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"Standing in the Dust" best film, "Life+1 Day" takes Iran Cinema Celebration by storm

TT ART desk **TEHRAN** — "Standing in the Dust", a biopic on war hero Ahmad Motevasselian, has been crowned best film at the 18th Iran Cinema Celebration while "Life+1 Day", a drama about poverty and drug abuse in Tehran, won seven awards, including best director.

"Standing in the Dust", which also won the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 34th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran earlier in February, tells the life story the Iranian commander who was kidnapped by the Zionist regime in 1982 in Lebanon.

"I dedicate this award to Ahmad Motevasselian, the national hero of our country," producer Habibollah Vaalinejad said after accepting the award at the gala organized by the Iranian House of Cinema in Mashq Square in downtown Tehran on Monday night.

"As this film took a step in introducing Motevasselian, I hope we can also move another step in this way," he added.

The film also brought Shahram Khalaj the award for best makeup artist and Iman Karamian the award for best special effects supervisor.

The best director award went to Saeid Rustai for "Life+1 Day" starring Peyman Moaadi and Navid Mohammadzadeh. →16

Leader says 'inaccurate' statistics a blow to resistance economy

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN** — In comments on Tuesday Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution underscored that a successful implementation of the resistance economy hinges upon "accurate statistics and information."

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made the remarks during a meeting with the officials of the Supreme Statistics Council, Statistical Center of Iran, as well as Population and Housing Census Headquarters.

© Leader.ir

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Over $162m of state shares divested in Iran since March

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** — Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO) transferred 5.760 trillion rials (about $162.34 million) worth of Iranian state-run shares to the private sector from the beginning of the present Iranian calendar year (March 20) to September 13, Tasnim News Agency reported on Tuesday.

As reported, 1.987 trillion rials (about $56 million) of the mentioned shares have been offered to the private sector via Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), 511 billion rials (about $14.4 million) via Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and 3.262 trillion rilas (about $91.9 million) have been put into tender.

Iranian state-run companies transferred 29.662 trillion rials (about $836 million) worth of their shares to the private sector in the past Iranian calendar year of 1394 (which ended on March 19), Tasnim News Agency reported in mid-April.

The country transferred 47.738 trillion rials (about $1.345 billion) worth of shares of state-run companies to the private sector in the calendar year of 1393, reportedly.

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Principlist MPs to hold session on coming presidential election

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN** — Iranian principlists of Majlis will hold a session in the coming weeks to discuss political issues, especially the upcoming presidential election, Tasnim reported.

The principlist camp seeks to decide which candidate to back in order to defeat the reformist camp's candidate, who will most likely be the incumbent president Hassan Rouhani.

Iran's upcoming presidential election is scheduled to be held in the country on May 19, 2017. It will be the twelfth presidential election in Iran.

President Rouhani may seek a second term to push ahead with reforms and expand more economic relations with foreign countries.

Rouhani clinched a deal with world powers last year which limits some of Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for relief from sanctions. The president has attempted to open the country's economy to foreign investors.

U.S. July exports to Iran rise 54% yr/yr

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** — The exports of the U.S. to Iran in the seventh month of 2016 witnessed a 54 percent hike and stood at $25.9 million, compared to July 2015, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to the latest report of American Statistical Association (ASA), Iran-U.S. commercial exchange in the first seven months of 2016 experienced an 11 percent decline and shrank to $139.4 million from its previous $157.7 million in the same time span in 2015. →13

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U.S. global political leadership has declined: Professor Onuf

INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Nicholas Onuf, a primary figure among constructivists in international relations, tells the Tehran Times that the United States' political leadership has been declining.

Onuf says the main reasons behind this decline are "political incoherence and loss of will" in the United States.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ **Do you agree with this view that the U.S. hegemonic power has declined?**

A: To start, we need to be clear by what we mean by the term hegemony. It is used most generally as a synonym for dominance achieved through the exercise of power. Judging from what the term hegemonia means in Greek, hegemony is more properly understood as leadership. In this case, we assume that power enables leadership, but the exercise of power is collective, more or less institutionalized and presumably in the interest of the collectivity. Finally and most narrowly, hegemony means leadership by example. In my view, this third sense of the term implies a shift from power to status (understood as a position or standing in society). Every society has a status-order; some individual or group has the highest rank, and all other individuals or groups are ranked in descending order. Arguably this is the basis of order, or stability, in any society (including so-called modern societies and 'international society'). Status may have its source in power, defined as the matter of A somehow getting B to do C, but status translates back into power in a wide range of situations. The result is social stratification.

So, when we talk about U.S. hegemonic power, we need to specify which sense of hegemony we have in mind. Is it dominance, leadership or rank?

■ **Some scholars such as Robert Keohane believe that the U.S. has seen a decline in its status as a global hegemony as of the 1970s. What is your stance in this regard?**

A: First I should point out that Keohane, who is best-known for writing about hegemony in the second sense, has a more subtle or complex position than you give him credit for. In 2012, he said that 'only the United States has the material capacity and political unity to exercise consistent global leadership.'

→13

Iran unveils high-speed chopper-carrier vessel

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN** — The IRGC Navy on Tuesday unveiled a new high-speed military vessel with the capability to carry helicopters.

The new vessel, named Shahid Mohammad Nazeri, was unveiled during a ceremony in the southern port city of Bushehr.

Addressing the ceremony, IRGC Navy Commander Ali Fadavi said the 55-meter fast cruising vessel is the biggest Iranian aluminum-hulled ship.

The senior military official said the watercraft, which has been designed and manufactured inside the country, has an operating range of 10,000 kilometers with a length of 55 meters, a width of 14.1 meters, and a height of 13 meters.

Named after an IRGC commander who was martyred in May, the craft is capable of boarding 100 military personnel and a helicopter on its deck in all weather conditions.

"The new vessel will enable the IRGC Navy to be much more present in high seas and oceans," Rear Admiral Fadavi added.

Iran has made great achievements in the production of speed boats and has acquired technical expertise in producing essential military systems in recent years.

Last October, the IRGC Navy brought into service a new torpedo-armed watercraft capable of operating both on and under water.

The domestically-produced watercraft, dubbed Zolfaqar, employs a four-meter-long torpedo which can target aircraft carriers, vessels weighing up to 200 tons, oil platforms as well as load and unload docks.

In May, Fadavi announced that the IRGC has carried out all necessary tests and will soon mass produce modern speedboats that cruise at a speed of 80 knots (148 kilometers) per hour.

In relevant remarks in March, the senior navy commander boasted IRGC's capabilities, saying that Iran is the only country that can design and manufacture this type of speedboats with such high speed.

Tehran center to host exhibit by Swiss photog George Gerster

TT ART desk **TEHRAN** — A collection of over 100 photos of Iran by George Gerster, an acclaimed Swiss pioneer of aerial photography, will be showcased in an exhibition, which will open at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center on Friday.

The exhibit titled "Iran through the Eyes of Homa" will display aerial photos of Iran's natural environs and some archaeological sites, monuments and cultural centers, which were taken in the 1970s.

Gerster had the opportunity to record the landscape of Iran on over 100 flights in 1976 and 1978. He published his unique collection in a book titled "Paradise Lost: Persia from Above".

He has previously showcased the photos in exhibitions titled "Persia: Paradise Lost" and "Iran: a Bird's Eye View" in New York, London and Paris from 2009 to 2014, but this is his first exhibition in Iran.

Gerster is currently in Tehran to promote his photo exhibition, which will run until October 1.

ARTICLE
By: Haniyeh S. Jafariyeh
Tehran Times journalist

Iran and the oil freeze enigma

Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are due to meet in Algeria on the sidelines of the International Energy Forum (IEF) on September 26-28 to continue the revival of talks on a global deal to freeze oil output levels.

The upcoming event has increased discussions between OPEC and non-OPEC members in recent weeks, while Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Russia stand in the center of attention as the main role players.

On one hand, Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, has reportedly made an agreement to collaborate with Russia, the world's top oil producer, on stabilizing the international oil market by setting up a working group to monitor it and come up with ways to promote stability. Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih has expressed hope that this month's meeting between producers in Algiers would lead to an agreement although "there's no need to freeze production now". His Russian counterpart, Alexander Novak, has affirmed that the two nations were seeking ways to ease oil market volatility.

On the other hand, Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has recently informed that he will attend the Algeria meeting to support any joint action to stabilize the oil market. Additionally, Iran's President Hassan Rouhnai has said he supports efforts by OPEC to stabilize oil prices, while reiterating that the country must restore production lost during years of sanctions. Nonetheless, Iran has not been able yet to meet the goal of reaching pre-sanction's production of 4 million barrels per day (bpd) the country had set as a pre-condition to participate in the freeze talks. Its output stood at roughly 3.85 million bpd in August, according to the published data.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Takfiri loyalists may use Syrian truce to equip terrorists: Iran

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** The Iranian defense minister has said all foreign governments should respect the will of the legitimate Syrian government and know that there is no military solution to the crisis, Tasnim reported on Tuesday.

On the truce announced in Syria, Hossein Dehqan said, "Backers of the Takfiri terrorism may use the curfew as an opportunity to equip terrorists."

On September 10, Moscow and Washington announced they had reached a tentative agreement for a ceasefire in Syria, which started on Monday.

Government: National security body has reached conclusion on FATF

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** Government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht announced on Tuesday that the Supreme National Security Council has reached a conclusion on the FATF row, Mehr reported.

"Fortunately the council has reached a conclusion in this regard and the Supreme National Security Council secretary will inform the people just in case," said Nobakht, speaking to a press conference.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on June 24 hailed Iran's adoption of an action plan to address shortcomings in its anti-money laundering policies.

Tehran, Beijing in close contact over terrorism, drug smuggling

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** The Chinese ambassador to Tehran has said Tehran and Beijing have been closely cooperating with each other in the areas of terrorism and drug smuggling, finalizing extensive agreements, according to IRNA on Tuesday.

"The two sides (Iran and China) have exchanged views on countering terrorism and drug smuggling and have reached extensive agreements," Pang Sen said during a press conference held in the Chinese embassy in Tehran on Tuesday.

The two kept good contacts even during the sanctions era, the Chinese diplomat added.

Iranian human rights delegation visits Italy

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** Mohammad Javad Larijani, the head of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, arrived at Italy on Tuesday for the third round of talks on judicial and human rights issues, according to ILNA.

Heading a delegation of jurists, diplomats, and human right experts, Larijani is scheduled to sit down with Italian officials on a wide range of issues, namely the rights of convicts, women, and children.

Tehran has announced readiness to hold bilateral talks with European countries on human rights.

Zarif in Venezuela to attend NAM foreign ministers summit

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif left Tehran for Venezuela on Tuesday to attend the Non-Aligned Movement meeting before the arrival of heads of state.

He is accompanied by deputies Abbas Araqchi and Majid Takht-Ravanchi.

Foreign ministers of the NAM states are expected to hold a meeting on September 15 and 16.

President Hassan Rouhani also plans to attend the NAM heads of state summit on September 16 to hand over the NAM presidency to Venezuela as the host country.

Deputy FM: Iran, Africa unknown to each other

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** The Director-General of Africa Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry has lamented that the capacities of Iran and Africa are unknown to one another, urging the two to clear up wrong images each has of the other.

"Our limited and incomplete understanding of African countries has lessened our attention to and interest in the countries," said Hossein Molla-Abdollahi, according to the Iran newspaper on Tuesday.

The same holds true for African countries, he said, adding "the 21st century Africa is changed."

Ex-IRGC chief: We should not intensify tension with Saudis

Leader aide urges elevated ties with Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, amid reservations with Riyadh

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** A senior advisor to the Supreme Leader on military affairs has urged elevated relations with the three Arab countries of Oman, Kuwait, and even Qatar amid reservations over already tense ties with Saudi Arabia.

"We should increase our relations with Oman, Kuwait, and even Qatar. But we should never intensify tension with Saudi Arabia," said Yahya Rahim Safavi, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Relations between Tehran and the Arab world have hit a low point over not only one but a list of disagreements.

After the storming of Saudi diplomatic posts in Tehran and Mashhad, itself a consequence of the execution of the top Shiite cleric and dozens more, Riyadh severed off ties with Tehran in January 2016.

Following the announcement, other Arab states downgraded ties with Iran.

Ever since then, tension between Tehran and Riyadh have deteriorated as the Arab country has increasingly appeared worried over Iran's growing sphere of influence in the Middle East region particularly after it mended fences with world powers over its nuclear power.

"The Saudis are incensed by Iran's increasing geopolitical weight and blame on Iran their failures in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and even in Yemen," said Rahim Safavi.

But motivated by whatsoever, Iran should show toleration and patience as Saudi Arabia favors a tumultuous situation, the military advisor said.

"I do think they (the Saudis) want to have strained relations with Iran and we should avoid escalating tensions as we have the Persian Gulf's peace, security, and the superior power."

While the former IRGC chief supports a policy of toleration toward Saudi Arabia, there are strong signs which say toleration does not always work.

As a reality check against the policy, the Saudis have increasingly grown emboldened even after 464 Iranian nationals lost their lives during a hajj stampede in Mina in September 2015.

Not only have Saudis not paid any compensation to families of the Iranian victims, but also they have declined to shoulder responsibility for the incident, a behavior Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif linked to the Saudi "bigotry."

It remains to be seen how the future of relations will be affected by the Syrian crisis, another vexing issue, now that there are increasing hopes for a long-term curfew in the country.

Leader says 'inaccurate' statistics a blow to resistance economy

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"The prerequisite for the realization of resistance economy is the availability of accurate statistics and information on the condition of domestic production and manufacturing businesses and their needs," the Leader noted.

Iran will start its 8th national census on October 16, which will last one month. The first census in Iran was documented in 1956 with 10-year intervals until the last two decades when the interval was reduced to 5 years given the country's population growth.

Ayatollah Khamenei stressed that any decision-making in the country should be premised upon "accurate, centralized, and scientific statistics and information," urging the people to actively answer questions in the incoming national census.

"For the decision-making in the country to be correct, right, and efficient, all the people both participate in the significant plan and provide statistical bodies with required accurate data statistics and information and as the officials have said the statistics are confidential," the Leader explained.

On the uses of national censuses, the Leader highlighted the importance of analyzing statistics in order not to be "caught off guard."

Both the current situation (of the country)and the trend of changes should be worked out of the statistics so as for the country's officials and decision makers not to be caught off guard because of the trend of changes in the present world where the pace of changes is very high, he said.

The Leader further warned of statistical differences expressed by different authorities and organizations, calling it "a big scourge" which can breed mistrust among the people.

"Sometimes, various centers announce different statistics on unemployment rate, inflation, and economic growth that cause mistrust among people."

Referring to statistical accusations against each other, the Leader called for identifying the source of such inconsistencies.

"The source of the dualism should be identified. That is, there have been faults either in that period or the following period, and manipulating statistics which are subject to the judgment of the wise people is a cardinal sin anyway."

Iran marks longest maritime border in Gulf of Oman

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi has said that Iran and Oman have implemented an important agreement by marking their longest maritime border in the Gulf of Oman.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman have finished complicated and difficult technical and legal talks on marking their maritime border successfully given their very close relations and relying on good neighborliness and good intention.

"The two countries have taken a very important step in bilateral ties and regional interactions," he wrote in an article published by the Iran newspaper on Tuesday.

Araqchi said that the demarcation indicates Iran's determination in establishing stability in the region and expanding

interaction with other countries, especially the regional ones.

He added that the step shows righteousness of Iran's principled position which is based on settling all the issues through "dialogue".

The senior diplomat also said that negotiations on marking borders have always been "complicated" and "difficult" in the history and caused conflicts, however Iran and Oman reached conclusion on maritime border through dialogue.

Rouhani to Qatar emir: Iran sees dialogue as only way to settle crises

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani told the Qatari emir on Monday that crises in the Middle East region must be settled by regional countries and only through political dialogue.

In a phone conversation with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Rouhani highlighted the importance of cooperation among the regional countries, especially the Persian Gulf littoral states.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran spares no effort to create and strengthen this procedure and all should make efforts in this area," he added.

Pointing to the spread of extremism, terrorism and violence in the region, Rouhani said, "Unfortunately, the region is not in a good situation and it is our duty to rescue the Muslims from terrorism and establish stability in the region and boost brotherhood among the Muslims."

For his part, Sheikh Tamim said that Iran has an important status in the region.

He highlighted the necessity of more dialogue between Iran and the Arab states bordering the Persian Gulf.

Expansion of relations and cooperation among the regional countries will benefit the people in the region who are fighting terrorism, the Qatari leader said.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran and Qatar have always enjoyed "historic" and "friendly" ties, noting that Doha welcomes expansion of relations with Tehran in various areas.

According to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the emir telephoned Rouhani to offer greetings for the Muslim Eid al-Adha feast which Muslims began celebrating on Monday.

It said the emir "asserted that (Persian) Gulf-Iranian relations must focus on the principles of good neighborly relations, mutual respect and the need to resolve any (Persian) Gulf-Iranian differences through dialogue and negotiations".

Germany cannot set conditions for Iran: govt. spokesman

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** The government spokesman said on Tuesday that Germany cannot set conditions for an improvement of ties with Iran, saying neither Germany nor any other country can decide for the Tehran government.

The remarks by Mohammad Baqer Nobakht came amid reports that German Chancellor Angela Merkel had said in February that Iran-Germany relations can only be fully normalized when Iran recognizes the existence of Israel.

However, Nobakht said Iran and Germany enjoy "good" ties and "the sides respect national interests of each other".

And some German officials may visit Iran within the next month, Nobakht added.

In May, Bloomberg reported that Merkel's government is prepared to invite Rouhani to Germany in a signal of support for improved ties with the Islamic republic.

The German government is now weighing an invite, though no date has been set for a prospective visit, Bloomberg reported.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a fellow Social Democrat, raised the possibility of a Rouhani visit to Europe's biggest economy when he met with the Iranian president in Tehran in February.

Rouhani skirted the German capital in a tour of Europe in January, when he visited Paris and Rome.

Nobakht said if a trip by Rouhani to Germany becomes certain its details will be announced to the media.

President to discuss terrorism in NAM, UN summits

TT POLITICS desk **TEHRAN —** An advisor to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that President Hassan Rouhani will discuss campaign against extremism and terrorism when he attends the NAM summit in Venezuela and the annual UN General Assembly meeting in New York in the coming days.

"These visits is of great importance given the Islamic Republic of Iran's role and status in the region and the world and also the current sensitive issues in the world," Hossein Sheikholeslam told IRNA in an interview published on Tuesday.

Rouhani, as the current chairman of NAM, will participate at the NAM summit on the Island of Margarita on September 16 to hand over the rotating presidency of the second largest international body to Venezuela.

He will then take a trip to Havana for talks with Cuban officials and then to New York for the UN meeting.

"These trips are good opportunities for us to meet with leaders of other countries, especially the Non-Aligned Movement's member states, on various international issues," Sheikholeslam remarked.

Rouhani plans to address the UN summit in New York.

Sheikholeslam said it is a good opportunity for Iran to make its "logical words" heard by the world.

The 71st session of the UN General Assembly will open on September 13 while the annual general debate with the theme of "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world" will be held on September 20, Press TV reported.

Syria 'shoots down Israeli jet, drone'

Militants fighting Syrian govt. violating truce

The Syrian army says it has shot down an Israeli warplane and a drone inside Syria following an Israeli attack on Syrian army positions in the south, state media reported.

Syria's official SANA news cited the Syrian military as saying that the intruding aircraft had been detected and targeted by the country's air defense system while they were striking Syrian military positions. The warplane, it said, was downed in western Quneitra and the drone in an area called Sa'sa' and located on the Damascus Reef.

Soon after the report, the Israeli military denied that any of its aircraft had been shot down in Syria, claiming that two missiles were fired at them during the airstrike on Quneitra but missed.

Israeli fighter jets had attacked two Syrian army cannons in the Golan Heights, where Quneitra is located, early on Tuesday morning. It was the fifth such attack in just over a week.

Israel seized parts of the Golan Heights from Syria after the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it in a move that has never been recognized by the international community.

Syria truce

Meanwhile, the government in Syria has announced that militants hostile to Damascus have violated a ceasefire that took effect late on Monday.

Syria's official SANA news agency on Tuesday cited a "military source" as saying that militants violated the truce, which was brokered by Russia and the United States, in the city of Aleppo.

According to the source, militant snipers targeted residential buildings in an area in Aleppo and mortar shells were also fired into another area in the city.

More than a dozen militant groups operating against the government in Syria earlier issued a statement that was highly critical of the ceasefire agreement on Monday.

The deal was announced on Friday following intensive talks between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and the United States Secretary of State John Kerry. The seven-day-long regime of calm took effect at sundown on Monday.

Hours after it took force, a group of militant outfits, including the so-called Free Syrian Army (FSA) and its affiliated groups, including Ahrar al-Sham (Islamic Movement of the Free People of the Levant?) and Jaish al-Islam (Jaysh al-Islam/ Brigade of Islam), released a joint statement bashing the accord and calling it "unjust."

Ahrar al-Sham and Jaish al-Islam are two of the most brutal terrorist groups that have been operating in Syria since the conflict broke out in 2011. Until now, however, the U.S. has been hampering a Russian bid to place Jaish al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham on the United Nations terror list.

While some reports have interpreted the statement as merely a strongly-worded tirade against the Syrian government and its allies, some media outlets have said it amounts to the rejection of the truce by the signatories to the statement.

In the text of the statement, the militant groups have not explicitly rejected the truce, however.

They said the ceasefire had to be accompanied by the establishment of a no-fly zone over conflict-stricken areas, claiming that Syrian and Russian aircraft would seize upon the chance to hit militant-held locations in the absence of such a ban.

They said they did not believe there was an international will to support the Syrian people and asserted they would fight the Syrian government and army to the end and would not give up their strategic positions in exchange for the entry of food supplies into under-siege areas.

According to the militant groups, the truce regime also lacks any mechanism holding the Syrian military accountable for potential violations.

Russia has been conducting an aerial campaign against militant positions in Syria since September 2015. The operations were launched on an official request by Damascus, which has long had military accords with Moscow.

(Source: agencies)

UN urges intl. inquiry into Yemen war

Ansarullah leader slams Saudi Hajj handling

The United Nations high commissioner for human rights has expressed concerns over the ongoing Saudi air strikes against Yemen, calling for an "independent" international inquiry into rights violations in the country.

The situation in Yemen should be subjected to a "comprehensive inquiry by an international independent body," Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein said in the Swiss city of Geneva on Tuesday.

Zeid's remarks come as the House of Saud regime has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015, with the United Nations putting the death toll from the military aggression at about 10,000.

The offensive was launched to reinstate Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a Saudi ally who has resigned as Yemen's president.

UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen Jamie McGoldrick said last month that the death toll from the Saudi military aggression could rise even further as some areas had no medical facilities, and that people were often buried without any official record being made.

