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INTERVIEW

Asefi: Ongoing tensions among Arab nations, tip of the iceberg

'We must not allow sides to use Iran's card against each other'

Political Desk

The decision made by some Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, to sever ties with Qatar is dominating headlines around the world. In an interview with Iranian website khabaronline.ir, former Iranian ambassador to the UAE and France, Hamid-Reza Asefi, discussed the outcomes of cutting ties between Doha and other Arab countries, as well as Iran's stance on the issue.

Asefi warned that the ongoing conflict is the tip of the iceberg, which could lead to dire consequences in the region. He said Iran should spare no effort to settle the crisis in a bid to prevent the escalation of tensions.

What do the severance of ties between Saudi Arabia and Qatar mean?

The ongoing conflict between Doha and Riyadh has happened twice in recent years. However, the Persian Gulf littoral states tried to prevent the collapse of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and settle their disputes.

Nonetheless, this time the situation is more complicated and more difficult. The ongoing conflict is completely different and deeper than the previous ones.

Why did Riyadh decide to cut ties with Doha amid the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and how would Qatar reciprocate the move?

The ongoing tension is deeper than the past. This has been attributed to several issues, including Qatar's approach toward the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood as well as its policy in Yemen.

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Kerry: Imposing new sanctions on Iran could be dangerous

Former US secretary of state, John Kerry, said on Monday that the Iran nuclear deal could hold even if President Donald Trump pulls out, but he warned that imposing new economic sanctions against Tehran could be dangerous.

Kerry said new sanctions on people involved in Iran's ballistic missile program could send a message to the Iranian people that there is no gain for them in the 2015 nuclear deal. The landmark agreement eased economic sanctions in return for restrictions on Iran's nuclear work, AP reported.

"If we become super provocative in ways that show the Iranian people there has been no advantage to this, that there is no gain, and our bellicosity is pushing them into a corner, that's dangerous

and that could bring a very different result," Kerry said.

Last month, the US Senate's Foreign Relations Committee voted 18-3 in favor of legislation that would authorize Trump to impose mandatory sanctions on people involved in Iran's ballistic missile program and anyone who does business with them. The measure also would apply sanctions to Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and enforce an arms embargo.

Trump said during his campaign that he would renegotiate or leave the Iran nuclear deal.

Kerry, who spoke in San Francisco at a fundraiser for Ploughshares Fund, an organization that works to reduce the threats posed by nuclear weapons, said he is hopeful Trump would listen

to Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and White House National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster.

"My hope is that they would in fact not just be the adults in the room, but that they would be listened to," Kerry said.

As former president Barack Obama's top diplomat, Kerry played a major role in achieving the historic nuclear deal with Iran involving six world powers.

Kerry added that there is a view that seems to dominate the Trump administration that "the United States can do anything that it needs to do all by itself," and he urged those in attendance to do more to fight for the government to recognize the value of diplomacy.

UN: 163 civilians shot dead by Daesh in Mosul last week



The United Nations human rights chief on Tuesday said the Daesh terror group murdered 163 civilians to prevent them from fleeing Iraq's western Mosul last week.

"The brutality of Daesh and other terrorist groups seemingly knows no bounds," said Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini.

"Yesterday, my staff reported to me that bodies of murdered Iraqi men, women and children still lay on the streets of the Al-Shira neighborhood of western Mosul, after at least 163 people were shot and killed by Daesh to prevent them from fleeing," he said in his opening address to the UN Human Rights Council, AFP reported.

"My staff have also received reports of missing people from this neighborhood," he added, with-

out providing further details.

His spokesman Rupert Colville said that the killings were believed to have taken place on June 1. Daesh seized Mosul in 2014, and the operation that began last October to retake the city has pushed hundreds of thousands of residents to flee their homes.

Iraqi forces have retaken all but a handful of areas around the Old City in western Mosul, but the terrorists are fighting in densely populated areas, and have used civilians as human shields at various points in the battle. The United Nations warned at the end of May that up to 200,000 civilians may still be trapped in Daesh-held areas, facing shortages of food, water and medicine as well as deadly danger from the battle for the city.

Qatar:

Kuwait to mediate Persian Gulf crisis

Kuwait is attempting to mediate a Persian Gulf crisis in which some Arab countries have cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and moved to isolate the energy-rich travel hub from the outside world, Qatar's foreign minister said early Tuesday.

The biggest diplomatic crisis in the Persian Gulf since the 1991 US-led war against Iraq pits several nations against Qatar. Airlines suspended flights and residents nervous about the peninsula's lone land border closing cleaned out grocery store shelves, AP wrote.

In an interview with Doha-based satellite news network Al Jazeera, Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said Kuwait's emir had asked Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to hold off on giving a speech about the crisis late Monday night.

"He received a call from the emir of Kuwait asking him to postpone it in order to give time to solve the crisis," Sheikh Mohammed said.

Still, the minister rejected those "trying to impose their will on Qatar or interfere in its internal affairs".



