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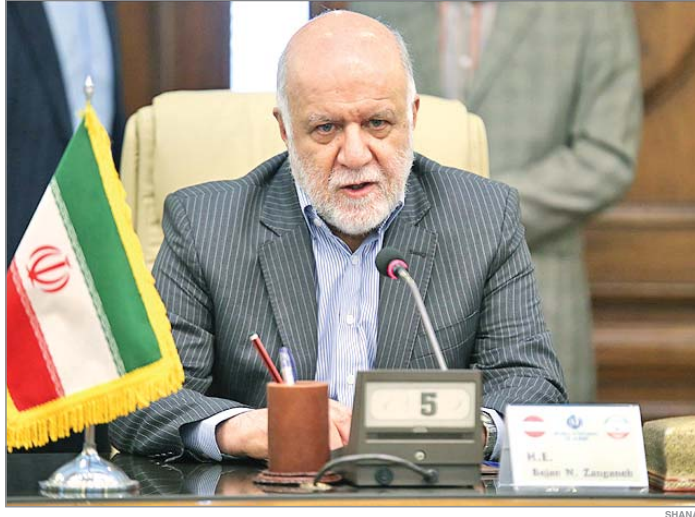
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Gas deal with Total likely within weeks

Iran expects to sign a long-delayed gas deal with French oil major Total in the next few weeks, said Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Saturday.

According to Shana, Zanganeh added, "Iran and Total are summing up the discussions on signing the contract for the development of Phase 11 of South Pars, and this is almost in the final stages."

He added, "The contract ... will be signed before the end of the (current) government."

Re-elected in May, President Hassan Rouhani is expected to form his new cabinet in August.

Total's CEO Patrick Pouyanne said in late May that the company planned to conclude the South Pars gas deal before summer. The deal would be based on the new Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC) scheme which has been postponed several times.

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GOPs divided as Trump reverses Obama Cuba policy

US President Donald Trump's decision to reverse some Obama-era Cuba policies landed with a thud among many congressional Republicans who say the new approach surrenders a potentially lucrative market for American goods and services to competitors.



AP

While anti-Castro conservatives hailed Trump's partial roll-back of President Barack Obama's detente, a number of other GOP lawmakers, particularly from farm states, criticized the change as misguided and isolationist. They urged him to ease barriers with Havana that will boost trade and create jobs in both countries, AP reported on Saturday.

Rep. Rick Crawford said Trump's shift is more than just a missed opportunity for rural America, which would benefit from greater access to Cuba's agricultural import market. He said Trump's policy may put US national security at risk as strategic competitors move to fill the vacuum the uncoupling could create.

Sen. Jeff Flake, a frequent critic of Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign, said in a statement that any policy change "that diminishes the ability of Americans to travel freely to Cuba is not in the best interests of the United States or the Cuban people."

Flake has been among the most outspoken lawmakers opposed to rolling back Obama's outreach to Havana. He's warned that returning to a "get tough" policy hurts everyday Cubans whose livelihoods are increasingly rooted in travel and tourism.

In his statement, Flake called for the Senate's GOP leadership to allow a vote on his legislation that he said would eliminate "arbitrary restrictions" on travel to Cuba that "do not exist for travel by Americans to any other country in the world."

During a speech Friday in Miami, Trump portrayed his updated policy as the fulfillment of a campaign promise to reverse Obama's diplomatic rapprochement with Cuba after decades of estrangement. Trump's approach is aimed at halting the flow of US cash to the country's military while maintaining diplomatic relations.

US airlines and cruise ships would still be allowed to service the island.

Yet new moves will burden the US government with the complicated task of policing US travel to Cuba to make sure there are no transactions with the military-linked conglomerate that runs much of the Cuban economy.

By restricting individual US travel to Cuba, the new policy also risks cutting off a major source of income for Cuba's private business sector, which the policy is intended to support.

US president announces he's being investigated

US President Donald Trump announced Friday he is under investigation in connection with a probe into alleged Russian election meddling that is gnawing away at his administration — and gathering pace.

The Republican leader also lashed out at the Justice Department's number two, the man tasked with organizing the probe.

The furious early morning barrage of tweets — his second in as many days — came as the special counsel investigating Russia's influence over his election pitched together a high-caliber legal team and pledged to begin interviews, AFP reported.

Trump is accused of firing FBI director James Comey over his refusal to steer the Russia investigation away from former national security advisor and Trump ally Mike Flynn.

The US president has denied trying to influence the investigation, but has acknowledged in an interview that Russia was on his mind when he dismissed Comey.

"I am being investigated for firing the FBI Director by the man who told me to fire the FBI Director! Witch Hunt!" he tweeted from the White House shortly before a day trip to Miami.

That appeared to be the first public confirmation that Trump is being investigated for obstruction of justice — and a digital salvo trained at Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who wrote a memo criticizing Comey.

A source on Trump's legal team attempted to clarify the missive, claiming he was reacting to media reports about the investigation rather than offering public confirmation.

Meanwhile, special counsel Robert Mueller — a respected former FBI director — has sought to beef up his investigatory firepower.

Putin: New sanctions will harm Russia-US ties

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday said new sanctions under consideration by the United States would damage relations between the two countries, but it was too early to talk about retaliation.

"That is why it is premature to speak publicly about our retaliatory actions," he said. Russia and the West have traded economic blows since 2014, after the reunification of the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea with Moscow.

The West imposed economic and financial sanctions that battered the rouble and the export-dependent economy. Moscow retaliated by banning imports of Western food.

The threat of a new wave of sanctions emerged this month as US policymakers backed the idea of punishing Russia for alleged meddling in the 2016 US presidential election and for supporting Syria's government in the six-year-long war.

Putin had previously dismissed the proposed sanctions, saying they reflected an internal political struggle in the United States, and that Washington had always used such methods as a means of trying to contain Russia.

Putin said that Russia would be forced to make changes because of the sanctions, but they wouldn't lead to a "collapse."

The US Senate voted nearly unanimously earlier this week for legislation to impose new sanctions on Moscow and force President Donald Trump to get Congress' approval before easing any existing sanctions.

In an interview with Rossiya1 state TV channel, excerpts of which were shown during the day on Saturday, Putin said he needed to see how the situation with sanctions evolved.

British Prime Minister Theresa May's government sought on Saturday to quell anger over a deadly tower block fire by pledging to support the victims of the blaze after protesters jeered her when she visited local residents.

May was rushed away from a meeting with residents on Friday under heavy police guard as protesters shouted "Shame on you!" and hundreds stormed a local town hall calling for justice, Reuters reported.

After a botched snap election that lost her party its majority in Parliament, May is facing criticism for her response to the blaze which engulfed the 24-storey apartment block of social housing on Wednesday, killing at least 30 people.

Residents of the destroyed tower said May was far too slow to visit the stricken community that the building had been unsafe, and that officials have failed to give enough information and support to those who have lost relatives and their homes.

Asked repeatedly whether she had misread the public mood, May did not answer directly but said the focus was on providing support to the victims.



AP

"Government is making money available, we're ensuring that we're going to get to the bottom of what's happened, we will ensure that people are rehousing. But we need to make sure that that actually happens," May said.

in three weeks, she said.

One of her closest allies, Damian Green, defended May on Saturday, adding that a team would go to the area to answer questions from residents.

"The Prime Minister is distraught about what has happened," said Green, who was appointed May's deputy in the wake of the general election.

"We're all desperately sad, we're all angry, but of course none of us as angry as those who were directly affected. I absolutely get why they're angry," Green said.

Anger in London

While the blaze has prompted an outpouring of generosity, with many people donating provisions and clothes, it has also unleashed rage at the authorities as the charred tower was cast as a deadly symbol of a deeply divided society.

Angry protesters chanting "We want justice," stormed their way into the Kensington and Chelsea town hall

on Friday. Opponents said May's handling of the fire has thrust her position further into doubt by showing a failure to feel the public mood and act decisively.

After a tumultuous week that pitched Britain into its deepest political crisis since the Brexit referendum a year ago, May's future was already uncertain due to her failed gamble on a snap election. Britain is now likely to go into arduous talks on Monday about its exit from the European Union with a weakened leader who is dependent on a small Northern Irish party.

Matthew Parris, a columnist and former Conservative lawmaker, said May's response to the fire had shown a lack of judgement which made her unsuitable to be prime minister.

"Wallowing in the wash of a general election that stripped our prime minister of her authority on the very eve of EU negotiations, neither common sense nor the evidence suggest she can re-establish public confidence," Parris wrote in the Times.

Karlheinz Kopf, a senior Austrian parliamentarian, criticized US conduct in the Middle East, especially regarding Iran, as unhelpful, saying it leads to instability instead of helping stabilize the region.

Official: Foreign tours unaffected by Tehran attacks

There has not been any report of cancellation of tours of Iran following the recent terrorist attacks in Tehran, a vice president said.

An inquiry from Iran's private tourism agencies shows that none of the tours of the country for foreign tourists has been called off as a consequence of the recent attacks in Tehran. Head of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization Zahra Ahmadipour said.



On June 7, terrorists launched simultaneous attacks on Iran's Parliament building in downtown Tehran and on the mausoleum of the founder of Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini, south of the city, killing 17 people and wounding more than 40 others. The Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attacks, Tasnim News Agency reported.



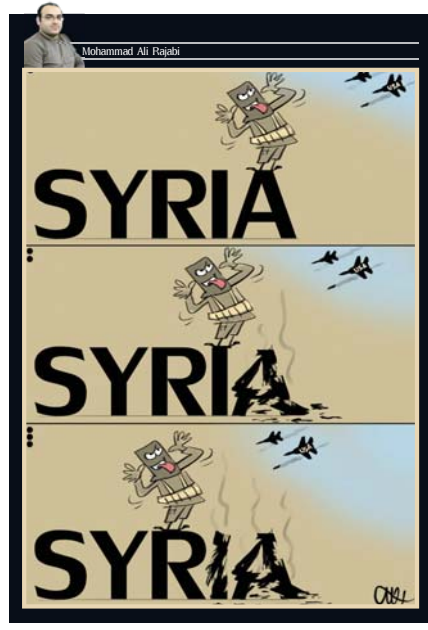
Ahmadipour pointed to a sharp rise in the number of Brazilian tourists visiting Iran, particularly the historic cities of Shiraz and Isfahan, and unveiled plans to facilitate such trips.

Tehran-Sao Paulo direct flight

Efforts are underway to launch a direct flight between Tehran and Brazil's Sao Paulo, which takes around 20 hours, she noted.

There has been a growing trend in Iran's tourism industry following implementation of a nuclear agreement between Tehran and world powers in 2015.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who won a second term in the recent election, has repeatedly highlighted the role of tourism industry in creating job opportunities for the country's young labor force.



Parliament to weigh measures against US sanctions bill

Iranian Parliament plans to discuss a draft of a plan aimed at taking retaliatory measures against US anti-Iran sanctions, a lawmaker said on Saturday.

Kamal Dehghan Firouzabadi said that the draft has been prepared by the Parliament Research Center and National Security and Foreign Policy Committee and is scheduled to be discussed in a session on July 2, IRNA reported.

On Sunday, Parliament Speaker Ali

Larjani urged Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee to draw the draft.

He also described the Senate's bill as a brazen violation of the spirit of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear agreement between Iran and P5+1 group of countries - Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany.

The Iranian lawmaker then called on

the Iranian delegation monitoring the JCPOA, the country's Supreme National Security Council, and the administration to begin implementing a parliamentary law to retaliate any breach of the JCPOA by the other parties to the deal.