Qatari soldiers killed in Yemen

Meantime, three Qatari soldiers fighting alongside the Saudi army have been killed in retaliatory attacks by Yemeni forces.

The Qatari armed forces confirmed the death of the soldiers on Monday night without specifying how or when they were killed, and no official comment was made by the country.

Earlier in the day, Yemen's Ansarullah movement fighters and allied army units killed six Saudi soldiers. Four snipers were gunned down in the Saudi Kingdom's Najran province, and two others were killed in Yemeni army's shelling of military positions in the kingdom's province of Assir.

The retaliatory attacks came after six civilians, three women and three children, were killed after Saudi mercenaries launched mortar attacks on residential areas in the city of Ta'izz southwest of the country.

'Saudis Hajj restrictions reminiscent of Israel policy on Aqsa Mosque'

Elsewhere, the leader of Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement has lashed out at the House of Saud regime for mishandling of the Hajj rituals, saying restrictions imposed on Muslims for this year's Hajj are reminiscent of Israel's repeated desecration of the al-Aqsa Mosque.

In his message to the Yemenis on the occasion of the Eid al-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice) which fell on Monday this year, Abdulmalek Badreddin al-Houthi said Saudi Arabia has deprived a large number of Muslims from this year's Hajj due to political reasons like the way many Palestinians are being barred from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

He said Saudi rulers have no right to claim full control over Ka'aba and the Grand Mosque in Mecca and block the access of pilgrims to the places, adding that there is no justification for the kingdom's move to prevent Muslims from performing the religious duty of Hajj.

In his message, the Ansarullah leader once again slammed Saudi Arabia's air campaign against Yemen, saying the regime in Riyadh insists on continuing the aggression in order to appease the United States and Israel.

The Ansarullah leader said Saudis have committed the most heinous crimes against the Yemeni nation in more than 18 months of their aggression. He, however, said the military aggression has not deterred the Yemenis from continuing their resistance against the war on their country.

(Source: agencies)

Former British Leader David Cameron to leave Parliament

Former Prime Minister David Cameron, who has stayed out of the public eye since leaving Downing Street in July, has decided to step down from his position in Parliament and put an end to his political career.

Cameron's surprise announcement will trigger a by-election in the county of Witney in Oxfordshire, which has been a safe seat for his Conservative Party for several decades.

Cameron, 49, won a general election in 2015, but his political fortunes shifted overnight in June when British voters rejected his pleas and decided to leave the European Union.He announced the next morning he would step down as prime minister but planned to stay on in Parliament. On Monday, he said he had concluded that it made more sense for him to leave public office altogether.

"In my view, the circumstances of my resignation as prime minister and the realities of modern politics make it very difficult to continue on the backbenches without the risk of becoming a diversion to the important decisions that lie ahead for my successor in Downing Street and the Government," Cameron said.

The former prime minister said he fully supports successor Theresa May, now charged with carrying out the voters' mandate to extricate Britain from the 28-nation EU bloc.

May said in a statement she had been proud to serve in Cameron's government, where she held the important role of home secretary, and said the government had accomplished great things under his leadership.

Cameron did not announce his future plans. He became party leader in 2005 and prime minister in 2010, when he led a coalition government that included the Liberal Democrats.

His Conservatives won an outright majority in 2015, strengthening his hand considerably, but he was brought down by voters' unhappiness with the EU, in part because of unchecked immigration from other EU countries into Britain.

The date for the by-election has not yet been set.

He promised to support the Conservative Party candidate chosen to replace him in the by-election that will be held in order to fill the Parliament vacancy.

(Source: AP)

Second Announcement

International Public Tender Notice (Two Stage)

"Purchase of One Set of Relocatable X-Ray Inspection System"

No: 46422118

IN THE NAME OF GOD

I.R Iran Customs Administration (IRICA)
Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry

Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) intends to purchase one set of Relocatable X-Ray Inspection System through Public, international tender according to the following conditions. Therefore, all eligible Iranian or foreign company agencies are requested to refer to mentioned address to obtain the tender documents.

1) ***tender Participation:*** International Public Tender Notice (Two Stage)"Purchase of One Set of Relocatable X-Ray Inspection System

2) ***The amount of Participation Guarantee Bank*** *shall be either 9,000,000,000 Iranian Rials or 225,000 Euros*

3) ***tender Participation Guarantee:*** *As a Bank Guarantee issued by one of the Iranian banks (accredited by Central Bank of I.R.I) or be deposited to account No.4001001106370306 in the name of IRICA at the Central bank of I.R.I and submit the receipt*

4) ***Deadline for obtaining tender documents: 10 Sep, 2016- 17 Sep, 2016***

5) ***The address for obtaining tender documents and submitting bid envelops:*** *Tenders & Contracts Bureau, Room No.104, Development & Equipment Dept. 1st floor Iran Custom Administration Bldg. Next to Nasser Alley, upper than Valiasr Sq. Tehran, Iran.*

6) ***Deadline for submitting bids: 22 Oct, 2016***

7) ***Opening bid envelopes: 23 Oct, 2016***

Further information would be available at www.irica.gov.ir also "National Database Portal of Iran Tenders Information" or Tel: +98 21 82992290

Development and Equipment Dept. of
Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Tenders & Contracts Bureau

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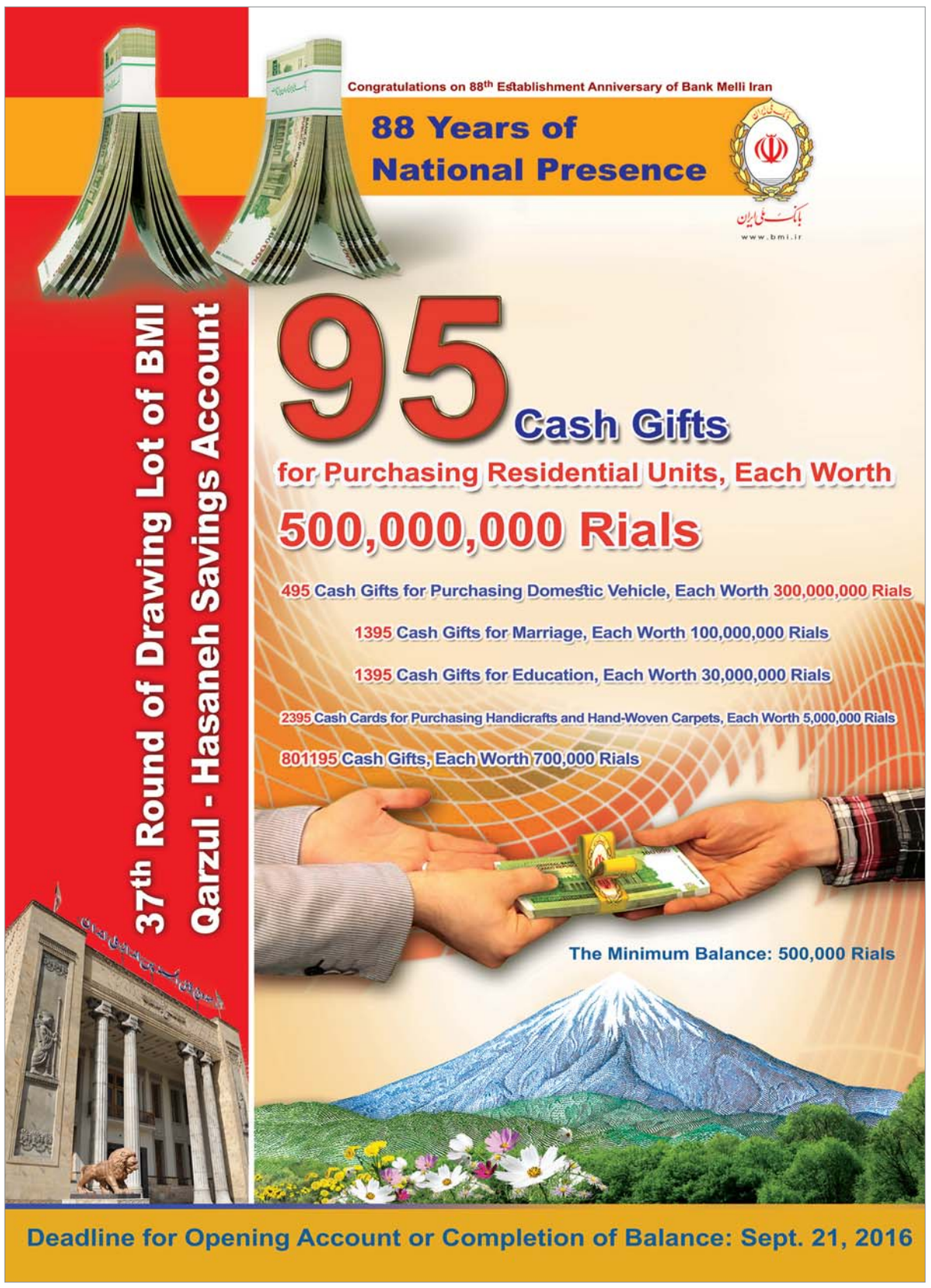

JUMP

Over $162m of state shares divested in Iran since March

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The Iranian government envisioned a large privatization program in the Fifth Five-Year National Development Plan (2010-2015), aiming to privatize about 20 percent of the state-owned firms each year.

Under the present interpretation of the Article 44 of Iran's Constitution, hundreds of state-owned companies have been privatized.

As Deputy Head of IPO Davoud Khani said in late April, IPO has been transferring shares of 140 Iranian state-run companies to the privates sector, and foreign investors are welcomed to make purchase if they wish to.

Expressing content that implementation of the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 has set a proper bed for IPO and domestic investors to enhance their levels of ties with foreign counterparts, the official admitted that in a bid to improve economic infrastructure and reinforce domestic private sector, his organization has provided foreign applicants for buying Iranian shares with a list of the governmental companies with available stakes for being transferred.

NEWS

Tehran to host Armenia Expo on Oct. 5-8

A trade fair of Armenian products and services –Armenia Expo – will be organized in Tehran on October 5-8. Armenia's Economy Ministry, Development Foundation of Armenia and the country's embassy in Iran are organizing the event.

As the Foreign Ministry press office reports, the fair will promote the development of trade and economic relations between Armenia and Iran, encourage investments, the development of tourism, and the facilitation of business agreements.

The fair will present to Iranian producers and entities Armenia's achievements in trade and various industries, as well as its capabilities for establishing long-term and stable business partnerships.

Processing of agricultural products, food manufacturing, medical and pharmaceutical products, construction, banking, information technology, jewelry, diamond cutting, glass production, textile industry, tourism, transport and logistics are the main highlights of the fair.

(Source: panarmenian.net)

Italy to cut growth forecasts, economy minister says

Italy will cut its economic growth estimates, the economy minister said on Tuesday, making Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's promise to cut taxes and reduce public debt look even harder to achieve.

"Growth will be revised down in forecasts the government is about to release as background to the budget law," Economy Minister Pier Carlo Padoan said at a Euromoney conference.

The euro zone's third largest economy stagnated in the second quarter and national statistics bureau ISTAT said it would remain weak in the near term.

The government's last forecast, made in April, envisaged growth of 1.2 percent in 2016, strengthening to 1.4 percent next year, but most analysts now expect something under 1 percent this year and an even weaker reading in 2017.

Padoan did not give any clearer indication of the new forecast, which must be published by Sept. 27.

Italy continues to under-perform the euro zone, which is forecast to grow by 1.7 percent this year, the European Central Bank said this month, marginally raising its previous estimate of 1.6 percent.

The ECB trimmed next year's forecast to 1.6 percent from 1.7 percent. That would still be at least double the growth expected for Italy, dragged down for years by low productivity, low employment rates and stifling bureaucracy.

Italian employers confederation Confindustria forecasts growth of just 0.6 percent in 2017. Several large banks have even lower projections, with Barclays Capital forecasting a contraction of 0.1 percent.

Germany's DIW institute said last week that the euro zone's largest economy would expand by 1.9 percent this year but slow to 1.0 percent in 2017 when the impact of Britain's decision to exit the EU would be more strongly felt.

Tommaso Nannicini, Renzi's economics adviser, told Reuters on Monday: "Aside from the numbers in themselves, what worries me is that we are too far away from the euro zone average."

Padoan said there would be no room to cut income tax in the 2017 budget to be presented next month, although the government would maintain tax breaks already in place for companies that invest in new equipment.

"Growth is not what we would like," Renzi admitted in Milan at the opening of new offices of the German multinational engineering company Siemens on Tuesday.

Industrial output data offered some relief on Tuesday, rising by 0.4 percent in July from the month before, after two consecutive declines.

But the weaker growth outlook makes it harder for Rome to cut its huge public debt, the highest in the euro zone after Greece as a percentage of national output. *(Source: Reuters)*

Pakistan's free trade agreement draft wins Iran's backing

In a sign of progress towards a free trade agreement (FTA), the Iranian authorities have agreed with the initial draft shared by Pakistan and returned it with their input, paving the way for kicking off formal negotiations on streamlining commerce between the two sides.

Pakistan had shared the draft on Iran President Hassan Rouhani's desire for free trade between the two countries during his visit to Islamabad in March this year.

Both the sides agreed to switch from the current preferential trade agreement to an FTA and push bilateral trade volume up to $5 billion over the next five years.

Govt. endorses move to enhance trade, political ties with Iran

"We have recently got back the initial draft that we shared earlier with the Iranian authorities; they have given their input and agreed to push ahead with the plan," said a senior officer in the Ministry of Commerce.

"Now, we will soon start formal negotiations on tariff lines, duties and other matters to finalize the document as quickly as possible," said the officer. "A Pakistani delegation will leave for Iran most probably by next month to start talks on the FTA."

As soon as the international community lifted longstanding sanctions from Tehran earlier this year, Pakistan and Iran expressed interest in promoting and expanding bilateral trade and later they developed a five-year road map with the objective of boosting trade to $5 billion.

Under the road map, they also agreed last month to open special bank accounts in their currencies in Pakistani and Iranian central banks for streamlining the payment mechanism for trade transactions.

Earlier when international sanctions were in place, there was no proper payment mechanism for trade with Iran as there were restrictions on financial transactions with the Islamic republic. That was the reason for a significant decline in Pakistan's trade with Iran over the past many years.

As part of the road map, both the sides have highlighted scores of challenges that will be addressed to achieve the trade objectives.

They will establish a mechanism to do away with the hurdles to bilateral trade such as non-tariff barriers, absence of a mutual recognition agreement, lack of banking facilities, infrastructure bottlenecks and trade through informal channels.

Pakistan, Iran sign MOU in step towards formal banking channels

They are eager to step up efforts to give a fresh impetus to bilateral trade and open up commerce and investment as well as provide market access under formal agreements.

In addition to the preferential trade agreement, which has been in force since September 2006 and is being reviewed for better performance in line with the changed scenario after the removal of sanctions, the two countries have agreed to enter into negotiations for free trade including trade in goods, services and investments.

They will move forward at a fast pace to conclude the FTA negotiations, effectively implement the preferential trade agreement, establish appropriate mechanisms for coordination in upcoming rounds of free trade talks and periodically monitor the progress.

A framework agreement in this regard will deal with trade in goods, trade facilitation, rules of origin and dispute settlement. The road map suggests that negotiations will come to an end in one and a half years from June 2016 to December 2017 unless the two sides agree on an extension.

(Source: The Express Tribune)

Iran and the oil freeze enigma

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In better words, the comments from Iranian officials may suggest that the Islamic Republic has moderated its stance, at least since OPEC's April meeting, but the issue of Iran's joining the oil freeze plan remains elusive as Mohsen Qamsari, the director for international affairs at the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), has announced that the company may lift output to 4.3 million bpd in the first quarter of next year and eventually reach 5 million bpd in two to three years.

It is worth reminding that Iran, which has been reviving oil exports after international sanctions were lifted in January, has repeatedly said it will not limit its oil output unless it reaches its pre-sanctions production level. The country even did not attend the mid-April Doha meeting and oil freeze discussions broke down after Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries rejected any deal unless all OPEC members joined including Iran.

Having all said above in mind, whether Iran will accept to join oil freeze talks or not is the question with no definite answer.

To get a brighter view over the case, the Tehran Times asked Iran's former OPEC Governor Mohammad Ali Khatibi about his point of view.

As he described the bed is set for Iran to join the 'collective effort', which is currently being formed among the OPEC and non-OPEC members.

"As Russia and Saudi Arabia have announced, they are ready to join the oil freeze plan," he said, "therefore, it seems that a collective effort is being formed for all oil producers to seize the oil freeze and increase oil prices and Iran can be one of them."

"Although Iran's exports has experienced a two-fold rise in volume and nearly stands at its pre-sanctions level, the country's income has not experienced such a hike," he said. "Iran's annual income of exports stands at $40 billion, while the figure was above $100 billion before the sanctions."

"Under the present circumstances, ascending the production level would not help the Islamic Republic with increasing its income," he noted. "To increase its income in the short-run, the country should improve oil prices in the international market, since mounting production level for about 20 percent to 30 percent requires making investments which would bear fruit within four to five years," he clarified.

As he concluded, the Islamic Republic can benefit joining the oil freeze plan and the consequent rise in oil prices.

Despite Khatibi's optimistic view, there are some analysts around the world who believe all this is much ado about nothing and the upcoming OPEC meeting will wrap-up with no specific conclusion. As The Market Watch quoted Omar Al-Ubaydli, a program director at the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies, he admitted that "there's nothing going on here, at least as far as oil markets are concerned." "Russia and Saudi Arabia both know that there's no chance of effective cooperation in oil markets due to market forces, but there's no harm in having an extra meeting, and issuing mutually supportive statements," he added.

OPEC Secretary-General Mohammed Barkindo and Iran's oil minister met in Tehran on September 6 to discuss global oil prices although the outcomes of the mutual talks were not revealed in detail. Pessimistically concluding, it can be said that even the Islamic Republic will not be ready to cut its production level and will attend the Algeria meeting not to be censured as it was after Doha meeting for oil prices depreciation.

But possibilities can also vary in a third dimension regarding the Russia' posture towards Iran' acceptance of the production cap. The Russian president Vladimir Putin has come out in defense of Iran, saying the country should be allowed to boost its oil output. "From the viewpoint of economic sense and logic, then it would be correct to find some sort of compromise," he said. However, as Bloomberg quoted Novak, while Russia and Saudi Arabia agree that Iran should be allowed to reach its pre-sanctions output, they have different views on whether the nation has already attained this level.

All in all, despite many speculations about the outcome of the Algeria meeting, its conclusion remains an enigma.

China's economy strengthened as factory output, retail perk up

China's economy strengthened after July's hiccup as factory output, investment and retail sales all exceeded economist estimates, amid a boost from property that's added to concern that price gains may prove unsustainable.

Key Points

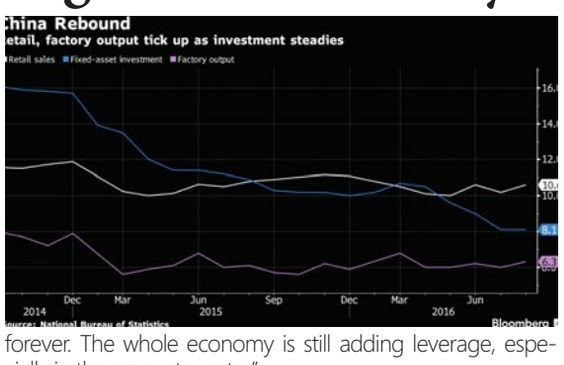
- Industrial production rose 6.3 percent from a year earlier in August, compared with a median estimate of 6.2 percent in Bloomberg survey of economists
- Retail sales climbed 10.6 percent last month, from 10.2 percent on July
- Fixed-asset investment increased 8.1 percent in first eight months of the year

Big Picture

The reports add to other recent data that have helped shore up confidence in the world's second-largest economy, including better-than-expected trade and the official factory gauge unexpectedly rising to the highest level in almost two years. One challenge is that the property market, which has underpinned the recovery, may face headwinds as the government signals that real estate price increases may be unsustainably high.

Economist Takeaways

"The economy seems quite stable, so they will not cut interest rates or the required reserve ratio because the current concern is on financial risks and the property bubble," said Larry Hu, head of China economics at Macquarie Securities Ltd. in Hong Kong. "You can front load future infrastructure demand to today for two or three years but you can't do it forever. The whole economy is still adding leverage, especially in the property sector."



"It's a decent set of numbers and continues to reinforce the message of economic stabilization," said Raymond Yeung, chief economist at Australia & New Zealand Banking Group in Hong Kong. "The government should be comfortable with the figures. The PBOC can now focus on structural reforms such as interest rate liberalization and simply maintain an accommodative environment in the money market."

"The latest signs of stabilization in growth suggest policy will continue rotating toward addressing longer-term challenges," Bloomberg Intelligence economists Tom Orlik and Fielding Chen wrote in a note. "Further interest rate cuts are unlikely. Even cuts in the reserve-requirement ratio may be more than required, though they could come into play if capital outflows continue."

"The delayed impact of earlier policy easing means that a stronger second half to this year is likely," Julian Evans-Pritchard, economist at Capital Economics in Singapore wrote in a note. "With further monetary easing unlikely in the near-term, this uptick in economic activity is likely to fizzle out going into next year."

"The production and investment data show that growth is stabilizing," said David Dollar, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington and former U.S. Treasury attaché to Beijing. "They're walking a fine line between enough stimulus to achieve 6.5 percent growth but not so much that risks build up alarmingly. If there's too much of a rebound they will take away the punch bowl."

The Details

- Surveyed jobless rate edged up in August but stabilized around 5.1 percent, NBS spokesman says at briefing
- Online retail sales climbed 26.7 percent this year through August
- Crude steel output rises 3 percent in August from year earlier
- Power output climbs 7.8 percent
- Property development investment climbs 5.4 percent in January through August period
- Home sales value rises 40.1 percent
- Private investments in fixed assets rose 2.1 percent for a second-straight month, matching record low
- Fixed investment in steel mining and oil and gas both fell more than 30 percent *(Source: Bloomberg)*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cambodia, China ink new economic pact

China and Cambodia inked a new pact that will boost the trade and investment relationship between the two countries.

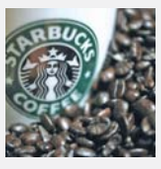
The Cambodia Chamber of Commerce (CCC) and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The deal was inked by CCC President Kith Meng and visiting CCPIT Chairman Jiang Zengwei in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh.

Kith Meng said that the pact covered various areas of cooperation including trade promotion activities, capacity-building, and the exchange of information and visits. He added that it would boost the overall Sino-Cambodian economic relationship.

Malaysia plans $1.4b spending to improve congested airports

Malaysia plans to spend about US$1 billion (S$1.36 billion) over the next five years to refurbish and expand its airports as the Southeast Asian country paces infrastructure growth with a surge in passenger traffic, its main airport operator said.

