illnesses such as Zika, which has spread from Brazil to Florida, leading to serious birth defects.

Although data confirming a formal link between climate change and the rise and spread of the virus are lacking, Climate Central reports that the initial Brazilian outbreak of Zika was "aided by a drought driven by El Niño, and by higher temperatures caused by longer-term weather cycles and by rising levels of greenhouse gas pollution." Climate Central's own research recently showed that in three quarters of major U.S. cities warming temperatures have lengthened the mosquito season—the number of days hot and humid enough for mosquitoes to be biting.

(Source: Huffington Post)

Pools linked to outbreak of diarrheal disease

A dip in the pool is one way to beat the heat this hot, humid summer, but it also can spread illness.

Mother Amy Howard and her 2-year-old son have spent much time this summer at a public pool.

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The couple of cases so far this year in Greene County is typical, but public health nurse Amy Schmitt said that number could rise. "This organism is pretty hearty and it can continue to shed for a very long time."

Ingesting pool water

The best way to reduce risk is for people, especially children, to avoid ingesting pool water, and for anyone who is sick to stay out of the water.

"We want to make sure that if they're sick, particularly with diarrhea, they really shouldn't be swimming," Schmitt said. "And if they're diagnosed with this infection called crypto — and that's done by lab test — they should not swim for two weeks after the diarrhea has stopped."

In addition to swimming pools, crypto can be spread at splash pads, water parks, lakes, ponds, streams and rivers. The parasite is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body for extended periods of time that also makes it tolerant to chlorine disinfection. Symptoms include diarrhea, stomach pains and vomiting, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(Source: WHIO)

Afghanistan's chief executive criticizes president

Abdullah Abdullah, Afghanistan's chief executive, has criticized President Ashraf Ghani for failing to work collaboratively and deemed him undeserving to serve the government.

The televised remarks late on Thursday raised fresh questions about the stability of the coalition formed in 2014 after both Ghani and Abdullah claimed victory in a presidential election and there were fears of armed clashes between their supporters.

The post of chief executive was created for Abdullah, a former foreign minister, as part of a United States-brokered deal to end deadlock over the election.

But he complained that he had been left out of key decisions, and depicted Ghani as arrogant and out of touch with the deteriorating situation in the country.

"The government is paralyzed and ministers do not have the chance to speak. Ghani provides a one-hour lecture but he should listen to the ministers for 15 minutes," he said.

"If someone does not have tolerance, they do not deserve the presidency."

Ghani's office was not immediately available to respond.

While rivalry between the camps has been no secret, until now, Abdullah largely kept his complaints private.

The government has yet to officially confirm Abdullah's position past a September deadline that had been set for doing so, or to clear up the problems that plagued the last election.

Despite the criticism, Abdullah said he would not leave the unity government and said he planned to meet Ghani to discuss their differences.

Taliban edges closer

Abdullah's criticism comes at a particularly sensitive time, as Taliban fighters have made considerable gains in recent month in different parts of the country.

Fresh fighting erupted on Thursday in Helmand after the government rushed military reinforcements to beat back Taliban fighters advancing.

But U.S. and Afghan officials insist that they will not allow another urban center to be captured, after the Taliban briefly overran northern Kunduz city last September in their biggest victory in 15 years of war.

"The security situation in Lashkar Gah [capital of Helmand province] is under our control," Dawlat Waziri, defense ministry spokesman, said.

"We have retaken control of Nawa. Fighting is still going on in the outskirts but we are making progress with clearance operations."

Dozens of Taliban fighters were killed in the clashes, according to Waziri.

Fierce battles in recent days across Helmand have sent thousands of people fleeing to Lashkar Gah, spurring a humanitarian crisis as officials report food and water shortages.

About 30,000 people have been displaced in Helmand in recent weeks, local officials said, with many of those fleeing to Lashkar Gah forced to abandon their lentil, maize and cotton crops during the lucrative harvest season.

"We left everything behind in Nawa; our house, our grape and maize harvests. We fled with 15 members of my family to Lashkar Gah, fearing for our lives," Mohammad Ali, 40, told AFP in a camp in the provincial capital.

"For the last three days we have been surviving on bread and water. We will die of hunger."

In another development, Doctors Without Borders (MSF/Médecins Sans Frontières) said it had shrunk the size of its team in Lashkar Gah, with some non-medical staff leaving the city.

"We've shared coordinates of our 300 bed hospital to approaching warring parties in Helmand," the international medical charity announced via Twitter.

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) officially ended its combat mission in December 2014, but U.S. forces were granted greater powers in June to strike at the armed groups as President Barack Obama pledged a more aggressive campaign.

"The situation in Helmand remains contested," NATO said in a statement.

"While there is clearly an increase in fighting, the Taliban have suffered a number of casualties and [Afghan forces] have been able to recover many checkpoints."

Government forces have suffered heavy casualties since taking over full responsibility for security after most foreign troops withdrew at the end of 2014.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Dozens of Republicans urge RNC to spend money on congressional races, not Trump

More than 75 Republicans have signed a letter urging Republican National Committee Chair Reince Priebus to spend the party's money on helping secure the Republican majority in the Senate, not on Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

The letter, whose signers include former congressmen Mickey Edwards and Christopher Shays; former senator Gordon Humphrey, Bruce Bartlett, a policy aide to Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush; and former RNC staff members said that Trump's campaign will have a "catastrophic impact" on down-ballot races.

It is another instance of Republicans coming out against the party's presidential nominee. In recent weeks, a number of high-profile Republicans have said they cannot support Trump's candidacy.