Under a law, passed by the parliament in October 2015, the administration should take retaliatory measures immediately and report back to the legislature.

On Thursday, the US Senate overwhelmingly passed a bill that would step up sanctions against Iran and Russia. The measure, passed by a vote of 98 to 2, includes new sanctions on Iran over its ballistic missile program and alleged "continued support for terrorism."

In order for the new Senate bill to become law, it must still pass the US House of Representatives and be signed by President Donald Trump.

Zarif to leave Tehran for Africa today

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is to pay a two-day visit to three North African countries, Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Saturday.



TASNIM NEWS AGENCY

The Iranian foreign minister is to visit Algeria, Mauritania and Tunisia at the invitation of the governments of the African countries, the ministry said, IRNA reported.

Zarif is scheduled to meet with the head of states of the three African countries as well as his counterparts, the ministry's spokesman Bahram Qassemi said.

Qassemi said that the visits are aimed at boosting the ties between Iran and the African countries, as well as talks on developments in the region, including Syria and the Persian Gulf. Highlighting the need for Muslim unity with regard to the regional situation, Qassemi said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that Muslim countries should consolidate unity and convergence" against hostile and divisive plots. Iranian government has always called the expansion of relations with African countries as its priority.

Iran, UNIDO sign MoU to cooperate on carbon sequestration

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Iran and the United Nations for the third phase of the international program carbon sequestration in four Iranian provinces.

The MoU, signed by Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization and The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), is expected to cover five regions: Yazd, North Khorasan, South Khorasan and Golestan provinces, IRNA reported.

Carbon sequestration is a biological process to store carbon in plants and soil.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by UNIDO Resident Representative in Tehran Gary Lewis and the head of Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization, Khodakaram Jalali.

The project started from a single village in North Khorasan, and currently is being implemented in some 300 other villages, influencing the life of 120,000 inhabitants, added Lewis.

It is not a mere soil restoration plan; rather it can lead to a full development by engaging local communities through rural community development, he added.

The international carbon precipitation is not only aimed at fighting desertification, but the plan will lead to saving energy, soil erosion prevention, economic development, and boosting employment in Iran, the UN coordinator reiterated.

After being piloted, the project's benefit in just one of Golestan Province villages was about 1.8 million dollars (60 billion rials), which is a significant figure, he added.

Iran ready to fully supply Qatar food requirements

A top Iranian official said the country stands fully ready to supply the food requirements of Qatar much beyond its current needs.

Abbas Maroufan, the deputy head of the Domestic Trade Branch of the Government Trading Corporation of Iran, was quoted by media as saying that Iran could support the food requirements of "10 countries like Qatar."

Maroufan emphasized that Iran had no problem in supplying Qatar's food needs, stressing the Islamic Republic would quickly do so as soon as there was a request to the same effect from Doha, Press TV reported.

Iran started to export food to Qatar immediately after the Persian Gulf country came under a blockade earlier this month by Saudi Arabia and several of its allies as a result of a row over regional politics.

Officials in Tehran over the past week said at least five plane loads of food supplies each weighing 100 tons had been sent to Qatar.

On Wednesday, Iran said it had sent a ship with 180 tons of fruits and vegetables to the Persian Gulf emirate.

Iran's media said the shipment was made on Tuesday from the country's southern port of Bandar Lengeh in Hormuzgan Province.

Officials had already said it would take a maximum 12 hours for a ship to reach Qatar from Iran's southern ports.

Other reports said Iran was also looking into exporting dairy products to Qatar and certain negotiations to the same effect were underway.

Officials have been quoted by media as saying that Iran could ship at least 45 tonnes of dairy products to Qatar.



Libya's coast guard intercepted 906 migrants off the western city of Sabratha on Friday, coast guard spokesman Ayoub Qassem said.

Iraqi forces release border crossing to Syria from Daesh

Iraqi forces took Saturday a border crossing point to Syria from the Daesh terrorist group, increasing pressure on the terrorists and getting closer to meeting up with Syrian forces and their allies who reached the border earlier this month for the first time in years.

Tribal forces and border police, supported by Iraqi and US-led coalition aircraft, took part in the operation to take the Al-Waleed crossing, the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said in a statement, AP reported.

Al-Waleed, in the far west of Iraq, fell to the Daesh group in 2015, giving the terrorists full control of the Iraq-Syria border, which they vowed to erase as part of their ambition to build their caliphate.

Saturday's push by Iraqi troops came nearly three weeks after Iraq's paramilitary forces — mostly Shia fighters referred to as the Popular Mobilization Forces — reached the Syrian border in northeastern Iraq.

In recent months the terrorists have been coming under increasing pressure in Iraq and Syria where they have lost vast parts of the land they declared as a caliphate in Syria and Iraq in June 2014.

US troops and the US-backed militia control the Al-Tanf area on the side



from Al-Waleed. Earlier this month, Syrian government forces outflanked US ad-

visers and the armed groups holding the Al-Tanf border crossing to establish their

own link to Iraq for the first time in years. The Iraqi side is still held by Daesh.

British Airways cabin crew to stage two-week strike

British Airways (BA) cabin crew are to stage a two-week strike from July 1, the union said, in a long-running dispute over pay and benefits.

Unite said BA had refused to accept its final offer on the issue of the "sanctioning" of striking cabin crew, BBC reported.

The union claims that crew who previously walked out have not had their bonuses or benefits, including free and discounted travel, restored.

BA said that this proposed action was "extreme and completely unnecessary". Unite said it would "vigorously" pursue legal action against BA on behalf of the 1,400 cabin crew affected.

The union claims that British Airways has formed a "blacklist to impose sanctions on striking cabin crew," which has led to bonus payments being cut and the removal of staff travel concessions.

Unite had originally planned a four-day strike to start on Friday, but this was suspended while the two sides tried to re-

solve the dispute.

However, the union has now said its members among BA's mixed fleet crew will go on strike from 00:01 on Saturday July 1 to 23:59 on Sunday July 16.

BA reassured passengers that it would continue to fly all customers to their destinations.

The airline said: "We had reached a deal on pay, which Unite agreed was acceptable. Unite has already confirmed it is pursuing the non-pay issues in this dispute through the courts.

"We urge Unite to let its members vote on the pay proposals."

Howard Beckett, Unite assistant general secretary, said: "The refusal by British Airways bosses to meaningfully consider our compromise offer is deeply disappointing.

"A resolution to this long-running dispute was within the grasp of British Airways, but instead of grabbing that opportunity, bosses rebuffed it. It now means British Airways faces an entirely avoidable two-week strike and prolonged legal action on behalf of over 1,400 mixed cabin crew."

There have been 26 days of strike action by BA staff since the start of the year.



TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS

Turkey frees PM advisor detained over Gulen links

Turkish authorities on Saturday freed the top advisor to Prime Minister Binali Yildirim detained on suspicion of links to the movement of US-based political figure, Fetullah Gulen, blamed for last year's failed coup, state media reported.

Birol Erdem, a former senior Justice Ministry official, was released under judicial supervision which means he should still face trial, a date for which has yet to be set, AFP reported.

He had been taken into custody in Ankara earlier this month along with his wife Gulnuser Erdem.

Unlike her husband, she was, however, placed under arrest by an Ankara court ahead of trial, the state-run Anadolu news agency reported.

Erdem, who was questioned for three days, had been accused of seeking to violate the constitution and being a leader of "an armed terror group".

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has vowed to wipe out Gulen's influence in Turkey after the failed July 15 coup seeking to oust him from power. Gulen denies any involvement in the coup.

A state of emergency declared days after the coup has since seen about 50,000 people arrested and over 100,000 lose their jobs, the biggest purge in the country's modern history.

But there has been criticism the purge has touched few at the heart of power and Erdem was one of very few top civilian officials to have been detained.

Reports at the time said Erdem was detained after other suspects had named him in their testimonies.

In a separate development, the son-in-law of Istanbul Mayor Kadir Topbas, Omer Faruk Kavurmaci, was detained again by police on suspicion of business links to Gulen.

Kavurmaci had been detained in October but was released in May on health grounds as he suffers from epilepsy. This had sparked angry claims he had benefited from nepotistic and preferential treatment.



AFF

Seven US Navy crew missing, commander hurt in crash off Japan

The US and Japan conducted a major search operation Saturday to find seven missing American sailors after their destroyer collided with a much larger container ship, crushing the side of the military vessel.

Planes, boats and helicopters scoured the seas off Japan's Pacific coast in a bid to find the crew who disappeared in the pre-dawn accident, which also left the USS Fitzgerald's skipper injured, AFP reported.

It was not clear where the missing sailors were when the collision happened.

"Search and rescue efforts continue by US and Japanese aircraft and surface vessels in the hopes of recovering the seven USS Fitzgerald (crew) still unaccounted for," the navy said Saturday evening. The names were withheld until their families have been notified.

Several other crew members were injured and had to be evacuated by air to hospital, including the guided missile destroyer's commanding officer Bryce Benson.

The collision between the Fitzgerald and Philippine-flagged container ship ACX Crystal happened around 2:30 a.m. (1730 GMT Friday) off the coast of the Izu peninsula, southwest of Tokyo.

The damaged ship later sailed back to its base in Yokosuka. The accident happened 104 kilometers (66 nautical miles) southwest of the area, the navy said.

The crash site is a busy shipping channel that is a gateway to major container ports in Yokohama and Tokyo. "The volume of ships is heavy in this area and there have been accidents before," coastguard official Yutaka Saito told Japan's public broadcaster NHK.



Damaged guided missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald is seen after colliding with a Philippine-flagged container ship, on June 17, 2017.

AFF

Electoral victory will make France's president a potent force

Florence Lehericy is a nurse, but on Monday she is likely to start a new career as a parliamentary deputy for Calvados, in northern France. Jean-Marie Flévet, a fireman, will join her from a constituency in Deux Sèvres in the west. Both are political novices. They belong to La République en Marche! (LRM), the movement behind Emmanuel Macron, who last month also won his first ever election — and duly took control of the Elysée Palace. Welcome to the revolution.

Across France people have risen up against a political class that failed them. The first round of voting for the legislature, on June 11th, suggests that LRM, which Mr. Macron created only 14 months ago, will win at least 400 of its 577 seats. The Socialists will lose 90% of their deputies, including their leader who did not even make the run-off. The Republicans will hang on to more, but they expected to win this election — until a few weeks ago, when LRM's victory became as inevitable as the blade sliding down the guillotine.

Mr. Macron offers a fresh answer to the popular discontent that has swept through Western democracies. He promises a new politics that ditches divisions between left and right. He wants to restore dynamism and self-belief to France and, with Germany's help, to the European Union. And he is being watched from abroad by politicians who, in their own countries, cannot seem to make themselves heard above the din. For his revolution to succeed, he needs to have good ideas and the ability to carry them through. Does he?

A different kind of rebel

Mr. Macron is the right man at the right time. Voters tired of France's stale politics wanted an outsider. Although he comes from the establishment — he is a graduate of an elite college, an ex-banker and an economy minister under his predecessor, François Hollande — Mr. Macron has never been a party man. He has designed LRM to act as a break with the past. Half of its candidates are new to politics. Half are women. It has campaigned against corruption. In the outgoing assembly the most common age is 60-70; the average of LRM's nominees is 43.