"My main terminal may require some upgrade," said Badlisham Ghazali, managing director of state-controlled Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd, referring to Kuala Lumpur International Airport. "There are other airports that have grown beyond capacity," including the tourist island of Langkawi, Kota Bharu in the north and Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, he said.



Starbucks chases China's tea market

Starbucks Corp. plans to increase its global tea business to $3 billion over the next five years as its starts selling its Teavana line of tea drinks across the Asia Pacific region.

China is Starbucks' fastest-growing market and the Seattle-based coffee chain is opening 500 stores a year in the world's most populous nation, aiming for a total of 3,400 stores by 2019.

The company is looking to China for growth momentum, homing in on China's $9.5 billion tea fixation, which is almost 10 times bigger than the country's coffee market. Starbucks' new tea products may also align with a growing demand for products aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles.

Shahroud University of Technology Hosts 3rd Iran National Coal Seminar

The 3rd Iran National Coal Research and Scientific Seminar was held in Shahroud University of Technology in the presence of domestic experts, elites and mining activists from 20 provinces of the country and also representatives of foreign companies from seven countries including Brazil, Australia, Ukraine, Spain and Russia, etc.

The closing ceremony of this prestigious seminar was held on Thursday in Mine Faculty of Shahroud University of Technology.

Strategies for overcoming problems facing mining sector, acceleration of convergence and synergy with regard to removing problems facing coal industry, paving suitable way for boosting scientific and research cooperation, strengthening relationship between university and industry and also taking advantage of fruitful and useful experiences of domestic and foreign companies, etc. have been cited as the main objectives of this seminar.

Of total 172 research and scientific articles submitted to the Secretariat of the Seminar, 107 articles were approved. In this two-day seminar, 20 articles were read orally while 87 of which were put on display in the form of posters.

It should be noted that the two-day seminar was held in two scientific sections including lecturers, panel discussion on clarifying strategies in line with solving problems facing mining and coal sector as well as presentation of articles, scientific productions and visiting the exhibition in the presence of chief executives of large coal manufacturing companies, Esfahan Steel Company (ESC), Tabas, Kerman, Mazandaran and Tehran steel companies, etc.

Dr. Mahdi Fateh

Official in charge of Secretariat and Secretary of Executive Committee of the Seminar Amir Saffari was the first speaker who said: "Of total 172 articles submitted to the Secretariat, 107 of which were confirmed and approved by the jury board members. The submitted articles were developed in the field of geology and exploration, extraction, mechanics of rock, ventilation, technical and engineering services, HSE (Health, Safety and Environment), processing and subject related to the latest achievements in the field of mining and coal industry of the country."

He pointed to one of the main programs held on the sidelines of this seminar and said: "Specialized Mining Exhibition and Related Industries" was organized on the sidelines of this seminar with the aim of introducing new products and services, exchanging view with new customers and meeting their demands and also raising their awareness on the activities and performance of the company."

Holding a specialized panel discussion entitled "Crisis Facing Coal Mines and Strategies for Moving Industry out of Recession" was another program of this seminar which was held in the presence of managers and activists of coal, he said, adding: "Organizing this program led to the presentation of very useful strategies with regard to solve problems facing coal sector of the country for both producers and consumers of this mineral product."

Conclusion of Cooperation Agreement between Iran, Australia and Ukraine

Elsewhere in his remarks, Saffari pointed to the other measures taken on the sidelines of this seminar and said: "A number of six specialized training and tutorial workshops were organized in the presence of domestic and foreign instructors which were led to the presentation of latest approaches and scientific updates in related field."

In addition, the seminar concluded two cooperation agreements between Shahroud University of Technology, Australia's University of Wollongong and Ukraine's University of Donetsk, focusing on exchanging Ph.D. university students based on exchanging information and fulfilling joint research and scientific activities.

The 3rd Iran National Coal Research and Scientific Seminar was held with the aim of studying status of coal in Iran's top industries, getting familiarity with the world's latest achievements in coal mining sector, developing and expanding relationship between industries and academic centers, scientific and research centers according to the requirements of industrial units, presenting strategies for improving and promoting current situation of this industry, etc. he ended.

"Coal" Is Obsolete in Academic Courses / Calling for Launching "Coal" Course at University

Former Managing Director of Esfahan Steel Company and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Iran Northeast Industrial and Mineral Company Ardashir Sa'd- Mohammadi was the next speaker who said: "Lack of training specialized and expert manpower is the main problem facing this industry. Unfortunately, this concept has been fallen into oblivion at universities and academic centers of the country."

He placed special emphasis on training expert and most experienced manpower in coal mining sector, otherwise, the coal industry of the country will lag behind international standards.

Nowadays, "Coal" has been removed from academic training chart and this issue has created drastic problem for this industry, he said, adding: "If students, who study "Mine Extraction" at universities, failed to pass relevant courses in "Coal", they will not attain considerable success in future."

In the end, he urged responsible officials to take effective steps in this field and revitalize "coal" course in academic centers and universities across the country.

Directive to Hike Coal Price Is Not Finalized

Head of Coal Committee of Iranian Mine House Mohammad Mojtahedi was the next speaker in this seminar who pointed to the dire need of ESC to two million coal and said: "Today, one million tons of which is imported into the country in a way that levying 15% governmental duties on importing this product will not meet demands of coal manufacturing industries as well."

He urged government and responsible officials to throw their heavyweight on coal miners and mining sector of the country and said: "Half of two million tons of coal needed by ESC is imported from other countries while quality of Iranian coal observes requirements of international standards and in some cases, its quality is higher than Chinese samples."

The government has considered levying 15% duties for importing coal in order to support domestic producers but is should be acknowledged that this issue has created a financial burden on the shoulders of steel production plants, he said, and urged governmental officials to take urgent measures in this respect.

It is a matter of regret to say that coal mining industry has not a responsible body for solving problems facing ahead, he said, adding: "A directive for increasing 14% of coal price was signed and sealed by the two ministers in the past Iranian calendar year in1 394 (ended March 19, 2016) but unfortunately, such directive is not followed up."

Given the above issue, the directive on increasing coal price has signed by the ministers of Cooperatives and Industry, Mine and Trade in mineral productions sector but it is not enforced, he said, adding: "Coal price has remained "constant and stable" since 1393 (ended March 19, 2015)."

Today, after passage of six months since the beginning of the current year (started March 20, 2016), the said directive on increasing price of coal has not thus far been finalized and this issue has created many problems ahead of producers, he said, adding: "On the other hand, this issue has caused many problems for coal production plant in a way that some units such as Kerman Coal Mfg. Company has resorted to reduce the number of its manpower."

Chancellor of Shahroud University of Technology Mohammad-Mehdi Fateh was the next speaker in this prestigious seminar who said: "Distinguished experts around the world in mining and coal sector have come together in this seminar in order to exchange their views and domestic producers of this industry can take advantage of their technical know-how and knowledge. In general, this seminar has created a golden opportunities for coal experts and producers to take maximum advantage of knowledge of personalities in this respect."

Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys high potential and capability in coal and mining sector, he said, adding: "It is for many years that economic crisis has affected mining sector critically and relying upon rich oil and gas reserves and operation of underground resources is not the solution to get rid of problem facing this industry."

"I am of the opinion that government should focus on paying due attention to its human resources and efficient manpower in order to materialize most of its economic objectives," he maintained.

He pointed to the high capability and potential of faculty members of the university in mining sector and said: "Benefitted from 26 experienced faculty members, 111 academic course in Master's Degree of Mining, and four Ph.D. level courses, Shahroud University of Technology is scientific forerunner in the country."

This academic center owns two scientific and research magazines, he said, adding: "With its 148 academic courses in technical and engineering fields and also 40 courses in Ph.D. level, Shahroud University of Technology plays an important role in promoting technical know-how and knowledge in the country."

Dr. Mohammad Ataei

UK Mining University Lecturer and Representative of Data Mining Philip Torres was the other speaker in this seminar who pointed to the high potential and capability of the Islamic Republic of Iran in mining sector and said: "Islamic Republic of Iran has high potentials in mining sector and organizing this seminar in the field of coal can help identify these capabilities in international level."

He also pointed to the way of organizing this seminar in Shahroud and said: "Removal of challenges facing coal and mining industry of Iran can help remove problems facing this industry as well."

Fortunately, Iran enjoys unlimited mineral reserves and also benefits from the most experienced and expert engineers in related field, he said, adding: "Iran should try to overhaul its infrastructures in mining sector and it is hoped that organizing such seminars will help settle problems facing this industry."

For his part, Professor at Ukraine's University of Donetsk Georgy Dotes-Ku said: "His country has expressed its readiness to help Iran boost its mining technology."

Ukraine's Donbas area has high potential in the field of coal, he said, adding: "We are ready to cooperate with Iran in the field of transferring world's most modern and advanced technology."

Existence of exhibition, several scientific and research articles and outstanding lecturers show that Iran mineral activists have equipped with high technical knowhow and knowledge in this sector, he said, adding: "Iran and Ukraine have a mutual understanding of mineral capabilities and capacities of each other in a way that mineral activists of the two countries are well aware of this issue that economy without mines and mining is meaningless."

Head of IT Park of Semnan Province Esmaeil Jalali was the next speaker in this seminar who pointed to the concept of lack of modern technologies in this industry and said: "Lack of sufficient capital for equipping explorations along with shortage of equipment and machinery with high technology for processing data are of salient problems facing mining and mineral sector of the country."

Inaccessibility to modeling and analyzing software packages, lack of using advanced and most modern machinery in drilling and extracting coal, using improper systems to repair and maintain mines, lack of using safety equipment observing requirements of international standards and also using traditional gravitational and floatation methods in the field of coal have been cited as the other problems facing this industry, he maintained.

Turning to the strategies to get rid of problems in mining sector of the country, he said: "Planning for using coal in producing clean energies along with other subjects such as correcting and positioning mines, setting up cooperatives companies, reducing governmental monopoly and delegating the authority of mineral sector to private and specialized units, etc. have been cited as the other strategies which can help remove problems facing mineral sector of the country."

In the end, Head of IT Park of Semnan Province Esmaeil Jalali pointed to the problems related to nature and genesis of coal deposits in Iran and said: "Thin coal layers, inconsistency of layers, inclination of coal layers as a result of drilling and increase of mine depth, locating in areas with forest cover and consequently environment, getting contact with underground waters in middle and upper depths and insufficiency of coal reserves for development of very large mine are of the problems related to the nature and genesis of coal deposits in the country.

It should be noted that this national seminar wrapped up its work after three days of exchanging views on the strategies to solve problems facing coal industry of the country.

It should be noted that Dr. Mohammad Ataei Scientific Secretary of the Seminar and Dr. Farhang Sereshki Executive Secretary of the Seminar delivered lecturers separately.

FEATURE

The avalanche of distrust

By David Brooks

I'm beginning to think this whole sordid campaign is being blown along by an acrid gust of distrust. The two main candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, are remarkably distrustful. They have set the modern standards for withholding information — his not releasing tax and health records, her not holding regular news conferences or quickly disclosing her pneumonia diagnosis. Both have a problem with spontaneous, reciprocal communication with a hint of vulnerability.

Both ultimately hew to a distrustful, stark, combative, zero-sum view of life — the idea that making it in this world is an unforgiving slog and that, given other people's selfish natures, vulnerability is dangerous.

Trump's convention speech was the perfect embodiment of the politics of distrust. American families, he argued, are under threat from foreigners who are as violent and menacing as they are insidious. Clinton's "Basket of Deplorables" riff comes from the same spiritual place. We have in our country, she jibed, millions of bigots, racists, xenophobes and haters — people who are so black-hearted that they are, as she put it, "irredeemable."

The parishioners at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C., felt that even the man who murdered their close friends was redeemable, but Clinton has written off vast chunks of her fellow citizens as beyond hope and redemption.

But these nominees didn't emerge in a vacuum. Distrustful politicians were nominated by an increasingly distrustful nation. A generation ago about half of all Americans felt they could trust the people around them, but now less than a third think other people are trustworthy.

Young people are the most distrustful of all; only about 19 percent of millennials believe other people can be trusted. But across all age groups there is a rising culture of paranoia and conspiracy-mongering. We set out a decade ago to democratize the Middle East, but we've ended up Middle Easternizing our democracy.

The rise of distrust correlates with a decline in community bonds and a surge of unmerited cynicism. Only 31 percent of millennials say there is a great deal of difference between the two political parties.

The true thing about distrust, in politics and in life generally, is that it is self-destructive. Distrustful people end up isolating themselves, alienating others and corroding their inner natures.

Past decades

Over the past few decades, the decline in social trust has correlated to an epidemic of loneliness. In 1985, 10 percent of Americans said they had no close friend with whom they could discuss important matters. By 2004, 25 percent had no such friend.

When you refuse to lay yourself before others, others won't lay themselves before you. An AARP study of Americans aged 45 and up found that 35 percent suffer from chronic loneliness, compared with 20 percent in a similar survey a decade ago. Suicide rates, which closely correlate with loneliness, have been spiking since 1999. The culture of distrust isn't the only isolating factor, but it plays a role.

The rise of distrust correlates with a decline in community bonds and a surge of unmerited cynicism. Only 31 percent of millennials say there is a great deal of difference between the two political parties. Only 52 percent of adults say they are extremely proud to be Americans, down from 70 percent in 2003.

The rise of distrust has corroded intimacy. When you go on social media you see people who long for friendship. People are posting and liking private photos on public places like Snapchat and Facebook. But the pervasive atmosphere of distrust undermines actual intimacy, which involves progressive self-disclosure, vulnerability, emotional risk and spontaneous and unpredictable face-to-face conversations.

Instead, what you see in social media is often the illusion of intimacy. The sharing is tightly curated — in a way carefully designed to mitigate unpredictability, danger, vulnerability and actual intimacy. There is, as Stephen Marche once put it, "a phony nonchalance." It's possible to have weeks of affirming online banter without ever doing a trust-fall into another's arms.

As Garry Shandling once joked, "My friends tell me I have an intimacy problem, but they don't really know me."

Distrust leads to these self-reinforcing spirals. As Alex Tabarrok of George Mason University observed recently, in distrustful societies parents are less likely to teach their children about tolerance and respect for others. More distrust leads to tighter regulations, which leads to slower growth, which leads to sour mentalities and more distrust.

Furthermore, fear is the great enemy of intimacy. But the loss of intimacy makes society more isolated. Isolation leads to more fear. More fear leads to fear-mongering leaders. And before long you wind up in this death spiral.

The great religions and the wisest political philosophies have always counseled going the other way. They've always advised that real strength is found in comradeship, and there's no possibility of that if you are building walls. They have generally championed the paradoxical leap -- that even in the midst of an avalanche of calumny, somebody's got to greet distrust with vulnerability, skepticism with innocence, cynicism with faith and hostility with affection. *(Source: The NYT)*

Germany's test of generosity and identity

After welcoming 1 million fleeing people, Germans now struggle to integrate them. They are being forced to look deep at what binds their country.

The world is awash in migrants and refugees -- 1 in every 122 people on Earth -- forcing a test of identity in many of the recipient countries.

That's especially true in Germany, which opened its doors in 2015 to more than a million people fleeing harsh conditions in the Middle East and Africa. This mass generosity was exemplary. It defied Germany's Nazi past.

Yet now as German citizens try to integrate this wave of uprooted foreigners, they are also struggling to define an identity that embraces the newcomers but also unites the nation under core values.

Many thought it might be easy. "We will manage this," said Chancellor Angela Merkel last year. She now regrets the words although not the hope behind them.

The political backlash

The political backlash against her "welcome culture" policy has been strong.

Last week, a new anti-immigrant party, Alternative for Germany (AfD), defeated her conservative party in a local election in her political home base.

The AfD has been running stronger in many races, reigniting public debate about German identity being ethnically based.

Even within her own coalition, Ms. Merkel now faces pressure not to seek a fourth term in 2017.

Her main political challenge, however, lies in reminding Germans that identity comes not from blood or soil but from an appeal to principles that bind people across cultures.

And she is also trying to disabuse many Germans of a belief that rising immigration leads to increased terrorism, pointing out that it is native Germans who have joined Islamic State.

Germany's economy is strong enough to absorb the new arrivals. And it knows it needs immigrants as workers for its aging society.

Merkel is also trying to disabuse many Germans of a belief that rising immigration leads to increased terrorism, pointing out that it is native Germans who have joined Islamic State.

Germany as a model

But can Germany also serve as a model for the rest of Europe by replacing a fear of foreigners with a type of loving but firm assimilation?

Merkel's welcome mat has come with conditions. She has banned burqas in courts and public schools. Her government has tied welfare benefits to learning the German language.

And she warns the country's large population of people with Turkish ancestry that it must "develop a high level of loyalty toward our country." She is searching for ways to rapidly mix people while bringing out the best of their different ways of life.

At the same time, she is pushed to find solutions to the refugee flow rather than simply to accept the surge.

She has arranged with Turkey to virtually end the flow of Syrians into Greece. She has sought deals with countries in Africa to stem migration. And she pushes Russia and others for peace in Syria.

Germany, like other countries, cannot remain secluded from the world's woes.

Merkel hopes Germans can orient themselves around values that have made them successful: freedom, security, and fairness. "Germany will remain Germany, and so will all that is dear to it," she said after her party's election loss.

Germany, states this daughter of a Lutheran pastor, puts the dignity of every human being at the center of its identity -- and in its work in integrating its new arrivals.

(Source: The CSM)

Theresa May's incompetence is creating an opposition within her own party

By Polly Toynbee

Remember the sheer relief when Theresa May was catapulted into No 10. The country breathed a great "Phew!" Thank God it's not a sociopath, an eye-swiveling "no experts" obsessive or an inexperienced dimwit. We had escaped the terrifying prospect of extreme Brexiteers whose breathtaking Trump-class lies had swung the referendum.

When May was suddenly the last one standing, how solid and capable she seemed in comparison. That ice-cool calm was balm after the hot campaign, where she had kept deep cover. Anyone surviving six years in the Home Office, notorious graveyard of political ambition, must surely be competent? Optimists could seize on her glimmerings of liberalism – good on domestic violence and racist stop-and-search. Pessimists shuddered at her snooper's charter, "Go home" vans and pledge to withdraw from the European convention on human rights.

But evidence was thin: in truth, we hardly knew her. Her no-small-talk, reveal-nothing reticence left everyone free to invest in her whatever they chose. Her threshold speech was elegantly expansive with her personal motto, "A country that works for everyone" – not for the fat cats but for families just getting by.

Now the honeymoon is over it's time to take a wary look at who we are tied to in this shotgun marriage. With no campaign, there was no scrutiny, no cross-questioning and no combative television debates; there was neither a selection nor an election. The wary will have heard her opening progressive pitch with healthy suspicion after David Cameron's hoodie, husky, let-the-sun-shine-in compassion morphed overnight into a sharp right turn.

Today Cameron scuttles away from politics, tail between his legs with much to be ashamed of. May faces a nation beset by its worst crisis since the war: the Brexit nightmare looms over everything, and the economy is dogged by abysmal productivity, low pay, low skills and a huge trade deficit. She faces an NHS in meltdown due to severe underfunding, a worsening housing crisis and precarious public services. The veneer of civilization wears thin.

Reviewing her inheritance, May was expected to proceed with characteristic caution -- but what if she is not that careful person at all? She is emerging as someone altogether more reckless and less competent.

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Hard Brexit

Start with the most pressing question: why did she put three vain and extreme mavericks in charge of Brexit? David Davis announcing at his first Commons appearance that staying in the single market was "improbable" had to be slapped down immediately. Liam Fox, touting for British trade, calls British business lazy. And Boris Johnson, as foreign secretary, joins a "hard Brexit" ginger group. What do they want? Crazy, dangerous things. Fox is for quitting the EU customs union, imposing customs checks on all exports, and a Northern Ireland hard border.

Former ministers are just as bad. John Redwood's "Go now, no deals" panics all exporters and importers. Nigel Lawson's "Lift all tariffs" would put 10% on selling cars to the EU, while ruining our manufacturers with cheap imports.

These uncontrollables seek a radical EU break and potential mayhem, leaving May's chancellor bleating that a single market must be preserved for the City. Why such chaos so soon, when she should command absolute authority?

The NHS risks hemorrhaging EU staff, while agencies fail to recruit more from Europe, due to Brexit. Last week May called in NHS leaders to order them to stop any hospital mergers or closures that risk causing local protests. But if they can't make savings, has she understood the vast size of the NHS crisis? As for health prevention, she bent to the will of the food industry over sugar and obesity.

But it's over grammar schools that she has truly squandered her reputation for caution, competence or moderation. This bombshell dropped out of the blue sky without rhyme or reason, ignoring evidence, plunging schools into yet another bout of turmoil. Her oxymoronic "inclusive grammar schools" may focus-group well – until most parents realize their children will be rudely rejected. The 11-plus brands you for life: after admitting in print that I failed, I still get abuse, telling me that proves I'm too stupid for this job.

International scales

The UK has no problem with high standards for its top half of children, who do well on international scales. What drags us down is abject failure with the low achievers. We have cut further education courses, there are few good apprenticeships. Read former Tory minister David Willetts: grammars are no ladder to social mobility. This week's report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows those "who don't get into grammar schools do worse than they would in a comprehensive system".

May uses the word "meritocracy" without irony, though it was coined by Michael Young in a dystopian satire. Stop and think: what is merit? Goodness, hard work, community-mindedness? Or just the genetic accident of talent? Inequality is monstrously unfair in itself, and not just because it means birth is almost always social destiny.

If social mobility were May's genuine intent, she would start not with 11-year-olds, but the best nurseries and children's centers where life chances can be changed – but these are closing. What a bad omen that she ignores "experts" for a nostalgic better yesterday.

Irrational in the extreme is her multiplying of faith schools – segregation by culture, race, religion and class. Faith schools are strong class segregators, on average taking a third fewer free-school-meals children. Already a quarter of state places in England and Wales are in faith schools, in this least religious country. But she is letting them drop the obligation to keep half their places for others, after Catholic and Jewish leaders refused to create more free schools unless they could keep 100% places for their own. How does this fit with religious de-radicalization?

None of this looks like a safe pair of hands taking back control in a country beleaguered by uncertainty. May seems set on answering the wrong questions in the wrong way, adding to splits and divisions. Her only piece of good luck is the disappearance of any credible opposition -- but she looks well on her way to filling that void with alternative opposition groups within her own party.

(Source: The Guardian)

Duterte wants U.S. Special Forces to leave South Philippines

By David Tweed

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said U.S. troops must leave the southern island of Mindanao, saying their presence would worsen the situation in the Muslim-majority area long riven by insurgency and terrorism.