"We believe that Donald Trump's divisiveness, recklessness, incompetence, and record-breaking unpopularity risk turning this election into a Democratic landslide, and only the immediate shift of all available RNC resources to vulnerable Senate and House races will prevent the GOP from drowning with a Trump-emblazoned anchor around its neck," the letter reads.

It said Trump's chances of becoming president are "evaporating by the day," due in large part to feuds and inflammatory comments that are alienating voters. The letter said they include his spat with the parents of a Muslim Army captain who was killed in Iraq, calling on Russia to find Hillary Clinton's missing emails, showing a "total ignorance" of foreign policy and "deliberately and repeatedly lying about scores of issues, large and small."

The RNC (Republican National Committee) and Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The letter cites a number of polls that show Trump losing ground to Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton nationally. It also points out his animosity toward other Republicans, including his claims that Sen. Ted Cruz's father may have been linked to John F. Kennedy's assassin, stating he would start a super PAC that could be used to fight other Republicans, calling Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) a loser in front of his Senate colleagues and initially refusing to support House Speaker Paul Ryan's primary campaign.

Andrew Weinstein, a former spokesman for Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich, said the letter was a cooperative effort among Republicans who were growing increasingly concerned at the idea that Trump could imperil the Republican majority in Congress. He said at least 17 former RNC staffers have signed the letter, which will be delivered to the committee next week. Signatures are still being collected.

Weinstein said the signatories aren't endorsing a particular candidate and vary on whom they will support in November. Weinstein has said he plans to vote for Clinton.

(Source: The Washington Post)

Turkey says receiving 'positive signals' from U.S. on Gulen extradition

Cleric says will return only if independent body finds him guilty

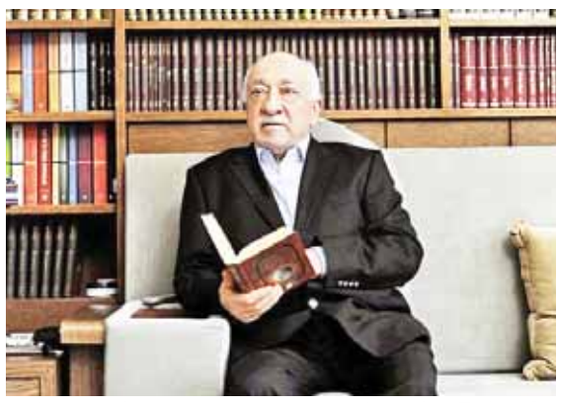
Turkey said on Friday it has received "positive signals" from the United States over its requests to extradite Pennsylvania-based preacher Fethullah Gulen whom Ankara accuses of ordering last month's attempted coup, AFP reported.

"We have started to receive some positive signals on the calls we have made" for Gulen's extradition, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters in Ankara, saying further documents relating to the case for his deportation were being drawn up to send to Washington.

Gulen is accused of ordering the July 15 coup during which a group within the military tried to remove President Recep Tayyip Erdogan from power. He strongly denies the claim.

Since then, Turkey has sent several documents to the United States which Ankara claims proves that Gulen was involved.

"Everyone in the world knows who is behind this coup attempt," Cavusoglu said.



Last week, an arrest warrant was issued in Turkey for Gulen.

The minister said the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe Biden expressed their intention to come to Turkey but would not confirm previous comments made by Ankara that Kerry would visit on Aug. 24.

Meanwhile, Gulen said on Friday he would only hand himself over to Turkish authorities if an independent international investigative body first found him guilty, Reuters reported.

"If a tenth of the accusations against me are established, I pledge to return to Turkey and serve the heaviest sentence," Fethullah Gulen said in an opinion piece in French daily Le Monde.

Gulen, who denies any involvement in the coup and has condemned it, said he believed the Turkish justice system was now controlled by the country's executive arm.

Turkey is pressing the United States to extradite the 75-year-old cleric and has purged tens of thousands of his suspected followers from the armed forces, other state institutions, the media and academia.

(Source: agencies)

Washington considers sanctioning Moscow over DNC email leak

United States officials are considering new economic sanctions against Russia over the DNC email leak released by WikiLeaks, the Wall Street Journal reports, citing sources familiar with the situation.

Officials have not so far, however, reached common ground on how exactly to impose sanctions, the WSJ reports.

Adopting more anti-Russian economic sanctions would mean delivering public accusations against Moscow or exposing links of the alleged hackers to Russia.

The White House has so far not commented, although the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and intelligence agencies investigating the cyberattack have "signaled" that the attack was "almost certainly" carried out by "Russian-affiliated hackers," according to the WSJ.

The breach of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, already compared to the Watergate scandal, is far from reaching its peak, as WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has dropped a broad hint he has much more material to potentially publish.

Speaking in Washington DC on Thursday, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said she does not know exactly how the notorious DNC leak was possible, but that there could be no mistake about its initiator.

"I know for sure it is the Russians," Pelosi told reporters, adding "we are assessing the damage."

"This is an electronic Watergate…The Russians broke in. Who did they give the information to? I don't know. Who dumped it? I don't know," she said, as quoted by the WSJ.

The Democrats are now urging the Obama administration to take decisive action.

"When the administration believes it has sufficient evidence of attribution, it will make that attribution public as well as consider any other steps necessary," said Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee.

During President Barack Obama's two terms in office, relations between Moscow and Washington have dropped to lows similar to those seen in the years of the Cold War.

Washington has already imposed a wide range of sanctions against Russian politicians and state companies following the reunification of Crimea with Russia, and accuses Moscow of being involved in the civil war in Ukraine.

Moscow has consistently denied allegations about its possible role in the hacking of U.S. Democratic Party emails published by WikiLeaks.