Whereas most populists cleave to right and left, the Macron revolution is to the center. He steals policies without prejudice — from the right, a desire to free up markets and businesses to create jobs and wealth; from the left, a belief in the role of government to shape, direct and protect. In the battle between open and closed, Mr. Macron is broadly for open in both trade and immigration. In French terms, he is an economic liberal. And, crucially, he is an optimist. For decades France has suffered from the morose belief that politics involves struggle, but no real solutions. That sabotages reform: why give up what you have today for something worse tomorrow? Elsewhere in Europe, democracy often seems a joyless transaction in which voters are asked to endorse politicians' empty promises in exchange for benefit cuts and shoddy public services.

Somehow, Mr. Macron has convinced the French that progress is possible. He has hit back against populist taunts that free markets are a concession to the bankers and the globalists with refreshing patriotism — whether by crushing the hand of Donald Trump or restoring pomp to the presidency. Against warnings about immigrants and foreign competition, he asserts that both will invigorate France, not enfeeble it. To Eurosceptics who accuse Brussels of sucking the life out of the nation, he insists that, no, the EU magnifies French power.

Good ideas are not enough. Mr. Macron must also break the habit of 30 years in which France's reforms have been blocked by the hard left. Success rests on early, visible progress in two areas — employment and relations with Germany.

French unemployment is double what it is in Germany. For the under 25s, it is stuck above 20%. Firms are reluctant to create permanent jobs because of high social charges and because redundancy and dismissal are expensive and difficult. Mr. Macron wants to lower employment taxes and to make workplace bargaining more flexible. Success in the labor market will help him win over Germany, which has lost faith in France's ability to keep up. So will getting a grip on France's public spending and its army of bureaucrats. Germany, often standstill, should give Mr. Macron the benefit of the doubt. He is the best, and possibly last, chance to create the impetus for the euro zone to shore up the structure of the single currency. LRM's landslide makes this program more likely to succeed. Mr. Macron has been lucky. His chief opponent on the mainstream right, François Fillon, was fatally damaged by allegations of corruption. LRM's victory will be flattered by France's two-round voting system. A strong EU economy will create jobs (if he is not to jeopardize that, he needs to go easy on the budget cuts). As Theresa May, Britain's hapless prime minister, can attest, firm control of the assembly will cement his good fortune.

However, resistance will move to the streets. Already, the ancien régime is warning that the election leaves Mr. Macron dangerously powerful, and that the turnout of under 50% has deprived him of a mandate. Militant hard-left unions are threatening to fight his labor-market reforms all the way. They must be faced down. The French president is indeed powerful — but in recent years the problem has been the weakness of the Elysée, not its dominance. The turnout was low, but it has been falling for years and is not much lower than in America or Canada. The unions speak for only the 8% of workers who are their members. That is no mandate. It is what ordinary citizens like Ms Lehericy and Mr Flévet have been elected to sweep away.

Renaissance man

Plenty could go wrong. Expectations of Mr. Macron are sky high. Though LRM has experienced politicians to keep order, it could prove chaotic and amateurish. There will be strikes and marches. As the pain bites, the French public will need to hear again and again why reform will benefit the nation. These risks are obvious. More remarkable is the revolution that Mr. Macron has already achieved. The hopes of France, Europe and centrists everywhere are resting on him.

The above article was taken from *The Economist*.

SPECIAL NEWS

Domestic Economy Desk

Iran's oil output, exports rising

Domestic Economy Desk

Average crude output of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) member states, including, Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Nigeria, Libya, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Iran amounted to 31,519,000 barrels per day in 2015, based on figures released by the organization.

Of this figure, Iran produced some 2,836,000 barrels ranking fourth after Saudi Arabia with 10,142,000, Iraq with 3,961,000 and the UAE with 2,906,000 bpd, ISNA wrote.

OPEC produced 32,486,000 barrels of oil per day in 2016. During this period, Iran stood third by pumping 3,518,000 barrels after Saudi Arabia and Iraq with 10,406,000 and 4,390,000 bpd respectively.



IRNA

In March 2017, OPEC's output was 31,770,000 barrels of oil per day, of which 3,792,000 barrels pertained to Iran. Saudi Arabia with 9,905,000 and Iraq with 4,425,000 ranked first and second respectively.

The organization's oil production in April 2017 totaled 31,803,000 barrels per day.

Iran produced 3,791,000 of the total output taking the third place after Saudi Arabia with 9,938,000 barrels and Iraq with 4,379,000 barrels.

In May 2017, the figure reached 32,139,000 barrels per day, of which 3,795,000 barrels was Iran's share preceded by Saudi Arabia (9,940,000 barrels) and Iraq (4,424,000).

OPEC clinched a historic deal with Russia and other non-members last December to slash global production by nearly 1.8 million barrels per day for six months starting January.

OPEC — in what was its first production deal in eight years — exempted key member Iran from cutting output, allowing the country to increase its crude production by 90,000 bpd to attain the pre-sanction output production level of around four million bpd.

In May 2017, OPEC and non-members led by Russia decided to extend cuts in oil output by nine months to March 2018.

Latest export figures

Reports suggest that Iran's oil export to the West in May reached to the levels prior to the imposition of anti-Iran sanctions, the removal of which began in January 2016.

The lifting of the sanctions started after the P5+1 (the US, Britain, France, Russia, China plus Germany) and Iran clinched a nuclear deal in July 2015.

Many Asian states continued to buy oil from Iran during the sanction era while the Europeans stopped purchasing crude. Hence, Iran's exports were halved and dropped to below one million barrels per day.

Following the lifting of sanctions, the Islamic Republic attracted new oil customers and resumed ties with its partners.

Gas deal with Total...

From Page 1

International firms have been cautious in their dealings with Iran despite the lifting of sanctions early last year out of fears of being blacklisted by the US.

Total became the first Western oil major to sign an energy agreement with Iran after the European Union and the United States undertook to lift sanctions on the Islamic Republic under a nuclear deal signed in July 2015.



IRNA

The company helped Iran develop phases 2 and 3 of South Pars in the 2000s, before pulling out after Western sanctions were imposed in 2011.

Total resumed trade with Iran in February 2016, and bought about 50 million barrels of crude for about \$1.9 billion last year, on top of 11 million barrels of oil products worth \$394 million, the company has announced.

The company has said it is interested in more Iranian projects other than South Pars, including an LNG plant which is half complete as well as a multibillion-dollar oil and gas pipeline between Iran and Oman.

NIOC adds five oil companies to prequalified list for Iran projects

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has added five more international oil companies to its list of prequalified companies for Iran's oil and gas upstream projects, just days before the June 19 deadline for the Azadegan oilfield tender consortia.

NIOC has added Russia's Gazprom Neft, Rosneft, Tatneft and Zarubezhneft and Azerbaijan's state-owned Socar, taking its list of prequalified companies to 34, according to a list posted on its website, Platts reported.

Russia now has six companies with Gazprom and Lukoil in the list, the single largest number of prequalified companies for Iran's upstream projects, followed by five companies from Japan.

Officials at Russian companies have said they are potentially interested in projects in Iran but the companies are awaiting for a final contract to evaluate the economics and decide whether they are to take part in them and in which form — individually or via consortia.

NIOC's updated prequalified list of companies comes as Tehran is gearing up for the biggest test of interest in the country's oil sector in years, as major international oil companies prepare to bid for the right to develop the Azadegan oilfield — one of its most prized assets.

The prequalified oil companies have been asked to provide details of their planned consortium partners by Monday, as part of NIOC's planned tender to develop the giant onshore Azadegan oil field, a source familiar with the issue said last week.

NIOC has also asked prequalified companies to seek its approval if they are selecting partners that have not been prequalified for Iran's upstream bidding rounds, the source said.

It plans to distribute detailed tender documents to the companies in July, the source added.

The tender will be Iran's first bidding round for a major oilfield, having previously relied on bilateral negotiations to award development contracts.

It is also the first to be launched under Iran's much delayed new model contract, the Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC), which is yet to be published.

This replaces the old buyback contract, which failed to attract sufficient investor interest due to its tough terms.

New contracts

The delay in launching the new contract has held up Iran's ambitious plans to bring in new international oil companies and restore its oil production to pre-sanctions levels of around 4 mbpd.

"Azadegan is the core of Iran's upstream development plans, and accounts for most of Iran's target for oil production capacity increase. Hence, the upcoming tender is perhaps the most important event the government has been looking forward to for months now, if not years," said Iman Nasseri, a senior consultant at FGE last week.

The tender covers the development of the entire Azadegan field.

Azadegan currently produces around 125,000 bpd,



SHANA

with 75,000 bpd from the northern portion and 50,000 bpd from the south. NIOC plans to raise production to 150,000 bpd in the north and as much as 600,000 bpd in two phases from South Azadegan.

"Iran seems to be in favor of having a Chinese-Russian partner in key developments to keep the project alive together with the local contractor should a 'snap back' of sanctions pull the European partner back out of the project," Nasseri said.

At the start of June, Gazprom Neft and Austria's OMV, which is also a prequalified company, signed an agreement on cooperation on projects in Iran.

The MOU outlines possibilities for working together on "analysis, assessment and study of certain oil deposits... in the territory of [Iran] in cooperation with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)", the two companies said in a statement at the time.

It said Gazprom Neft was "studying the possibility of

participating in the development of two blocks in Iran" and given OMV's experience in Iran and the Middle East, "joint geological assessment of blocks will be most effective".

Gazprom Neft earlier said it was looking at the Changouleh and Cheshmeh Khosh oilfields. Iran has already invited OMV to participate in an imminent tender to develop the Azadegan oilfield.

Malaysia's state-owned Petronas and Royal Dutch Shell have handed over their technical studies report on the Azadegan oilfield to NIOC.

France's Total and Japan's Inpex Corp. have also offered their surveys on Iran's largest crude reserves, Shana reported quoting Nouredin Shahnazadeh, the managing director of Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company.

Total, Shell, Inpex and Petronas are among the pre-qualified companies to bid for the Azadegan field.

Iran's economy minister in South Korea to boost banking ties

Iran's economy minister is visiting South Korea to discuss expansion of banking relations and line of credit (LC) between the two countries.

Ali Tayyebnia, who is in South Korea to attend the annual conference of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), has held talks with Minister of Strategy and Finance Yoo Il-Ho, IRNA reported.

Following the implementation of the landmark nuclear agreement between Iran and major world powers known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a strategic foreign finance committee was set up in Iran's Ministry of Economy, which included representatives of Central Bank of Iran and Plan and Budget Organization, to accelerate and facilitate foreign lines of credit.

South Korea is one of the target countries of the committee for foreign lines of credit and financial services. Based on preliminary talks, two South Korean banks are expected to finance Iran projects.

The meeting discussed lines of credit between the two countries' banks, brokerage deals and opening branches of Iranian banks in the east Asian country.

Talks with South Korean banks on creating lines of credit are in the final stage, but some other issues require agreements between the ministers of the two countries.

The changing currency in oil deals was

another topic of discussion in the meeting between Tayyebnia and his South Korean counterpart.

Iran-South Korea trade and financial exchanges entered a new phase last year after former South Korean president visited Iran in May and an agreement was signed on the use of euro in bilateral transactions.

The South Korean delegation in Tehran also expressed readiness to extend lines of credit for Iranian projects and preliminary talks on this are currently underway.



IRNA

AIIB is an international financial institute which was initiated by China and Iran is one of its shareholders.

The main goal of the bank was defined as crediting countries along the Silk Road and boosting development of infrastructures in Asia.

Iran became a member of the institution in November and currently ranks eleventh among its shareholders, holding 1.61 percent of the total shares.