The state-run Kuwait News Agency reported Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah spoke with Qatar's emir Monday evening and urged him to give a chance to efforts that could ease tensions. The call came after a senior Saudi royal arrived in Kuwait with a message from the Saudi king. An Omani diplomat traveled to Qatar on Monday.

Reuters also reported, quoting Arab officials that Kuwait's emir will travel to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday for talks with King Salman over the Persian Gulf dispute with Qatar.

Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as well as the Maldives announced Monday they would cut diplomatic ties.

Saudi Arabia said it was cutting ties due to Qatar's "embrace of various terrorist and sectarian groups aimed at destabilizing the region".

Qatar has consistently denied any support for extremists and did so again after Monday's move by its neighbors.

"The measures are unjustified and are based on false and baseless claims," the Qatari Foreign Ministry said. The Persian Gulf countries ordered their citizens out of Qatar and gave Qataris abroad 14 days to return home to their insular nation, whose only land border is with Saudi Arabia.

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Afghanistan issues ultimatum to Taliban as bombing toll tops 150

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani issued an ultimatum to the Taliban Tuesday, warning them to embrace peace or "face consequences" after announcing that the death toll from last week's devastating truck bombing had passed 150.

Ghani has come under mounting criticism over the bombing, the deadliest in Kabul since 2001, with protests and deadly street clashes rolling the Afghan capital as people incensed by spiraling insecurity call for his government's resignation, AFP reported.

The president made a strong plea for peace at an international conference on Afghanistan attended by around two dozen countries, which was held under tight security as armored vehicles patrolled the streets and fighter jets roared over the capital.

"We are offering a chance for peace but this is not an open-ended offer," Ghani said.

"Time is running out... this is the last chance: Take it or face consequences."

The conference, labeled the "Kabul Process", aims to build international support for ways to restore security in Afghanistan.

Ghani offered the Taliban the opportunity to open a representative office, adding that he was



flexible about the location of future talks.

The terrorist group responded to the conference by firing a rocket at what they claimed was NATO's headquarters. It landed inside the Indian ambassador's residence and no

one was hurt.

Kabul has been on edge since the massive truck bomb last Wednesday ripped through the city's highly fortified diplomatic quarter, home to the presidential palace and a host of foreign embassies. The death toll has jumped to more than 150 people, while over 300 wounded were brought to hospitals, many with burns and amputations, Ghani told the conference.

"We are a nation of survivors. Terrorists can shed our blood but they cannot break our will," he said.

Previously officials had put the number of dead at 90. Ghani did not explain the dramatic jump but Afghan authorities are well known for initially playing down casualty figures.

Four more people were killed Friday when hundreds of protesters incensed by the bombing clashed with police, prompting officials to force them back with live rounds fired in the air, tear gas and water cannon.

Shamkhani: Coalition in Syria not short-term alliance

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said that a coalition between Iran, Russia, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon's Hezbollah is not a short-term coalition due to its goals pursuing in fight against terrorism.

Referring to the recent achievements of the coalition in the war-torn Syria, Shamkhani said the coalition managed to drive out foreign-backed terrorists from Aleppo after years that it fell to terrorists, IRNA reported.

In December 2016, the Syrian Army with the help of Russian airstrikes liberated the city from the terrorists.

The Iranian official stressed the importance of the establishment of effective coalitions among countries in the region in order to ensure regional and international security.

"Undoubtedly, the threat of terrorism still tops security threats in the international community," Shamkhani said in an interview with the Institute for Iran-Eurasia Studies, Press TV reported.

"The most important issue is that there is a common analysis of the future of regional developments, the pervasiveness of the danger of terrorist groups and the negative role of the US and its fake alliance in the region," he added.

The Iranian official also pointed to the relations between Iran and Russia, saying, "We believe that such relations are underway in a strategic form, particularly since Russia's serious and effective involvement in the fight against terrorism in Syria."

He added that Iran and Russia have mili-



IRNA

tary cooperation given their common interests.

"Contrary to certain countries in the region which merely purchase and stockpile US arms, Iran, itself, chooses the type of weapons it requires," he said, adding that the purchases are very small compared to the arms designed and produced in the country.

He said arms sales are a very small part of defense cooperation between Iran and

Russia.

The SNSC secretary emphasized that military maneuvers between Tehran and Moscow, which are based on common goals, are not a cause for concern, adding, however, that "we are concerned about military drills by countries that are moving in a path contrary to the provision of security in the region."

Shamkhani reiterated that Iran and Russia have strategic cooperation with the pur-

pose of countering terrorism, saying such interaction is beneficial to the two sides.

Tehran and Moscow have been supporting Syria in its counterterrorism battle over the past years, facilitating many army gains on the battlefield.

Iran and Russia have been offering military advisory assistance to the Syrian Army, while Moscow also provides air cover to the government's ground operations on several fronts.

IRNA chief, counterparts discuss media cooperation in Russia

Political Desk

Head of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) Mohammad Khodddadi held meetings with senior officials of more than a dozen news agencies from Asian and European countries to promote bilateral media cooperation.