The Philippines will review its policy of allowing American forces to combat terrorist groups in Mindanao, Duterte said Monday in a speech in Manila. As many as 1,300 U.S. Special Forces troops have been present on the island since 2002.

"These special forces, they have to go," Duterte said. "They have to, in Mindanao -- there are many white men there."

"I just couldn't say it before out of respect," he added. "I don't want a rift with America but they have to go."

Duterte's comments follow a spat with President Barack Obama that prompted the U.S. leader to cancel a meeting last week on the sidelines of a summit in Laos. In the past few weeks, Duterte has lashed out at the U.S. for criticizing his war on drugs that has led to thousands of extra-judicial killings, and denounced military killings that took place over a century ago when the Philippines was an American colony.

Prior to Duterte's election this year, U.S.-Philippine relations had been strengthening. The Supreme Court in January upheld the validity of a defense cooperation pact that gives the U.S. military the right to increase troops deployed to the Philippines for war games, as well as bringing equipment into military areas including Subic Bay, the former site of a U.S. naval facility.

Manila's forces dwarfed

The U.S. has also been a strong supporter of the Philippines as it pushes back against China's assertiveness in the disputed South China Sea. Manila's military forces are dwarfed by China's Navy and coastguard.

"This could just be fallout from the Laos brouhaha," said Richard Bitzinger, who studies the military as a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "It is interesting that he hasn't mentioned the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. Maybe he wants the U.S. to say it really values its relationship with the Philippines."

State Department spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. hasn't received any formal request to withdraw U.S. forces and that it would premature to respond to media reports about Duterte's comments.

"We remain committed to our alliance with the Philippines," Kirby told reporters Monday in Washington. "It's been a long, productive history."

Duterte put his entire country under a so-called state of "lawlessness" following a bombing in his home city of Davao on Mindanao at the start of the month. The measure allows him to use the military to assist the police to fight crime and violence.

Duterte said Monday the presence of U.S. forces could inflame the situation and suggested that they may be kidnap targets or killed by local terrorist groups.

The U.S. hadn't apologized for alleged atrocities committed by Americans on Filipinos in the 1900s, Duterte said, also criticizing the U.S. over its role in conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Vietnam. American officials are "hypocrites" for funding anti-drug efforts while calling him out for supposed human-right violations, he said in the same speech.

(Source: The Bloomberg)

Oil production in Iran rises 22,300 bpd in August: OPEC

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** Based on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s Monthly Oil Market Report for September 2016, Iran's oil production rose 22,300 barrels per day (bpd) in August and stood at 3.653 million bpd; the country's July output was reported 3.631 million bpd.

After Saudi Arabia and Iraq, Iran is the third largest oil producer among OPEC members. The report also indicates that in August Saudi Arabia increased its oil production by 28,000 bpd to 10.605 million bpd.

According to the report, Iran's heavy crude price rose 58 cents or 1.4 percent to reach $42.17 in August, the figure was reported $41.59 for July.

The first eight months average price for Iran's heavy crude in 2016 stood at $36.6, down $17 compared to the same period last year.

OPEC's basket price reached $43.1 per barrel in August, witnessing a 42-cent rise compared to the previous month.

Since a landmark nuclear deal was reached with major powers in 2015 leading to the lifting of sanctions, Iran has been planning to boost crude production and exports to the pre-sanction levels.

Earlier in August, Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh told parliament that Iran wants to raise output to 4.6 million bpd within five years, well above pre-sanction levels of 3.8-4 million bpd.

Iran sells 1.64m bpd of oil to Asia's 4 major importers in July

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** According to the latest data released by Thomson Reuters, the total amount of Iranian crude oil imported by Asia's four major importers namely China, Japan, India and South Korea reached 1.64 million barrels per day (bpd) in July.

Based on the data, these countries' oil import from Iran has risen by 61 percent compared to the same period last year, the biggest increase since April 2014.

India has imported 523,100 bpd which shows a 142 percent growth compared to the same period in 2015.

South Korea's Iranian crude import stood at 291,100 bpd, up 336 percent in comparison to July 2015.

Japan which imported 158,600 bpd in July 2015 raised its import by 61.7 percent to reach 256,700 bpd in July 2016.

Earlier this month a senior official from the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said that Iran is ready to raise its oil production to 4 million bpd in the next two to three months depending on market demand.

According to Seyed Mohsen Qamsari, the director for international affairs at NIOC, Iran is currently exporting 2.74 million barrels of crude oil and gas condensates each day.

Asia is the biggest consumer of oil in the world and being in the region Iran plans to export 63 percent of its output to Asian countries.

Global oil surplus to persist into first half of 2017: IEA

A sharp slowdown in global oil demand growth, coupled with ballooning inventories and rising supply means the crude market will be oversupplied at least through the first six months of 2017, the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday.

"Our forecast in this month's report suggests that this supply-demand dynamic may not change significantly in the coming months. As a result, supply will continue to outpace demand at least through the first half of next year," the IEA said.

The IEA had previously expected the market to show no surplus in the second half of this year.

Global refinery runs are expected to grow at their slowest pace in at least a decade this year, which will curb appetite for crude oil, just as inventories across the OECD rose to a fresh record high of 3.111 billion barrels, the report said.

"With our more pessimistic outlook for the second half of 2016 refining activity and revisions to crude supply, the expected draws in the third quarter of 2016 are now lower, while the build in the fourth quarter of 2016 is higher," the IEA said.

The IEA left its forecast for demand growth for 2017 unchanged from its prediction in June at 1.2 million barrels per day, but cut its forecast for 2016 consumption growth to 1.3 million bpd, from 1.4 million. *(Source: Reuters)*

NEWS

Tehran signs co-op MOU with 2 intl. bodies on wastewater treatment

TT ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN —** Iran's Water and Wastewater Company signed a cooperation MOU on wastewater treatment with two international bodies namely International Water Association (IWA) and International Commission on Irrigation & Drainage (ICID), IRNA reported.

The MOU, which was signed in Tehran on Tuesday, includes taking joint measures in the field of urban and agricultural usages of treated wastewater, introducing modern technology in this field and conducting necessary researches to prepare principles and standards required for institutionalizing safe usage of treated wastewater.

Iraq lifts crude loading plans for October by 23,000 bpd

Iraq's State Oil Marketing Company, SOMO, expects its October exports from the main southern Persian Gulf terminals will average 3.28 million barrels per day, up by 23,000 bpd from the September export plans, Platts reported on Monday, citing official SOMO tanker nomination figures.

The loading plans for this month and next are close to the average yearly export volumes of some 3.25 million bpd. This may point to the assumption that SOMO is trying to nominate volumes close to capacity so as to avoid high demurrage costs as it was the case in June and July, Platts observes.

Based on direct communication to OPEC, Iraq's crude production stood at 4.638 million bpd in August, up by 32,000 bpd over July, OPEC said in its Monthly Oil Market Report on Monday. Based on secondary sources, Iraq pumped 4.354 million bpd last month.

At the end of last month, Iraq signaled it would support an OPEC output freeze deal at the meeting in Algiers later this month. "We support freezing oil production by OPEC due to the sharp decline of oil prices," Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said at a news conference on August 30.

This may have boosted optimistic expectations for a production cap deal at the September 26-28 meeting, but last week SOMO's director general Falah Al-Amri said that Iraq would support a freeze "for a certain period", without giving further details what a 'certain period' means and at what level Iraq was ready to freeze.

The official, however, added that Iraq will see a "steady growth in production and exports next year".

(Source: oilprice.com)

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INTERNATIONAL DAILY TEHRAN TIMES

Botanical secrets of Descurainia sophia

By Soraya Ghoddousi

Descurainia sophia, commonly known as Flixweed is native to Europe and northern Africa. This plant's common names are Flixweed, Flax weed, Herb-Sophia, Tansy mustard, Flaxweed tansymustard, Flixweed tansymustard and Pinnate tansymustard.

Flixweed as a species of the Mustard family is so widespread adapted to grow in dry environments, waste ground, roadsides and disturbed sites up to 900-2000 m elevation .It is an annual /biennial 10 to 75 cm high herbaceous plant, possessing an erect, often branching stem with 2 to 3 times pinnately compound leaves, which have dissected margins and basal attachments. The inflorescence of yellow petal small flowers is raceme. The1.5 to 3 cm long, green to brown, sillique fruits contain 10 to 20 long narrow seeds, which become sticky when moistened. Flixweed is reproduced by seeds in spring.

Uses

Warm and cold syrups of the seeds are known as favorite drinks in many countries, and the salad of its flowers and leaves as antiscorbutic and astringent are consumed in some other countries. Fried, powdered and decocted seeds, and poultices of the plant are wholly utilizable for treatment of many diseases, fitness and beauty.

Ingredients

Since different classes of secondary metabolites are present in seeds and aerial parts of Flixweed, this plant shows various pharmacological and remedial properties. The seed contains 25.5 - 29.9% protein, 26.9 - 39.7% fat and 3.6 - 3.9% ash on a zero moisture basis.

Functions

According to Traditional Persian Medicine (TPM) evacuation of surplus black bile, which causes many disorders such as palpitation, varicocele, dyspepsia, varicose vein, hematologic disease, constipation, and hemorrhoid is done by the seeds of Flixweed drinks. Mucilage as a water absorbent exopolysaccharide carbohydrate is the most important feature of the seeds of Flixweed. It has several effects on digestion system as a digestive tonic. 1) it causes as slimming to feel of fullness for 3-4 hours for the sake of presence of inflated seeds in stomach by absorbing the water 2) bonding with bad cholesterol in small intestine and3) as a muscle relaxant removal of constipation by producing laxation in large intestine .This latest feature causes ripening of cervix in the last month of pregnancy by drinking warm syrup of the seeds and facilitation of vaginal delivery. The powdered seeds are considered as a blood sugar reducer, for cardiotonic feature. The warm syrup of the seeds is used: 1) as an anti-pruritic in remedy of urticaria, and measles eruption, 2) as an expectorant, a demulcent, and an analgesic in treatment of chronic coughs, bronchitis, asthma, hoarseness, and throat irritation 2) as a febrifuge in remedy of fevers, 3) as a diuretic in treating oedema and blood pressure reducer and 4) as a laxative in treatment of constipation. Because of weak presence of mucilage property of the seeds in cold water or fried seeds, the cold syrup is used as an astringent for treating of the anti-diarrheal disease, and the fried seeds are used in remedy of dysentery. A poultice of the flowers and leaves is used as a demulcent for treating of toothache, sciatica pain, and also as an anti-inflammatory for treatment of outer sores and ulcers. Anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, anti-pruritic, and analgesic activities refer to extracted phenolic compounds. Flavonoids of the seeds cause anti helminthic, antioxidant features. Cardiotonic feature of the seed is because of cardiac (bitter) glycosides of the seeds which are released by decoction. Allyl disulfide compounds in seeds act as the muscle relaxant.

Recipes

A: Warm Syrup1) Add 1 tea spoon of Manna; dried sap of Alhaji camelurom (Camelthorn) as the reformer, to half cup of warm water. Mix and filter it after 2-3 min and keep it away. 2) Ablute 2-3 of the seeds (depending on body weight in adults) 7 times with cold water to lose their outer bitterness. 3) Add abluted seeds to hot boiled water. 4) Leave it for 15-20 minutes. 5) Add liquid part1 to it liquid part 6.You can add 1 table spoon of honey, just if your temperament is cold (for assuring touch your hand's wrist in order to check your pulse. Strong pulse equals hot temperament and vice versa). This can be repeated up to 40 days before breakfast, and repeat the period after 7 days again.

B: Decoction 1) Add washed seeds to boiling water (300cc) and boil it for 15 min. 2) Add A-1 liquid to it. You can add rock candy to reduce the bitter taste.

C: 1) Add seeds of part A-2 to cold water (1/4 lit), honey (1 TS), Rose water (1 TS) and ice cubes.2) Mix it to drink.

D: 1) Add some well grinded fresh flowers and leaves to boiling (2-5 min) / dried ones to cold water to gain warm/ cold poultice. Anti-spasmodic Demulcent

Side effects

The effect rarely reported from Flixweed's seeds was headache that should be accompanied by Astragalus tragacantha (Milkvetch) in the family of Fabaceae (Pea).

I never understood depression until my mother died from it — in honor of World Suicide Prevention Day

By Alexandra Owens

Growing up with a depressed parent was normal. Does that make sense? I didn't know any difference. I thought every parent cried themselves to sleep. That all mothers ended up in the psych ward at least 5 times a year. That most parents had addiction issues and thus slip ups happened every now and then. Because that was my normal. Depression was our family's normal. We didn't live by days of the week so much or special events; I measured time in the dark and light bouts of her illness

My normal was doctors and meds being prescribed to her; her lazy Susan of pills that sat upon our microwave. The AA and NAA meetings that I sat and colored through as a child. My normal was a mother who sat in her room for hours and hours on end. Alone and weeping. Zero laughter. Very little excitement or enthusiasm for life. And almost no physical touch during the dark moments. Almost as if the zest of anything had been squeezed out with such violence that only a shadow of a person prepared meals and drove me places.

I thought everyone at 14 had mothers who cut their faces in a fit of rage within their depression. Then I visited my "best friend" and realized that wasn't true. So I didn't say anything. Because talking about it only deepened the realization that depression not only consumed our household; but stalked me in my mind. Always pretending things were better than they were. Never sharing the intensity behind the abuse that came with this mental illness. This illness that I despised. That I hated. It wouldn't ever touch me.

So forgive me. I didn't understand depression. I wanted to. I really did. It missed me in the passing of genes and I've never experienced it myself. I have lived with it though. I've been a one woman audience to the chaos it brings. But the actual all-knowing feeling isn't something I am intimately in tune with. Just like I can't comprehend not being able to take care of your children. Or cutting your wrists because the pain is so bad. Or requiring your child to parent you through another psych ward intake as you beg the doctors to admit her because you can't do another night of suicide watch. It doesn't make sense to me. And if that comes across critical please know that's not the purpose. I genuinely cannot psychically fathom those feelings and emotions. I don't think I ever will. But I have dug deep; done the first hand research of this disease. For most of my life I had zero empathy for my mother and her "issues." Why couldn't she snap out of it? Often in her darkest days I would scream and scream for her to figure herself out. Get her act together and move on. Why did it haunt her day in and out? It looked like such a weakness to me. Until the depression killed her, and she committed suicide. And then something clicked.

I'm embarrassed to say for many years I judged. Full-on gavel in hand judged. And I am sorry. So sorry. Because I was without empathy. And THAT is the worst thing you can withhold from someone suffering. Maybe it was because I was so full of rage that even as an adult I struggled to have empathy for friends with depression. I always had sympathy; but never empathy. And that's not the same at all. Brene Brown describes the difference as: "sympathy being the pity we feel for someone else's hardships whereas empathy is the "me too", the act of putting yourself in their shoes." I cringe at the thoughts that once ran through my mind. How high on my horse I sat. Because in my head if I judged it, twisted it, or mocked it - the "it" didn't have any weight, or value. Which meant they were just "sad". And anyone can stop being sad.

Depression isn't sad. It isn't a sappy movie that triggers some tears or a really good cry. It's not Adele on a rainy day. It's not the weepy feeling we get when our monthly cycle comes, or the tears we weep when miss our best friend.

It's torture. Absolute pure and utter torture. And I am not using that word lightly at all. It attacks the brain in ways in which those of us who aren't struggling can't imagine; and then we expect you to snap out of it and make dinner. As if you have any control over this all-encompassing pain that you can't shake off. It enters your soul and refuses to leave. Or allow you to get out of bed. Or pick up your crying child, or have a shower.

Imagine an open sore. On your arm or leg. One that was cut long ago. It oozes and weeps through whatever bandage you place on it. Sometimes the pain is more than you can handle and you just have to lay there, while other times you can still move but only in a fog because the throbbing is still there. It's always there. And yet you carry on. You try to wake up, get dressed and smile. Mostly pretending. Always pretending. That is depression. The sore that may scab, hopefully scar; but always there.

Here's what I know to be true now. About my mother who suffered and about my friends who are suffering. They aren't sad. It's not just a rainy cloud day. And I'm sorry I ever thought that. I'm sorry if I ever pushed you to "just smile" I wish now I hadn't pushed so hard with my mother; as a child I didn't comprehend it but as an adult I think she could have used some empathy. Some "me too" in my words and actions.

So as National Suicide Prevention week begins I'm humbled. Humbled to be able to walk alongside my friends who are suffering and honored that they would willingly share their story and allow me to love them where they are at. So if you are struggling and crying out for help; let me hold your hand.

(Source: huffingtonpost.com)

Borderline personality disorder

By Arnold Lieber, MD

A personality disorder is a pattern of feelings and behaviors that seem appropriate and justified to the person experiencing them, even though these feelings and behaviors cause a great deal of problems in that person's life.

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a personality disorder that typically includes the following symptoms:

- Inappropriate or extreme emotional reactions
- Highly impulsive behaviors
- A history of unstable relationships
- Intense mood swings, impulsive behaviors, and extreme reactions can make it difficult for people with borderline personality disorder to complete schooling, maintain stable jobs and have long-lasting, healthy relationships.

Symptoms of borderline personality disorder

Borderline personality disorder symptoms vary from person to person and women are more likely to have this disorder than men. Common symptoms of the disorder include the following:

- Having an unstable or dysfunctional self-image or a distorted sense of self (how one feels about one's self)
- Feelings of isolation, boredom and emptiness
- Difficulty feeling empathy for others
- A history of unstable relationships that can change drastically from intense love and idealization to intense hate

A persistent fear of abandonment and rejection, including extreme emotional reactions to real and even perceived abandonment

- Intense, highly changeable moods that can last for several days or for just a few hours
- Strong feelings of anxiety, worry and depression
- Impulsive, risky, self-destructive and dangerous behaviors, including reckless driving, drug or alcohol abuse.
- Hostility
- Unstable career plans, goals and aspirations

Many people experience one or more of the above symptoms regularly, but a person with borderline personality disorder will experience many of the symptoms listed above consistently throughout adulthood.

The term "borderline" refers to that fact that people with this condition tend to "border" on being diagnosed with additional mental health conditions in their lifetime, including psychosis.

One of the ironies of this disorder is that people with BPD may crave closeness, but their intense and unstable emotional responses tend to alienate others, causing long-term feelings of isolation.

Borderline personality disorder and suicidality

Around 80 percent of people with borderline personality disorder display suicidal behaviors, including suicide attempts, cutting themselves, burning themselves, and other self-destructive acts. It is estimated that between 4 and 9 percent of people with BPD will die by suicide.

- Help for Borderline Personality Disorder
- Living with borderline personality disorder, or being in a relationship with someone who has BPD, can be stressful. It can be very difficult to acknowledge and accept the reality of BPD, but treatment may help.

If you are concerned that you, or that someone you care about, may have borderline personality disorder, contact a licensed mental health professional. Many supportive healthcare professionals are available to help you get started on the path to healing. Since BPD can be a complex condition, and treatment usually requires long-term talk therapy, it will be important to find a mental health professional who has expertise in treating this condition.

It is possible to learn how to manage feelings better and find ways to have healthier and more rewarding relationships. With the help of talk therapy, one can learn how to reduce impulsive and self-destructive behaviors and understand more about the condition. With a commitment to long-term treatment, positive and healthy change is within reach.

(Source: www.psycom.net)

NEWS

Ways to prevent college weight gain

Although most first-year college students don't gain the "freshman 15," research does show that almost two-thirds pack on some pounds—typically about 7.5 pounds. And those numbers, like student loan debt, grow over the four years of college: On average men add on about 13 pounds; women, about 9 pounds.

Use these tips to help keep the pounds off

Eat breakfast

It's important to eat three meals a day, especially since people who skip breakfast are at increased risk for being overweight, says Joan Salge Blake, R.D., spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and clinical associate professor at Boston University. If you don't like eating breakfast in the dining hall, stock a small refrigerator in your dorm room with skim milk or low-fat yogurt to put over a quick bowl of whole grain cereal (bonus: add in some blueberries or bananas) before class in the morning.

Avoid sugary drinks

Energy drinks might keep you awake in your morning classes, but soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks account for more than a third of the added sugars many of us consume each day—and they cause you to crash. So opt for water instead. Too boring? Add a slice of lemon or cucumber from the salad bar.

Don't overdo it at the buffet

Resist the urge to pile on everything as you go down the buffet line. Instead, fill at least half your plate with vegetables and fruit and use the My Plate icon from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a guide, Blake says. Can't resist the pizza? Top it with vegetables and eat a salad with it. Better yet, Blake recommends starting with a salad and vegetable soup when you get into the dining hall and then getting up a second time for your next course—if you're still hungry.

Exercise

After your classes are over, squeeze in some exercise by taking a brisk walk around campus, signing up for a gym class for credit like tennis, or getting involved with intramural sports like broom ball or Ultimate Frisbee.

Weigh yourself regularly

To keep the pounds from creeping on, pack a scale, since research shows that successful losers weigh themselves at least once a week. If you do find yourself gaining weight, keep a food journal or use an app like MyFitnessPal to see what you're eating—and what you're not eating. "You may find you're skipping meals and you're becoming so ravenous that you end up eating anything that's not moving," Blake says. Instead, try to eat 4.5 cups of vegetables and fruits per day, which will fill you up without filling you out, unlike calorie-dense chips and crackers. Made-to-order omelets are also a great way to eat more vegetables—add in some spinach, tomatoes, and mushrooms when you're ordering it. And find out if your university has a program that allows students to meet with on-staff dietitians free of charge. Lastly, skip the body-fat scales - they aren't that accurate in gauging body fat.

Skip the unhealthy snacks

When it's late at night and you get hungry, you might have the urge to eat a quick snack—but make sure it's a healthy one. Campuses these days are filled with small shops where you can load up on unhealthy snacks. Instead, heat up a 100-calorie bag of popcorn in your microwave or a community microwave in a common area. "It's a neat, efficient, yummy way to get whole grains," Blake says. For quick snacks in-between meals, skip the instant mac-and-cheese and potato chips, and instead pick up low fat string cheese, chopped vegetables, and dips like hummus and salsa. (The snack suggestions also apply to late-night munching!)

Get enough sleep

There is a link between sleep loss and obesity—when you don't get enough sleep your appetite for high calorie foods increases, which contributes to weight gain, a 2013 study from the Journal of Nature Communication says. To combat this, don't pull all-nighters studying or stay up late watching TV. You should set a schedule for studying so you don't find yourself in the position of having to cram for a test the night before, and you can binge watch TV anytime, so why do it late at night? Instead, get enough sleep.

(Source: consumerreports.org)

Drought, intellectual abyss, and a ubiquitous sand: desert traveler

By Samad Habibi

Desert of Khartouran has been home to villages virtually deserted by its inhabitants; as our desert traveler would document, the drought and dryness are causes to blame.