Iran, EEU finalize FTZ accord



Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) finalized an agreement on establishing a free trade zone.

The EEU announced on Saturday that Iran and EEU member states will observe the basic principles of World Trade Organization and bring about proper conditions for trading all goods within the framework of commerce collaborations, IRNA reported.

Iran and the EEU negotiated the creation of the free trade zone for 18 months.

Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mahmoud Vaezi and minister for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission examined the various dimensions of the agreement.

On the sidelines of the meeting, on June 2, Vaezi said that Iran started with 200 items and can increase the number. According to the deal, the move toward free trade will start after three years of preferred tariffs.

The EEU is an economic union of states located primarily in northern Eurasia. It provides for the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor within member states.

The current members of the union are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia that all in all have a GDP of \$2.2 trillion, \$3.1 trillion of industrial products, and \$877 billion trade with non-member countries that equals 7.3 percent of world export and 3.2 percent of world import.

UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond said that the kingdom should focus on protecting jobs and the economy on the eve of Brexit talks with the European Union.

BRICS to lead efforts to eradicate hunger, poverty by 2030



ss-coa.org

With the clock ticking toward the 2030 deadline for meeting the international goals to eradicate hunger and poverty, five of the world's most important emerging economies are well positioned to take a leading role in helping to achieve these objectives, according to the United Nations.

The five countries, known collectively as the 'BRICS' (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), form an important economic bloc, the Rome-based UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported on June 16.

They account for more than 40 percent of the world's population and over 20 percent of global domestic product. Together, they produce more than one-third of global cereal production. Last year, Russia became the largest wheat exporter in the world, IPS wrote.

Speaking during the Seventh Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture in Nanjing, China's Kundhavi Kadiresan, assistant director general and FAO's regional representative for Asia and the Pacific, said, "The BRICS countries play an important political role in the international arena. Developing countries around the world look to your successes in economic development over the past few decades as an example to follow."

"Your experiences provide a path that can help us all meet our global collective commitments, namely those of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — and the Paris climate accord."

Kadiresan pointed out that, despite trends towards urbanization, poverty in the world today is primarily rural. As a result, accelerating rural development will be key to achieving the SDGs.

"The question is how can we do this? Our experiences in countries in different parts of the world have shown that it can best be done through a combination of agricultural growth and targeted social protection, but also through growth in the rural nonfarm economy," she said.

"Agriculture can be a driver of sustained and inclusive rural growth. In low-income countries, growth originating from agriculture is twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth originating from other sectors of the economy."

Equally important is that all the tools, approaches and technologies developed "must be useful and accessible to poor family farmers in developing countries" so that they can increase production and productivity.

Achieving agricultural growth would also require investments in research and development, and the BRICS countries could play a leading role in this, as all five countries have strong agricultural research systems that are working on many of the challenges faced by developing countries, such as feeding a growing population in a sustainable way, according to FAO.

"Biotechnology would also play a key role in these advances, as would agro-ecological approaches. Climate-smart agriculture will be essential to adapt to the

uncertain changes facing our farmers, and it will rely heavily on cutting-edge research."

Information and Communication Technologies are becoming more widespread by the day, and they offer a promising approach to address many of the challenges smallholders face with regard to information on prices, weather forecasts, vaccines, financial services, and much more.

Agricultural growth, as important as it is, cannot eradicate hunger and poverty all by itself — social protection programs can also play a key role in rural development, the UN specialized body said.

These programs have important poverty reduction and health benefits, and can also strengthen the confidence of family farmers, encouraging them to become more entrepreneurial, it explained.

"Brazil's Fome Zero and India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act are global references in this regard."

Kadiresan stressed that it is important not to overlook the key role played by the rural non-farm economy in fostering rural development.

"As economies transform, most farm households obtain significant income from activities other than farming. The income from these activities provides not only a higher standard of living, but also a more stable one in many cases. Governments play a key role in encouraging this transformation by investing in rural health and education," she said.

Main Indices of TSE

Index	Value	Change	Percent
Total Index	79285.0	(54)	0
Industry Index	68098.2	(18.3)	(0.08)
Free Float Index	86617.7	86.3	0.1
First Market Index	54723.3	(34)	(0.02)
Second Market Index	177424.0	192.8	0.15

Overall Index details on 20170617

First	79446.4	Change end of year(%)	918.32%
High	79533.8	Historical highest	89500.6 (20140105)
Low	79285.0	Historical lowest	100 (1369/1/6)
Close	79285.0	Base Value	100 (1369/1/6)
Change	0		

Industry Index details on 20170617

First	68252.4	Change end of year(%)	1027.74%
Max Value	68328.4	Historical highest	75181.9 (20140105)
Max Value	69610.5	Historical lowest	1226.8 (1377/8/25)
Closing	68098.2	Base Value	
Closing	(18.3)		

Free Float Index details on 20170617

First	86458.1	Change end of year(%)	
Max Value	88753.6	Historical highest	105040 (20140105)
Max Value	88687.9	Historical lowest	
Closing	86617.7	Base Value	
Closing	86.3		

Main Board Index details on 20170617

First	54881.1	Change end of year(%)	777.1%
Max Value	54902.9	Historical highest	67441.4 (20140105)
Max Value	55990.5	Historical lowest	
Closing	54723.3	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	(34)		

Secondary Index details on 20170617

First	177795.9	Change end of year(%)	1345.03%
Max Value	177958.2	Historical highest	181353 (20170522)
Max Value	181452.5	Historical lowest	
Closing	177424.0	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	192.8		

Spain threatens to block Greece bailout payment

Spain threatened to block the latest bailout disbursement to Greece, angry that Athens has failed to drop a legal case against European experts who had worked on the Greek privatization program.

"The payment of the latest tranche will be blocked without a solution," said Spanish Economy Minister Luis de Guindos on the sidelines of EU finance minister talks in Luxembourg, according

to AFP.

De Guindos told reporters that Spain and Italy had won the support of eurozone partners at marathon talks on Thursday when a €8.5 billion (\$9.5 billion) payout to Greece was agreed in principle.

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, the eurozone's most dominant figure, backed De Guindos.

"Immunity was promised beforehand and such commitments should be fulfilled," Schäuble told reporters.

Another top eurozone official said the allegations were "unfair" and that ministers believed the case was politically motivated. The legal case concerns three advisers from Spain, Italy and Slovakia to the Greek privatization agency, created at the insistence of Germany in the

wake of the debt crisis in 2011.

Many details of the accusations are unknown, but a Greek legal source said the experts were accused of disloyalty to the public — a crime that carries a 20-year jail sentence.

The Greek courts initiated proceedings against the experts in 2014 after alleged irregularities in the sale of 28 real estate properties owned by the Greek state.

Russian central bank cuts rates

Russia's central bank reduced its key interest rate by 25 basis points to nine percent as inflation in the economy approaches its target.

The bank, which has gradually reduced rates in installments throughout the year, said inflation, which hit 4.1 percent in May, was close enough to its target of four percent by the end of the year to allow a cut, it said in a statement, FT reported.

Russia's return to economic growth this year, which the bank expects to hit 1 to 1.5 percent, was also a factor in the decision.

The bank said it would continue its 'moderately tight' policy as it considered further lowering rates over the course of the year.

President Vladimir Putin has called on banks to increase lending, which requires a lower key interest rate, but has backed central bank chief Elvira Nabilulina's efforts to lower inflation and



trend.az

stabilize the ruble.

On Thursday, Putin said during his annual call-in show that Nabilulina's efforts had helped reduce currency volatility from the ruble's dependence on oil, which saw it halve in value as prices plummeted in 2014.

"This is the basis the central bank is operating from: If oil prices go the other way and decrease, then it won't have to sharply adjust the key interest rate," he said.

US housing starts drop for third straight month

US homebuilders slowed down the pace of construction for the third straight month in May, a possible sign that the shortage of houses for sale might worsen. The Commerce Department said that housing starts fell 5.5 percent in May to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.09 million units.

This comes after a 2.7 percent monthly decline in April and a 7.7 percent drop in March. Home construction is still 3.2 percent higher year-to-date, but that increase has been too modest to address the dwindling supply of homes, AP wrote.

Homebuilders remain optimistic about their sales prospects, but the level of construction has done little to meet demand from would-be buyers.

The number of existing homes listed for sale has been registering annual declines for roughly two years — creating a dearth of properties on the market.



KEITH SRAKOCIC/AP

Mark Fleming, chief economist at First American Financial — a title insurance company — said, "The lack of inventory of homes for sale is one of the most pressing challenges in the housing market today."

What has generally happened is a decline in the construction of apartment buildings that has been more than offset by the gains in the building of single-family houses.

Major Currencies

Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2853	Chinese Yuan	0.1468
Euro	1.1191	UAE Dirham	0.2722
British Pound	1.2785	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2921
Australian Dollar	0.7623	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0090	Saudi Riyal	0.2666

Major Commodities

Crude Oil	\$44.68	Silver	\$16.67
Gold	\$1255.20	Platinum	\$929.90
Copper	\$2.57	Wheat	\$465.75

Archeologists uncover a 12th century city in Ethiopia

A forgotten city thought to date back as far as the 10th century CE has been uncovered by a team of archeologists in eastern Ethiopia.

Artifacts from Egypt, India and China have been found in the city in the Harlaa region, according to BBC.

The archeologists also uncovered a 12th Century mosque which is similar to those found in Tanzania and Somaliland.

Archeologists said this proves historic connections between different Islamic communities in Africa.

Lead archeologist Professor Timothy Insoll from the University of Exeter said, "This discovery revolutionizes our understanding of trade in an archeologically neglected part of Ethiopia. What we have found shows this area was the center of trade in that region."

The team also found jewelry and other artifacts from Madagascar, the Maldives, Yemen and China. Harlaa was a "rich, cosmopolitan" center for jewelry making, Insoll said.

"Residents of Harlaa were a mixed community of foreigners and local people who traded with others in the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and possibly as far away as the Persian Gulf," he said.

BBC Ethiopia correspondent Emmanuel Iguzza said there was a local myth that the area was occupied by giants because the settlement buildings and walls were constructed with large stone blocks that could not be lifted by ordinary people.

However the archeologists found no evidence of this. "We have obviously disproved that, but I'm not sure they fully believe us yet," said Insoll.

A statement from the team said the remains of some of the 300 people buried in the cemetery are being analyzed to find out what their diet consisted of.

Further excavations are expected to be conducted next year.

Global diet, farming methods must change for environment's sake

Reducing meat consumption and using more efficient farming methods globally are essential to stave off irreversible damage to the environment, a new study said.

The research, from the University of Minnesota, also found that future increases in agricultural sustainability are likely to be driven by dietary shifts and increases in efficiency, rather than changes between food production systems, phys.org wrote.

Researchers examined more than 740 production systems for more than 90 different types of food, to understand the links between diets, agricultural production practices and environmental degradation. Their results are published in the journal Environmental Research Letters.

Lead author Dr. Michael Clark said: "If we want to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture, but still provide a secure food supply for a growing global population, it is essential



vaderstad.com

to understand how these things are linked."

Using life cycle assessments — which detail the input, output and environmental impact of a food production system — the researchers analyzed the comparative environmental impacts of different food production systems (e.g. conventional versus

organic; grain-fed versus grass-fed meats; trawling versus non-trawling fisheries; and greenhouse-grown versus open-field produce), different agricultural input efficiencies (such as feed and fertilizer), and different foods.

The impacts they studied covered levels of land use, greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs),

fossil fuel energy use, eutrophication (nutrient runoff) and acidification potential.