"We are again seeing these maniacal attempts to exploit the Russian theme in the U.S. election campaign," Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Last year, President Obama signed an executive order that facilitates imposing sanctions against any country endangering U.S. national security through cyberattacks.

"Our tools now include an executive order authorizing sanctions against those that engage in significant malicious cyber activities, such as harming our nation's critical infrastructure – our transportation systems or power grid," White House counterterrorism adviser Lisa Monaco said last month.

"Nations like Russia and China are growing more assertive and sophisticated in their cyber operations," the U.S. counterterrorism adviser claimed, before mentioning cyber threats from "non-state actors," including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

There is the view in the U.S. that the DNC breach is a tit-for-tat payback operation.

"They believe we are trying to influence political developments in Russia, trying to effect change, and so their natural response is to retaliate and do unto us as they think we've done unto them," the director of U.S. national intelligence, James Clapper, said last month, without making specific statements about the alleged Russian role in the DNC breach.

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton seems to have no doubts whatsoever about the Russian involvement in the leaks.

"Russian intelligence services, which are part of the Russian government, which is under the firm control of Vladimir Putin, hacked into the DNC and we know that they arranged for a lot of those emails to be released…," Clinton told Fox News earlier this week. *(Source: RT)*

JUMP

Richard Nephew: 'I do not believe the United States will violate the JCPOA'

1→ The United States, the European Union, and the UNSC all acted in accordance with the JCPOA by terminating, stopping, or suspending the various sanctions described in the JCPOA. When some in the Iranian government said that "all sanctions" would be removed against Iran, they were in error, as the text of the JCPOA made clear. Iran certainly has had delayed economic benefits from the deal, but this is because of a complex combination of factors: Iran's own need for fundamental reforms; the low oil price; and, some concern from international banks and businesses about sanctions remaining in place against the Iranian government for…, violations of human rights, and support for destabilizing activities in the Middle East.

"I believe that the United States and Iran will continue to implement their obligations under the JCPOA, as both have a national interest in the benefits they each receive from the deal."

Do you think the next U.S. president will respect the JCPOA?

A: I believe so, since I believe the next president of the United States will be Hillary Clinton. She has expressed her support for the JCPOA, while stressing the importance of ensuring its rigorous implementation and verification for enforcement.

If the next U.S. president violates the deal, will its allies support it?

A: I do not believe the United States will violate the JCPOA. But, if it were to violate the JCPOA, the issue for its allies will be why and for what reason.

Putin dismisses Sergei Ivanov

Russian President Vladimir Putin has dismissed his close ally and powerful Chief of Staff Sergei Ivanov, according to a Kremlin statement.

The move represents the highest-level demotion inside the Kremlin in several years.

"Russian President Vladimir Putin has decreed to relieve Ivanov of his duties as head of the Russian presidential administration," Friday's statement said.

It said Ivanov, 63, who is also a former defense minister, would now serve as a special representative for conservation, environmental and transportation issues.

Ivanov, who served together with Putin in the Soviet-era KGB (Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti/Committee for State Security) spy agency, was appointed Kremlin chief of staff in late 2011, just months before Putin's 2012 re-election. Ivanov will be replaced by Anton Vaino, a 44-year-old former diplomat who had served as Ivanov's deputy since 2012, according to a decree signed by Putin on Friday.

"I remember well our agreement about the fact you had asked not to be in this area of work as the head of the presidential administration for more than four years," Putin said in a meeting with Ivanov and Vaino broadcast on state television. "This is why I am sympathetic to your desire to move on to another field of work." Many observers had considered Ivanov a leading candidate to take over from Putin as president when his second term ended in 2008. However, Putin handed over the top job to Dmitry Medvedev, the current prime minister, before reclaiming it in 2012. *(Source: agencies)*

Is selling tanks to Saudi Arabia such a good idea?

7→ The tank deal is only the latest in a series of arms sales to the Kingdom since the Saudis announced the start of Operation Decisive Storm last year. The Royal Saudi Air Force has received billions in munitions and spare parts to keep up its aerial bombardment of Yemen. Without U.S. and UK support and logistics, the RSAF would be a diminished war machine.

President Barack Obama has been the most enthusiastic arms salesman to Saudi Arabia in American history. All told sales on his watch total over $110 billion. None has provoked a serious challenge on the Hill. Only Senator Chris Murphy from Connecticut has called for greater scrutiny of the arms relationship with the Kingdom.

Riyadh was the first Arab capital Obama visited as president. He has visited Saudi Arabia more than any other country in the Middle East including Israel. The relationship has been bumpy but lucrative.

The UN backed peace process in Yemen has all but collapsed. Four months of talks brought no breakthrough. Saudi Arabia argues that it is supporting the legitimate elected government that replaced Saleh and it has the backing of the UN Security Council.

The losers in the war are of course the Yemeni people. More than half the twenty-five million people are malnourished. Many are dislocated. Children are at greatest risk. The war gets almost no mention in the American media, but it's our war. *(Source: National Interest)*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Third World Golden Adobe award slated for Oct. 31

TT SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — The Third World Golden Adobe award ceremony for the best urban management projects worldwide will be held in Tehran on October 31 concurrent with the World Cities Day, IRIB reported.

The awards will be bestowed upon the urban managers and citizens who according to a jury are best at and most instrumental in executing key urban projects and sustainable urban growth, said an official with Tehran's Municipality.

The award aims at improving urban life and encouraging international interactions in developing urban infrastructure which ultimately leads to transferring knowledge and information in implementing urban projects, Goshtasb Mozaffari said.

The first Golden Adobe award ceremony was held in 2014. The event is being backed by the World Association of the Major Metropolises, the United Nations Human Settlements Program, and Tehran's Municipality.