Torrid and scorched; this is epithets to define Khartouran desert region in Shahroud's Biarjmand County, in Semnan. To this natural harsh environment add the perennial drought which has hit the region out of its population: seldom would any one visiting the region spot young people; they had long abandoned their homes in the villages to seek their odds of success in cities miles from the heart of the desert: now here is the abode of the elderly.

Drought has found ample coverage by the local media, with headlines covering the dearth of water, either for meagre agriculture or for living; however, as Mohammad Hossein Abedi, Mehr News local correspondent would agree, only those who have the first-hand experience of the difficult life without water could bear testimony to the harsh realities of the desert life. The minds of 30,000 inhabitants of the county now entertain to come to terms grudgingly with the complete lack of water, a grim image indeed.

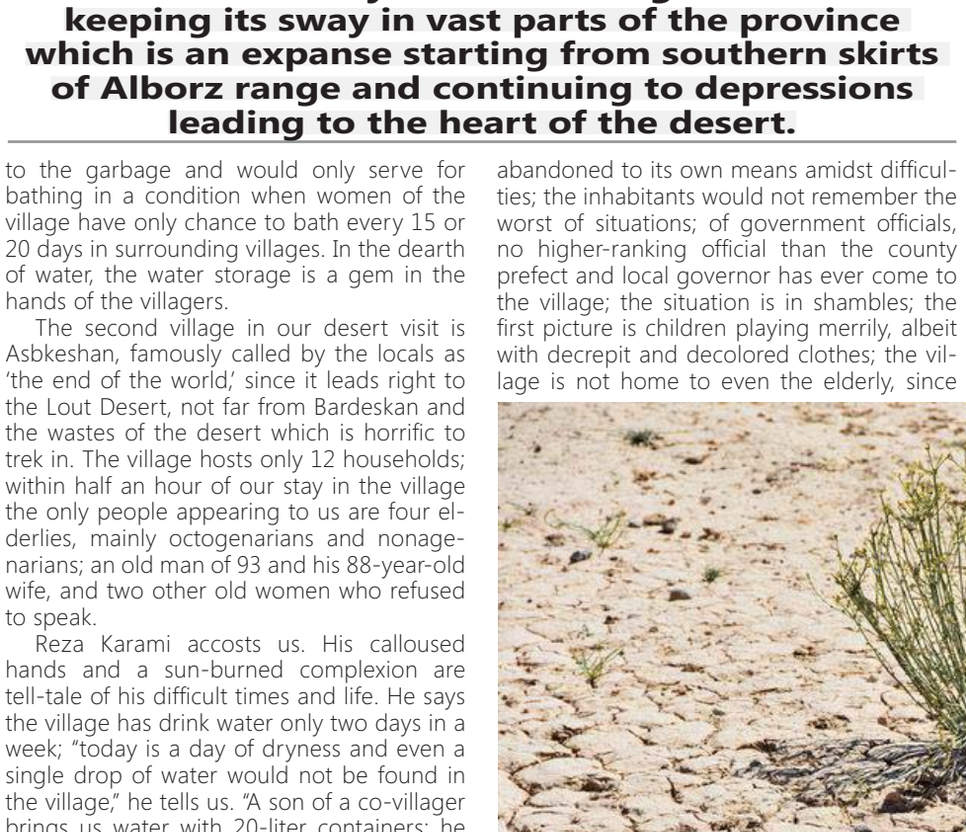
It is now for 17 years that drought has been keeping its sway in vast parts of the province which is an expanse starting from southern skirts of Alborz range and continuing to depressions leading to the heart of the desert. A drive of 300km to the south from Sahroud brings the tourists to the 'gate of the desert,' as the locals would call. Here in the last village of the county, Asbkeshan (Persian for 'horse-charioted cart'), the beast of drought growls more menacing than anywhere else; the people, hardened and patient, have migrated to the cities to curse the environment so ungrateful to its people. But not all seek their chances in cities and have preferred to remain in their homes in the desert for the blessed hope of the coming rain; the migration however, has a strong footprints in the region, wrecking its share of havoc upon the economy and social life.

In most villages the only source of water is water tanks occasionally visiting the torrid villages provided by Biarjmand Rural Water and Wastewater Office; 20 out of 29 settled villages now receive their water solely from these tanks whose arrival triggers murmurs of happiness; but the 2,000-liter tanks of the village rapidly drains and the cycle of waiting and hydration will be go on interminably in the eyes of the villagers.

Continue 300km and you will arrive in Derazab, a village of 16 households. Only the elderly and women live in the village and the young had been too impatient to see the vanity of waiting in this desert of drought and left since long for better places to live. The remaining people usually sit in the shades of a tree; this is the only mode of life in the arid zone. The terrain and the road to the village is tortuous and difficult. For these people, the well, dug to the horrendous depths of 250 meters, has not provided a drop of water and now they would speak out to any visitor seeking their voices.

Ghodratollah is one of the village inhabitants. "Migration has reduced village population of once more than 25 households to now 16 households, each with one or two members. The life is difficult and dreary here, since Derazab has no water; a well, dug almost on the eve of the Revolution of 1979 had long been dried out," he tells to Mehr News correspondent. "Water from underground had been reaching to the village through a canal 9km long and going parallel to the road, hence the name 'derazab' (Persian for 'long waterway'); now, water is scarce and we restore it in 20-liter containers to be consumed. The heat rapidly evaporates this water within 2 hours; with the containers are empty, here comes the painful 14 day of waiting for tanks to come to village; a shallow pond of stagnant water is the only source of water for washing our bodies," Ghodratollah continues.

The well Ghodratollah refers to is an underground water storage facility now home to the garbage and would only serve for bathing in a condition when women of the village have only chance to bath every 15 or 20 days in surrounding villages. In the dearth of water, the water storage is a gem in the hands of the villagers.



It is now for 17 years that drought has been keeping its sway in vast parts of the province which is an expanse starting from southern skirts of Alborz range and continuing to depressions leading to the heart of the desert.

The second village in our desert visit is Asbkeshan, famously called by the locals as 'the end of the world,' since it leads right to the Lout Desert, not far from Bardeskan and the wastes of the desert which is horrific to trek in. The village hosts only 12 households; within half an hour of our stay in the village the only people appearing to us are four elderlies, mainly octogenarians and nonagenarians; an old man of 93 and his 88-year-old wife, and two other old women who refused to speak.

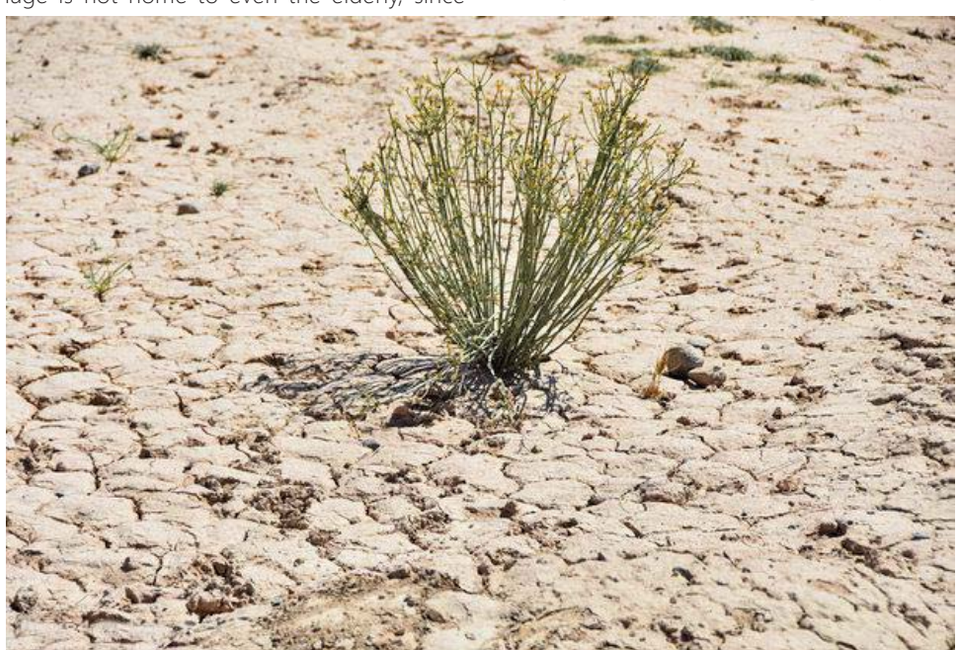
Reza Karami accosts us. His calloused hands and a sun-burned complexion are tell-tale of his difficult times and life. He says the village has drink water only two days in a week; "today is a day of dryness and even a single drop of water would not be found in the village," he tells us. "A son of a co-villager brings us water with 20-liter containers; he would soon abandon us; indeed, we were indebted to him and would soon go for our water to an underground canal where bats live and water is far from hygiene to drink," he sobs, in convulsions.

Garmab is a village in queue for our visit after leaving Reza Karami in Asbkeshan miles behind. Garmab would have been a tourist resort of some reputation for its spa mineral water; now however, some haggard goats grapple with finding outcroppings of some desert bushes out of the sand. This is the image the village presents lavishly to visitors; all the drought is understood when we catch the glimpse of a fawn yeanling trying to drink milk from his mother's breast far from the maddening crowd of other creatures suffering the drought. The village is almost dead.

The common chapter of life in all Touran (Khartouran) villages is drought-induced migration of the youth to cities. A local, Valliollah Adeli, the village governor administrator gives an account of the situation; "28 households of Garmab have only 6 hours a day of water which does not suffice for everyday life; in such conditions, no young man would stay and see the doomed fate of his village," he adds.

Fatemeh Akbari, however, is a different voice than Adeli's. She speaks out her grievences; "the water is contaminated here; long ago, we had plenty of water and grew vegetables; agriculture flourished, and livestock were also burgeoned; but the drought has wreaked havoc on all good days and now all that has gone," she complains.

Still deeper afield into the desert, we reach Kalateh Meri and Vahel, a village forlorn and abandoned to its own means amidst difficulties; the inhabitants would not remember the worst of situations; of government officials, no higher-ranking official than the county prefect and local governor has ever come to the village; the situation is in shambles; the first picture is children playing merrily, albeit with decrepit and decolored clothes; the village is not home to even the elderly, since here is the absolute absence of water. In comparison, villages other than Kalateh Meri and Vahel are paradise. The locals rely on the spillovers from other villages in the upstream for their daily water needs.



The village has been virtually deserted by its settlers, as Khanoum Goli, a villager, would say, "agriculture and animal husbandry needs plenty of water and here, where miles into the desert is dry, even resistant animals as camels would leave, since one day they will need water; the economy has crumbled thus."

An examination in city of Shahroud of the population newly settled indicates the wave of immigration from the villages; the average villager coming to Shahroud is under 40 and usually settle in cheap and low-quality government-sponsored Mehr Housing scheme houses. The local government official believes severely declining precipitation had contributed to the drought along with global climate change; "the sector to be severely hit is drink water in desert regions; the situation is not optimal for agriculture and livestock breeders; government measures included reviving the underground water canals and dredging of surface aqueduct system, but all these measures have been short-term responses and failed to address and solve drought once and for all," Rouhollah Karimi tells us; "outdated pipe networks, cracks and breakage, and decline in precipitation and in water levels are possible causes of drought."

"To seriously address the problem, local plans have been devised which include Khartouran Water Supply Scheme which will provide water for 9 villages when completed. The work on preliminary studies and excavations are underway by relevant government bodies; wells have been dug and we only invest hope in the water output of these wells," Karimi sums the measures.

"Village migrants comprise a new class of underqualified job seekers; their lifestyle is incompatible with city's cramped environment and most of them are hit by the sophisticated nature of life and become depressed and indulge themselves in menial lower-paid jobs or just engage in felony," says the county governor. "The rural economy has thus been hit, with long-term measures badly needed to redeem the life and activity in villages once burgeoning with the water present; the sum of measures rely only on the possibility of precipitations and would fail if no precipitation occurs."

Amid the local government measures, the human crisis in Khartouran is ubiquitous and ruling the deserts. All eyes and all minds await the ultimate redeemer, rain, which had been so far fleeting. All government officials should abandon the comfort of their office desk to dare into the deserts we traversed in this report to see the realities harsh as they are, for an experience an insider would only understand properly.

We leave our real desert traveler to reflect upon the sad nature of events in the desert and begin a virtual journey where he finished in the gate of the desert. As he told us, the first city in the desert when we go deeper into the wastes of the central desert southward is Bardeskan, now in the Khorasan territories. The depression leading to the Lout Desert, the lowest point in Iranian plateau had been much envied for its challenges for any traveler either ancient or modern. The desert in central Iran consists of spectacular scenery of sand dunes and in some areas vast expenses of wind erosion material create hundreds of miles of the wilderness through which movement is difficult and cumbersome.

Our virtual journey brings us to some of the world's most notorious desert storms further south in Kerman and Sistan where Zagros's southeasterly tilt creates still difficult terrain and the rugged outcroppings of the rocks are visible when you have chances to spot them during travel. Few hundred miles to the east, Iranian plateau gives way to new territories where the desert gradually leads to mountainous regions of Afghanistan and where the flanks of Iran's northern Alborz leads to mountains over the border in Afghanistan.

The virtual journey to the south puts us to a branch of the ancient Silk Road which crisscrossed the Iranian plateau and linked the cities and oases spread around the desert and provided shelter and comfort from the heat of the day. In all the inner depression of Iranian plateau to which the Lut desert is an important part, sophisticated ancient systems of underground canals provided the inhabitants means to prosper and resilience. In Tabas, which lies midway in the long road between Sabzewar and Yazd, the most inhospitable climate governs the lives of the sparse population of desert dwellers. Since the times immemorial, desert had been formidable, tantalizing as its mirages to the caravans of the Silk Road or lonely travelers of the Europe who dared to challenge the very concept of the desert by following the Silk Road right to the middle of nowhere. Such a traveler were Thesiger and Marco Polo who were intrigued to cross the central desert and the depression in the 16th century.

But the drought is not a ubiquitous as a single phenomenon as our traveler in Khartouran in the northern gate of the desert had so impressed by; geological features of the desert are far from tantalizing: kaluts (yardangs) stand like enormous sand castles; broken teeth punctuating the landscape as far as the eye can see; meteorites are plenty in the Lut Desert further south outside Kerman, since the dry climate provides excellent environment to lovers of meteorites to traverse the diverse landscape in their adventure; beautiful nights where the sky invites the inquiring eyes to behold the stars as if they were coming to sit on the sands.

Finally, desert has been inspiring for poets and prose writers of the Persian literature in providing them with themes of reflection of an intellectual upon the creation where the persona of Ali Shariati in his 'Night of the Desert,' combines religious musing with the night and its image of the Milky Way and diverse elements to share with the reader his own experiences of the nature of the creation. Out of such poetic sensations here lies the miles of sand before our virtual traveler and extreme heat; only water would quench the thirst invading the traveler; the imagination here becomes ever-creating, as desert is home to strange feelings of melancholy and the very vastness of the space instills the traveler with a brooding sense of loneliness: fear of intellectual abysses any reflection upon the desert poses upon our traveler and interminable sand dunes mocking the average courageous.

An examination in city of Shahroud of the population newly settled indicates the wave of immigration from the villages; the average villager coming to Shahroud is under 40 and usually settle in cheap and low-quality government-sponsored Mehr Housing scheme houses.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY TEHRAN TIMES

Wheat, one of the world's most important crops, is being threatened by climate change

One of the biggest concerns about climate change is the effect it will have on agriculture. Many studies have suggested that rising temperatures could be harmful to farms around the world, although there's plenty of uncertainty about how bad things will get and which food supplies we should worry about most.

Now, a new study published Monday in Nature Climate Change reiterates concerns that wheat -- the most significant single crop in terms of human consumption -- might be in big trouble.

After comparing multiple studies used to predict the future of global crop production, researchers have found that they all agree on one point: rising temperatures are going to be really bad for wheat production.

Scientists use a wide range of techniques to make predictions about the future of the environment, including a variety of models and statistical analyses. Often, though, there's debate about which technique produces the most accurate results.

The authors of the new study, who included dozens of scientists from institutions in China, the U.S., Europe and elsewhere around the world, decided to compare three different methods used to assess the impact of temperature changes on wheat production.

Statistical analysis

These included a type of statistical analysis that relies on historical observations of climate and global wheat yields to make inferences about the future, as well as two different types of model simulations.

For the purposes of this comparison, the researchers focused only on the effects of temperature, without incorporating other climate-related factors such as rising carbon dioxide levels or changes in precipitation.

Specifically, all the techniques suggested that a global temperature increase of 1 degree Celsius would lead to a worldwide decline in wheat yield by between 4.1 and 6.4 percent.

The world currently produces more than 700 million tons of wheat annually, which is converted into all kinds of products for human consumption, including flour for bread, pasta, cakes, breakfast cereals and more. A reduction of just 5 percent would translate to a loss of about 35 million tons each year.

And that could spell big trouble for the global food supply.

A new report from the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) projected that world wheat production for the 2016/17 year would hit 741 million tons, nearly 500 million of which is destined to be used directly for human consumption.

Global production

While global production of coarse grains, including corn, does outweigh the production of wheat, a significantly smaller proportion of it goes to human consumption worldwide, with the rest being used for animal feed and industrial purposes.

According to the FAO, global human consumption of coarse grains comes to about 200 million tons annually.

The various studies also produce similar findings on a country level for the world's largest wheat producers, including the U.S., China, India and France. For instance, all of the study methods suggested that China will see yield reductions of about 3.0 percent per 1 degree Celsius increase in global temperature. And India was projected to experience much greater declines of about 8.0 percent.

(Source: The Washington Post)

The researchers focused only on the effects of temperature, without incorporating other climate-related factors such as rising carbon dioxide levels or changes in precipitation.

Mars looks like national park in awesome new pics

The rocky Martian landscape rivals the beauty of national parks of the southwestern United States in amazing new photos taken by NASA's Mars Curiosity rover last week.

Curiosity took the photos on Sept. 8 as the rover said farewell to Murray Buttes, an area with steep rock formations at the base of the 3.4-mile-high (5.5 kilometers) Mount Sharp.

The rover, also known as the Mars Science Laboratory, has been investigating the Murray formation for the last month.

The view Mars from NASA's Curiosity rover shows a dramatic hillside outcrop with stacks of sandstone layers that scientists refer to as "cross-bedding."

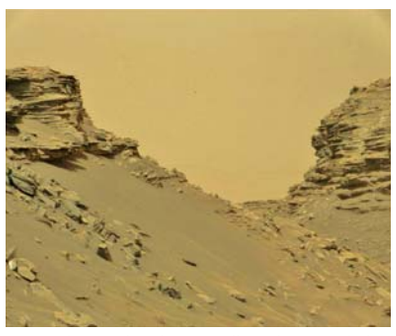
This close-up view of Martian rock formations from NASA's Curiosity rover reveals fine layers of sandstone.

The rover's Mastcam snapped the photo on Sept. 8, as the rover exited the Murray Buttes region.

"Curiosity's science team has been just thrilled to go on this road trip through a bit of the American desert Southwest on Mars," Curiosity Project Scientist Ashwin Vasavada, of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, said in a statement.

Ancient sand dunes

"Studying these buttes up close has given us a better understanding of ancient sand dunes that formed and



were buried, chemically changed by groundwater, exhumed and eroded to form the landscape that we see today," Vasavada added.

The Curiosity rover just celebrated the four-year anniversary of its dramatic landing on Mars.

On Aug. 5, 2012, the rover plopped down onto the floor of Gale Crater, a 96-mile-wide (154 km) dent in the Martian surface.

Mount Sharp sits in the center of the crater, about 5 miles (8 km) from the base of Mount Sharp.

Now the rover is leaving Murray Buttes, set to continue climbing up Mount Sharp despite the damage Mars' rugged terrain has inflicted on the vessel's wheels.

Since arriving on the Red Planet, Curiosity has found evidence to suggest that Mars once had water — and possibly even microbial life.

(Source: space.com)

Scientists followed 5,000 genius kids for 45 years

Follow thousands of super-bright kids for four and a half decades and you learn a thing or two about how to raise a high-achiever.

One of the biggest takeaways: Even kids with genius-level IQs need teachers to help them reach their full potential.

Since it began in 1971, the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) has tracked 5,000 of the smartest the children in America — the top 1%, 0.1%, and even 0.01% of all students. It is the longest-running study of gifted children in history.

Set against an education system that often prioritizes lifting up the lowest-performing kids, SMPY's findings present another claim: Don't forget about the kids at the tippy-top.

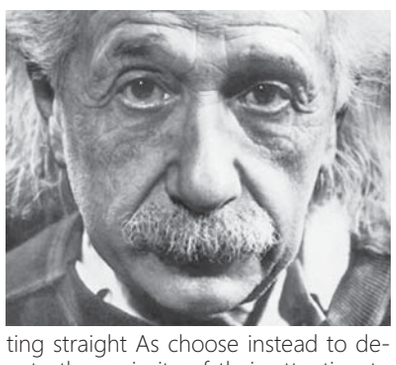
"Whether we like it or not, these people really do control our society," Jonathan Wai, psychologist at the Duke University Talent Identification Program, recently told Nature.

The "kids who test in the top 1% tend to become our eminent scientists and academics, our Fortune 500 CEOs and federal judges, senators and billionaires."

Early aptitude

Unfortunately, much of the research from SMPY (pronounced simpy) indicates that kids who show an early aptitude for subjects like science and math tend not to receive the help they need.

Teachers who see their brightest students mastering material and getting straight As choose instead to devote the majority of their attention to under-achieving kids.



As a result, the kids who may have gone on to invent life-changing medical devices or sit in the United Nations can fall into less influential roles.

SMPY reveals that assuming the smartest kids can achieve their full potential without being pushed is misguided.

One of the many follow-up reviews in the study's 45-year run showed that grade-skipping can play a vital role in kids' development. When researchers compared a control group of gifted students who didn't skip a grade to those who did, the grade-skippers were 60% more likely to earn patents and doctorates and more than twice as likely to get a Ph.D. in a field related to science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM).

Even at the upper limits of intelligence, in other words, kids can still slip through the cracks. *(Source: Business Insider)*

AIC Pays 9b Rials Worth of Compensation to Shadilon Textile Group Co.

In line with honoring clientele, the insured entities and compensating the damages incurred to the insured, Asia Insurance Company (AIC) paid 9 billion rials worth of compensation to Shadilon Textile group Company in the shortest time possible.

Shadilon Textile Group Company's compensation check was submitted by Faramarz Khajir Deputy Chief Executive of Asia Insurance Company to the representative of the textile company.

After announcing the damage incurred to the Textile Company, AIC dispatched its expert insurance teams along with officials in charge of building, electricity and textile machinery to the incident site, Public Relations Dept. of AIC reported.