Clark said: "Although high agricultural efficiency consistently correlated with lower environmental impacts, the detailed picture we found was extremely mixed. While organic systems used less energy, they had higher land use, did not offer benefits in GHGs, and tended to have higher eutrophication and acidification potential per unit of food produced. Grass-fed meats, meanwhile, tended to require more land and emit more GHGs than grain-fed meats."

However, the authors note that these findings do not imply conventional practices are sustainable. Instead, they suggest that combining the benefits of different production systems — for example organic's reduced reliance on chemicals with the high yields of conventional systems — would result in a more sustainable agricultural system.

Plastic polluted Arctic islands dumping ground for Gulf Stream

Beaches on remote Arctic islands are heavily polluted with plastic, a new expedition found, demonstrating that the region is the dumping ground for waste carried northwards on the Gulf Stream.

The shorelines of islands in the Svalbard archipelago and of Jan Mayen Island were found to be littered with much more plastic waste than on European beaches, despite tiny local populations, The Guardian reported.

The cause is plastic drifting northwards at the Atlantic from Europe and North America, before being stranded in the Arctic. Plastic waste dumped in UK seas is carried to the Arctic within two years, according to a previous study.

At least one trillion pieces of plastic have already been frozen into the Arctic ice over past decades, according to other research. This makes it a major global sink for plas-

tic pollution, many times more concentrated than the well-known great Pacific garbage patch.

With global warming causing rapid melting of the ice cap, plastic is being released and making the problem even worse. Plastic pollution kills animals that become tangled up and seriously harms those that mistake it for food.

The latest expedition took Dutch sci-

tists from the Wageningen Economic Research (WER) institute to six beaches in Svalbard, where they recorded 876 pieces of visible litter per 100 meter stretch of beach.

On Jan Mayen Island — the most remote in the North Atlantic — they recorded 575 pieces. By comparison, an average of 375 pieces were found on Dutch beaches, despite their proximity to the source of the waste.

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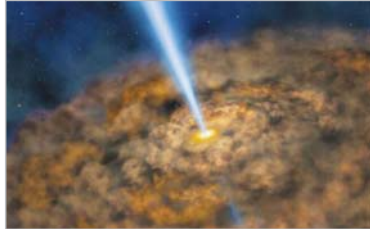
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NASA observatory finds cool, dense dust surrounding active black hole

A new survey of tori surrounding active supermassive black holes suggested dust surrounding central black holes is more compact than scientists thought.

The survey is one of the first to look specifically at the donut-shaped dust structures surrounding active black holes at the center of galaxies, or active galactic nuclei, UPI reported.



NASA — that can obscure the behavior of supermassive black holes inside active galactic nuclei.

The surrounding torus obscures observations of many black holes. Energy absorbed by the torus is reemitted in extremely long infrared wavelengths.

These wavelengths are absorbed by water vapor in Earth's atmosphere, making it difficult to image tori using ground-based telescopes.

Astronomers at the University of Texas, San Antonio (UTSA) used data collected by NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy to analyze the tori surrounding 11 supermassive black holes, all actively consuming material at the centers of galaxies located more than 100 million light-years from Earth.

SOFIA's Faint Object infraRed CAmera, or FORCAST, allowed researchers to measure the infrared emissions of each torus, revealing the dust donut's size, opacity and density.

Lindsay Fuller, a grad student at UTSA, said, "Using SOFIA, we were able to obtain the most spatially detailed observations possible at these wavelengths, allowing us to make new discoveries on the characterization of active galactic nuclei dust tori."

The scientists' analysis, detailed in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, suggested tori are 30 percent smaller than expected.

Their dust is also denser and emits even longer infrared wavelengths than predicted.

Researchers expect follow up analysis to confirm whether all of the infrared emissions measured by SOFIA originate from tori. It's possible other structures in the active galactic nuclei are spitting out infrared emissions.

Enrique Lopez-Rodriguez, staff scientist at the SOFIA Science Center, said, "Next, our goal will be to use SOFIA to observe a larger sample of active galactic nuclei, and at longer wavelengths."

"That will allow us to put tighter constraints on the physical structure of the dusty environment surrounding the active galactic nuclei."

China launches first X-ray space telescope

China successfully launched its first X-ray space telescope to study black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts.



tribune.com.pk

A Long March-4B rocket carried the 2.5-ton telescope into orbit from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's Gobi Desert, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

The Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT), named Insight, will allow Chinese scientists to observe magnetic fields and the interiors of pulsars and better understand the evolution of black holes.

It will also help scientists search for gamma-ray bursts corresponding to gravitational waves and study how to pulsars can be used for spacecraft navigation, Xinhua said.

"Insight is expected to push forward the development of space astronomy and improve space X-ray detection technology in China."

Beijing sees its multi-billion-dollar space program as a symbol of its rise and of the Communist Party's success in turning around the fortunes of the once poverty-stricken nation.

In April, China's first cargo spacecraft successfully docked with an orbiting space lab — a key development toward China's goal of having its own crewed space station by 2022.

Last month, China opened a 'Lunar Palace' laboratory on Earth to simulate a moon-like environment and house students for up to 200 days as the country prepares for its long-term goal of sending humans to the natural satellite.

Batteries that drink seawater could power long-range underwater vehicles

The long range of airborne drones helps them perform critical tasks in the skies.

Now Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) spinout Open Water Power (OWP) aims to greatly improve the range of unpowered underwater vehicles (UUVs), helping them better perform in a range of applications under the sea, according to phys.org.

Recently acquired by major tech firm L3 Technologies, OWP has developed a novel aluminum-water power system that's safer and more durable, and that gives UUVs a tenfold increase in range over traditional lithium-ion batteries used for the same applications.

The power systems could find a wide range of uses, including helping UUVs dive deeper, for longer periods of time, into the ocean's abyss to explore shipwrecks, map the ocean floor, and conduct research.

They could also be used for long-range oil prospecting out at sea and various military applications.

With the acquisition, OWP now aims to ramp up development of its power systems, not just for UUVs, but also for various ocean-floor monitoring systems, sonar buoy systems and other marine-research devices.

OWP is currently working with the US Navy to replace batteries in acoustic sensors designed to detect enemy submarines.

This summer, the startup will launch a pilot with Riptide Autonomous Solutions, which will use the UUVs for underwater surveys.

Currently, Riptide's UUVs travel roughly 100 nautical miles in one go, but the company hopes OWP can increase that distance to 1,000 nautical miles.

Co-inventor Ian Salmon McKay '12, SM '13, who co-founded OWP with fellow mechanical engineering



phys.org
Open Water Power's battery that drinks in sea water to operate is safer and cheaper, and provides a tenfold increase in range, over traditional lithium-ion batteries used for unpowered underwater vehicles.

graduate Thomas Milnes PhD '13, said, "Everything people want to do underwater should get a lot easier. We're off to conquer the oceans."

Most UUVs use lithium-based batteries, which have several issues. They're known to catch fire, for one thing, so UUV-sized batteries are generally not shippable by air.

Also, their energy density is limited, meaning expensive service ships choreograph UUVs to sea, recharging the batteries as necessary.

And the batteries need to be encased in expensive metal pressure vessels.

In short, they're rather short-lived and unsafe.

In contrast, OWP's power system is safer, cheaper, and longer-lasting. It consists of an alloyed aluminum, a cathode alloyed with a combination of elements (primarily nickel), and an alkaline electrolyte that's positioned between the electrodes.

When a UUV equipped with the power system is placed in the ocean, sea water is pulled into the battery, and is split at the cathode into hydroxide anions and hydrogen gas.

The hydroxide anions interact with the

aluminum anode, creating aluminum hydroxide and releasing electrons.

Those electrons travel back toward the cathode, donating energy to a circuit along the way to begin the cycle anew.

Both the aluminum hydroxide and hydrogen gas are jettisoned as harmless waste.

Components are only activated when flooded with water. Once the aluminum anode corrodes, it can be replaced at low cost.

McKay said, "Think of the power system as type of underwater engine, where water is the oxidizer feeding the chemical reactions, instead of the air used by car engines."

"Our power system can drink sea water and discard waste products. But that exhaust is not harmful, compared to exhaust of terrestrial engines."

With the aluminum-based power system, UUVs can launch from shore and don't need service ships, opening up new opportunities and dropping costs.

With oil prospecting, for example, UUVs currently used to explore the Gulf of Mexico need to hug the shores, covering only a few pipeline assets.

OWP-powered UUVs could cover hundreds of miles and return before needing a new power system, covering all available pipeline assets.

McKay said, "Consider also the Malaysian Airlines crash in 2014, where UUVs were recruited to search areas that were infeasible for equipment on the other vessels."

"In looking for the debris, a sizeable amount of the power budget for missions like that is used descending to depth and ascending back to the surface, so their working time on the sea floor is very limited."

"Our power system will improve on that."

See the latest stunning views of Jupiter

Once every 53 days, Jupiter pulls Juno close. Locked in orbit since July 2016, the spacecraft has made five close flybys of the planet so far.

More than 1,300 Earths could fit inside Juno, but Juno takes only two hours to zip from pole to pole, sciencenews.org reported.

Juno took a sequence of 14 enhanced-color images during its north-to-south trek on May 19.

Each image's width corresponds to the width of the field of view of JunoCam — Juno's visible light camera.

As the spacecraft zooms closer, to about 3,400 kilometers above the cloud tops, less total area of Jupiter can be seen, but more details emerge.

Turbulent clouds, for example, signal massive tempests along the equator. New data from the mission reveal that near the equator, ammonia rises from unexpectedly deep in the Jovian atmosphere.

Such upwelling might fuel storms like these, but it's too early for scientists to tell. And what look like pinpricks of light across the entire south tropical zone are



sciencenews.org
The tiny white spots in this image of Jupiter's south tropical zone, taken May 19, 2017, are actually towers of clouds composed of ammonia ice and, perhaps, water ice.

actually 50-kilometer-wide cloud towers.

Found high in Jupiter's atmosphere, these clouds are probably made of ice crystals.

Juno mission leader Scott Bolton of the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, said, "It's snowing on

Jupiter, and we're seeing how it works. Or it could be hail."

Either way, it's not snow or hail as we know it. The precipitation is probably mostly ammonia ice, but there may be water ice, too.

Juno doesn't have eyes only for Jupiter. Sometimes the spacecraft stargazes, too.

On its initial science flyby last August, Juno captured the first image of Jupiter's main ring seen from the inside looking out.

In the background of the newly released image, Betelgeuse, in the constellation Orion, peeks above the gauzy band, and the three stars of Orion's belt glint from the bottom right.

Heidi Becker, leader of Juno's radiation monitoring team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., said, "Taken with Juno's star-tracking navigation camera, the shot reveals that heaven looks the same to us from Jupiter."

These rendezvous won't go on forever, but they could last into 2019.

Scientists inch closer to wirelessly charging moving electric vehicles



UPI
Researchers at Stanford were able to wirelessly transmit electricity between two electromagnetic coils.

Scientists from Stanford University have made a breakthrough in the quest to wirelessly charge a moving electric vehicle.

In 2007, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) researchers wirelessly charged a stationary object a few feet away, UPI wrote.

In recent experiments, scientists were able to wirelessly transmit electricity to a moving LED lightbulb using a similar setup. If researchers can find a way to charge electric vehicles while on the go, it would remove the cars' biggest drawbacks — their limited range and lengthy charging times.