The meetings were held on the sidelines of an international congress in the Russian city of Saint Petersburg attended by 40 leading news agencies.

Khodddadi signed a MoU with Dmitry Kiselev, head of Russian Sputnik News Agency, to expand media ties.

In a meeting with TASS Director General Sergei Mikhailov, Khodddadi said the expansion of media ties between Iran and Russia will cement bilateral relations in diplomatic, economic and defense sectors.

Mikhailov, for his part, underlined the importance of media cooperation, describing the transfer of information between the two nations as very widespread.

Khodddadi also discussed ways of promoting media contacts with officials of other news agencies from Spain, Cuba, Italy, South Korea, Japan, India, Bulgaria, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Turkey and Egypt.

Asefi: Ongoing tensions among Arab nations...

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It is an oversimplification of the issue if some link the ongoing tensions between the Arab nations to comments made by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani about Iran, Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah, the veracity of which he has rejected. It seems that the tensions are just the tip of the iceberg. Some countries are interested in resolving the dispute through mediation, but the Saudis refuse to accept it.

Are the tensions linked to Donald Trump's recent trip to the region?

We cannot ignore the impact of Trump's regional visit on the issue. Once he began his trip I warned that this would plunge the region into tensions and crisis.

The US president's trip was aimed at milking regional nations. Now, we should see how Trump will react to the situation.

It is unimaginable that the conflict would result in a military confrontation without Washington's approval.

It is also unimaginable that Arab nations decided to cut ties with Qatar overnight.

The root of the conflict pertains to months ago, which was worsened by Trump's trip.

It remains to be seen what will happen in the future.

We should wait for Qatar's reaction; it has so far tried to calm the situation and avoid harsh rhetoric in order to pave the way for resolving the conflict.

What approaches should Iran adopt?

Tehran should follow the issue with scrutiny and sensitivity.

We should voice concern about escalating tensions among these countries. This is because if the tensions lead to military confrontations, the whole region would be adversely affected.

If possible, the Islamic Republic should hold talks with other countries to settle the conflict.

Iran should calm the situation without siding with any of the nations involved in the conflict. We must not allow the sides to use Iran's card against each other because this would complicate the situation.

Meanwhile, no one should turn a blind eye to the plots of the US and Israel, which are trying to increase tensions due to their political and economic interests.

The Islamic Republic needs to exhaust all possibilities to resolve the crisis.

The Saudis claim that Qatar's support for "terrorism and extremism," its media campaign toward the war in Yemen, the policies adopted by Al Jazeera network as well as the country's approach toward Iran have created the ongoing crisis. Such excuses have made it difficult to resolve the crisis.

The US retains a lot of influence on Saudi Arabia and Qatar. It is not clear whether Washington is willing to help resolve the dispute, or is in favor of its continuation because of its political and economic interests.

On the whole, Iran should exercise restraint and patience and follow the developments with scrutiny. The Islamic Republic must use all its capacity to control the crisis.



Qatar: Kuwait to mediate...

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The countries also said they would eject Qatar's diplomats and they planned to cut air and sea traffic. Qatar Airways, one of the region's major long-haul carriers, has suspended all flights to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain until further notice.

Iran's airspace open to Qatari flights

An Iranian civil aviation official said Qatari aircraft bound for Europe or Africa can fly over Iran's territory as of Tuesday.

The highest number of Qatari flights are bound to North Africa and Southern Europe via an air route over Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the unnamed official was quoted as saying by the Mehr News Agency.

He noted that from now on, the Qatari flights will have to cross over Iran, Iraq and Jordan for traveling to North Africa.

The official added that the transfer of Qatari flights into Iran's airspace would mark a 20 percent rise in the country's air traffic.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Monday spoke with multiple foreign counterparts including Qatar's top diplomat and EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, to discuss the latest regional developments, especially the Persian Gulf diplomatic crisis. Zarif tweeted on Monday urging Qatar and its neighboring countries to engage in dialogue to resolve their dispute.

"Neighbors are permanent; geography can't be changed. Coercion is never the solution. Dialogue is imperative, especially during blessed Ramadan," Zarif said, referring to the Muslim month of fasting.

OPINION

Saudi Arabia cuts off Qatar

Saudi Arabia and its satellites have repeatedly put their neighbor Qatar on notice, but never as severely as this. In 2014, they temporarily recalled their ambassadors from the tiny, rich Persian Gulf statelet; but on June 5th, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain announced they were not only severing diplomatic relations with Qatar, but their air, sea and land links too—meaning that Qatar's only land border is to be closed. Panic buying is already reported in Qatari shops. Qataris must leave Saudi Arabia within days, and will henceforth be denied entry. For good measure the ambitious young Saudi defense minister and deputy crown prince, Muhammad bin Salman, expelled Qatar's 1,000-strong force from the coalition he leads against Houthis in Yemen.

Qatar is the world's second-largest exporter of natural gas and will host the football World Cup in 2022, and it has sought to exert influence across the region. Saudi news outlets say the measures are reprisals for Qatar's support for terrorism, including Al-Qaeda. That said, other Persian Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have also had to fend off claims that they—or their citizens—have helped to fund jihadists.

