

# EU to Benefit Most Once Sanctions Lifted: Iran

TEHRAN - The prospects for the lifting of sanctions against Iran in light of the Thursday success of the country to reach mutual understanding over solutions toward a final nuclear deal had already triggered speculations that world businesses will soon prepare for a much-awaited gold rush to Tehran. Iranian merchants now believe that the Europeans could specifically be the real winners on this front. "The economies of [most] European countries have not been in good shape over the past few years," said Yahya Al-e Es'haq, the president of Tehran Chamber of Commerce. "Those problems still



continue but a lot of them can be resolved through investing in Iranian businesses". Al-e Es'haq further emphasized that the Iranian markets as well as those in the region that are in the hands of Iranian industries

are valuable to the Europeans. "Iran's economy is not limited only to a domestic market of 78 million consumers," he said. Rather, the veteran merchant said, the Iranian economy has a powerful dominance

over several regional markets that have a collective population of consumers of 350 million. "This is a key privilege of the Iranian economy and there are many countries that are interested in the idea of producing their

products in Iran and presenting them to the regional markets". Over a week of talks between top diplomats of Iran and the P5+1 in the Swiss city of Lausanne culminated in a joint statement. (More on P4)...(15)

## Pentagon Chief Heading to Japan, S.Korea Next Week

WASHINGTON - Pentagon chief Ashton Carter will travel to Japan and South Korea next week to underscore President Barack Obama's commitment to a strategic shift towards Asia, even as crises in the Middle East preoccupy Washington.

Carter embarks on the first of two trips to Asia on Tuesday, stopping in Tokyo and Seoul before meeting the head of US Pacific Command in Hawaii, officials said.

In May, Carter will return to the region for the annual Shangri-La security conference in Singapore followed by a visit to India, which he has worked closely with in the past to bolster defense ties.

The two visits in two months to Asia will "affirm defense relationships with allies and build upon key initiatives of the rebalance to the region," the Pentagon said in a statement.

But while Obama has tried to make the Asia-Pacific region a higher priority for US strategy, upheaval across the Middle East -- including the rise of Islamic State jihadists -- has repeatedly diverted his administration's attention.

Since August, the United States has led a coalition carrying out air strikes against the IS group in Iraq and Syria, and last week Obama approved intelligence and logistical support for a Saudi-led air war in Yemen against Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

Before flying to Japan, Carter will deliver a speech on the US "rebalance" to Asia on Monday at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. (AFP)

## Aussie Anti-Islam Protests Turn Violent

SYDNEY - In Australia, anti-Muslim protesters have staged demonstrations across the country, with counter-rallies held supporting multiculturalism, prompting clashes between the opposing groups.

The far-right group, Reclaim Australia, held protests in 16 cities across the country, including the provincial capitals, regional and rural towns, protesting against what they claimed minority groups who want to change the Australian cultural identity.

In Sydney, far-right protesters marched in the city carrying banners reading "Yes Australia. No Islam." However the group was outnumbered by anti-racist demonstrators.

Clare Fester, organizer of the counter-rally, said Reclaim Australia is racist and divisive and the march is "quite clearly an attack on Muslims and Muslim communities in this country." Fester added that Australia's mainstream politicians has encouraged the racist sentiments, with Prime Minister Tony Abbott "attacking Muslim leaders and telling them they need to stamp out extremism that really doesn't exist, certainly not in Australia."

This is while in the southern city of Melbourne, clashes were reported between the two groups, with at least two people injured.

More than 100 police officers formed a barricade between two opposing sides as scuffles broke out near the city's Federation Square.

The Reclaim Australia protesters were also outnumbered in southern city by counter-demonstrators chanting "immigrants are welcome, racists are not." (AFP)

## Obama Seeks Public Support for Continued Nuke Talks with Iran

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Barack Obama on Saturday turned to the public for support to continued nuclear talks with Iran toward a final deal, one day after a framework pact was reached.

In his weekly radio and online address, Obama described the tentative deal as a "good" one that meets U.S. "core objectives" and cuts off "every pathway that Iran could take to develop a nuclear weapon."

The preliminary accord was sealed on Thursday following eight days of intense negotiations between Iran's foreign minister and his counterparts from Britain, China, France,



Russia, the United States plus Germany in the Swiss city of Lausanne.

The deal sets limits on Iran's nuclear activities for it to take Tehran at least one year to produce enough fissile materials to produce a nuclear weapon,

and allows regular inspections of the facilities inside the Islamic republic.