Lead researcher Shanhui Fan, a professor of electrical engineering at Stanford, said, "In theory, one could drive for an unlimited amount of time without having to stop to recharge."

"The hope is that you'll be

able to charge your electric car while you're driving down the highway. A coil in the bottom of the vehicle could receive electricity from a series of coils connected to an electric current embedded in the road."

Wireless charging relies on an electromagnetic phenomenon known as magnetic resonance coupling.

Electricity rotating around

a tire can form an oscillating magnetic field. This push and pull can excite electrons in a nearby coil of wires, triggering a flow of electricity.

But in order to keep a continuous flow of electricity, the sets of coils must be manually tuned to maintain the resonant frequency as they move.

Stanford scientists worked around the problem by

swapping out the transmitter's radio-frequency source and installing a voltage amplifier and feedback resistor.

The duo can automatically calculate the proper frequency as the distance between the coils changes.

Researchers described their breakthrough in the journal Nature.

Lead study author Sid

Assawaworrarit, a Stanford grad student, said, "Adding the amplifier allows power to be very efficiently transferred across most of the three-foot range and despite the changing orientation of the receiving coil."

"This eliminates the need for automatic and continuous tuning of any aspect of the circuits."

The team of scientists used a relatively inefficient off-the-shelf amplifier.

A custom amp could boost the transmitters' efficiency. And research suggested further tweaks could boost the amount of electricity the technology can transmit.

Fan said, "We can rethink how to deliver electricity not only to our cars, but to smaller devices on or in our bodies."

"For anything that could benefit from dynamic, wireless charging, this is potentially very important."

US school system fails to produce education equality

All across America, preparations are underway for high school graduation. It's a glorious time, representing both a milestone and a gateway to adulthood.

But missing from this year's ceremonies are more than one million kids who dropped out and will not be attending graduation day, dailysignal.com wrote.

The future those high school dropouts face is chilling. They will have a much harder time getting a job and will earn much less than those who did graduate. They're also more likely to commit a crime and more likely to be the victim of one.

In short, many of them face a life that will be so much more difficult — all because they could not or chose not to finish high school.

The consequences of this crisis are especially evident in the US community. Today, more than half of all African-American students in many large US cities don't graduate from high school. Think about that.

And those kids aren't just dropping out — they're escaping. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, schools that serve majority-minority communities have the worst performance, the highest crime rates, and the largest achievement gaps.

In cities like Detroit, more than nine in 10 black students can't even read or do math at grade level.

It wasn't supposed to be this way.

In 1954, the Supreme Court issued its landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, ruling that school segregation is unconstitutional.

'Massive Resistance' soon followed as many states launched an all-out effort to block integration.

Today, the nemesis isn't the old Massive Resistance crowd, but a similarly determined cartel of unions, bureaucrats, and politicians. They make a great deal of money from the current system in the form of union dues, salaries, and political contributions.

As a result, they view education equality as a threat and anyone seeking it as their enemy.



dailysignal.com

Just ask Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. Appearing before Congress recently, DeVos testified that her goal is "ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to receive a great education."

But rather than be hailed for seeking the equality promised decades ago, she's being attacked by those who want things to stay just as they are.

But the secretary isn't just right — she's echoing the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling which declared education to be "a right which must be made available to all on equal terms."

Today in America, that right is conditional. If you are wealthy, white, connected, or elected, your child probably goes to or graduates from a great school.

But if you are African-American or Latino and living in a poor urban neighborhood, your child is much more likely to go to a failing school — a school where more than half of all students can't read or write well, have low math scores, face the daily threat of bullying and violence, and won't graduate.

Do these sound like 'equal terms' to you?

Research suggests US teens as inactive as 60-year-olds

Here's some compelling evidence that Americans have become a sedentary bunch: Research suggests that the average teen is no more active than the average 60-year-old.

Researchers analyzed data from more than 12,500 people of various ages who wore activity tracking devices for seven straight days as part of national health surveys conducted between 2003 and 2006. UPI wrote.

The study found that physical activity levels among children and teens were lower than previously thought. The World Health Organization recommends at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity a day for children aged between five and 17.

But in the study, more than 25 percent of boys and 50 percent of girls aged six to 11 and more than 50 percent of males and 75 percent of females aged 12 to 19 did not reach the WHO guidelines, according to the researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

"Activity levels at the end of adolescence were alarmingly low, and by age 19, they were comparable to 60-year-olds," senior study author Vadim Zipunnikov said in a Hopkins news release. He is an assistant professor in the department of biostatistics.

"For school-age children, the primary window for activity was the afternoon between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.," Zipunnikov said. "So, the big question is, how do we modify daily schedules, in schools, for example, to be more conducive to increasing physical activity?"

The study also found that the only increases in physical activity levels occurred among young adults during their 20s. Activity levels fell through middle and older adulthood.

In all age groups, males tended to be more active than females. However, after midlife, men's activity levels fell sharply compared to females. And among adults aged 60 and older, men were more inactive and had lower light-intensity activity levels than females.

The researchers also identified different times throughout the day when activity was highest and lowest among the different groups.



washingtontimes.com

Housing refugees of Middle East conflicts: Where will they go?

Prolonged conflicts in the Middle East have led to a deadly humanitarian crisis, with as many as 17.5 million people displaced in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

In Syria alone, 11.5 million people have fled their homes — more than three people a minute — since the beginning of war in 2011. Five million have fled the country, and six million live in ad-hoc shelters across the country, ipsnews.com wrote.

The new numbers, in a report by the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) highlight the sheer magnitude of movement in the region, and the struggle of everyday life in first-hand accounts.

"When the siege of east Aleppo started last Ramadan [2016], the situation grew even more difficult as people were stranded for 190 days. The situation there was in a state of paralysis. My son was always hungry as there was nothing to eat or drink. Food was extremely expensive. We were forced to eat different kinds of lentil-based food. As a result, I lost 25 kilos," said Yasser, a businessman in Aleppo, who watched his son die as his building collapsed after a bombing.

Aleppo, a flourishing economic hub in northern Syria, laid in ruins after four years of hellish fighting between varying warring groups.

When the fighting finally ended on Dec. 15, 2016, 35,000 people were evacuated to neighboring areas in just one week. As residents move back into the city, livable housing remains a major problem.

In Ramadi, Iraq, which was recently liberated from Daesh terrorist group, fighting damaged almost 80 percent of the city. By March, more than a year since the war ended, only 60 percent of its civilians were able to return to the city. Nationwide, even before the Iraqi offensive on Mosul began in October 2016, almost a tenth of Iraqis were uprooted from their homes.

In Mosul, at the beginning of April this year, nearly 274,000 remained displaced from their homes in the city.

In all cases, the extent of damage has been complicated by tactics of urban warfare — firing in densely packed cities, and employing sieges against civilians.

In three cities — Foua, Kefraya and Madaya — in eastern Aleppo, for instance, nearly 60,000 civilians

were trapped in a siege that lasted 190 days in 2016. Similarly, in a 15-month siege in Taiz, Yemen, nearly 200,000 people were caught in the cross-fire.

Matters are made worse by continual use of high-impact weapons that destroy urban infrastructure — a single broken pipe, for instance, can deprive 100,000 people of water.

In a co-written editorial for *The Guardian*, ICRC President Peter Maurer and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) President Dr. Joanne Liu said "What we are witnessing is a sustained assault on, and massive disregard for, the provision of health care during times of conflict."

The report urges parties involved in the conflict to uphold the rules of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), protect urban settings, and work to the pressing concerns of civilians.

Spurred by ongoing attacks on volunteers and medical facilities, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2286 on May 3, 2016, which called on all warring parties to protect medical facilities and personnel.



vukuzenzele.gov.za

Education a top priority

Almost 80 percent of respondents support more or even much more spending on education, whereas only 20 percent would support more spending on defense policy.

In a number of countries, a majority of respondents is even willing to pay higher taxes in order to finance additional spending on education. The details of the study have been published as online preprints in the *Journal of European Social Policy* and the *Journal of European Public Policy*, phys.org reported.

The survey was conducted via computer-assisted telephone interviews as part of the project 'Investing in Education in Europe: Attitudes, Politics and Policies' (INVEDUC), which is financed with a Starting Grant from the European Research Council (ERC).

It significantly advances scientific knowledge as it is the first international comparative survey of public opinion on details of education policy.

It provides evidence on public attitudes on education spending and financing, the distribution of financial and other resources across different sectors of the education system, the governance of education as well as potential fiscal trade-offs between educational investments and other social policies.

The survey covers eight countries with different types of welfare states: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, Spain and Italy.

In order to achieve the best possible data quality, the university's researchers collaborated with a professional survey institute specializing in international comparative surveys.

Marius Busemeyer explained: "One further innovative feature of the survey is to include experimental components: Different from previous surveys, we examined whether public support for higher education expenditures changes when people are confronted with various kinds of budget constraints."

When participants were asked to name just one out of several key areas of the welfare state — besides education, these were, for instance, labor market policy, pensions, family policy, healthcare or social assistance — education policy did best at an approval rate of 29 percent, closely followed by health policy (22 percent).

Other supposedly popular social policies such as pensions or family policy ranked considerably lower. A majority of participants supported greater state spending on education in countries like Germany and Italy, where expenditure is below average.

When asked about which sectors of education should be prioritized, respondents assigned top priority to general school education and vocational education and training (VET).

Across all countries, 62 percent of respondents demanded more or even

much more spending in these two sectors. This is surprising given the fact that public debates often focus on expanding opportunities in early child education and higher education. In direct comparison, however, the public rather supports additional investments in general schools and VET.

In basically all surveyed countries, support for VET is higher than for higher education. This is especially true for countries like Italy or Spain, which suffer from high levels of youth unemployment rates. Germany, which is doing well in this respect, makes for the exception to the rule: Here, expanding early child education is considered the more urgent issue.

Then there's the money problem: In view of shrinking public budgets, political attempts to increase education spending can pose a challenge. In order to gauge the robustness of public

Erendira Wallenda dangles by teeth above Niagara Falls

Daredevil and professional aerialist Erendira Wallenda broke the world record for the highest suspension over Niagara Falls, which straddle the international border between Canada and the United States.

On the fifth anniversary of her husband of 17 years, Nik, walking over the waterfalls on a tight rope, Erendira hung by her teeth from an aerial hoop dangling approximately 300 feet above the thundering water, nbcnews.com wrote.



Erendira Wallenda hanging by her teeth.

Her act set a Guinness World Record for height, breaking the record Nik set when he hung from his teeth 250 feet above Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri.

Transported by a helicopter, Erendira sat in a hula hoop and performed multiple acrobatic flips before using only a mouth piece to suspend from the circle. She then hung upside down with her feet on the hoop before repeating the mouth stunt.

During her feat, her husband leaned face-first out of the

helicopter with headphones on that allowed him to communicate with the pilot. She had a safety harness around her waist to comply with New York State law for stunts that occur more than 20 feet in the air.

The family has had safety issues in the past. In February, Nik Wallenda attempted to perform another high wire stunt

with an eight-person pyramid. When some performers slipped, he and three others were able to catch the wire while the five remaining fell to the ground.

In a press conference after Erendira's successful stunt, Nik confirmed that despite suffering injuries, the five performers are already training or performing again.

In 1978, family member Karl Wallenda died in a high-wire accident while attempting to walk between two towers of the Con-

dado Plaza Hotel located in San Juan, Puerto Rico, according to the Associated Press.

After her routine, Erendira waved to the crowd watching her with binoculars and cameras. While she sat in the hoop, the helicopter returned to the roof of the garage of Niagara Resort.