There are broader and older grievances at play, rooted in geopolitics and the place of Islam in politics. For decades, Saudi and Emirati officials have blamed Qatar, which protrudes like a sore thumb from the western Gulf, for breaking ranks with the Saudi-dominated six-nation Persian Gulf Co-operation Council (PGCC).

Qatar is one of three GCC states that still maintains cordial relations with Iran (Kuwait and Oman are the other two). Its Emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, is credited expressing reservations about Saudi Arabia's increasingly belligerent posture against Iran. Qatar also sponsors and provides sanctuary to the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly irking the UAE, which deems the Brotherhood a terrorist group.

And it also funds and hosts Al Jazeera, a broadcaster that offers a platform to Arab dissidents everywhere but in Qatar, and which fanned the flames of revolution and armed revolt during the Arab Spring.

For all their ambition, the Al Thanis have little appetite for confrontation. Qatar's foreign ministry has meekly expressed "deep regret" at the severing of ties. In recent years Qatar has scaled back its public support for the Brotherhood.

As tensions mounted in recent days it ejected senior members of the Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood, Hamas, and repatriated a dissident wanted in Saudi Arabia. It has disclaimed a headline criticizing Saudi Arabia's stance on Iran, and described the quote attributed to the Emir as "fake news".

But the isolation is unlikely to end soon. Saudi Arabia has yet to define its demands for restoring ties, and Qatar can expect little solace from other Arab states. Most of them are likely to welcome Qatar's coup-pance. Egypt's president and his fellow generals still fume at Al Jazeera for opposing their overthrow of the Brotherhood's elected president in 2013; so Egypt quickly joined Saudi Arabia in cutting its links with Qatar.

Yemen's ousted Saudi-supported government, and the UAE-backed authority in eastern Libya also declared they are following suit.

Historically, Qatar looked overseas for protection against Saudi bullying. The British kept the Saudis from extending their rule to its coastal protectorates in the 1920s. More recently, Qatar has reached out to an unlikely assembly of Israel, Iran, Turkey and America for support. Of late, though, its alliances have seemed to fray. Israel has deepened its security relationship with Qatar's rivals, the UAE, and to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia.

American support may also be less certain. Qatar hosts the largest American base in the Middle East, Al-Udeid. Located on the road to the Saudi border, Qataris have long viewed it as their best defense against invasion by land. But many Qataris now fear that America under Donald Trump might be less a regional referee than a Saudi cheerleader. Last month Mr. Trump chose Riyadh, the Saudi capital, as the first foreign destination of his presidency, and in return was greeted with Saudi pomp and arms contracts. His foreign policy advisers are reckoned to maintain close ties with Muhammad bin Zayed, the UAE's de facto ruler, who has been urging America to move its forces there from Qatar for years.

Qatar could look to Turkey, which shares its favorable view of the Muslim Brotherhood and opened a base in the sheikhdom last year. Given his troubles at home, though, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish president, might shy from a confrontation with the Al Sauds. That leaves Iran. The two countries jointly manage South Pars, the world's largest gas field. In addition, says a cleric close to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran has a defense pact with Qatar which commits it to the latter's defense in the event of a Saudi attack.

Already, Iranian officials have offered to send food shipments across the Gulf. Saudi Arabia's impetuous actions risk further driving Qatar into the arms of Iran, and increasing the danger of armed confrontation with Shia state. In response to nervousness about both outcomes, oil and gas prices are rising.

From The Economist

The Italian police said Tuesday that they had broken a smuggling ring between Tunisia and Sicily which was preparing to bring migrants with suspected terrorist links to Europe.

WHO: Death toll in Yemen cholera outbreak hits nearly 700

A cholera epidemic in Yemen has killed at least 681 people and the outbreak has yet to peak, according to World Health Organization (WHO) figures showing an increase in the death toll of nearly 50 percent since its last update on May 27.

WHO figures taken between April 27 and June 4 show 86,422 suspected cholera cases were recorded in 19 of Yemen's 23 governorates, although the WHO said the increase was partly due to "better completeness of reporting." Reuters reported.

On May 29, the WHO reported 471 people had died in the period to May 27 and there were 51,832 suspected cases.

"Nationwide, this outbreak 'second wave' doesn't seem to have yet reached its peak," the WHO said in its bulletin.

The epidemic began in October, spread until December and then dwindled but was never brought fully under control. In April, a new surge in cases began.

Yemen has been hit hard by war, with 19 million of its 28 million people needing humanitarian aid and many of them on the verge of famine. Fewer than half of the country's health facilities are fully functional. The most affected governorates were Amanat al-Asimah, around the capital Sana'a, Hajjah, Amran and Hodeidah, all in north and western Yemen, with more than 53 percent of the cases reported since April 27.