In return, the U.S. and the European Union will suspend nuclear-related sanctions against Tehran, with the lifting of all ... (More on P4)...(16)

## Saudi-Led Coalition Airdrops Arms to Yemeni Forces

SANAA - A Saudi-led coalition trying to halt the advance of Yemen's Shiite rebels airdropped weapons to beleaguered fighters in a southern port city on Friday, while al-Qaida militants overran a key military base in eastern Yemen, further expanding their gains in this violence-wracked country.

The developments underscore the magnitude of Yemen's turmoil and the swift unraveling of the country's military and other forces still loyal to embattled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who fled Yemen to Saudi Arabia last week.

On one side, there is the ferocious fighting between Shiite rebels known as Houthis and southern militias loyal to Hadi. On the other, Yemen's al-Qaida branch has been widening its area of influence in the country and gobbling up more territory.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, as the branch is named, has benefited from Yemen's political crisis ever since the Houthis first surged from their northern strongholds last year to take over the capital, Sanaa, and much of the north. The rebels are backed in their push by military and police forces loyal to Hadi's predecessor, ousted autocrat Ali Abdullah Saleh.

On Thursday, al-Qaida militants overran Mukalla, a major port city in southern Yemen and the provincial capital of the country's largest province, Hadramawt, seizing government buildings and freeing inmates from a prison, including a top Saudi-born leader.

The militants consolidated their hold of Mukalla on Friday, capturing its port and a major army base in the city, facing little resistance, said military officials. Soldiers fled the base without a fight as the militants ... (More on P4)...(17)

## Russia's Lavrov Criticizes Law on East Ukraine

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has criticized a law approved by Kiev on the status of territories in east Ukraine, saying it contravenes the Minsk ceasefire deal.

Lavrov, who is on a visit to Slovakia, told a news conference on Saturday that "the law goes in the opposite direction" to the spirit of the February deal between the Kiev government and pro-Russians aimed at ending the tension in the east.

He said Moscow will work to stop the law. Marathon talks in the Belarusian city of Minsk among the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine resulted in a ceasefire, which came into force on February 15.

In March, the Ukrainian parliament approved a draft law to grant special status to parts of east Ukraine. The law is supposed to offer pro-Russians more autonomy. Under the bill, certain districts in eastern Ukraine would acquire the "special status" for three years but only when local elections are held in the eastern territories in accordance with the Ukrainian law and under international observation.

The two mainly Russian-speaking regions of Donetsk and Lugansk in eastern Ukraine have been hit by deadly ... (More on P4)...(18)

## Oxfam Assails World Bank Arm for Rights Violations

WASHINGTON - The World Bank's private-sector finance unit supported development projects in numerous countries that involved grave violations of human rights, anti-poverty group Oxfam alleged in a new report Thursday.

Oxfam said the World Bank's International Finance Corporation has increasingly channelled its funds through other financial institutions, like local banks and private-equity funds, sacrificing close oversight of projects that have a harmful impact on impoverished populations. The IFC "has little accountability for billions of dollars' worth of investments into banks, hedge funds and other financial intermediaries, resulting in projects that are causing human rights abuses around the world," Oxfam said. Citing its own research as well as reports by the World Bank's internal watchdog, Oxfam said that the IFC has taken a "hands off" strategy to



pumping \$36 billion into poor countries via other private-sector financial intermediaries over the past four years.

- Risky loan model - But Nicolas Mombrial, head of Oxfam International's Washington office, said that the IFC does not know where much of its money under the new lending model goes and how it really impacts people in the field.

"We describe some shocking abuses in projects originally born of IFC investments to third parties across Asia, Africa and Latin America, including deaths, repression, landgrabs and violence," Mombrial said. "Because public infor-

## Russia Gambles on Populist Parties in Anti-EU Campaign

VIENNA - From the far right to the radical left, populist parties across Europe are being courted by Russia's Vladimir Putin who aims to turn them into allies in his anti-EU campaign.

The Front National (FN) in France, Syriza in Greece and Jobbik in Hungary may be the most famous ones but they are far from being alone. Some, like Britain's UKIP, have adopted a "benevolent neutrality" toward Putin.

They are united in their objective to "challenge the EU", and this in turn aligns them with Russia's wish for a "weak and divided Europe", explains Hungarian political analyst Peter Kreko. In the longer term, the Kremlin banks on these parties' accession to power to change Europe and separate it from NATO and the United States.

"Moscow wants to establish long-term alliances with all those loyal to Russia," says Russian analyst Konstantin Kalatchev of the Political Expert Group.

These parties also help to promote the Kremlin's internal communications. When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, self-proclaimed "monitors" from the FN and Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ) told Russian TV that due process had been followed.