Speaking with reporters afterward, Erendira said she couldn't hear anything while dangling because she was listening to music.

"I just had to put myself back to my backyard training and I felt good enough that I was able to hang by my teeth a second time," she said in a press conference to reporters.

She said she did not anticipate the wind to make the hoop shake as much as it did.

Erendira has attempted stunts since she was five years old and said she hopes she can perform another act with her husband five years from now — or pass the tradition of daredevil feats on to the next generation.

"I probably would want to spend all day long up there," she said. "It was a beautiful and amazing experience."

35-pound tabby cat seeking to slim down

Staff at an animal shelter in Washington, DC, are working to help a 35-pound (15.87kg) rescue cat shed weight and find a new home.

Humane Rescue Alliance shared video of Symba the hefty, six-year-old, orange tabby cat exercising on a circular treadmill device as he is prepared for adoption, UPI reported.

"HRA staff have seen a lot — but we've never seen a 35 pound cat! At six-years-old, Symba is bigger than a lion cub and we

know he'd be much more comfortable if he slimmed down a bit," the rescue group said.

The staff at HRA are seeking a new owner for Symba who is willing to provide a loving home and help guide him to a healthier weight.

"If you're up for the challenge, he'd love to go home with you and continue his weight loss journey," HRA said.

"This handsome fellow is sweet, mellow, and waiting for a new home where he can thrive."

Symba arrived at the rescue group after his previous owner moved to a nursing facility that doesn't allow pets.

HRA spokesman Matt Williams told Today



HUMANE RESCUE ALLIANCE

that Symba needs to lose at least 15 pounds to maintain a healthy weight and will require an owner willing to hold him to a strict diet and exercise regimen.

"As much as we love Symba, as cute as he is, his obesity is serious," Williams said.

"He really needs to lose the weight to live a good life."



PICTURE OF THE DAY



A dog feeds four tiger cubs and a puppy at the Xixiakou Wild Animal Protection Zone in Shandong Province, China.

CSN/REUTERS

Two-headed porpoise pulled from ocean in the North Sea

A newly born two-headed porpoise has been documented by a group of Dutch fishermen and studied by a team of researchers from several institutions in the Netherlands.

In their paper published in *Deinsea* — Online Journal of the Natural History Museum Rotterdam — the researchers reported how the fishermen caught the porpoise, photographed it and then threw it back into the ocean, phys.org wrote.

Reports of conjoined twins in cetaceans (a family that includes whales, porpoises and dolphins) are rare, quite naturally because they occur in the open sea — it is also likely that most would die shortly after birth, like the specimen found by the fishermen. In this case, it appears the porpoise was born without the ability to swim. The fishermen knew the porpoise was a rare find, but because they were subject to rules preventing them from keeping caught mammals, they were compelled to throw it



phys.org

back into the sea — but not before taking multiple photographs, which they sent to the team at *Deinsea*.

In studying the photographs taken by the fishermen, the researchers found signs that it had been born very recently — the dorsal fins were limp and the umbilical opening was still open — also, the tail had not stiffened, which meant it could not swim.

Additionally, both of the heads still had rostrum hair, which disappears in healthy

porpoises shortly after birth.

The research team reported also that the porpoise was male, and that it had two heads that were fully formed.

It also had individual pectoral fins, but just one body. They suggest it is likely the porpoise was symmetrically conjoined, which happens when two embryos fuse into one.

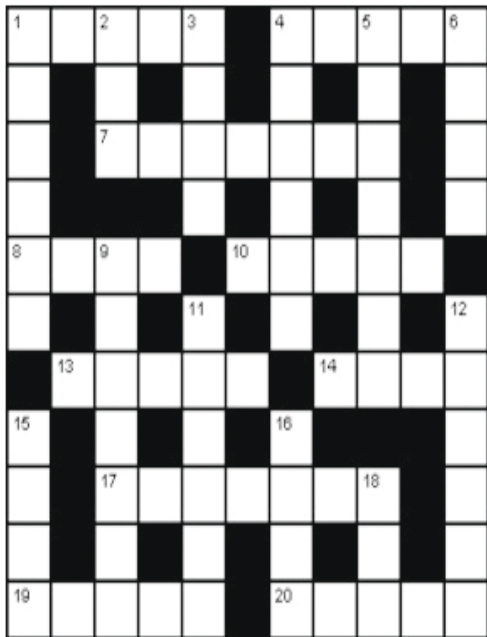
In other cases, a single embryo does not split, preventing the development of separate twins.

Though there have been nine previous cases of known conjoined sightings in cetaceans, this is the first for a porpoise.

Researchers believe that twins, conjoined or otherwise, are rare in porpoises because porpoise calves in utero are too large.

The development of conjoined twins would normally kill the mother, though it is not known if that was the case for the one found in the North Sea.

Quick Crossword



DOWN

1. Smooth fabric (6)
2. Precious stone (3)
3. Simple (4)
4. Bee house (6)
5. Imprecise (7)
6. Reverberation (4)
9. Oval (7)
11. Saunter (6)
12. Blood vessel (6)
15. Optical device (4)
16. Ursine mammal (4)
18. Uncooked (3)

ACROSS

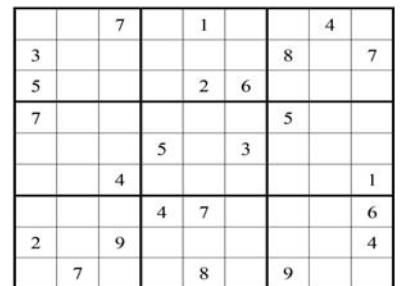
1. Obscure (5)
4. Nimble (5)
7. Monumental (7)
8. Fencing sword (4)
10. Test (5)
13. Woodwind instrument (5)
14. Celestial body (4)
17. Innovator (7)
19. Carapace (5)
20. Raucous (5)

Yesterday's solution



Sudoku

Sudoku was inspired by the table devised by Iranian mathematician Khwarazmi. Fill 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row and each of the nine 3x3 sub-grids that compose the grid, contains all of the digits from 1 to 9.



Michael Phelps, the most successful Olympian of all time, nicknamed "Flying Fish", will race against a great white shark as part of a television show due to air in July.



'Outraged' Ronaldo puts Man United on red alert

Cristiano Ronaldo prepares for Portugal's Confederations Cup match against Mexico in Russia on June 18, 2017.

FRANCK FIFE/GETTY IMAGES

Manchester United is watching the Cristiano Ronaldo show with renewed interest after the Real Madrid striker made it plain he is "outraged" at what he feels is unfair treatment by tax authorities and is now determined to leave Spain.

Ronaldo, who signed a new five-year contract in November, has made no secret of his affection for United – the club he left to join Madrid in 2009 after six years at Old Trafford – and José Mourinho, who shares the same super agent, Jorge Mendes, would relish his return as he seeks to build a team capable of a title challenge and a successful campaign in the Champions League, the Guardian reported.

United remains one of the clubs with the financial muscle to offer a competitive package for Ronaldo – the Red Devils are predicting record revenues of up to £570million this year – and his return would be a dream commercial move.

He has a €1 billion

(€880million) release clause in his current Madrid deal and United – now without Zlatan Ibrahimovic's wages on the books and the potential to lose Wayne Rooney's financial burden soon – would be able to meet Ronaldo's wage demands of around £400,000 a week. Paris Saint-Germain could match United's offer but the Old Trafford move presents Ronaldo with his fairytale moment and a far grander stage on which to perform. The potential availability of one of the world's most marketable players will also naturally alert the Chinese Super League clubs.

Reports that Ronaldo wanted to leave Real were sparked on Friday in the Portuguese newspaper A Bola. It claimed his decision was "irreversible" and that he has already told his Madrid teammates that he wants to leave.

The root of Ronaldo's anger stems from Spanish prosecutors' lawsuit against the player, accusing him of defrauding tax authorities of €14.7million by hiding his

image rights income between 2011 and 2014. Ronaldo has categorically denied any wrongdoing. Real backed that assertion, saying it was confident the Portuguese forward had acted legally.

Ronaldo's frustrations at his treatment come after leading Real to three Champions League titles, scoring twice in last month's final against Juventus in Cardiff as Real became the first club to retain the trophy. He also became only the second player to score in three different finals and remains the competition's record goal scorer with 105.

Barcelona's Lionel Messi took a similar stance in threatening to quit Spain in 2014, also claiming he had been singled out for special treatment, when he was accused of concealing €1.1million from the authorities. The Argentina international was found guilty and subsequently lost an appeal against a 21-month prison sentence – under Spanish law sentences under two years are usually suspended – and a €2.1million (£1.8million) fine.

Murray 'may only have couple of years left' at top

World number one Andy Murray said he may only have "a couple of years" left at the top of tennis but insists he will "make the most of every tournament".

Now 30 years old, Murray will be aiming to win Wimbledon for the third time and equal Fred Perry's record when the tournament starts next month, BBC reported.

Retirement

The Scot, who was knighted in the New Year Honors, turned 30 in May and all of the top five players on the men's tour are in their 30s. Spaniard

20 to 30 years, normally by early 30s is when players have struggled to stay at the top.

"I know some of the players have been doing really well until their mid-30s recently, but that might not be the case with me. Maybe the next couple of years are the last few where I have a chance to compete for the majors and the biggest tournaments.

"Most of the players are travelling with physios now, spending a lot more time working in the gym to protect their bodies from the kind of pounding you give it on the court as well. I think some of that explains it.

"I don't know how long I'm going

2013 and 2016, begins on July 3 and the defending champion said expectations will be high that he can repeat his previous successes.

"For me, it is obviously always going to be the biggest tournament during the year," said Murray.

"A lot of pressure comes with it as well. There's a lot of expectation during this period, so it can be a bit stressful – but I'm able to get away from that as well because I'm at home, I'm sleeping in my own bed and I have all my family around me.

"I'm older and more experienced in dealing with it. The pressure and stress that goes with it maybe doesn't affect me quite as much when I was younger."

Being world number one

Since becoming world number one in November last year he has struggled with injuries and for form. So has the pressure of being top of the rankings taken its toll?

"It hasn't for me," he said.

"I mean, I've been asked that question lots over the past few months. I didn't play particularly well from February through to the French Open, but at the French [where he was knocked out in the semifinals by Wawrinka] I felt I played quite well.

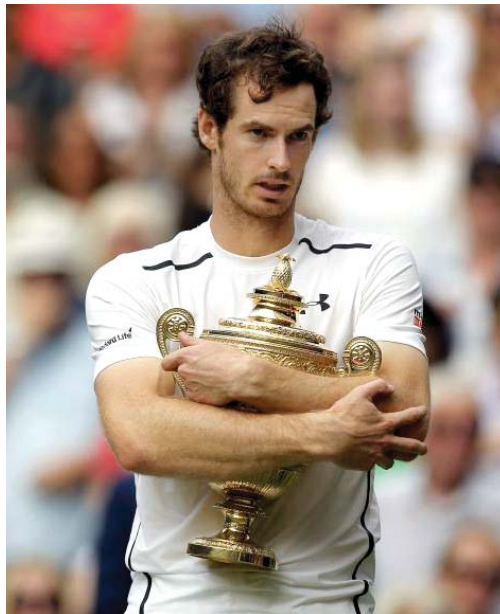
"[The world ranking] isn't something I think about when I'm on the court or when I'm preparing for matches.