Caused by ingesting bacteria from water or food contaminated with feces, cholera usually manifests itself with sud-



A woman sits next to her son who is infected with cholera at a hospital in the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah, Yemen, on May 14, 2017.

den acute diarrhea and can kill within hours, although three-quarters of infected people show no symptoms.

The short incubation period means outbreaks can spread quickly, especially

in places without safe water or sanitation.

Riyadh has been incessantly pounding Yemen since 2015 in a bid to reinstall the country's ex-government and crush the

Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Saudi Arabia that carries out airstrikes almost daily has killed at least 10,000 people in Yemen, and hunger and disease are rife there.

Third London attacker named amid anger over security flaws

UK Police on Tuesday named the third attacker in the weekend terror assault in London amid mounting anger, two days before an election, over how the terrorists had apparently escaped surveillance.

With flags at half-mast, the nation fell silent at 11:00 a.m. (1000 GMT) to remember the seven killed and dozens injured on Saturday night - a mourning ritual now grimly familiar after two previous terror attacks in less than three months, AFP reported.

Police identified the third attacker as Youssef Zaghiba, a



People near the scene of the recent attack observe a minute's silence in tribute to the victims of the attack at London Bridge and Borough Market, in central London, Britain, on June 6, 2017.

22-year-old Italian of Moroccan descent, a day after naming his accomplices as Khuram Shazad Butt, 27, a Pakistan-born Briton, and Rachid Redouane, 30, a self-described Moroccan-Libyan dual national.

Police also said they had made an overnight raid in east London and arrested a 27-year-old man early Tuesday. Twelve people arrested earlier have since been released without charge.

Butt "was known to the police and MI5" but there was no intelligence to suggest the attack was being planned, the Metropolitan Police said. Zaghiba was "not a police or MI5 subject of interest," it added, an assertion that seemed to conflict with accounts in the Italian media.

Criticism immediately flared about how Butt was able to carry out the attack.

He had notably featured in a Channel 4 TV documentary and, according to the British media, numerous people alarmed by his views had gone to the authorities.

According to Italian media reports, Zaghiba's status as a potential militant was notified to the British and Moroccan secret services.

The London attack follows the May 22 suicide bombing at the Manchester Arena by Salman Abedi - killing 22 people including children - who was also known to British intelligence services.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson acknowledged that the security services had to provide an answer.

After a brief pause, election campaigning resumed on Monday, with security dominating the agenda ahead of Thursday's vote. Prime Minister Theresa May has vowed to crack down on terrorist content online, saying: "We cannot and must not pretend that things can continue as they are."

But the premier also faced mounting criticism for her record on security in the six years she served as Britain's interior minister before becoming prime minister last year.

May called the snap general election on April 18, little more than two years into a five-year Parliament, arguing that a commanding majority would give her a stronger hand in the Brexit negotiations with the European Union.

According to a poll published Tuesday by the group Survation, May's lead over Labour has shriveled to just over a single point - 41.6 percent to 40.4 percent.

UN threatens DR Congo with international probe

The UN rights chief on Tuesday gave Kinshasa a two-day deadline to show it is seriously investigating violence in the central Kasai provinces, or submit to an international probe.

"Unless I receive appropriate responses from the government regarding a joint investigation by June 8, I will insist on the creation of an international investigative mechanism for the Kasais," said High Commissioner of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, AFP reported.



AFP

In March, the high commissioner demanded a high-level investigation into abuses committed against civilians in the violence-wracked Democratic Republic of Congo following the discovery of dozens of mass graves.

The region has seen a major spike in violence since September when government forces killed tribal chief and militia leader Kamwina Nsapu who had rebelled against President Joseph Kabila.

The unrest has claimed more than 400 lives and forced more than 1.2 million from their homes, according to UN figures. Unconfirmed local statistics put the number of dead as high as 3,000.

In his opening address to the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday, he warned that "the already dire situation in the Kasai provinces... continues to deteriorate, spreading to other provinces and across the border with Angola."

Kremlin 'resolutely' denies Russia hacked US vote

The Kremlin on Tuesday strongly denied a leaked US report that Russian military intelligence hackers tried to infiltrate into US voting systems before last year's presidential election.

"Apart from this claim which absolutely does not conform to reality, we have not seen any other information nor heard any arguments for the reliability of this information," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists, AFP reported.

"We resolutely deny the possibility that such a thing could have happened," he said, adding that he had not read the report.

The report by the National Security Agency was allegedly leaked by a private contractor just over a month after it was written and published Monday on The Intercept, an online news website which

focuses on national security issues.

It depicted a hacking operation tied closely to Moscow's GRU intelligence directorate that targeted private US companies providing voter registration services and equipment to local governments.

President Vladimir Putin also has said that hackers can come from any country since they are "free people like artists" and conceded it was theoretically possible that a "patriotically minded" hacker could decide to act against those critical of Russia.

He insisted however that "we never get involved in this on a state level."

The Kremlin strongman also suggested that attacks could be designed to appear to come from Russia in order to discredit the country, while saying that in his opinion hacking cannot influence electoral campaigns in Europe, Asia or America.