After evaluating the damage and holding expert-level sessions, the compensation rate was determined 9 billion rials, the amount of which was compensated by AIC.

It should be noted that fire broke out in the production and packaging halls of Shadilon No-Baft Company, affiliated to Shadilon Textile Group Company, at the ending days of the last Iranian calendar year in 1394 (ended March 19, 2016). The fire was curbed and extinguished at the unsparing efforts of firefighting team of the factory and also on-time attendance of firefighting team of Mashhad Safety Services and Firefighting Organization.

Ground Broken for Constructing Eight Schools at Initiative of Ayandeh Bank

At the initiative taken by Ayandeh Bank, the ground was broken for the construction operation of a number of eight schools in less developed and disadvantaged provinces of the country on Sunday Sept. 11 in the presence of senior officials of provincial governorship and education managers, members of the Board of Directors, deputies and directors of the bank.

These development projects will be constructed under the auspicious name of Eight Infallible Imam of Household Prophet, Imam Reza (AS) concurrent with Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice).

Moreover playing a constructive role in monetary market of the country, Ayandeh Bank tries to take giant step in the field of social responsibilities including construction of school with the aim of paving suitable way for children and young adults living in disadvantaged and underprivileged areas of the country to continue their studies, Public Relations Department of Ayandeh Bank reported.

Given the above issue, construction of one of these schools has been funded by managers and staff of Ayandeh Bank, the report added.

With the coordination made in this regard, these schools will be put into operation in upcoming School Year 2017-2018.

NEWS

Tides affect earthquakes, moon phase can increase seismic activity intensity

What causes earthquakes? Seismologists and other scientists have been trying to understand the geological phenomenon for centuries in a bid to come up with some sort of an effective early warning system that could save many lives. And while our understanding of earthquakes is still relatively poor, a new study links the intensity of quakes to tidal stress on Earth.

The study by researchers from the University of Tokyo concludes "that large earthquakes are more probable during periods of high tidal stress." Which is to say, quakes that occur on the days of full or new moons — every 15 days, when the tidal forces affecting Earth are the strongest — are likely to be strong ones, compared to those on other days.

The study, titled "Earthquake potential revealed by tidal influence on earthquake size–frequency statistics," takes three sets of data on earthquakes from Japan, California and around the world.

On analyzing them, they found "that very large earthquakes, including the 2004 Sumatran, 2010 Maule earthquake in Chile and the 2011 Tohoku-Oki earthquake in Japan, tend to occur near the time of maximum tidal stress amplitude."

Led by Satoshi Ide, a seismologist at the University of Tokyo, the study also found that "for more than 10,000 earthquakes of around magnitude 5.5, the researchers found, an earthquake that began during a time of high tidal stress was more likely to grow to magnitude 8 or above." All earthquakes start small, and depending on numerous factors that aren't fully understood, grow in intensity.

However, Ide pointed out that despite the effect of tides, earthquakes do not become more probable in areas prone to them, and that the study does not change how such regions should prepare for quakes. *(Source: ibtimes.com)*

Super-hypnotic desk sculpture is powered by magnets and ferrofluid

Forget retro office accessories like lava lamps and Big Mouth Billy Bass. If you really want to start a conversation, consider investing in Rize, a beautiful visual display that uses ferrofluid and directed magnetic fields to achieve truly otherworldly results.

Having launched as a Kick-starter campaign with the modest goal of racking up $7,000 in pledges, the so-called Rize Spinning Ferrofluid Display has now attracted almost 900 backers — and a total haul of $120,142 at time of writing. There's still time for you to get involved.

"My background is in engineering, but my hobby and passion is creating art," creator Matt Robison told Digital Trends. "I wanted to make a really nice-looking piece that would look great on any desk. I think it's something that would be cool to show people, or just to get you thinking if you're sat at your computer for a long time. You look at it and it's just a really mesmerizing effect. It's a fun art piece."

For those unfamiliar with the amazing properties of ferrofluid, it refers to a strange black substance developed by NASA for use as a prototype rocket fuel. Ferrofluid was originally made by mixing RP-1 rocket fuel — a substance similar to kerosene — with magnetite particles, so that magnetic forces could pull the fuel into the rocket engines in zero gravity.

To create his extraterrestrial-appearing masterpiece, Robison decided to come up with a way to show off these unique abilities to maximum visual impact. To activate Rize, users place the sculpture onto its magnetic base, which has the effect of magnetizing the giant screw in the center of the sculpture and causing the ferrofluid to spin around it hypnotically.

(Source: Digital Trends)

Many languages use similar sounds for common objects

Nearly two thirds of the world's languages often use similar sounds for common objects, such as the "n" sound for nose, international researchers said Monday.

The study challenges a long-standing principle of linguistics, which holds that the relationship between sound and meaning is completely arbitrary, said the report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"These sound symbolic patterns show up again and again across the world, independent of the geographical dispersal of humans and independent of language lineage," said Morten Christiansen, professor of psychology at Cornell University.

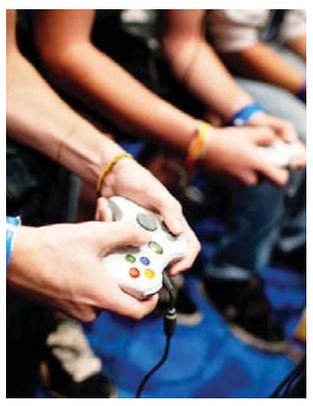
"There does seem to be something about the human condition that leads to these patterns. We don't know what it is, but we know it's there," added Christiansen, director of Cornell's Cognitive Neuroscience Lab.

For the study, scientists analyzed dozens of basic vocabulary words in 62 percent of the world's more than 6,000 current languages. *(Source: AFP)*

NEWS

Gamer science: Are video games making kids smarter?

Video games provide us with challenging environments, fun puzzles and endless hours of entertainment. Today it seems that all too many people are spending their time exploring alien worlds, saving Princess Zelda or catching Pokémon. All that time spent in front of a computer screen just can't be good for us and it really can't be good for our children... can it? Most parents, mine included, would probably tell you no. A survey conducted in Australia, however, would say yes! After surveying 12,004 students across 772 schools it was discovered that students who spent significant time online playing video games scored higher in math, reading and science, while students that spent their time on social media scored lower.



The survey was mainly focused on internet usage among 15-year-olds and compared those numbers to recent test scores. Internet usage among Australian teens is higher than it is in the United States — 97% compared to 93% — but both countries have large numbers of youth spending their time online compared to Europe, 86%. The survey showed that students spend their time online playing games, engaging in social media and many other activities. The numbers showed that the students that were playing games more often were scoring much higher in all three academic categories while students that spent most of their internet time on social media were scoring much lower.

(Source: Forbes)

LEARN ENGLISH

Daily Chores on a Farm

Cesar: **Rise and shine**! It's time to get to work.
Karol: What?! It's four o'clock in the morning. The sun isn't even up yet.
Cesar: You live on a **farm** now. We have a lot of **chores** to do before **sunup** and we need to start doing them now.
Karol: I'll **milk the cows** later. Let me sleep to a **decent hour**.
Cesar: All right, you can milk the cows a little later, but we have to **feed and water the animals** now. We also have to clean out the **stalls** and **groom** the animals before we start repairs on the **fences**.
Karol: Why can't we do those things when the sun is up and we can see what we're doing?
Cesar: Because we'll need **daylight hours** to tend to the **crops**. We're done with **planting**, but we'll need to do the watering and **weeding**. Just be glad that the **harvest** is three months away.
Karol: I don't think I'm **cut out to be** a **farmhand**.
Cesar: You should have thought of that before agreeing to spend the summer at your uncle's farm. Now move!
Karol: But I thought I'd spend the days learning how to ride horses.
Cesar: **City girls**!

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

rise and shine: used humorously to tell someone to wake up and get out of bed
farm: an area of land, used for growing crops or keeping animals
chore: a small job that you have to do regularly, especially work that you do to keep a house clean
sunup: the time when the sun first appears in the morning
milk the cow: to take milk from a cow
decent hour: a time that is not too early
feed and water the animal: to give the animal something to eat and give them water to drink
stall: an enclosed area in a building for an animal such as a horse or cow
groom: to clean and brush an animal, especially a horse
fence: a structure made of wood, metal etc. that surrounds a piece of land
daylight hour: the time when the light produced by the sun during the day
crop: a plant such as wheat, rice, or fruit that is grown by farmers and used as food
plant: to put plants or seeds in the ground to grow
weed: to remove unwanted plants from a garden or other place
harvest: the time when crops are gathered from the fields, or the act of gathering them
cut out to be something: to have the qualities that you need for a particular job or activity
farmhand: someone who works on a farm
city girl: a female who has little to no knowledge of the country way of life

Without water, everything withers

The top 5 mistakes divorced parents make

Breaking up is hard to do, and it may be especially hard for kids. Kids of divorce can feel they've been hit the hardest by the end of their parents' relationship. Some are asked to broker peace between warring exes, even as they are grieving the loss of a parent who has abruptly moved out. Others must deal with parents who suddenly can't cope with everyday tasks, like making dinner or helping with homework.

Many children carry the battle scars of divorce well into adulthood. But broken-up spouses can help stop the damage by managing their own behavior before the ink dries on the divorce papers. Family and divorce expert M. Gary Neuman, LMHC, gives exes pointers on how to split up without emotionally destroying their kids in long term.

1. Don't make your child the messenger...

"Too many parents attempt to communicate through their children," Neuman says, "which causes undue emotional stress on them and forces them to negotiate a situation their own parents could not handle. Email is an excellent tool nowadays to communicate with your ex-spouse. It allows you to specifically discuss the practicalities of raising your child without detouring into negative areas and opening old wounds. It also provides a recorded message, admissible into court, so parents tend to be more careful when using it.

"If you want or need to speak with your ex over the phone or in person, be focused and stay on task, and most important, don't swallow the bait if he or she descends into anger. Simply say, 'I appreciate your feelings, but I am here to discuss our child's school assignment.' Take the high road. Your child's emotional health depends on it."

2. ... or your therapist

"Teenagers like to feel in control, and divorce turns their world upside down," Neuman says. "Don't fall into the trap of sharing divorce details or your angry feelings about your ex with your older kids. Their own anxiety and need for control causes them to be 'understanding' of what you're going through, but you need to be the parent. Get outside help for yourself, get therapy if necessary, and maintain those boundaries. Making your child your cohort is wrong and does them damage."

3. Try to "get" your kid

"Kids need to feel as if they are understood," Neuman says, and after a divorce their feelings may be in turmoil. "Listen to them. Don't tell them what to think. And it might be difficult, but never criticize your ex -- it's a criticism of your child, who, of course, is 50% of your ex-husband or wife. Respond specifically to what they are telling you. Say, 'It sounds like you are feeling sad/mad/upset about meeting your dad's new girlfriend, is that right?' As a parent, you don't have to have a solution. You just need to hear them.

"And don't editorialize. You can suggest your child write down his feelings and share them with your ex, but only if the child wants to do so. Stay trained on your child's feelings, not yours. Healing comes through a loving connection and from feeling understood."

4. Avoid the third degree

"I tell parents to treat their child's weekend away with their ex-spouse as if the child has just visited an aunt or uncle," Neuman says. "Saying nothing will leave your child stressed, as if he must compartmentalize both worlds and tiptoe around this other experience. On the other hand, grilling the child puts him squarely in the middle, which is an impossible position emotionally. So ask your kid fun and general questions, which diffuses tension. And then let it go."

5. Repair the damage you've already done

Many divorced parents reading these tips may recognize mistakes they've unintentionally made with their own kids. Is it ever too late to undo emotional fall-out from a nasty split? "No, children are remarkably forgiving," Neuman says, "at least until they reach their later teen years, when anger may be more cemented. If you've made mistakes, it's important to do the following:

Apologize for them. Saying you're sorry goes a long way with your kids.

Explain in detail exactly what you've done wrong, and then commit to changing your behavior from that moment on.

Give your child a safe and specific signal -- for example, tell your child to raise his or her hand when you begin criticizing your ex -- which serves as a time-out for you, telling you in no uncertain terms you're doing it again and need to stop immediately."

(Source: WebMD)

Humans improved one rainforest; how can we improve the rest?

Trees that are taller, wider and healthier as a result of 13,000 years of human inhabitation in the forest sounds too good to be true, but that's exactly what researchers found in a temperate rainforest along the coast of British Columbia.

Scientists from the University of Waterloo, the University of Victoria and the Hakai Institute published their findings in Nature Communications on Tuesday. Shells and fire contributed to the exemplary health of the forest.

"It's incredible that in a time when so much research is showing us the negative legacies people leave behind, here is the opposite story," study lead and professor in the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo Andrew Trant said in a press release.

"These forests are thriving from the relationship with coastal First Nations. For more than 13,000 years -- 500 generations-people have been transforming this landscape. So this area that at first glance seems pristine and wild is actually highly modified and enhanced as a result of human behavior."

Shellfish are a staple of the First Nations' diet. The disposed shells covered thousands of square meters in the forest, and at some places were up to five meters deep.

Nutrients from the shells nourished the forest soil. The breakdown of shells is a slow process that distributes nutrients in a sort of time release.

The nutrients from the shells, combined with common use of fire, provided important benefits that allowed the forest to thrive. Scientists found that the First Nations inhabited forest had a more favorable soil pH and better soil drainage.Trant expects to find similar results along other global coastlines. Future research is planned to study more landscapes that have historically been influenced by humans. Notably absent from the studied forest are plastic pollution, deforestation and significant use of fossil fuels.

(Source: Nature World News)

IN FOCUS **Tehran Times/** Mohammad Mashayekhi

Seedlings of tomato, pepper, eggplant, cabbage, watermelon, etc., are grown at Hasht Bandi greenhouse complex in the southern province of Hormozgan. The seedlings are then sold to farmers to be transplanted onto main fields.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Climbers release fox caught in plastic container

A group of climbers from Borujerd, Lorestan province, delicately helped to free a fox whose head was stuck in a plastic container, Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.

While the climbers were climbing the region's heights they saw a fox that was stuck in a plastic container left in the area and was about to die.

They helped to release the fox carefully and the animal was once again free to go back to nature.

نجات جان روباه گرفتار شده در ظرف پلاستیکی توسط کوهنوردان

به گزارش خبرگزاری تسنیم کوهنوردان بروجردی با دقت اقدام به خلاص کردن سر یک روباه که داخل ظرف پلاستیکی گرفتار شده بود میکنند.

کوهنوردان بروجردی در هنگام کوهنوردی در ارتفاعات منطقه با یک روباه مواجه می‌شوند که به علت گیر کردن سر حیوان در داخل یک ظرف رها شده در طبیعت، در شرف مرگ قرار گرفته بود.

این کوهنوردان اقدام به خلاص کردن سر این روباه از داخل ظرف پلاستیکی می‌کنند و این حیوان به دامن محیط زیست خود باز می‌گردد.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Man is known by the company he keeps

Explanation: a person's character is judged by the type of people with whom they spend their time
For example: Cleaning up the banquet room won't take long if we all help; many hands make light work.

PHRASAL VERB

Bash something up

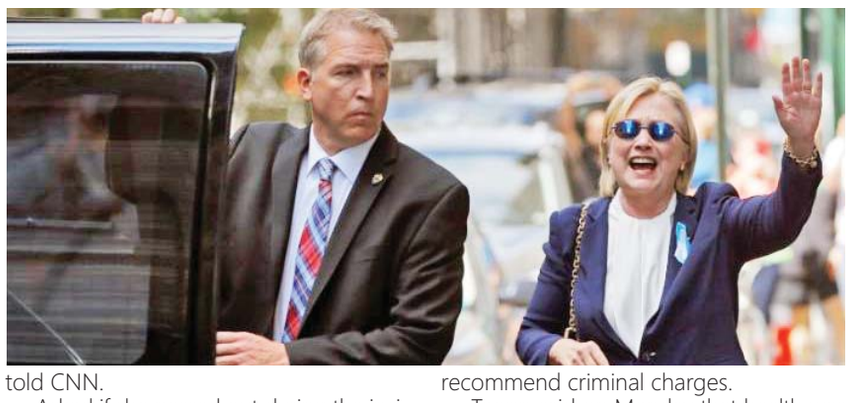
Meaning: to crash something; to strike something and damage it
For example: She bashed the car up badly.

ENGLISH IDIOM

All told

Explanation: all told means the final number, when everything has been counted
For example: The number of visitors to the exhibition, all told, was 2543.

'I didn't think it was a big deal,' Clinton says of pneumonia bout



Democrat Hillary Clinton said she could resume presidential campaigning in a couple of days after a bout of pneumonia that she initially had not believed was "that big a deal."

Clinton's health scare after she almost collapsed at an event on Sunday, causing her to cancel some campaign trips, revived concerns about a tendency toward secrecy that has dogged her campaign, and underscored perennial worries about the medical fitness of candidates for one of the world's most demanding jobs.

"Well, it will be in the next couple of days. ... I just want to get this over and done with and get back on the trail as soon as possible," she said in an interview on CNN on Monday night, adding she had ignored doctor's orders to rest.

"I just didn't think it was going to be that big a deal."

Her campaign acknowledged on Monday it may have been too slow disclosing her pneumonia diagnosis after she nearly fainted at a New York memorial ceremony for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. She was diagnosed with the lung infection on Friday.

"I think that in retrospect, we could have handled it better in terms of providing more information more quickly," Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon told MSNBC earlier in the day. The health problem was the latest blow for the Democratic presidential nominee at a time when Republican rival Donald Trump has erased most of her lead in national opinion polls and is competitive again in many battleground states where the Nov. 8 election is likely to be decided.

Clinton, 68, said she had dealt with similar episodes of dizziness before. "You know, it is something that has occurred a few times over the course of my life. I'm aware of it and usually can avoid it," she told CNN.

Asked if she passed out during the incident on Sunday, she said: "No, I didn't. I felt dizzy and I did lose my balance for a minute. Once I got in. Once I could sit down. Once I could cool off. Once I had some water, I immediately started feeling better."

Her campaign said her husband, former President Bill Clinton, would campaign on her behalf while she rests.

Both Clinton and Trump, 70, said they intended to release more of their medical details in the coming days, as their campaigns gear up for the November election.

'deeply shocked'

Questions about the incident reinforced the perception of Clinton as secretive, a view fuelled by the controversy surrounding her use of a private email server while serving as President Barack Obama's secretary of state from 2009 to 2013.

A federal investigation of that issue said she was "extremely careless" in her handling of classified emails, but did not recommend criminal charges.

Trump said on Monday that health was a campaign issue but he did not attack Clinton over her physical condition. "I just hope she gets well and gets back on the trail," he said in an interview with Fox News.

He focused his criticism on comments by Clinton last week in which she dismissed half of his supporters as a "basket of deplorable" of racist, homophobic people. Clinton said she regretted the remark.

Trump has compared the comment with a much-criticized remark by 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney that 47 percent of the electorate was dependent on the government.

"I was deeply shocked and alarmed to hear my opponent attack, slander, smear, demean these wonderful, amazing people who are supporting our campaign by the millions," Trump told a conference of National Guard members in Baltimore.

Trump has himself aroused controversy with comments in which he called some Mexican immigrants criminals and rapists, questioned whether a United States-born judge could be fair because of his Mexican heritage and criticized the Muslim parents of an American soldier who died in combat in Iraq.

'short-term turbulence'

Clinton's pneumonia disclosure was made public hours after her campaign said she had become "overheated" to explain why, her knees buckling and unsteady, she was rushed from the Sept. 11 ceremony.

"The short-term turbulence will be more about the handling of this than the substance," David Axelrod, a former political adviser to Obama, told Reuters.

"Antibiotics can take care of pneumonia," Axelrod tweeted later. "What's the cure for an unhealthy penchant for privacy that repeatedly creates unnecessary problems?"

Trump had suggested for weeks that Clinton lacked the energy needed to be president. He has raised questions about her stamina, reprising a tactic from the Republican primary campaign when he derided rival Jeb Bush as a "low-energy" candidate.

Democrats said her attendance at events despite her pneumonia diagnosis proved her toughness.

Trump's campaign has issued a short letter from his doctor saying he was in excellent health with "extraordinary" strength and stamina. But the letter did not mention what medicine Trump might be taking or other details typically included in such disclosures.

In July 2015, Clinton released a two-page letter outlining her medical condition that sought to reassure Americans about her health after she fell and suffered a concussion at home in 2012 near the end of her tenure as secretary of state.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran, Austria ink environment protection MOU

TT SOCIETY desk

Iran and Austria signed a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation in the field of environment protection.

Iranian Department of Environment Director Masoumeh Ebtekar and Austrian Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management Andrä Rupprechter signed the MOU in Vienna on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

The MOU underlines cooperation in the exchange of information and technology related to the environment, climate change, and marine ecology.

On the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Ebtekar said the two sides agreed to hold courses on conserving national parks and protected areas as well as training rangers.

"We also agreed upon paving the way for both the government and the private sectors to invest in waste management and renewable energy projects," she added.

Rupprechter, for his part, said that Austria is ready to establish waste incinerators in Iran and help the country implement water and wastewater management projects.

Ebtekar arrived in Vienna on Monday for a two-day visit. She is scheduled to meet Austrian Foreign Affairs Minister Sebastian Kurz, members of the Austrian chamber of commerce, and some MPs.

U.S. global political leadership has declined: Professor Onuf

1→ And he asked, 'Can the United States as a society summon the political coherence and willpower to devise and implement a sustainable leadership strategy for the twenty-first century?' It's pretty clear he thought it an open question just a few years ago, and I expect he still does. (The quoted passages are from Keohane's 'Hegemony and after: What can be said about the future of American global leadership?' Foreign Affairs, Vol. 91, No. 4, readily available online.)

Now, as for my stance. If we mean hegemony as dominance, than obviously the U.S. experienced a moment of dominance after the Cold War ended. This moment was highly contingent and bound to be temporary. Decline set in soon enough for all kinds of obvious reasons. If we mean hegemony as leadership, then my stance is pretty much the same as Keohane's. If there is a decline in U.S. leadership, then the large causes are political incoherence and loss of will. This is not just the situation in the U.S. No other country has the coherence or will to exercise leadership beyond regional limits. If we mean hegemony as top rank in the global status-order, I'm not sure this has changed—yet. The question is not so much whether the U.S. has lost status in the global order but whether other states have joined the U.S. in the top rank. Here the answer is not so clear. In strictly global terms, no. If we see the world having regionalized significantly in the last couple decades, then yes. The U.S., Germany, China, India, Russia and perhaps even Iran could be taken to constitute a club of regional hegemons, each gradually learning to respect the others' regional spheres of influence.

The U.S., Germany, China, India, Russia and perhaps even Iran could be taken to constitute a club of regional hegemons, each gradually learning to respect the others' regional spheres of influence.

How do you support your stance if you think the U.S. has experienced a decline?