"Obviously when you get asked about it, you spend a little bit of time thinking: 'Maybe, could it be because of that?' But I really don't think it has been the reason why I struggled for a few months – but everyone will have their own opinion on that.

"It's been a frustrating few months because I picked up a couple of injuries, including one to my elbow, and a couple of illnesses.

"I was still pretty nervous going into the French because I'd hardly won any matches for a while, but with each match that I got through, I started to build confidence, started to play a little bit better and was very close to reaching the final by the end.

"Form can turn around very quickly providing you're mentally in the right place and you're doing the right things and training. And I feel I'm in a good place now to go on a good run during the grass."



ANDREW COULDRIDGE/REUTERS

Andy Murray won his third Grand Slam title and second Wimbledon trophy on July 10, 2016 after he beat Milos Raonic in straight sets in the final.

Rafael Nadal is 31, Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland is 32, Serbia's Novak Djokovic is 30 and Swiss Roger Federer 35.

But Murray said that despite players continuing to compete at the highest level into their 30s he accepts that he may not have long left at the top.

"My coach, Ivan Lendl, was still competitive at the top until he was about 32 but, generally, over the past

to be playing for any more. I want to make the most of every tournament I compete in. If I'm going to be away from my family, I'm not going to do that and not do my best, be totally professional and take every tournament as seriously as I can."

Wimbledon chances

Wimbledon, which Murray won in

Conte's tenacity may become a problem for Chelsea

Reports suggest the Chelsea manager is at loggerheads with the club's hierarchy over transfer dealings, less than a month after he lifted the Premier League trophy. These accounts carry echoes of Conte's final months as manager of Juventus.

same financial level as other giants of European football. It was a theme he had aired before, more than once. When Juventus was knocked out of the Champions League by Bayern Munich at the quarterfinal stage in 2013, Conte told the media: "You do

he wanted to give "an enormous thank you" to the club but that "it might be more difficult to keep winning with Juventus". The chairman, Andrea Agnelli, was effusive in his praise, describing Conte as a "great leader" who "led us to write history".



GETTY IMAGES

Antonio Conte raised the 2016/17 Premier League trophy in his first year in charge of London Blues, Chelsea.

As at Stamford Bridge, Conte was a hugely successful manager in Turin, securing a record Serie A points total in his third consecutive title-winning season of 2013-14. But on the day he won the title Conte was asked on TV about his plans for the next season. His reply was as unexpected as it was colorful: "Well, you cannot go to eat at a €00 restaurant with just €10 in your pocket, can you?" the Guardian reported.

With this metaphor, Conte was referring to his team's prospects of winning the Champions League, a trophy Juve's owners, the Agnelli family, wanted but Conte had proved unable to provide. That season Italy's Old Lady had dropped out of Europe's premier competition at the group stage.

For Conte the issue was simple: he was not able to compete at the

not build skyscrapers with a pail and shovel." And before Juve faced Real Madrid in the group stage in his final season Conte said: "They are in a tank, we are a car."

Conte wanted the money to strengthen the side with players such as Alexis Sánchez, then at Barcelona, and Juan Cuadrado. Instead the club told him Bianconeri had struck a deal for Patrice Evra, a Champions League-winning full-back, but by then 33 years of age.

The manager was also reported to have become frustrated with other elements of the club's operations, from proposed summer tours to the players' win bonuses. On July 15, 2014 Juventus announced that Conte was to leave by "mutual consent".

In the statement published by the club on its website, Conte announced

Asked about his relationship with Conte a year later Agnelli gave a slightly different response. Describing what he saw as the manager's weakness, Agnelli said: "He is perhaps a bit touchy, especially when you tell him that something isn't going the way he wants it to. As for a quality, that is tenacity, for sure."

Chelsea would have known this about Conte when the Blues signed him. The London club might also have known that Conte walked out of another managerial job at Bari, just a month after getting the club promoted to Serie A and signing a new contract. But now, as the hierarchy and manager dispute the best way for the club to build on a league title with European dominance, the Premier League champion is feeling the force of Conte's tenacity for itself.

Art & Culture

'Harry Potter' British actor Beazley dies aged 101

'Harry Potter' actor Sam Beazley, who played Professor Everard in the 'Order of the Phoenix', died at the age of 101.

According to dailymail.co.uk, the British actor, born in Kensington, had a long and distinguished theater career before he turned to the screen.



dailymail.co.uk

He played Professor Everard in 'Harry Potter' and the 'Order of the Phoenix', the fifth in the series. He also appeared in 'Johnny English' and 'Bridget Jones' Diary.

His death was announced in the Times newspaper, with a statement reading: "Actor and artist, died in his sleep June 12, 2017, aged 101. Beloved brother-in-law, uncle and great uncle. Funeral on June 21, at Mortlake Crematorium, 2pm."

Everard was one of the former headmasters of Hogwarts, and his portrait hung in Professor Dumbledore's office. Everard was sent by Dumbledore to his portrait at the Ministry of Magic when Arthur Weasley was attacked by Nagini, to warn of possible future attacks.

Beazley had started his acting career as a teenager on the stage, but left the profession to serve in World War Two.

He ran an antique shop for several decades afterwards but returned to his first passion aged 75.

Beazley was also the Vicar in the 1995 version of 'Pride and Prejudice' and appeared in Foyle's 'War and Midsomer Murders'.

Avildsen, director of 'Rocky', 'Karate Kid' dies at 81

John G. Avildsen, who won an Oscar for directing the original 'Rocky' (1976), starring Sylvester Stallone, and also directed all three of the original 'Karate Kid' films, died in Los Angeles at the age of 81.

Avildsen also won the DGA Award for directing 'Rocky', which also won Oscars for best picture and film editing and was nominated in multiple other categories.

In 2006, Variety interviewed Avildsen, who said that a film with a boxing story didn't excite him at first, but he was "moved by the urban character study of Sylvester Stallone's script".

He held out on directing part two in lieu of another project — a decision that Avildsen said was "one of my greatest mistakes". He returned to the franchise to direct 1990's 'Rocky V'.

In 1983, he was Oscar nominated again, this time for the documentary short 'Traveling Hopefully'.

The Director's Guild released a statement, saying, "We were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of beloved director John Avildsen. His iconic 'Rocky', which won the DGA Feature Film Award in 1976, has been lionized throughout our culture as the quintessential underdog story — a recurring theme in his notable body of work which included 'Save the Tiger' and 'The Karate Kid' franchise. Throughout the decades, his rousing portrayals of victory, courage and emotion captured the hearts of generations of Americans."

He served on the DGA's National Board for three terms, on the DGA's Eastern Directors Council from 1977-1990, on the Western Directors Council from 1992-1994, and was a member of the 1987 and 1996 DGA Negotiating Committees.

Avildsen developed a reputation for making movies about losers, or underdogs, who somehow become winners.

Avildsen's other films included the critically hailed drama-thriller 'Joe' (1970), starring Susan Sarandon and Peter Boyle. It was his first success as a director, and was praised for Peter Boyle's performance.

'Save the Tiger' (1973), an issue-oriented drama sporting an outstanding starring performance from Jack Lemmon, was nominated for three Oscars, with Lemmon winning best actor. The three Oscar nominations for 'Save the Tiger' and the win for Lemmon secured Avildsen's place on the list of go-to directors.

His other films included comedy 'W.W. and the Dixie Dancekings' (1975), starring Burt Reynolds; thriller 'The Formula' (1980), starring George C. Scott and Marlon Brando; eerie comedy 'Neighbors', starring John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd; pregnancy comedy 'For Keeps?' (1988), starring Molly Ringwald; drama 'Lean on Me' (1989), which helped launch Morgan Freeman's career; and bull riding biopic '8 Seconds' (1994), starring Luke Perry.

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 » Managing Director: Sadroddin Moosavi
 » Editor-in-Chief: Kambakhsh Khalaji
 » Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88755761-2
 » Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88761869
 » Subscription Dept. Tel: +98 21 88521954, +98 21 88748900
 » ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548992, 5
 » Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 8850067 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com
 » Website: <http://www.irandailyonline.ir>
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Culture Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri attended the closing ceremony of the 25th Tehran International Holy Qur'an Exhibition in which the top participants were awarded.



Iran's 'Cold Breath' screening to be dedicated to Kiarostami in Europe

Compiled from Dispatches

The public screening of 'Cold Breath', by Abbas Raziji, is to be dedicated to late internationally-acclaimed Iranian film director Abbas Kiarostami in Europe.

Raziji said the late Kiarostami had played a key role in introducing Iranian cinema to the world, Europe in particular.

He said the film is to vie at the 14th Salento International Film Festival (SIFF) which is to take place from September 1 to 9, 2017 in Tricase, Salento Apulia in Italy.

Raziji noted that the film has so far taken part in over 40 international festivals and has managed to win several awards.

The movie narrates the story of a woman called Maryam, who is past her thirties, and the hardships



she faces every day. Meanwhile, Experimental-documentary film 'Abbas

Kiarostami', directed by Midia Kiasat, will go on screen at Vagrant Film Festival 2017 in Belarus.

This film will premiere at the inner courtyard of the National History Museum of Belarus in Minsk on July 23 to compete with 30 other works from other countries.

The flick demonstrates a new look at late Kiarostami in which the archival footage and songs by prominent traditional vocalist Shahram Nazari are used on script and film title sequence.

Kiarostami was a highly influential figure in world cinema who passed away in July last year at 76 in Paris where he had been undergoing treatment for cancer.

The news of his death rattled fellow filmmakers and audiences around the world. Former French president François Hollande was among the most notable figures to pay tribute to Kiarostami, hailing him as the filmmaker who has "profoundly marked the history of cinema".

Farhadi's films displayed in Rome open-air festival

The retrospective of Iranian Oscar winner filmmaker Asghar Farhadi is part of the Third Trastevere Film Festival, currently underway in the Trastevere district of Rome.

The open-air festival started on June 1 and has so far shown Farhadi's 'About Elly' and 'A Separation' and will screen 'The Past' on June 20, and his Oscar-winning film 'The Salesman' on June 30, ifnews.com reported.

There are also other retrospective sections dedicated to

The festival also includes movies from Italian comedies, Disney classics and Pixar masterpieces, as well as movies directed by renowned filmmakers Martin Scorsese, Wim Wenders, Ang Lee, Xavier Dolan, Richard Curtis and many others.

Horror films will also be shown.

During the event, many movies will be presented by Italian directors and actors such as Roberto Benigni and Renzo Arbore, providing a great opportunity to meet the popular artists and discuss the movies as well.

This year the festival has doubled the outdoor seating to 400. It will conclude on August 1.

Berlin-bound drama to shed light on Iran's 'Plight'

Iranian short film 'Plight', written and directed by Mohammadreza Khavari, will be screened in the short competition section of Berlin Flash Film Festival, Germany.

The event is a monthly, online film festival followed by an awards ceremony/live screening held in Berlin at Zoo Palast, recognizing the overall winners in each category.

Berlin Flash Film Festival celebrates micro, super short films, shorts, and scripts. Each month, or Edition, all entries is screened online by an international panel of experts from the film and performance industry. Mehr News Agency wrote.

The first edition of short film festival of Berlin Flash will be held from July 1 to 25, 2017. Khavari's other short productions have taken part in international festivals in the US, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, India, among other countries.



Weather

25 21 Bandar Anzali	37 17 Isfahan	37 28 Kish Island	29 19 Sari	40 26 Yazd	35 ^ v 24 Tehran	34 20 Kabul	44 29 Mecca	27 15 Stockholm	39 23 Tashkent	29 22 Tripoli
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