Dmitry Peskov

Poll: Macron's party seen winning landslide in French legislature

French President Emmanuel Macron's party is set for a large lead in the first round of a parliamentary election this month, putting it on course to secure one of the biggest majorities modern France has seen, an Ipsos Sopra-Steria poll showed on Tuesday, Reuters reported.



Emmanuel Macron

CHARLES PLATIAU/REUTERS

Macron's Republic on the Move (LREM) was seen winning 29.5 percent of the vote in the June 11 first round, well ahead of the Republicans and their allies of the center-right at 23 percent.

The far right National Front was seen winning 17 percent of the vote while the hard-left France Unbound was at 12.5 percent and the Socialists at 8.5 percent.

LREM's lead narrowed from 31 percent the last time the poll was conducted a week ago after Macron's former campaign chief, and now a cabinet minister, came under investigation for past financial dealings. The poll forecast that in the second round Macron's party would secure 385-415 seats in Parliament, out of 577 seats, potentially the biggest majority since former president Charles de Gaulle's 1968 landslide victory.

The Republicans party would win 105-125, the Socialists 25-25 seats, the hard left France Unbound 12-22 seats and the National Front 5-15 seats, the projection said.

The poll, conducted on June 2-4, with a sample of 2,103 people, also found that 68 percent of those surveyed had definitely made up their minds about whom they would vote for, while the number was 75 percent for those backing Macron's party.

Australia police treat fatal Melbourne shootout as terrorism

A fatal shootout claimed by the Daesh terrorist group was being treated as a terrorist attack by Australian police Tuesday, as the prime minister condemned it as "shocking and cowardly".

A man of Somali background was killed in a gun battle with police when he opened fire following an hour-long standoff after taking a female escort hostage at a serviced apartment block in Melbourne on Monday evening, AFP reported.

It is alleged 29-year-old Yacqub Khayre, linked to a 2009 terror plot targeting an Australian Army barracks, had first murdered a Chinese-born Australian man working as a receptionist in the foyer.

Police said he made statements "around Al-Qaeda" and called a local television station making similar comments, reportedly: "This is for IS (Daesh), this is for Al-Qaeda."

Authorities labeled the attack as a terrorism incident but added that investigations were still ongoing into whether it was planned or random.

"We're not seeing anything indicating that he's got some message from overseas to do this at all but, again, early days," said Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton.

He said it was possible that Khayre may have been attempting to lure police by taking the escort hostage.

"We still don't know exactly whether that was the case," Ashton said, but police believed he was acting alone and there was no ongoing threat.

The Amaq media outlet - which is affiliated with Daesh - carried a statement claiming responsibility.

Ashton said Daesh "always tend to jump up and claim responsibility every time something happens" and it was too early to determine whether they were involved.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the attack underlined the need to be constantly vigilant. "It is a terrorist attack and it underlines the need for us to be constantly vigilant, never to be deterred, always defiant," in the face of terrorism, he said.

Australian officials have grown increasingly concerned over the threat of terrorist attacks. They say they have prevented 12 attacks on home soil since the threat level was raised in September 2014, including a foiled Christmas Day plot in Melbourne last year, with more than 60 people charged.

But four have gone ahead, including the murder of a Sydney police employee in 2015 by a 15-year-old boy.

SPECIAL NEWS

Domestic Economy Desk

NITC hopes to renovate oil tanker fleet

National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), is looking at options to place its first orders for new VLCCs since the easing of international sanctions last year, as it plans to renovate its existing fleet.



IRNA

Any new contracts would be to replace its current vessels, rather than adding new deadweight tons, NITC Managing Director Siros Kianersi said, Platts reported on Monday.

"The new building price is at its lowest and [this] is the best time to renovate the fleet," Kianersi said.

NITC is one of the world's largest tanker companies, with a fleet of 65 tankers and gas carriers making up a total of 15.5 million dwt capacity. Along with crude oil, the company is also a big transporter of LPG and refined oil products.

"We have no intention to expand but are looking closely at ordering ships to renew our fleet and reduce the average age of our vessels," he added.

Prior to the sanctions, 20 percent of NITC's business came from transporting Iranian cargoes, with 80 percent from moving international cargoes.

While NITC is not planning to increase its crude oil vessel fleet, it is looking to expand activities in LPG and petrochemical shipments, he said.

NITC tankers are now being accepted at international ports, with these vessels receiving Western insurance cover, reputed flags of convenience, approvals and certification from the International Association of Classification Societies after the sanctions.

Kianersi added he expected the tanker market to remain soft, at least in the short run.

"We hope it will improve in the last quarter of 2017 and there will be an improvement in rates for 2018 and 2019, provided owners do not order so many VLCCs."

Poland eyes Caspian fish imports from Iran

Iran said Poland has expressed interest in importing Caspian Sea trout (weighing 1.1 kilograms each) from Iran.

Ahmad Qana'iparsat, the head of the Fisheries Department in the northern province of Gilan, said that the European nation has expressed interest in importing all of Iran's trout fish, Mehr News Agency reported.