A: It would take a book, or indeed three books, to support my stance that the U.S. has lost room to maneuver in world affairs without necessarily losing its capacity for leadership or its status by most measures. And even then I would not have addressed the large question as to whether states in general have lost their dominance, capacity to lead and status in today's world.

In what areas have the U.S. hegemony declined most?

A: If 'most' relative to other states, then it would seem in its ability to compel other states to do its bidding through the threat or use of military force and economic sanctions. But I should point out that this is hardly a recent development—consider Vietnam. The real issue is whether this traditional criterion for dominance tells us very much about the way things work today. If 'most' relative to other societies, it may be in its reputation for managing the global economy. In this respect, 2008 changed everything.

Do you see a link between the decline in the U.S. hegemonic power and the conflicts in the Middle East?

A: If we define hegemony as Keohane does—as a matter of political leadership—then the answer is surely yes, there is a link. To say this, of course, is barely to scratch the surface of what has been happening in the Middle East. If we define hegemony as I am inclined to—as a matter of status-ordering—then the Middle East has been off-limits, so to speak, for decades. Let me explain briefly. Given Israel's peculiar position as a beneficiary of U.S. protection and the dependence of the world economy on the region's oil, the stability of the global status-order (which is, after all, in the interest of most states) requires the Middle East to be cordoned off and treated by reference to a separate set of rules. In effect, the Middle East has a status so anomalous as to deny it any position in the standing system of global hegemony. I see little likelihood that this situation will change in the foreseeable future.

U.S. hegemony in forcing other countries to do its bidding "through the threat or use of military force and economic sanctions" has been declining, says Onuf, a primary figure among constructivists in international relations.

U.S. bombers fly over South Korea in show of force after nuclear test

Two United States B-1 bombers flew over South Korea on Tuesday in a show of force and solidarity with its ally after North Korea's nuclear test last week, while a U.S. envoy called for a swift and strong response to Pyongyang from the United Nations.

Speaking in the South Korean capital on Tuesday, Sung Kim, the U.S. envoy on North Korea, said that the United States remained open to meaningful dialogue with Pyongyang on ending its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"Our intention is to secure the strongest possible (United Nations Security Council) resolution that includes new sanctions as quickly as possible," Kim told a news briefing after meeting his South Korean counterpart.

He said the United States would work with China, North Korea's major diplomatic ally, to close loopholes in existing resolutions, which were tightened with Beijing's backing in March.

"China has been very clear that they understand the need for a new UN Security Council resolution in response to the latest North Korean nuclear test," Kim said.

However, China and Russia, which strongly oppose a recent decision by the United States and South Korea to deploy an advanced anti-missile system in the South to counter the North's missile threat, have shown reluctance to back further sanctions.

"Both sides think that North Korea's nuclear test is not beneficial to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula," China's official People's Daily newspaper said on Tuesday following a high-level China-Russia security meeting in Beijing.

"At present, we must work hard to prevent the situation on the peninsula continuing to escalate, and put the issue of the nuclearization of the peninsula back on the track of dialogue and consultation," it said.

The pair of the U.S. supersonic B-1B Lancer strategic bombers took off from their base in Guam and flew with two Japan Air Self Defense Force aircraft before a "hand-off" to South Korean fighters, according to the U.S. military.

The B-1Bs were then escorted by South Korean and U.S. fighter jets in a low-altitude flight over Osan Air Base, which is 77 km (48 miles) from the Demilitarized Zone border with the North and about 40 km (25 miles) from the South's capital Seoul.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS

Turkey 'asks U.S. to arrest Gulen' for 'ordering' coup

Turkey has asked Washington to arrest the United States-based preacher Fethullah Gulen for "ordering" the July 15 coup bid which was aimed at ousting the government, state media reported on Tuesday.

The justice ministry has demanded that U.S. authorities arrest the preacher on charges of "ordering and commanding the attempted coup," the Anadolu news agency reported.

It was the first time Turkey had formally asked Washington to arrest Gulen, who currently lives in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania, the agency said.

Ankara has on several occasions asked the U.S. authorities to extradite Gulen, sending them documents which allegedly show evidence of his involvement in the putsch.

Early last month, an Istanbul court issued a formal arrest warrant for Gulen, who has denied any involvement in the botched coup.

When U.S. Vice President Joe Biden visited Ankara several weeks later, he said he understood the "intense feeling" in Turkey over Gulen.

The United States has "no, no, no, no interest whatsoever in protecting anyone who has done harm to an ally. None," he said.

"But we need to meet the legal standard requirement under our law," he added.

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

Gulen was an ally of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan before 2013. The alliance was destroyed after the 2013 corruption investigations in Turkey. Erdogan accused Gulen of being behind the corruption investigations. He is currently on Turkey's most-wanted-terrorist list and is accused of leading what the current Turkish officials call the Gulenist Terror Organization (FETO). A Turkish criminal court issued an arrest warrant for Gulen. Turkey is demanding the extradition of Gulen from the United States. However, U.S. figures in general do not believe he is associated with any terrorist activity, and have requested evidence to be provided by the Turkish Government to substantiate the allegations in the warrant requesting extradition. *(Source: agencies)*

Altercation breaks out at Trump rally

An altercation broke out between the United States Republican presidential nominees Donald Trump supporters and protesters at the Republican presidential nominee's campaign rally in Asheville, North Carolina.

A man from the crowd went over to violently confront a group of anti-Trump protesters as they were being escorted out on Monday from the U.S. Cellular Center arena.

A video of the incident shows the man with his hands on a protester's neck. Moments later, the man lobbed a blow at the protester.

The man pulled another protester toward him and shouted back and forth with a third, female protester while a member of Trump's security team held him back. He also shouted at a female protester wearing a hijab who was not with the group but was also escorted out.

The unidentified man was allowed to remain for the rest of the rally despite his actions.

It is not the first time Trump's campaign rally has turned violent. Trump's campaign has been marked by hateful name-calling and controversy from the beginning, including disparaging remarks about women, Mexican immigrants and Muslims.

The NBC poll also shows that a majority of registered voters hold an unfavorable view of both Trump and Clinton, and consider them not trustworthy. *(Source: agencies)*

2 protesters die in Kashmir as curfew quiets Eid festivities

Two anti-India protesters were killed and scores were injured in clashes with security forces in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir on Tuesday, police said, as a security lockdown marred Eid festivities in the disputed region.

Security forces fired tear gas and shotgun pellets to quell protesters in several places, including Srinagar, the main city, police said. Protests took place in dozens of areas in the region, which has been wracked by massive demonstrations since July.

A curfew was in effect in the entire Kashmir Valley, and most people stayed indoors for the Islamic festival of Eid al-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice), which fell on Tuesday. Usually bustling on such occasions, Srinagar's marketplaces were deserted.

Authorities did not allow congregational Eid prayers in the main mosques and Eid grounds in the predominantly Muslim region, but prayers were held by people in small neighborhood mosques. A protester was killed by a tear gas shell in the northern area of Bandipora, a police officer said on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to reporters. Another protester was killed by shotgun pellets in Shopian in the south, he said. At least 60 people were injured in clashes in 10 different places in the region. *(Source: AP)*

U.S. July exports to Iran rise 54% yr/yr

1→ The worth of U.S.'s exports to Iran in January-July 2016 was $97.7 million, showing a 38 percent fall from $157.7 million in the same period in 2015.

The country's worth of imports from the Islamic Republic in the said time was $41.7 million, while the figure stood at zero in the same time in the preceding year.

PARALYMPICS

Blind footballer Behzad Zadaliasghar scores worldie at the Paralympics

Take a bow son.

That'd be what Andy Gray would say if he were commentating on the Rio Paralympics (which thankfully he's not) after witnessing Behzad Zadaliasghar's sensational solo goal in the blind football tournament.

Picking the ball up on the left wing, the Iran No.10 cut inside. After skimming past one challenge a wonderful bit of footwork saw him leave two opposition players for dead. He then took it around another before unleashing the ball into the bottom corner of the net.

Who does blind football work?

- The game is played by players of varying degrees of visual impairment
- To make it a level playing field, outfield players with better sight wear blindfolds
- Goalkeepers can be partially or full sighted and also act as a guide
- The ball contains a noise-making device enabling it to be located
- Silence must be kept in the stands during periods of play
- The pitch is surrounded by boards to stop the ball going out and to help players get their bearings
- The balls are heavier than a normal ball to limit bounce and put the emphasis on skill

The goal sparked jubilant celebrations and helped ensure Iran won their match against Morocco 2-0.

(Source: Metro)

Chelsea captain John Terry ruled out of Liverpool clash with foot injury

John Terry has been ruled out of action for "approximately 10 days" by Chelsea with strained foot ligaments, meaning the defender will miss Friday's Premier League clash against Liverpool.

Chelsea confirmed in a short statement that Terry, who picked up the injury in the final minutes of Sunday's 2-2 draw with Swansea City and left the Liberty Stadium on crutches, will be out of action for approximately 10 days.

It means the Chelsea captain is definitely out of Liverpool's visit to Stamford Bridge as well as next Tuesday's EFL Cup third-round tie against Leicester City, and faces a fight to recover for the Blues' trip to the Emirates Stadium to take on Arsenal on Sept. 24.

In Terry's absence, David Luiz is expected to make his first Chelsea appearance since finalising a shock return to Stamford Bridge after two years at Paris Saint-Germain on deadline day. The Brazilian, along with fellow new arrival Marcos Alonso, was an unused substitute against Swansea.

Gary Cahill is expected to keep his place alongside Luiz after sources told ESPN FC that the England international will not be punished by the Football Association for his postmatch tweets and comments about referee Andre Marriner in the wake of the Swansea draw.

Terry underwent immediate treatment from Chelsea's medical staff on the squad's return from south Wales on Sunday, but swelling around the 35-year-old's ankle delayed the scan that has now confirmed the extent of the injury.

The 35-year-old signed a new one-year contract at Chelsea in May after a lengthy standoff that he claimed required him to accept a "different role" at Stamford Bridge, but started each of the Blues' first four Premier League matches this season at the heart of Antonio Conte's defence.

(Source: Soccernet)

Vicente del Bosque hailed by Sir Alex Ferguson at UEFA conference

Former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has paid a glowing tribute to ex-Spain coach Vicente del Bosque after presenting him with an award during a UEFA conference in Paris.

The long-time United boss was among many coaches and technical directors to gather in the French capital to assess this summer›s Euro 2016 tournament that was held in the country.

Among those in attendance was Julen Lopetegui, Del Bosque›s successor as Spain coach. Del Bosque ended his eight-year spell in charge of La Roja following their round-of-16 elimination in France by Italy.

«Success changes certain people but Vicente has never changed,» Ferguson said. «He guided Spain with class and his national team will always be remembered for how they played.»

Del Bosque led Spain to their first World Cup triumph in 2010 and followed that success by clinching the country›s second successive European Championship two years later.

Del Bosque, who previously captured two Champions League crowns and two La Liga titles in a four-year spell in charge of Real Madrid between 1999 and 2003, continues to work for the Royal Spanish Football Federation as an advisor.

(Source: Soccernet)

Sardar Azmoun, Umtiti and Morata among 32 Champions League players to watch

With the 2016-17 Champions League group stage getting under way this week, Michael Yokhin picks out a player to watch from each of the 32 clubs taking part.

Group A

Presnel Kimpembe, PSG

Kimpembe is a rarity at Paris Saint-Germain -- an academy graduate who is getting a fair chance to prove himself in the lineup. The 21-year-old, who was linked to Chelsea, featured regularly in the beginning of the season, and coach Unai Emery was satisfied with his performances. With David Luiz back at Chelsea, he might set the Champions League alight.

Alex Iwobi, Arsenal

The Nigerian, 20, burst onto the scene with some spectacular performances toward the end of last season, contributing two goals and five assists and getting compliments from his uncle, the incomparable Jay-Jay Okocha. Iwobi's dribbling skills and vision make him an exciting player to watch, and he is able to fill numerous positions in Arsene Wenger's attack.

Alexander Fransson, Basel

The 22-year-old midfielder was compared to Andres Iniesta at his former club Norrkoping, where he grew up and became a star by Swedish standards, proving to be crucial in the sensational title triumph in 2015. After moving to Basel in January, Fransson won the title in Switzerland as well, broke into the national team after Euro 2016, and his passing skills could be very useful in the Champions League.

Jonathan Cafu, Ludogorets

Ludogorets invested about €2 million when signing the 25-year-old Brazilian winger from Sao Paulo, and now owner Kiril Domuschiev expects to get no less than €10m for him. Little wonder -- Cafu scored two absolutely breathtaking goals against Red Star Belgrade in the Champions League qualifiers, and his technical abilities will make him a very noticeable player at the group stage.

Group B

Andre Horta, Benfica

After selling the teenage sensation Renato Sanches to Bayern Munich, Benfica signed 19-year-old Horta from Vitoria Setubal as his direct replacement. Once discarded at the club academy, the diminutive box-to-box midfielder has proved the club wrong and is delighted to be back at Estadio da Luz. His boundless energy is badly needed, and Horta could emulate Sanches, although that is quite a task.

Elseid Hysaj, Napoli

One of the best right-backs at Euro 2016, the 22-year-old Albanian is still a bit underrated outside of Italy, but that will change very quickly. Nurtured by Maurizio Sarri at Empoli, he was taken by the coach to Napoli and was virtually ever present last season as the team finished second in Serie A. Very disciplined defensively and always willing to join the attack, Hysaj is the perfect modern defender.

Derlis Gonzalez, Dynamo Kiev

The Ukrainian champions are associated with right winger Andriy Yarmolenko, but the 22-year-old Paraguayan on the opposite flank is actually more interesting. Quick and skilful, he is difficult to be marked out of the game, and likes to cut inside using his stronger right foot. Gonzalez scored a crucial goal at Porto last season as Kiev progressed to the round of 16, and could be on song again this term.

Vincent Aboubakar, Besiktas

Mario Gomez was the undisputed star for Besiktas last season -- the German scored 26 goals as the Eagles won their first title since 2009. Now that he has decided to leave because of security concerns, Aboubakar, 24, will have to fill his huge boots. On loan from Porto, the Cameroonian striker will be massively important for his team. He is very strong physically, but possesses a deft touch, too.

Group C

Samuel Umtiti, Barcelona

Didier Deschamps mentioned Umtiti's disappointing performances in the Champions League for Lyon last season when explaining why he didn't want him in his France squad at Euro 2016. Eventually, the 22-year-old got a chance to prove himself and shone at the tournament, and Barcelona must be happy to have signed him for €25m. But can he play better at the group stage than a year ago?

Claudio Bravo, Manchester City

All eyes will be on the Chilean goalkeeper after Pep Guardiola has controversially discarded Joe Hart -- and that is especially true after his problematic debut in the Manchester derby. The 33-year-old will have to prove that he is indeed the right solution, and the move is certainly good for him as far as the Champions League is concerned, because Bravo sat on the bench at Barcelona in European fixtures.

Andreas Christensen, Borussia Monchengladbach

The decision to bring Luiz back from Paris Saint-Germain looks even more questionable when you take into account that Chelsea's brightest centre-back is still on loan in the Bundesliga. Compared to Franz Beckenbauer by Denmark coach Age Hareide, the 20-year-old has been absolutely imperious last season at Gladbach -- solid defensively and superb in distribution. Christensen should be even better this term on his way to superstardom.

Nir Bitton, Celtic

Celtic must be solid in central midfield to avoid getting thrashed six times in a very tough group. The 24-year-old Israeli will be crucial in that respect -- he is calm on the ball, covers a lot of ground and possesses a good long-range shot as well. Quality performances will improve Bitton's chances of moving south to the Premier League.

Group D

Xabi Alonso, Bayern Munich

This could be the Spaniard's last shot at joining Clarence Seedorf and becoming the second player in history to win the Champions League with three different clubs. Legendary at Liverpool and Real Madrid, he is still going strong at almost 35, but that is probably his last season at Allianz Arena. Can we expect a goal from the halfway line?

Nicolas Gaitan, Atletico Madrid

The Argentine midfielder spent six years at Benfica despite constant rumours every summer. Now that he has finally left for a bigger club, this is his chance to prove his worth. A true flair player and crowd pleaser, Gaitan, 28, is also a hard worker admired by Diego Simeone. He could be the game-changer.

Gaston Pereiro, PSV Eindhoven

The Uruguayan winger has Alvaro Recoba's face tattooed on his arm and was compared to Robin van Persie in the Netherlands. Left-footed and unpredictable, Pereiro, 21, loves to dribble and entertain, and dreams of playing for Real Madrid alongside Cristiano Ronaldo, yet another idol. Scoring against Atletico won't hurt his chances.

Sardar Azmoun, Rostov

The skilful striker is definitely the most intriguing player in a combative Rostov lineup. The 21-year-old, nicknamed the "Iranian Messi," scored nine goals as his team sensationally finished second in Russia last season ahead of Zenit, and then found the net against both Anderlecht and Ajax in the Champions League qualifiers. Protege of coach Kurban Berdyev, Azmoun is making progress on a monthly basis.

Group E

Mario Fernandes, CSKA Moscow

The galloping right-back has one cap for Brazil, but he is now a Russian citizen, widely expected to play for the 2018 World Cup hosts at the tournament. That makes the 25-year-old more interesting than ever, and his attacking skills will be very important for CSKA. Fernandes could be less stable at the back at times, though.

Tin Jedvaj, Bayer Leverkusen

If everything goes according to plan, the 20-year-old Croatian sensation could possibly become one of the best defenders of his generation. Versatile and able to fill any position across the back four, he is very fast, tenacious and skilful on the ball. Jedvaj's performance against Spain at Euro 2016 was a masterpiece, and he should make another step forward this season.

Victor Wanyama, Tottenham

When Wanyama played in the Champions League four years ago, he scored against Barcelona and led Celtic into the round of 16. Every team needs a midfield warrior, and the 25-year-old Kenyan is exactly that for Spurs, but he must be careful not to get sent off -- three red cards at Southampton last season are a worrying sign.

Djibril Sidibe, Monaco

Monaco have not spent a great deal on signings in the past two years, but they paid €15m for Sidibe this summer, and that was a very wise investment. The 24-year-old is a full-back, capable of playing left or right, who can easily switch to midfield -- sound defensively, but extremely useful on the wing. He started for France at Belarus in the 2018 World Cup qualifying game, and looks destined to become the first choice in the near future.

Group F

Alvaro Morata, Real Madrid

One of the most intriguing questions at the Bernabeu is the amount of time Morata will get. The 23-year-old striker was brought back from Juventus after two successful seasons, especially in the Champions League, where he scored seven goals, including two against Real in the semifinals in 2015. Morata is a born winner -- could he be the man who brings the 12th European title to the Spanish capital?

Andre Schurrle, Borussia Dortmund

His talent is indisputable, but the 25-year-old winger has been wildly inconsistent at Chelsea and Wolfsburg, and the feeling was that his career is going in the wrong direction. He only had three short substitute appearances at Euro 2016 for Germany, but Dortmund believe in him, and now Schurrle has a great chance to get back on track under the guidance of Thomas Tuchel. Will he take it?

Bas Dost, Sporting Lisbon

After scoring at will for Wolfsburg in the beginning of 2015, the 27-year-old Dutch striker was much less lethal last season, but Sporting gambled on him as a direct replacement for the Leicester-bound Islam Slimani. The move could be perfect for the rather old-fashioned Dost, who should thrive on the service Slimani used to get. Expect a lot of goals if he finds his feet soon enough.

Michal Pazdan, Legia Warsaw

Poland conceded just two goals in 510 minutes of play at Euro 2016, and the 28-year-old centre-back has been absolutely superb throughout. Rather anonymous outside of his homeland, Pazdan became a real star last season, and Legia conceded just once in five matches in the Champions League qualifiers with him on the pitch. It will be very interesting to see him against some of the best attacking lines in Europe.

Group G

Ahmed Musa, Leicester City

The 23-year-old Nigerian is an outstanding acquisition by the Foxes. Not only is Musa a versatile and hardworking attacker who is able to play anywhere across the front line, he also brings invaluable Champions League experience with 20 games in the tournament for CSKA Moscow. Lightning quick and unselfish, Musa is perfect for Claudio Ranieri's tactics, and could shine this season at the big stage.

Andre Silva, Porto

The level of expectations on Andre Silva in Portugal is extremely high, and it remains to be seen whether the 20-year-old who only broke into the lineup in 2016 is mentally strong enough not to lose any touch with reality. There are early signs, though, that Andre Silva could be the central striker the country had been waiting for. Tough tests in the Champions League might prove that.

Ludovic Butelle, Club Brugge

In 2004, the promising French keeper lost his spleen after a terrifying clash with an opponent during a routine friendly at Valencia. Butelle's life was saved in an emergency operation, but his career was seemingly destroyed. Now, 12 years later, he takes the central stage at the age of 33, after helping Club Brugge to win their first title since 2005. It is one of the best stories of the year.

Thomas Delaney, Copenhagen

The Danish champions offered to make Delaney the highest-paid player in the history of the club, but the captain refused and signed for Werder Bremen. Before he leaves in January, the 25-year-old box-to-box player will be keen to make his mark in the Champions League, and his energy, technical skills and aerial prowess will be crucial to Copenhagen's chances to earn a few points.

Group H

Dani Alves, Juventus

The legendary Brazilian was signed with one mission in mind -- to use his vast experience earned at Barcelona to help Juventus to win the Champions League. The 33-year-old right-back says so himself. Alves is one of the most exciting players ever in his position, and it will be very extremely interesting to watch him playing in a totally different tactical formation.

Franco Vazquez, Sevilla

Few midfielders are as elegant as the 27-year-old, who stayed a bit too long at Palermo, but now can finally star at the big stage in a very attack-minded Sevilla side under Jorge Sampaoli. Vazquez had telepathic understanding with Paulo Dybala in Sicily, but will try to outshine his former teammate in the two games against Juventus.

Sergi Darder, Lyon

He is still a little underrated, but the 22-year-old Spaniard is a promising versatile midfielder who combines excellent ball-winning skills with superb distribution and quality long-range shot. His debut season in the Champions League was disappointing with Lyon crashing out at the group stage, but Darder is more experienced now and ready to lead the team.

El Arabi Hilal Soudani, Dinamo Zagreb

The 28-year-old Algerian is the man responsible for Zagreb's qualification -- he expertly scored the extra-time winner at Salzburg in the playoffs. Soudani possesses great speed and good ball control, and he is a born goal scorer, even though usually positioned on the right wing. With Slimani moving to Leicester, Soudani deserves to play in a big league as well, and a good show in the Champions League could make his dream come true.

(Source: ESPN)

Iranian athletes collect two more gold medals in Rio 2016 Paralympics

Iran's powerlifter Majid Farzin seized the country's second gold medal at the 2016 Paralympic Games on Monday.

