

Austrian Airlines to Add Isfahan to Itinerary
TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Austrian Airlines, a Lufthansa subsidiary, plans to add new flights to Iran's central province of Isfahan.
 Austrian Airlines said in a statement that it plans to launch 3X-weekly Vienna-Isfahan services from September 4, Air Transport World website reported. Vienna-Isfahan services will become 4X-weekly starting from summer 2017, it added. Isfahan will be the second destination of the Austrian flights after Tehran's services, which were launched back in March. Austrian Airlines will operate up to 17 weekly flights to Iran as of September 2016.

Kayhan International

Qasemi Condemns 'Takfiri Terrorism' in Turkey
TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi on Sunday strongly condemned a bomb blast targeting a wedding ceremony in Turkey's southeastern province of Gaziantep.
 "Carrying out such terrorist acts in a wedding ceremony and the killing of defenseless people and civilians once again clearly displayed the ominous and anti-human goals of Takfiri terrorism," Qasemi said. Such acts of terror, he said, showed how the ominous and dangerous phenomenon of terrorism threatens the international community in order to achieve its inhuman goals.

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 By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer
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Iran Unveils Bavar-373 Air Defense System



President Hassan Rouhani (3rd L) and Iranian Defense Minister Hussein Dehqan (2nd L) stand in front of the new air defense missile system Bavar-373 in Tehran, August 21, 2016.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran on Sunday unveiled its domestically-built answer to the Russian S-300 advanced air defense system in a ceremony attended by President Hassan Rouhani.
 Iranian news agencies ran photos of Rouhani at a Defense Ministry exhibition which included the showcasing of the Bavar-373 air defense system, which would make any effort to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities more difficult.
 Iran's deal to import Russia's S-300 was put on hold amid sanctions in 2010, prompting the Islamic Republic to develop its own missile defense system.
 Since last year's signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the deal which saw western nations provide Tehran with sanctions relief in exchange for placing limits on its nuclear program, parts of the S-300 have reportedly been delivered.
 The occupying regime of Israel and the U.S. have protested Russia's sale of the S-300 to Iran.
 The Bavar-373 was successfully test fired in August 2014 and is designed to hit targets at high altitudes.
 Rouhani, accompanied by Iranian Defense Minister Brig.-Gen. Hussein Dehqan, was also briefed on the progress of manufacturing for Iran's first turbojet engine, as well as other air defense projects.
 The Iranian president praised

the Defense Ministry for helping to disprove "unfair and baseless" allegations that Iran seeks to build weapons of mass destruction, adding that this was an integral part of closing the nuclear deal with the P5+1 group of world powers.
 Rouhani said that Iran's military budget had more than doubled compared with last year.
 "If we are able to discuss with world powers around the negotiating table, it is because of our national strength, because of our national unity," he said.
 Rouhani also unveiled the first Iranian-made turbo-jet engine, saying it was capable of flight at 50,000 feet.
 "The Islamic Republic is one of eight countries in the world who have mastered the technology to build these engines," the president said.
 Dehqan said Iran was now looking to develop seaborne cruise missiles capable of supersonic speed.
 "We have greatly increased the range of our marine cruise missiles and currently possess missiles with a range of 200 kilometers which are anti-ship and anti-surface," he said.
 He added that the country has succeeded in taking major steps in the development of marine cruise missiles and has doubled or even tripled the range of all its missiles and made efforts to diversify their applications.
 "We have succeeded in changing the

strategic systems of cruise missiles and increasing the power of their engines and ranges," Dehqan said, adding that the missiles can now hit the targets at a distance of 100 kilometers.
 "We did not intend to make an Iranian version of the S-300 -- we wanted to build an Iranian system, and we built it," Dehqan told the IRNA news agency over the weekend.
 In an earlier speech at Friday prayers, he said: "Our missile power is at such a level that we are able to destroy all our targets at any operational range."
 Elsewhere in his remarks on Sunday, the Iranian defense minister stated that the country has taken great strides in producing torpedoes, noting that the first consignment of home-made torpedoes would be delivered to the naval forces in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2017) in a bid to boost their power in confrontation with any possible threat.
 He added that Iran has produced high-speed vessels proportionate to its needs and put into operation a vessel which is capable of achieving speeds in excess of 60 knots.
 Iranian experts are also capable of manufacturing various strategic products in electronics industries, which can be used in air defense bases of the Army and other units of the Iranian Armed Forces, Dehqan said.