Poland is also eyeing the import of common carp (each weighing at least 1.5 kilograms), he added.

Turning to provincial fish exports, Qana'iparsat said that 50 ships dock daily in Kianshahr port to transport fish from Iran to Russia.

The province, he noted, produced 30,000 tons of fish in the year to March 20, 2017 and this figure is expected to reach 130,000 tons by 2021.

Iran's fishery exports in the year to March 20, 2107 stood at \$412 million with an output of 460,000 tons.

Iran's gasoline output to reach 70m liters/day

Iran's average gasoline production will increase to 70 million liters per day, said deputy oil minister.

According to IRNA, Abbas Kazemi further said, "The average gasoline production currently stands at 62 million liters per day and this figure would hit 70 million liters after an 8-million-liter gasoline production plant come on stream."



SHANA

He predicted that the average gasoline consumption in Iran will increase to 76-78 million liters per day, given the 1.3 million more cars produced.

Officials had earlier said that with the inauguration of the first stage of Persian Gulf Star Refinery, Iran will become self-sufficient in gasoline.

Ambassador:

China-Iran trade on the rise

Trade between Iran and China currently stands at \$31 billion, of which \$14.82 billion pertains to Iran's export, the Chinese ambassador to Iran said at a conference on Tuesday in Tehran.

Pang Sen further said that during 2016, China increased oil import from Iran by 17 percent to 31.3 million tons, Trend News Agency reported.

He added that investments by Chinese companies in Iran grew by 45.14 percent to reach \$630 million last year.

"China secured its top partner for Iran for eighth consecutive year," Pang Sen said, adding that trade in military equipment between the two sides is also increasing.

He said that China issued visas for 100,000 Iranians during last year.

The ambassador said that his country supports Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The SCO refused to initiate Iran's accession last year despite a request from Russia which backs Tehran's bid. The bloc also includes four former Soviet Central Asian republics.

Assistant Chinese Foreign Minister Li Huilai said on Monday that Iran is an observer at the SCO and has for a long time "proactively participated" in its activities and has made positive contributions to the SCO's development.

"China highly appraises this. China welcomes and supports Iran's wish to become a formal member of the SCO," he told reporters, ahead of the summit in Kazakh capital Astana which President Xi Jinping will attend.

"I think that at this meeting all sides



IRNA

will continue to conscientiously study the issue of Iran becoming a member on the basis of the SCO's relevant rules and consensus through consultations."

China has close economic and diplomatic ties with Iran, and was also instrumental in pushing through a landmark 2015 deal to modify Iran's nuclear pro-

gram. Li said that Pakistan and India will formally join the bloc as members at the summit, saying that the grouping's attraction to others and its influence continues to grow.

"More and more countries have said they hope to become dialogue partners, observers or formal members of the

SCO. China welcomes countries who want to and who meet the conditions to apply to become members, observers or dialogue partners."

China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan formed the SCO in 2001 to fight threats posed by radicals and drug trafficking from neighboring Afghanistan.

Switzerland to build Iran's largest solar power plant

Domestic Economy Desk

Swiss investors will construct Iran's largest solar power plant in the northeast of the country, announced the managing director of North Khorasan Power Distribution Company.

Afrezza Sabouri added that the construction of a 300-MW solar power plant will begin within four months, an.az.ir reported.

The Renewable Energy Organization of Iran (SUNA) and a group of investors from Switzerland signed a contract last July to build the solar power plant in North Khorasan Province.

Following agreements with German firms to construct solar plants in Iran, the government decided to also work with Swiss investors who agreed to invest \$60 million (\$44 million) in Iran's renewable energy sector.

Based on the contract, the solar plant will be wholly designed, built, installed and launched by the European firms.

Sabouri added that SUNA has provided the foreign



IRNA

companies 60 hectares of land near a 400-kilovolt power station in the city of Jajrom to transfer its output.

Pointing to a directive by the state-run Iran Power

Generation, Distribution and Transmission Company on the optimal use of domestic equipment and facilities, the official underlined that with the exception of solar panels and inverters, all other parts and components of the solar project will be built and supplied by Iranian firms.

In line with its policy to promote investment in renewables, the government will purchase electricity from renewable plants at a tariff that is 17 percent above the regular price and will increase the tariff by an additional 30 percent if domestic equipment are used in building the plants.

Iran has a diverse climate of vast windy plains with over 300 sunny days in the year, which makes it ideal for generating electricity from wind and solar energies, but its total output from renewables does not exceed a few hundred megawatts.

To expand renewables infrastructure, Iran has turned to European powerhouse Germany that produces 90,000 MW from renewable — which is higher than Iran's total power generation capacity of 75,000 MW.

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran to coordinate cargo transportation to Europe

Domestic Economy Desk

Azerbaijani, Georgian and Iranian railways will set up a working group to coordinate the transportation of cargo from the Persian Gulf and India to Europe and vice versa, Azerbaijan Railways Public Relations Department told AZERTAC.