In the final event of the men's under 80kg competition, the 32-year-old won the gold medal lifting 240kg in the third round.

Farzin also managed to improve his own world mark by four kilograms.

"I had trained intensely for months to clinch this medal. I thank God that all my earlier efforts finally bore fruit, and I could bring honor to my family and nation," Farzin said after the contest.

Chinese competitor Gu Xiaofei claimed the silver with a lift of 228 kilograms. Uzbek weightlifter Giorgi Chkheidze elevated 207 kilograms to earn the bronze medal.

Later on Monday night, Mohammad Khalvandi snatched Iranian delegation's third gold medal at the 2016 Paralympic Game.

The Iranian claimed a gold medal in the Men's Javelin Throw - F57 with a throw of 46.12m.

His countryman Abdollah Heidari won the silver medal, throwing 43.77m.

Bronze medal went to Vietnamese athlete Hung Ngoc with 43.27m.

In the men's shot put F42 category competitions at the Nilton Santos Stadium, Iranian Paralympian athlete Sajad Mohammadian picked a silver medal with a winning throw of 14.31 meters.

British shot putter Aled Davies threw 15.97 meters to snatch the gold medal.

The bronze went to South Africa's Tyrone Pillay with a winning throw of 13.91 meters in his final attempt.

Iranian athletes have so far snatched eight medals — three gold and five silvers — putting the Islamic Republic in the 17th slot of the medal count table.

Iran has participated at the 2016 Summer Paralympics with 111 athletes in 12 sports.

The Iranian delegation finished in 11th place in the previous edition, winning 10 gold medals, seven silvers and seven bronze medals.

(Source: Staff & Agencies)

Faghani to referee Tehran derby for the third time

TT **SPORTS** desk Alireza Faghani has been appointed to referee Friday's Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

The Referees Committee of Iran's Football Federation announced on Wednesday that Torki will officiate the match.

He will be assisted by Reza Sokhandan and Mohammad Reza Mansouri in the derby.

This is the third time Faghani has been appointed as Tehran derby referee. In the previous two games Persepolis has won once while the other match finished with a goalless draw.

"As a referee all the matches are the same for me. Derby is important for the fans and the media but for us it is just like another normal game. I hope we could have decent performance on Friday," Faghani who officiated the Olympic final between Brazil and Germany last month said.

Esteghlal and Persepolis have played against each other 82 times, with Esteghlal winning 24 games, Persepolis taking 21 victories, and 37 matches ending in a draw.

Persepolis is currently Iran Professional league table toppers while Esteghlal is struggling this season as they have gained just three points over the last five games standing in the 14th place.

The Tehran derby was chosen as the most important in Asia and the 22nd important derby in the world on June 2008 by World Soccer Magazine.

Iran loses to Spain in FIFA Futsal World Cup

Two-time world champions Spain opened their 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup campaign in impressive fashion with a 5-1 win over highly-regarded Asian champions Iran in Medellin.

Spain opened in perfect fashion with a goal in the opening minute and quickly raced to a 3-0 half-time lead in what was a high-quality contest.

In truth, the contest was far more even than the scoreline indicated, but the European champions displayed greater efficiency in front of goal. Iran's profligacy extended to the penalty spot where they twice missed spot-kicks in the first half, while Spain's impressive goalkeeper Paco Sedano was kept busy making several blocks.

Lozano crashed home the first goal on the one-minute mark, and Iran somehow failed to equalise in a high-tempo opening half. Sedano made a double save from Mahdi Javid, while Hamid Ahmadi thumped an effort against the frame of the goal.

The European champions soon doubled their lead after Miguelin set-up Jose Ruiz for a cool finish, while Aicardo gave his side a three-goal advantage prior to the interval.

Miguelin scored the goal of the match with a stunning volley from a corner, and a fifth for Spain arrived late on as Aicardo netted his second.

There was belated joy for Iran as Ali Hassan Zadeh scored from the penalty spot either side of Spain's second-half strikes.

Spain tackle fellow Group F opening victors Azerbaijan next up, while Iran will have the chance to atone against Morocco.

(Source: FIFA)

Mexico beats Iran U-20 football squad in China tournament

Iran national under-20 football team, more commonly known as Javanan, has sustained a loss at the "Chang'an Ford Cup" CFA International Youth Football Tournament Qujing 2016 in China, going down to the Mexican side.

On Sunday, the Iranian squad, which had defeated the hosts 4-2 in its opening match on September 9, lost 0-2 to the Central American outfit at the end of a game played in the southwestern Chinese city of Qujing.

The "Chang'an Ford Cup" CFA International Youth Football Tournament Qujing 2016 started on September 7, and will finish on September 15.

The tournament has attracted national under-20 football teams from China, Iran, Kazakhstan and Mexico.

Javanan is preparing for the 2016 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-19 Championship, which is scheduled to be held between October 13 and 30 in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom of Bahrain.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is drawn in Group C of the group stage of the forthcoming sports event, and is pitted against defending champion Qatar, Asian powerhouse Japan and Yemen.

The hosts are drawn in Group A, and have joined 2012 champion South Korea as well as Saudi Arabia.

Group B constitutes of 2014 runner-up North Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Vietnam. Australia, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan form Group D.

The 2016 AFC U-19 Championship acts as the AFC qualifier for the 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup in South Korea, with the top four teams qualifying.

Since South Korea has already qualified automatically as the AFC U-19 Championship host, the fifth-placed team will also qualify for the 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup if the South Korean team finishes in the top four.

(Source: PressTV)

Iran Football 7-a-side into Paralympic Semis

Iran football 7-a-side defeated the Netherlands 2-0 in Group B at the 2016 Paralympic Games on Monday.

Hashem Rastegari and Farzad Mehri scored for the Iranian team in the 9th and 18th minutes respectively.

It was Iran's third successive victory in the event. Team Melli had already defeated Argentina 3-1 and USA 2-0.

Iran will play host Brazil on Wednesday to book a place in the final match.

Iran has participated at the 2016 Summer Paralympics with 111 athletes in 12 sports.

The Iranian delegation finished in 11th place in the previous edition, winning 10 gold medals, seven silvers and seven bronze medals.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran wheelchair basketball to meet Japan for ninth place

Iran wheelchair basketball team earned its second win at the Paralympic Games.

In the match held at the ROA Hall, Iran defeated Algeria 72-48 in Pool B.

Iran defeated Germany 69-63 in its opening match and lost to Great Britain 60-84, USA 93-44 and Brazil 73-50 respectively.

Iran has been scheduled to face Japan on Thursday for ninth place.

Iran has participated at the 2016 Summer Paralympics with 111 athletes in 12 sports.

The Iranian delegation finished in 11th place in the previous edition, winning 10 gold medals, seven silvers and seven bronze medals.

(Source: Tasnim)

PARALYMPICS

At 8 feet tall, this Paralympian sat down and started getting noticed

RIO DE JANEIRO — Greg Walker encountered the tallest man in Iran in the dining hall of a hotel in rural China. Walking with crutches, the man, Morteza Mehrzad, ducked beneath a towering archway. Once through, he straightened his back, unfolding his 8-foot-1-inch frame.

Walker's first thought: Wow.

His second thought: Oh, this is bad.

For at that moment, Walker, coaching the United States men's sitting volleyball team in a tournament in China, realized that Iran had intensified the competition to find tall players leading up to the Paralympics.

A variation of the able-bodied sport, the game is played by people with various impairments who, sitting and sliding along the floor, volley over a nearly four-foot net.

Height truly matters, and after integrating two players who are 6-foot-7 and 6-foot-10, Brazil emerged as a global power. But with Mehrzad's entrance into the competition, Walker, and the coaches of other nations, must rethink their strategy. Or find taller players. "It was as if Iran saw how good a position Brazil's put themselves in with their height," Walker said. "Like, 'O.K., we're going to one-up you. We're going to pull this guy out of the reserves.' Great, thanks."

It is an axiom that holds as true in sitting volleyball as it does in the N.F.L. When one team develops a successful strategy, others strive to duplicate it.

Iran has taken that charge to the extreme, cultivating Mehrzad over a five-year span to counter Anderson Ribas da Silva, Brazil's hulking spiker and blocker extraordinaire who played traditional volleyball professionally before knee injuries prevented him from continuing.

The United States may find the challenge to catch up fraught. Eric Duda, an American player, said he asked a prosthetist who regularly works with the team to help recruitment by sharing his list of tall clients. Walker has joked with his wife, a clinical medical researcher, about scouring a database for the same.

Or, the United States could rely somewhat on happenstance, as Iran did.

The coach, Hadi Rezaei, said he was not actively searching for a player who, when sitting, could look clear over the net. But then one day five years ago he turned on the television.

A program featuring people with physical abnormalities and unusual talents was showing a segment on Mehrzad, and Rezaei, speaking through a translator Saturday night, said he thought, "I could actually use him on my team."

Rezaei called the network, which helped him contact Mehrzad, who was living in seclusion in a coastal town in northern Iran. Mehrzad, who turns 29 on Saturday, often uses a wheelchair because a bike accident when he was 16 injured his pelvis, causing his right leg to stop growing and be about 6 inches shorter than his left. Embarrassed by his height and a hormonal disorder, acromegaly, that causes changes in facial bone structure, Mehrzad rarely left his home, Rezaei said.

Mehrzad was not made available for interviews Saturday night, after Iran began pool play in the Paralympics by sweeping China, but Rezaei shared details about him.

Before Rezaei found him, Mehrzad had heard of sitting volleyball — after all, the Iranian men had won five gold medals and two silvers across the last seven Paralympics — but had never played before.

"We gave him reason to hope, and he wanted it, of course," Rezaei said. He added: "I will tell you a key word that he used himself. Before he became famous, when he came out of the house, everybody looked at him very strangely. And then now that he's famous, when he comes out, everyone wants to take a picture. He became a champion."

That is what Rezaei told him would happen when he coaxed him into the sport, and at first Mehrzad trained in his hometown, refining basic skills. His progression earned him a spot in the national team in March, when, in his international debut in China, he was selected as the best spiker of the Intercontinental Cup.

"He's only 50 percent of what he could be at the moment," said Rezaei, adding that in two years Mehrzad will be "the best player ever."

Even now, though, he dominates. The format of sitting volleyball, a faster version of its standing counterpart, rewards skill and precision but there is no substitute for reach and wingspan. Especially considering that, unlike in standing volleyball, opponents are permitted to block serves. Mehrzad's spikes go straight down, never deep.

"When he attacks, he's like three meters off the ground," Ribas said through an interpreter.

Ribas was exaggerating, slightly. When Mehrzad is sitting, his right arm can strike the ball 6 feet 4 inches off the ground, and that is what the crowd at Riocentro Pavilion 6 was eager to see Saturday night, when he checked in against China during the second set.

It erupted at the sight of him propelling himself onto the court with his hands and assuming his place on the outside, and again after the first point, when his reach forced an error wide. Fed a nice pass two points later, Mehrzad slammed the ball off the front line's fingertips.

Teams, like the United States and China, have tried negating Mehrzad's impact by speeding up their offense. (They have also applied the strategy to Ribas, who wagged his finger à la Dikembe Mutombo after a devastating spike Friday against the United States.) The objective, players said, is to tire the opposition out quicker.

Walker and his assistant, Joe Skinner, adjusted their training plan. To simulate the higher point of impact, they would wallop balls at players while sitting on chairs, or even standing.

"Our defense has gotten better because they're used to seeing it," Walker said. "Before, it was just like, 'What the heck is this?'"

The drills did familiarize the United States men's team. They just could not fully simulate the experience. The Americans lost to Iran in straight sets back in China, and then in straight sets Friday to Brazil, which, barring a challenge from Bosnia and Herzegovina, expects to face Iran for the gold.

If that matchup materializes, and Ribas and Mehrzad do stare across (and over) the net from each other again, it would validate a truism that J. Dee Marinko of the United States mentioned the other day.

"You can't teach height," Marinko said.

(Source: NYTimes)

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Poem of the day

If without the house of devotion I stand,
I am not the first to throw wide the door.
Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon:13:00 Evening: 7:31 Dawn: 5:22 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:47 (tomorrow)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian films win awards at Kazan festival

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** Two Iranian films won awards at the Kazan International Muslim Film Festival, which was held in the capital of the Tartar Autonomous Republic, Russia from September 5 to 11.

Hadi Mohaqeq's "Immortal" won the award for best film while "I Want to Be a King" by Mehdi Ganji won the award for best documentary.

In addition, the award for best cinematographer was presented Ruzbeh Rayga for his collaboration in "Immortal".

"Omophagia" on stage at Tehran theater

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** A troupe led by director/writer Erfan Khallaqi is performing "Omophagia" based on several Greek myths at Tehran's Da Theater.

The monologue, which is being performed by Saman Mahdavi, will be on stage until September 28, Khallaqi told the Persian service of Honaronline on Tuesday.

Omophagia is a large element of Dionysiac myth which means the eating of raw flesh that may have been the symbol of the triumph of wild nature over civilization.

"Hush! Girls Don't Scream" crowned best at Action on Film

TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** Iranian director Puran Derakhshandeh's acclaimed drama "Hush! Girls Don't Scream", has won the best art direction award at the Action on Film (AOF), an international film festival in Pasadena, California, the U.S.

The film's star Shahab Hosseini also won the award for best actor in the World Cinema section of the event, which was held from September 2 to 10.

"Hush! Girls Don't Scream" is about Shirin who is supposed to get married in a couple of hours, but murders a man unexpectedly.

NEWS

"Hotel Rwanda" director revisits historic tragedy in "The Promise"

TORONTO (Reuters) — A new film that addresses the massacre of Armenians by Ottoman forces during World War One is meant to spur discussion about a historical tragedy that still has the power to stir political tensions, its director says.

"The Promise", the latest from director Terry George, had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival on Sunday evening.

The historical drama stars Oscar Isaac as an Armenian medical student and Christian Bale as an American foreign correspondent who fall in love with the same woman. Their love triangle unfolds as the Ottoman Empire's entry into the war is followed by the killing of Christian Armenians.

The nature and scale of those killings remains contentious.

Earlier this year, Turkey recalled its ambassador to Germany in protest against a parliament resolution declaring the 1915 massacre of Armenians a genocide.

Turkey accepts that many Armenians died in partisan fighting beginning in 1915, but denies that up to 1.5 million were killed and that this constituted an act of genocide, a term used by many Western historians and foreign parliaments.

"It's a subject that for 100 years ... has been suppressed, and I thought this was a wonderful opportunity to try and enlighten the world and at the same time tell an engrossing story," George said in a red carpet interview ahead of the premiere.

George won the festival's People's Choice Award in 2004 with "Hotel Rwanda", a true story set during the country's 1994 genocide.

George said the filmmakers opted to stay under the radar during production. But now that the movie completed, he said he is ready to address political reaction.

"Let's get it out into the open. That's what this film is about. Let's not hide in the shadows or suppress the information or suppress the history of the event. Let's have a debate about it," he said.

While there will be a focus on the film's politics, George noted that like directors David Lean and Warren Beatty, he set out to tell an "old fashion love story" set in a historic period.

Canadian actress Charlotte Le Bon, who stars the Armenian artist pursued by both Isaac and Bale, said the events of the film have contemporary relevance given so many people are still fleeing persecution.

"This story happened a hundred years ago and it's still happening today," she said in an interview.

"Standing in the Dust" best film, "Life+1 Day" takes Iran Cinema Celebration by storm

1→

Rustai also received the award for best screenwriter and Moaadi won the best actor award for his role in "Life+1 Day". The film also won the best supporting actor award for Mohammadzadeh.

Baran Kowsari won the best actress award and Fereshteh Sadr-Orafai received the best supporting actress award for their roles in director Hatef Alimardani's drama "Binam Alley".

The best cinematographer award was presented to Hooman Behmanesh for his collaboration in "A Dragon Arrives" directed by Mani Haqiqi while Bahram Dehqani received the best editor award for "Life+1 Day".

The best composer award went to Karen Homayunfar for "Bodyguard" director Ebrahim Hatamikai's political drama, which also won the award for best computerized special effects for Hadi Eslami.

Sound recording engineer Amin Mirshekari and costume designer Ghazaleh Motemed won awards for their collaboration in "Life+1 Day".

"A Dragon Arrives" brought an award for its set designer Amir-Hossein Qodsi while the award for best sound effects engineer went to Arash Qasemi for "Sound and Fury" directed by Hooman Seyyedi.

The celebration is organized annually on the National Day of Cinema honoring the best productions of Iranian cinema in all categories.

Winners in the categories of animation, documentary and short films were announced over the two past weeks.

In addition, actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya, producer Manuchehr Mohammadi, film expert Alireza Rezadad and cinema owner Mohammad Khadem received lifetime achievement awards on Saturday night at Tehran's Eyvan Shams.

Producer Habibollah Vaalinejad (L) receives the award for best film for "Standing in the Dust" from veteran actor Mehdi Fakhimzadeh during the 18th Iran Cinema Celebration in Tehran's Mashq Square on September 12, 2016. Actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya is also seen in the photo. *(Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)*

"Life+1 Day" director Saeid Rustai holds the award for best director at the 18th Iran Cinema Celebration in Tehran's Mashq Square on September 12, 2016. *(Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)*

■ Criticism, remembrance of Kiarostami dominate Iran Cinema Celebration

Remarks reflecting criticism, satire and remembrance of the recently deceased filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami dominated the award ceremony.

Referring to the lawsuit filed by Kiarostami's family against his physicians, actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya who presented the best film award to Rustai said, "The tragic loss of Kiarostami has engulfed all of us."

"We treat people's souls and physicians cure people's bodies, no problem will be settled if we bear the flag of enmity. We should try to find solutions for our problems; we should not seek to find the culprit. Physicians may make a mistake as we filmmakers may do so. We have forgotten over the years that we can solve our problems through dialogue with each other," she added.

Pallet, an Iranian band performing a fusion of Iranian and pop music, also staged a performance in memory of Kiarostami as part of the celebration, while Moaadi, the winner of the best actor award, dedicated his award to Kiarostami.

In her acceptance speech, Kowsari, the winner of the best actress award, lamented, "This year in which Iranian cineastes were shamefully insulted, you people backed us and your support was very encouraging for us."

Kowsari's remarks referred to an article published by Ya Lesarat daily earlier in August, calling a number of Iranian actors and cineastes "cuckolds" following their appearance at the Hafez Awards ceremony with their wives wearing heavy makeup.

"Life+1 Day" stars Peyman Moaadi (R) and Navid Mohammadzadeh accept awards for best actor and best supporting actor respectively at the 18th Iran Cinema Celebration in Tehran's Mashq Square on September 12, 2016. *(Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)*

Baran Kowsari speaks after accepting best actress award for her role in "Binam Alley" at the 18th Iran Cinema Celebration in Tehran's Mashq Square on September 12, 2016. *(Tasnim/Erfan Kuchari)*

Fereshteh Sadr-Orafai holds the award for best supporting actress for her role in "Binam Alley" at the 18th Iran Cinema Celebration in Tehran's Mashq Square on September 12, 2016. *(Honaronline/Saeid Rabiei)*

Seyyed Hossein Nasr's "Study Quran" up for review at Tehran meeting

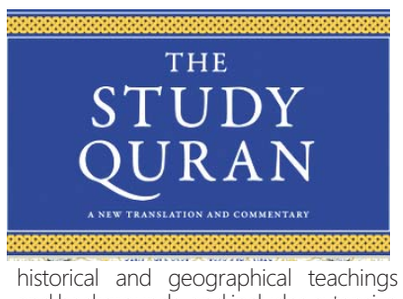
TT ART desk **TEHRAN —** Islamic philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr's book "The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary" will be reviewed in session to be held at the Mahmud Afshar Foundation in Tehran this afternoon.

The session has been organized in collaboration with the Persian literary monthly Bokhara.

"The Study Quran" is a historic and groundbreaking work, produced by a distinguished team of Islamic studies scholars led by Nasr, a professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University

Published in November 2015 by HarperOne, the famous American publisher, the book offers a new English translation of the Quran that is accurate, accessible and reliable.

The book also offers a rigorous analysis of its theological, metaphysical, historical and geographical teachings and backgrounds, and includes extensive study notes and special introductions by experts in the field, the publisher has announced.



Nasr is scheduled to participate in the review session via Skype video chat, while scholars Mostafa Mohaqeq-Damad (Department of Islamic Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of Iran Director) and Nasrollah Purjavadi (philosophy professor at the University of Tehran) are expected to attend the session.

Italy's Cameristi della Scala to give concert in Tehran

TT CULTURE desk **TEHRAN —** The Italian chamber orchestra Cameristi della Scala is scheduled to give a concert in Tehran's Vahdat Hall on September 21, 2016.

In a press conference held at Vahdat Hall, Ali-Akbar Safipur, the managing director of Iran's Rudaki Foundation, Italian Ambassador Mauro Conciatori, and Italian Cultural Attaché in Tehran Carlo Cereti talked about the concert, Persian media reported on Tuesday.

This concert helps review Iran-Italy relations, Safipur said, adding, "We have arranged many fine events and have been able to introduce Iran's genuine art to the world."

Ambassador Mauro Conciatori called music the simplest means to transmit culture since it requires no translation and one can learn a great deal about a country by listening to its music.

He said that for him as a diplomat who had traveled to Iran for the first time, music was the first thing that helped him learn more about Iran.

In his brief words Carlo Cereti also said that there have been good relations with Rudaki and the recent World Youth Orchestra's performance in Tehran in August was a good example.

The Cameristi della Scala is due to perform compositions by Italian musicians including Antonio Vivaldi (Italian Baroque composer and violinist) and Niccolo Paganini (violinist), he added.

A master class has also been arranged on the side section, he added.

Cameristi della Scala has performed in the most prestigious theaters and concert halls in the world. The orchestra's repertoire includes the principal compositions for chamber orchestras from the 18th century.

Blanchett leads celebrities in video poem for refugees

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A host of celebrities seek to highlight the plight of refugees in a video in which they read a poem listing items people have grabbed as they fled their homes.

Oscar winner Cate Blanchett leads a cast including Keira Knightley, Stanley Tucci, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Jesse Eisenberg and Kit Harrington in performing the poem "What They Took With Them" in the film, which U.N. refugee agency UNHCR said was released on Facebook on Monday to support its #WithRefugees petition.

Written by Jenifer Toksvig, the poem was inspired by the stories and testimonies of people fleeing their homes and the items they took with them.

Among those listed by the actors in the film are a wallet, an army service record, a high school certificate, a mobile phone, house keys and a national flag.

"The rhythm and words of the poem echo the frenzy and chaos and terror of suddenly being forced to leave your home, grabbing what little you can carry with you, and fleeing for safety," Blanchett, a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, said in a statement.

UNHCR said the petition is asking governments to ensure refugees have access to safe places to live, education and work.