One of the benefits of closer ties with Moscow could be financial support. The FN recently received a loan worth nine million euros (\$9.8 million; £6.6 million) from the Czech Russian Bank. French news website Mediapart reported this week that hacked text messages exchanged between Russian officials proved there was a link between Russian financing and party support for Putin.

Despite lingering suspicions, there is no further proof of direct party funding, even if the WikiLeaks affair revealed that the US ambassador in Sofia had expressed worry about possible Russian transfers to Bulgaria's ultranationalist Ataka (Attack) party. (AFP)

## Nieghbor News

### Lausanne Success Prompts Rally in TSE "Dream Day"

TEHRAN - The success of P5+1 and Iran in the Swiss city of Lausanne to arrive at a common understanding over solutions for a final deal to end years of disputes over the country's nuclear energy program sent stocks on a rally in Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) on Saturday. In the first session after the developments in Lausanne, the TSE's main index surged by an all-time high of above 2,000 points to reach 67,827 units by the close of trading thus making Saturday "The Dream Day" for stock activists. The rise was a jump of 3.2 percent compared to the end of the previous day of trading on 1 April. The highest gains have

been recorded at 4 percent for Khalij Fars Petrochemical Company and Iran Telecommunications Company. Several banking groups, auto majors and steel producers also enjoyed major gains. Overall, a total of over 388 million shares roughly worth 1.24 trillion Rials (nearly \$44 million) were traded on Saturday. Over a week of talks between top diplomats of Iran and the P5+1 in Lausanne culminated in a joint statement on Thursday in which the sides said they had reached understanding over solutions to move ahead toward drafting a comprehensive nuclear agreement before 30 June. (Press TV)

### Iran N-Deal a Major Breakthrough: Asif

RAWALPINDI - Calling the framework agreement on Iran's nuclear programme "a major breakthrough", Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif said the deal would bring about a change in the regional security paradigm and augured well for peace in the region.

He was speaking to journalists at Benazir Bhutto International Airport after welcoming 176 Pakistani nationals who arrived here from Yemen on Friday. This was the second PIA special flight that brought back Pakistani nationals, including 40 children, stranded in Aden.

The minister said he was happy that the Pakistani citizens had safely made it back home and hoped that the remaining 250 to 300 would be evacuated within a couple of days as soon as the government obtained a corridor through the no-fly zone.

Take a look: Framework for final deal reached at Iran nuclear talks. He said it would be easy to evacuate Pakistanis from Al Mukalla than Sanaa because the latter's airport had been destroyed. However, he said that if they were given security clearance, those stranded in Sanaa could also be airlifted. (Monitoring Desk)

### China Promotes Eco-Friendly Burials

BEIJING - Along the shore near the north China coastal city of Tianjin, Zheng Meili joined her mother-in-law and over 300 others to commemorate their deceased relatives ahead of Qingming festival, also known as Tomb Sweeping Day. However, they had no tombs to sweep. Instead, they scattered petals in the sea, where their loved ones rest in peace. "My mother-in-law told me that she wants her remains to be scattered into the sea after her death, like her husband, so she can stay together with him there," Zheng said.

Chinese tradition holds that the dead should be buried in coffins beside their ancestors, but the custom has put a strain on the populous country's land resources.

A report released last week on China's funeral industry predicted that cemetery plots in most of China's provincial-level regions will be depleted in ten years.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, a total of 9.73 million Chinese people died in 2013, which would require about 10 million square meters of land if they all chose traditional burial,

the report said. Waning cemetery space is pushing up prices for traditional funerals and is squeezing arable land, forests, grassland, and other environmental resources.

To deal with the problem, the government started promoting eco-friendly burials, such as sea burials, in the 1990s. Others choose cremation with the option to scatter ashes on trees, lawns or flower gardens.

Over the past two decades, authorities in Beijing have registered 12,651 sea burials and the total number of eco-friendly burials reached 78,891 at the end of 2014. To encourage more environmentally friendly funerals, local authorities in Beijing doubled subsidies for sea burials from 2,000 yuan (326 U.S. dollars) to 4,000 yuan this year.

Under the subsidy, the government will cover travel expenses, insurance and meals for up to six relatives as well as a degradable urn for each burial at sea. However, it is not easy to change people's minds on funeral customs, and many Chinese see a traditional burial as an obligation of filial piety toward their elders. (Xinhua)

### New Education Minister Appointed in Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan - Turkmenistan named its new education minister. According to the Turkmen president's decree, issued April 4, Purli Agamyradov was appointed the country's minister of education. Agamyradov previously served as the rector of

the Turkmen State Institute of Economics and Management.

Turkmenistan has about 1,800 secondary schools and over 20 higher education institutions. A 12-year secondary education was introduced in Turkmenistan, starting from 2013/2014 school year. (Agencies)