Ayatollah Khamenei: Arrogant Powers Dislike a Powerful Islam

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Sunday said that enemies of Muslim nations have no hostility towards a "secular" version of Islam, based on which religion has no role in sociopolitical affairs.
 In a meeting with a group of clerics and prayer leaders in Tehran on the occasion of World Mosque Day, the Leader said a "secular Islam,"

which is restricted to individual or collective worship, is not the subject of hostility for domineering powers.
 What bullying powers are opposed to is a "powerful Islam" which lays the foundations for a sociopolitical system and guides nations towards prosperity, Ayatollah Khamenei added.
 Touching upon the international occasion, the Leader said Iran

insistently demanded that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation designate August 21 as World Mosque Day in an effort to draw attention to Israel's burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969.
 On this day 47 year ago, Aqsa Mosque was set on fire by an Australian settler in coordination with Israeli officials and military forces. The fire gutted the southeastern wing of the mosque.

Government Rudderless on Economic Direction

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- President Hassan Rouhani started his tenure in office with a promise to put Iran's economic boat back on an even keel, but many analysts say his administration is now rudderless more than any time.
 Rouhani's famous pledge to make tangible changes in his first 100 days of office generated high hopes after years of market turbulence which saw Iran's inflation surge up to 40%.
 The new administration inherited an economy shriveled under sanctions which squeezed trade with the world, as oil exports shrank 60%, leaving the country to grapple with its worst stagflation in decades.
 President Rouhani has sought to reverse the trend, helping the national currency stabilize against the dollar after losing two-thirds of its value and returning the capital to the financial sector from parallel markets.
 The most significant achievement of the government, however, was its ability to cut inflation rate thrice by following better monetary discipline.
 However, those achievements have been eclipsed by an economic inertia which has exacerbated Iran's unemployment problem.
 Critics point the finger at Rouhani's economic team, saying it is oblivious to a bloated financial sector which has been thriving for years at the expense of a cash-strapped production sector.

In recent years, banks and financial institutions have mushroomed in Iran, engaging more in speculative activities than finance.
 A number of manufacturing corporations, pension funds, charity foundations as well as civil, military and state organizations have established their own banks to cash in on the lucrative speculative sector.
 Those financial institutions have been extending credit to "bigwig" clients who are themselves engaged in speculative activities. This cycle has led to the creation of bank money at the expense of real money.
 As a result, financial institutions have replaced the government and the central bank as the virtual supplier of money, resulting in a liquidity crisis.
 According to the Central Bank of Iran, the financial sector has about \$260 billion of liquidity. This figure equals 65% of the GDP of Iran's economy of about \$400 billion.
 Normally, the cash flow is not a bad thing but it becomes a burden when it trickles into the non-productive sector, leading to stagflation. That's exactly what has happened to the Iranian economy.
 Economists say the government has adopted the worst aspects of an economic model bordering on neoliberalism. They cite the 2008 disaster in the US and other capitalist nations, caused by a hyperactive financial sector.

With the speculative market wreaking havoc, Iran is further faced with unchecked imports and smuggling of foreign goods which are seriously harming domestic manufacturers.
 These are also hindering the government's efforts to attract foreign investment as President Rouhani has widely rooted for.
 As the bulk of liquidity is used for speculative activities instead of being lent to manufacturers, the economy continues to remain mired in stagnation and unemployment gets worse.
 Moreover, consumers are getting a small slice of the bulging liquidity pie which otherwise would have boosted domestic producers and the economy.
 By nature, the financial sector prefers the more lucrative speculation to real production and that is how a profit-driven economic system works.
 Some economists say with its inflation and recession, the priority for Iran must be to wade out of the stagnation first.
 They say the country cannot jeopardize production, employment and social welfare under the pretext of slimming the economy, arguing that is like prescribing an overweight person to stop eating in order to get into shape.
 They say what the government needs to do now is to channel financial resources to production from the speculative market.

Bombing at Wedding Kills Scores in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) — The wedding had ended and the guests had started walking home when a bombing tore through the site of the ceremony in southeastern Turkey late

Saturday, killing more than 50 people and wounding scores more, the latest in a string of attacks in the restive region in the past week.
 The deadly attack in Gaziantep was

carried out by a terrorist between the ages of 12 and 14, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters in Istanbul on Sunday, citing police sources. He said 51 people had been

killed in the attack and 69 people were receiving treatment in the hospital, with 17 people in critical condition.
 Erdogan also issued a statement

earlier saying that Daesh was probably behind the attack and that its aim was to sow divisions among ethnic groups in the country and to "spread incitement along ethnic and

religious lines."
 There was no claim of responsibility immediately after the attack.
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