Tehran traffic police confront offending motorcyclists decisively

TT SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — The Tehran traffic police has adopted more forceful approaches to deal with offending motorcyclists, the deputy chief of the traffic police has said.

Fines of 600,000 rials ($17) for not wearing a helmet, 650,000 rials ($18) for riding in the pedestrian area, 800,000 rials ($23) for using bus only lane, 1.5 million rials ($43) for riding dangerously, and 2 million rials ($57) for running a red light will be imposed on the offending motorcyclists, Hassan Abedi said, YJC reported.

In addition to the fines the offenders will face, he said, their motorcycles will be confiscated and taken to the traffic police's parking lots.

Iran to open 3rd hemodialysis center abroad in Tajikistan

TT SOCIETY desk **TEHRAN** — Iran's third hemodialysis center abroad will be opened in Tajikistan in autumn, said an official with Iran's Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

"We are now recruiting and training staff for this center," Reza Raees-Karami said, Tasnim news agency reported.

Earlier, Mohsen Ziaee, the IRCS chief, announced that should the two countries succeed in providing necessary coordination the center will soon come on stream in Tajikistan.

In addition to two hemodialysis centers in El Alto, Bolivia, IRCS with 29 hospitals in 19 countries is offering services to patients worldwide.

LEARN ENGLISH

Going Through Customs

Customs Officer: Your passports, please. What is your **final destination**?
Özkan: Los Angeles.
Customs Officer: How long is your **stay**?
Özkan: We'll be there for a week.
Customs Officer: What is the purpose of your trip?
Özkan: I'm going there on business and my family is **accompanying** me on vacation.
Customs Officer: Who are you traveling with?
Özkan: This is my wife Ayse, and these are my children, Mustafa and Ömer.
Customs Officer: Are you bringing in any **restricted items**? Any plants, fruits and vegetables, meats, or animals?
Özkan: No.
Customs Officer: Do you have anything to **declare**?
Özkan: We bought some **duty-free** items in the airport. Here's the receipt.
Customs Officer: That's fine. **Step over** to the **exam station** for **baggage inspection**.
We opened our bags for inspection, and luckily, the inspector found nothing to **confiscate** and we **got off scot-free**. I'm really glad they didn't find that cat we're **smuggling** in as a gift for my favorite podcaster!

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases
final destination: a place that you reach at the end of a journey after stopping at several places on the way
stay: a limited time of living in a place
accompany: to go somewhere with someone
restricted items: goods which must meet certain conditions before clearance through Customs
declare: to tell a customs official that you are carrying goods on which you should pay tax when you enter a country
duty-free: duty-free goods can be brought into a country without paying tax on them
step over: to move to a place a few steps away
exam station: examination station, a place, usually a big table at the airport where they take your baggage and they open it up to see what you are bringing to the country
baggage inspection: a careful examination of the baggage to find out more about it or to check for anything wrong
confiscate: to officially take private property away from someone, usually as a punishment
get off scot-free: to avoid being punished although you deserve to be
smuggle: to take something or someone illegally from one country to another

Happy Left Handers Day!

→1

Marie Curie, Sir Isaac Newton, Alan Turing, Lionel Messi, Pele, Diego Armando Maradona, Sir Bobby Charlton, Mark Spitz, Michelangelo, and Vincent van Goch are of the other well-known lefties throughout the history.

The devil is left handed

Well we don't know for sure, but many artistic representations of Satan depict him as left-handed! The man in red is said to baptize with his left hand while the Christian church's blessings are performed with the right hand.

The Latin word for "left" is "sinister," which could also go into why nuns used to force children to write with their right hands even if they were left-handed as said in Brain Jet website. Also the word 'left' in English comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'lyft', meaning broken or weak.

At least The Boston Strangler, Jack the Ripper, and Osama Bin Laden were left-handed. Research also shows that there is a correlation between left-handed people and delinquent behavior.

Lefties are easily embarrassed

A behavioral test conducted in Scotland showed a correlation between left-handedness and embarrassment. Those who had a dominant left hand answered that they worried more often about making mistakes and were more sensitive to criticism. Overall, the study suggested that left-handed people are generally more hesitant.

Lefties tend to be quick to anger

When it comes to processing moods, some lefties showed an imbalance in processing emotions with the left and right hemispheres in their brains. Frequent bad moods may be a result of this.

Left handed people may have a higher risk of brain disorder

The left hemisphere of the brain is used by both lefties and righties for language functioning. However, approximately 30% of lefties are partial to their right hemisphere. As a result, lefties run a higher risk of developing schizophrenia, dyslexia, or ADHD.

Take left-handedness serious

In all seriousness left handers make up 10-12 percent of the population, but live in a right-handed world. Most gadgets, office supplies, cooking supplies, and various other objects are catered for right-handed folks. Most of left-handed people in today's society have to adapt to use right handed tools and objects.

There's also a more serious side to the day, which spreads awareness about the special needs of left-handed kids.

On Intl. Day, Ban calls for empowerment of youth for lasting change in world

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message on International Youth Day, 12 August 2016, called for empowerment of young people with the resources, backing and space they need to create lasting change in our world.

The full text of his message reads:

The world's young people – who make up the largest generation of youth in history – can lead a global drive to break the patterns of the past and set the world on course to a more sustainable future. Young people are directly affected by the tragic contradictions that prevail today: between abject poverty and ostentatious wealth, gnawing hunger and shameful food waste, rich natural resources and polluting industries. Youth can deliver solutions on these issues, which lie at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this first year of that15-year plan for a healthier, safer and more just future, we count on the active engagement of the world's young people to transform the production and consumption of goods and services so they meet the basic needs and aspirations of the world's poorest people without overburdening already strained ecosystems.

Young people are traditionally at the cutting edge, and today's youth have more information than any previous generation. Their dynamism, creativity and idealism can combine to shape attitudes toward demand and help create more sustainable industries.

Youth are already influencing how the world produces, distributes and consumes while driving green entrepreneurship by designing sustainable products and services. As conscious consumers, young people are at the forefront of a shift toward more fair, equitable and sustainable buying patterns. Youth are strong and effective advocates of recycling, reusing and limiting waste, and they are leading technological innovations to foster a resource-efficient economy.

When we invest in youth, they can contribute to new markets, decent jobs, fair trade, sustainable housing, sustainable transport and tourism, and more opportunities that benefit the planet and people.

I am proud that the United Nations is actively engaged in supporting young leaders who can carry out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns. I encourage all young people to become involved in advancing the SDGs and demanding action by their Governments. My Youth Envoy is eager to connect you to our campaigns, which are being carried out across the entire United Nations system.

On International Youth Day, I urge others to join this global push for progress. Let us empower young people with the resources, backing and space they need to create lasting change in our world.

(Source: UNIC)

IN FOCUS IRIB/ Ehsan Jazini

The "playmate, fellow-citizens festival", which started on August 4, is still running in the city of Isfahan as a festival of fun, joy and entertainment. All the people aging 4 or more are welcome to join and enjoy games of various types every day from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. until August 19.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◄► ج

Excessive heat cuts down work hours in Khuzestan

Excessive heat has made all institutions in the southwestern province of Khuzestan to finish work at 1 p.m. for two days in a row, Nasim reported on Tuesday.
The provincial crisis management department announced in a statement that as the temperature has risen to 49 degrees Celsius all institutions except for hospitals and fire stations in the province should finish work sooner to reduce energy use on Monday and Tuesday.
According to Khuzestan meteorological organization 17 cities in the province have experienced a temperature of 49 to 51 degrees on Monday and it is likely that the temperature remains high for the rest of the current week.

کاهش ساعات کار ادارات خوزستان بر اثر گرمای شدید

به گزارش روز سه شنبه ی نسیم آنلاین به علت گرمای شدید هوا ادارات خوزستان برای دومین روز متوالی تا ساعت ۱۳ فعال هستند.
مدیریت بحران استانداری خوزستان طی اطلاعیه ای اعلام کرد: به دلیل گرمای شدید هوا و وقوع دمای بالای ۴۹ درجه و همچنین کاهش مصرف انرژی، تمام ادارات خوزستان به جز بیمارستان ها و مراکز آتش نشانی روز دوشنبه و سه شنبه تا ساعت ۱۳ فعال هستند.
بنا به پیش بینی های اداره کل هواشناسی خوزستان دمای هوا در ۱۷ شهرستان این استان روز دوشنبه به ۴۹ تا ۵۱ درجه سانتیگراد رسیده است و پیش بینی میشود که روند افزایش دما تا اواخر هفته جاری ادامه یابد.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Bad news travels fast

Explanation: people tend to circulate bad news very quickly (accidents, illness, etc.)
For example: Andy: How did you know I got fired already? It only happened this morning. John: Bad news travels fast.

PHRASAL VERB

Act up

Meaning: behave badly or strangely
For example: He's a tough kid and he acts up a lot.

ENGLISH IDIOM

After the fact

Explanation: after something, such as a crime or an accident, has taken place
For example: He said he realized he had put people in danger, but that was of no help after the fact.

Queiroz calls up 25 players for Italy camp

TT SPORTS desk Iran national football team head coach Carlos Queiroz has invited 25 players for a preparatory camp in Italy ahead of 2018 World Cup qualifications matches.

The new squad will fly to Italy on Saturday to hold a 12-day camp in Coverciano. Coverciano, also known as Casa Italia, located in the quartier of Florence with the same name, is the central training ground and technical headquarters of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC).

The Coverciano is the primary training ground for all Italy national football teams from the U-15 age group and above (including women's), as well as the Italian Armed Forces' representative football team. Occasionally it has hosted foreign teams visiting Italy.

Facilities include four standard football pitches, multipurpose gym, swimming pool and two tennis courts. In addition, there is a library, hotel, conference hall and restaurant located on site. The Hotel Coverciano can accommodate over 100 people; the venue is thus often used by foreign touring teams and by Italian clubs at the higher levels who are based in the Florence area

Carlos Queiroz men will take on newly promoted Serie B side SPAL on August 19 while they will face Serie B youth XI team four days later.

The Persians will play Qatar in the first game of 2018 World Cup qualification third round on September 1 while they have to face China five days later in Shenyang, more than 6,000 kilometer away.

Iran has been drawn in Group A of the World Cup qualification along with Uzbekistan, China, Qatar and Syria.

The winner and runner-up of each group (four teams in total) will qualify for the Russia 2018, while the third-placed teams of each group will advance to the Asian play-off.

The winner of the Asian play-off will face the side that finishes fourth in the fifth round of the CONCACAF qualifiers in a two-leg inter-confederation playoff.

Goalkeeper: Alireza Beyranvand, Mohammadreza Akhbari, Rashid Mazaheri.

Defenders: Seyyed Jalal Hosseini, Pejman Montazeri, Morteza Pourali Ganji, Mohammad Tayyebi, Ehsan Hajsafi, Ramin Rezaeian, Pourya Ghafouri, Saeid Aghaei, and Mohammad Ansari.

Midfielders: Andranik Teymourian, Kamal Kamyabinia, Darioush Shojaeian, Omid Ebrahimi, and Ezzatollah Pourghaz.

Forwards: Ashkan Dejagah, Rahim Zahivi, Mehdi Torabi, Vahid Amiri, Mehdi Taromi, Ehsan Pahlavan, Soroush Rafiei, and Morteza Tabrizi.

Iran remains top of Asia in FIFA rankings

TT SPORTS desk Iran remained Asia's top team in the FIFA world rankings. South Korea, Japan, Uzbekistan and Australia are behind Iran.

The result of this, after the significant changes that arose last month from the various continental championships, is that Argentina remains top, followed closely by Belgium, Colombia, Germany and Chile.

Just two international matches, both friendlies, have been played since the July Ranking, meaning that the changes that have taken place are generally minor.

The devaluation of older games has been a factor in many of those, and it has benefited the likes of Costa Rica (21, up 6), Japan (49, up 8), Korea DPR (99, up 18) and Mauritania (104, up 15). The same process has not smiled on Cuba, though, who dropped 30 places to 151st position.

Weightlifter Salimi hopes to defend his title in Rio

TT SPORTS desk RIO – Iranian super heavyweight weightlifter Behdad Salimi hopes to defend his gold medal at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

Salimi will be defending his title at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

"I am well-prepared for the competition. I've trained well in the previous months. All things are ready for an interesting rivalry," Salimi said.

"I cannot predict the results but I will do my best to get the best result. I hope to defend my title in Rio," he added.

"I will be competing with some new opponents from Armenia, Georgia, and Estonia, and I think I have a difficult task ahead of me. My toughest rival is Lasha Talakhadze from Georgia," Salimi concluded.

Arda Turan's Twitter account hacked after 'liking' Real Madrid post

Barcelona midfielder Arda Turan says his Twitter account was hacked, after Blaugrana fans reacted angrily when it seemed he had "liked" photos praising Real Madrid.

It was first noticed on Thursday that a tweet recently posted by a Madrid fan, showing the sleeve of a Blancos jersey with an image celebrating the club's 11 European Cup wins had been 'liked' by Arda's personal account.

This led to indignation and derision among a section of Barca supporters, with their ire directed against the Turkey international, who has failed to impress following a €42 million move to the Camp Nou from Atletico Madrid in 2015. Some Madrid fans also joined in and enjoyed claiming that Arda had now shown he was really a Blancos follower at heart.

The online storm was picked up by both the Madrid and Catalan sports press, causing enough embarrassment for Arda to tweet on Friday morning that his "account was hacked for a brief period" but the problem had been resolved.

"Two days ago my account was hacked for a brief period," Turan said. "During that period 1 RT was made and 2 photos were 'liked' without my knowledge. I would like my statement regarding this issue to be taken into consideration. Best."

No further details of the hacking have emerged.

(Source: Soccernet)

Basketball fans miss Spain-Nigeria start due to suspicious backpack

Fans missed the start of the men's Olympic basketball contest between Nigeria and Spain on Thursday after an unattended backpack was found in the arena, triggering a security alert and a controlled detonation of the bag.

Television images showed the players, including Spanish NBA star Pau Gasol, starting play against the backdrop of tiers of empty seats after security held back crowds from entering the arena.

The backpack was carried away by a robot and detonated, a spokesman for Rio 2016 confirmed. Detonating unattended bags has been common this Games amid concerns over security at South America's first Olympics.

A security agent said the backpack was discovered after the Brazil-Croatia game.

A tablet computer, some socks and a jacket were found inside the backpack following the detonation. The public were allowed into the arena immediately afterwards, a spokesman said.

Security has been an issue since the Games began on August 5. Swedish tourists were briefly abducted when they visited a slum, Portugal's visiting education minister was robbed at knifepoint, bullets flew into the equestrian centre and a Games bus was attacked with stones.

(Source: Reuters)

Man United's Paul Pogba suspended for first match back in Premier League

Manchester United's world-record new signing Paul Pogba is suspended for his side's first Premier League match of the season, the Football Association has confirmed.

Pogba, 23, returned to Old Trafford from Juventus this summer for £89.3 million, four years after leaving for Turin for just £800,000 following a lack of game time and a dispute over a new contract.

However, he will have to wait to make his second United debut, as he is banned from appearing in the club's first Premier League match of the new season at Bournemouth on Sunday.

The French midfielder is suspended because of the two bookings he received in last season's Coppa Italia, the second of which came in the 1-0 victory over AC Milan in the final.

The FA has confirmed on Twitter that the suspension is transferred over to the English game, rendering him ineligible for Jose Mourinho's first match as United manager.

However, it was already unlikely that Pogba would start the Bournemouth match, as he was part of the France team that lost the Euro 2016 final to Portugal on July 10, playing all 120 minutes of the match in Paris as the hosts lost 1-0 in extra time.

(Source: ESPN)

Phelps writes new page with four wins in same event

Michael Phelps of the United States won the Olympic 200 meters individual medley on Thursday to capture the 22nd gold medal of his career and become the first swimmer to win the same event at four consecutive Games.

Japan's 400 IM champion Kosuke Hagino won silver and Wang Shun of China took bronze, both moving dramatically through the field on the final length after turning in fifth and seventh place.

It was yet another extraordinary swim for Phelps, 31, who has now won two individual and two relay golds at his fifth Olympics, two years after coming out of retirement.

His medal haul has now risen to 26, including two silvers and two bronzes, with the 100 butterfly final still to come on Friday. Thirteen of his golds have come in individual races, the rest in relays.

"Right now I don't know how to wrap my head around that. I don't know what to say. It's been a hell of a career," Phelps told reporters, while acknowledging the strain on his 31-year-old body.

"That hurt a lot ... my body is in pain, my legs are hurting, I'm tired."

Despite winning four golds in London in 2012, Phelps has said he was dissatisfied with his preparation and results there and wants to bow out on his own terms.

"The biggest thing for me through the meet so far is I've been able to kind of finish how I wanted to. I've been able to come back and I've been able to accomplish things that I just dreamt of," he said.

"GREATEST EVER"

He was lauded by the Rio crowd, with one banner proclaiming "Phelps Greatest Olympian Ever". At the medal ceremony he swayed slightly and breathed deeply, his eyes moist, as he listened to the U.S. anthem.

Phelps then raised his arms to salute the crowd as fiancee Nicole cradled their baby son Boomer in the stands.

There was little time to savor the moment, however, as he raced back off the pool deck to get ready for the semi-finals of the 100m butterfly, which he also has the chance to win for a fourth successive Games.

He finished second in his semi-final to qualify fifth fastest for Friday's final. In the medley, Brazil's Thiago Pereira went off fastest, leading from Phelps after the butterfly leg, with Ryan Lochte of the United States and Hagino neck-and-neck just behind.

With the Rio crowd's excitement mounting, the three turned almost together after the backstroke, with Lochte just 0.01 seconds ahead.

Phelps led from Pereira and Lochte at the final turn and powered on as the other two faded, opening the way for Hagino and Wang to grab the two other medals.

Phelps clocked one minute, 54.66 for a comfortable winning margin of 1.95 seconds.

Japan's Hiromasa Fujimori was fourth and Lochte fifth in the last individual race of his long career, with a flagging Pereira seventh.

Phelps' four consecutive golds in the same event are unique for a swimmer, and place him in the same Olympic pantheon as fellow-Americans Al Oerter in the discus and Carl Lewis in the long jump.

(Source: Reuters)

Chinese swimmer Chen tests positive for banned substance

RIO DE JANEIRO — A female Chinese swimmer has tested positive for a banned substance at the Rio Olympics, China's swimming association said Friday — the first competitor in the sport to fail a test at the games.

The Chinese Swimming Association said Chen Xinyi tested positive for the diuretic hydrochlorothiazide after she finished fourth in the women's 100-meter butterfly Sunday, missing a bronze medal by nine-hundredths of a second. Xinhua, China's official state news agency, reported the story Friday.

The 18-year-old was also scheduled to compete in the 50 meter freestyle beginning Friday.

Chen has applied to the International Olympic Committee to have her B sample tested and to get a hearing on the matter, Xinhua said, citing the swimming association.

"The CSA has taken this matter seriously and demanded full cooperation from Chen in the investigation," the association said in the statement quoted by Xinhua.

Chen's result comes as doping has been a major concern in the Rio Games. Seven Russian swimmers have been allowed to compete in Rio after initially being banned following allegations of a huge, state-sponsored doping operation in their homeland. That decision has sparked vocal complaints from several swimmers, most notably American Lilly King.

No statement about Chen's reported test was posted to the website of the Chinese Swimming Association, and calls to its offices rang unanswered on Friday. FINA, the international governing body of swimming, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Li Keke, a spokeswoman for China's national anti-doping agency, said she had no additional information on the Chen case.

"We have noticed media reports about the case. So far the anti-doping agency has yet to receive any official confirmation," Li told The Associated Press.

"This reported test should be generated by the organizer. The Olympic committee and FINA should know about it. At present, we will continue to monitor," Li said.

(Source: AP)

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SINCE 1979

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Poem of the day

I died from minerality and became vegetable;
And From vegetativeness I died and became animal.
I died from animality and became man.
Then why fear disappearance through death?

Rumi

Prayer Times

Noon:13:9 Evening: 20:15 Dawn: 4:50 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:23 (tomorrow)

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NEWS

Iranian delegation attends Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** The delegation of Iranian cineastes, authors and war veterans who had traveled to Japan to attend the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony returned home on Thursday.

The ceremony is held annually on August 6 to commemorate the anniversary of tragedy of the U.S. atomic attack on the Japanese city.

The delegation was composed of actor Parviz Parastui, filmmakers Homayun Asadian and Maziar Miri, writer Habib Ahmadzadeh and several Iranian soldiers wounded by Iraqi chemical weapons during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The group also attended the third Iran Peace and Friendship Film Festival, which was held in Hiroshima and Tokyo, secretary of the festival Parastui said in a press release published on Friday.

He added that the festival aims to familiarize the world with the pain Iranian soldiers have suffered after the Iran-Iraq war because of Iraqi chemical weapons.

A number of Iranian movies were screened at the festival including Abdolhassan Barzideh's "Mazar-i-Sharif", Ebrahim Hatamikia's "Bodyguard" and Maziar Miri's "Painting Pool".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Santur virtuoso Majid Najahi dies at 82

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** Majid Najahi, the veteran Iranian santur virtuoso died at 82 in Tehran on Thursday morning.

He was known for his solo performances on the Radio Golha program, which was broadcasted on an Iranian National Radio station over a period from 1956 to 1979.

The Radio Golha program is still referred to by scholars and musicians as an encyclopedia of Persian music and poetry.

Scholar Seyyed Ahmad Lavasani passes away

TT CULTURE desk **TEHRAN —** Seyyed Ahmad Lavasani, an Iranian and Persian literature scholar in Lebanese universities, passed away at age 87 and was buried Thursday in Tyre, South Lebanon.

Several Lebanese people, literati and scholars along with a number of Iranian officials attended his funeral.

He was a professor of Persian literature in Lebanese universities for more than 50 years.

He wrote several books in Persian and Arabic including an Arabic-Persian Dictionary.

Stockholm to host festival of Iranian movies

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** Sixteen Iranian short, documentary and feature-length movies will go on screen at the Iranian 2016 Film Festival, which will be held in the two Swedish cities of Uppsala and Stockholm on September 24 and 25.

"Oblivion Season" directed by Abbas Rafei, " Nahid" by Ida Panahandeh, "The Girl's House" by Shahram Shah-Hosseini and "Wednesday, May 9" by Vahid Jalilvand are among the films.

The festival is organized every year by Yari, an Uppsala-based charity organization that helps street children in Iran to go to school and also to raise funds for the construction of schools and libraries for children.

Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival announces international lineup

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** The organizers of the 16th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival has announced a lineup of seven plays from different countries to go on stage during the event in Tehran.

The foreign plays will be competing in the international section of the festival running from August 22 to 28, the Center for Dramatic Arts has announced on its website.

"Extraordinary Voyage", a puppet show by the German company of Russian roots named "The Fifth Wheel", is among the competing plays.

"Extraordinary Voyage" is a combination of humor, music and dance from all over the world. It consists of numerous marionette acts such as Arabs, Flamenco, Gypsies, Mexicans and Indians. The performance is light, funny, with excellent puppets, solid rhythm and very good style with no text.

Japanese puppeteer Nori Sawa will present the famous legend of "The Pied Piper" with the shadow puppet theater and music performed by the Japanese musicians.

Selected by the Cultural Ministry of the Japanese Government, Nori Sawa started his professional career in Europe in 1992,. He now lives in Prague and often travels between Japan and the Czech Republic.

"The Writer", a co-production of Ulrike Quade Company (Amsterdam), Jo Stromgren Kompani (Oslo) and the Nordland Visual Theater (Stamsund), is another highlight of the festival.

Also included is "Shirin" by Kaveh Ayreek, an Afghan mime artist, writer, director and actor currently residing in Kabul. His dream is to bring some relief to his post-war society, and help relieve their traumas of war through his art. "Shirin" meaning sweet in Farsi is one of the many plays he has written.

A total of 27 Iranian plays will go on stage at the national section of the festival.

A poster for 16th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival

Iranian thespians to stage "Galileo's Battle"

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** A cast of Iranian actors led by director Masud Tayyebi will be performing "Galileo's Battle" at Molavi Hall in Tehran beginning August 15.

Based on German poet and playwright Eugen Bertolt Friedrich Brecht's "Life of Galileo", the play centers on the struggle between the 17th century scientist Galileo Galilei and the church for his vision of the cosmos.

Considered by many to be one of Brecht's masterpieces, the play explores the question of Galileo's social and ethical responsibility, as he must choose between his life and his work when confronted with the demands of the Inquisition.

Throughout the play Brecht seeks to examine the issues of scientific morality and the difficult relationship between the intellectual and authority.

The late prominent Iranian stage director and playwright Hamid Samandarian translated "Life of Galileo" into Persian a couple of years ago.

Aryaz Zolfaqari, Elham Jeddi, Iman Mirhashemi, Zorhreh Zargar, Alireza Qadiri, Mojgan Rayegan and Shiva Amani are among members of the cast, which has been rehearsing the play for the past 15 months.

PICTURE OF THE DAY HONARONLINE/*Masud Mirmiri*

Thespians perform "Neighbor of Aqa", a play by director Hossein Kiani underway at Baran Theater Hall in Tehran. The play will be onstage until September 12.

Sadi Foundation to host Persian literature aficionados from Turkey

TT CULTURE desk **TEHRAN —** The Tehran-based Sadi Foundation in collaboration with the Islamic Azad University will hold a short-term Persian-language refresher course for a select group of over 30 Turkish university students from August 13 to 30.

Organized under the auspices of the Iranian cultural attaché's office in Ankara, the program also encapsulates various sightseeing tours in Tehran and a three-day visit to the historical city of Isfahan in central Iran.

The Sadi Foundation, tasked with promoting the Persian language and literature overseas, is currently hosting 200 non-native learners of the Persian language during its 83rd Persian Language and Literature Refresher Course that started on August 4.

Pedro Almodovar reflects on "Julieta" at UK premiere

LONDON (Reuters) — Acclaimed Spanish director Pedro Almovodar said he found a new challenge in his latest film "Julieta", mining a quieter drama for his 20th feature film as he reflected on his decades-long career.

"Julieta" is an adaptation of several Alice Munro stories about a single mother drifting into depression as she searches for her missing daughter and discovers much about her traumatic past is not what it seems. The film stars Emma Suarez as the older Julieta and Adriana Ugarte as the younger iteration of the character. Almovodar, 66, known for complex dramas such as "Hable con Ella" ("Talk to Her"), "Todo sobre mi madre" ("All About My Mother") and "Volver," said "Julieta" presented a new challenge for him.

"I used to make a lot of melodramas, I mean dramas with a lot of sense of humor, music and strange situations. But in this case... there is so much pain in this story that I wanted to - just to make it more softer way that I could. So I mean this sobriety, it was something new for me and it's related more with a dark drama than with melodrama," the Oscar-winning director told Reuters at the film's UK premiere on Wednesday.

Debuting his 20th film, Almovodar looked back on his own career, saying he "dreamed to be a director" since childhood. When asked about his contribution to Spanish cinema, Almodovar said his country's diverse culture was at the heart of his work, and discussed the changing portrayals of his female characters through the years.

"In the Eighties I was starting doing everything, and also the country was starting in a new period - it was the moment when the Spanish democracy birth again. So the character that I wrote, I mean the female characters that I wrote at the moment, they were very different from now because of the decade. It was a decade full of passion, full of freedom and it was a big explosion, it was a unique moment in the history of my country," he said.

The film opens in cinemas across the UK on August 26 and hits the United States on December 21.