The decision was made at a meeting attended by Chairman of Azerbaijan Railways Javid Gurbanov, Chairman of Georgian Railways Mamuka Bakhtadze and Managing Director of Iranian Railways Saeed Mohammadzadeh in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The meeting focused on organizing overland cargo transportation from the Persian Gulf and India (passing through Azerbaijan and Georgia) to Europe and in the opposite direction, as well as cargo transportation via Azerbaijani and Iranian ports.

They noted that a large volume of cargo from the Persian Gulf and India to Europe and vice versa is currently being

transported by sea, and this takes about 30-40 days.

Transporting cargo through Georgia, Azerbaijan and Iran will cut the transportation time, they said.

Azerbaijan officially launched a rail link to Iran's northern city of Astara in March this making an ambitious multimodal transport project connecting northern Europe to India closer to reality.

The train arrived in Iran concurrent with a visit to the Islamic Republic by Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev during which he discussed the implementation of the North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC) with Iran's President Hassan Rouhani.

Aliyev told reporters after meeting Rouhani that the NSTC was an important project, underlining that it could have positive effects on the economies of host countries.

He indicated Baku's determination to materialize the project saying his country would in-

vest in the railway project from Iran's northern city of Rasht to Astara.

Aliyev recalled that an agreement signed between the railway companies of Iran and Azerbaijan during his meeting with Rouhani could facilitate the expansion of economic relations between the two countries.

The NSTC is a multi-modal route to link India and the Middle East to the Caucasus, Central Asia and Europe.

The ship, road and rail route connects Mumbai, India to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas and further to Baku in Azerbaijan as well as Astrakhan, Moscow and St. Petersburg in Russia before extending to northern Europe and Scandinavia.

In addition to Iran, India and Russia, other countries that can be linked to the transit network include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Turkey, Tajikistan, Oman, Syria and Bulgaria.

Ministry: Agro sector attracted \$590m in FDI in nine months

Domestic Economy Desk

Iran attracted \$590 million in foreign direct investment (FDI) for the agriculture sector during March 20-December 20, 2016 following the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Announcing this, Mohammad Khaledi, director general for economic affairs at Agricultural Jihad Ministry said that the country received only \$2 million in foreign investment during the year to March 20, 2014, IRNA reported.

He added that \$86 million of the foreign direct investment went to the agriculture sector in the year to March 19, 2015.

Multiple climatic zones allow Iran to cultivate a variety of crops and fruits. The country is the leading producer and exporter of several agricultural products, including pistachios, saffron and raisin.

Since 1979, Iran has been pursuing a policy of attaining self-sufficiency in food production but a series of challenges, including inefficient land governance and nagging drought, have hindered the effort.

Agriculture accounts for 13 percent of Iran's GDP and over 20 percent of its employment but it is characterized by low productivity and investment.

The industry uses up 92 percent of the country's water resources, according to officials, draining valuable reserves which have formed over thousands of years.

Scotland's economy is showing signs of slowing faster than the rest of the UK as consumer spending fades and firms remain reluctant to invest, according to a report.

ECB to hint at end to easy money

Expectations are high that the European Central Bank will hint that it is heading for the exit from its easy-money policy when governors meet in Estonian capital Tallinn.

Most analysts predict the bank's 60-billion-euro (\$67.4 billion) monthly bond purchases will continue and interest rates will remain at historic lows, AFP wrote.

But they believe policymakers will begin laying the groundwork for an announcement later this year about plans to wind down bond-buying, by offering a sunnier economic outlook for the 19-nation eurozone.

"The ECB governing council needs to take no major policy decision beyond tweaking its guidance a little to keep up with the eurozone's broad-based and resilient economic recovery," said economist Holger Schmieding of Berenberg Bank.

Bond-buying and low interest rates were introduced at a time when the ECB feared the threat of deflation — or steadily decreasing prices that undermine economic activity.

By pumping cash through the financial system and into the real economy, the bank believes it has stimulated growth and pushed inflation back towards its target of just below two percent.

Inflation has been on a rollercoaster ride in recent months, hitting the two-percent target in February before falling back again in March.

The same pattern was repeated with a spike in April, to 1.9 percent, before a retreat in May.

Volatile food and energy prices are to blame for such rapid changes, policymakers said, while 'core', or underlying inflation discounting those elements remains sluggish.

ECB President Mario Draghi argues that wages — which he dubs the 'linchpin' of price growth — are not rising fast enough to drive inflation, even as the eurozone economy enjoys healthy expansion.

"Deflationary risks might have disappeared, but the ECB is still far away from reaching its inflation objective," said economist Carsten Brzeski of ING-DiBa.



businessstimes.com

Nevertheless, "the ECB would be blind not to acknowledge the cyclical upswing in the eurozone" in its press conference Thursday, he added.

Balanced risks

In its carefully-weighted policy statements, the central bank has long warned of risks threatening the eurozone recovery.

This in turn has justified language elsewhere in its 'forward guidance' suggesting that if economic activity slowed, policymakers could lower interest rates even further or boost bond-buying back to its previous level of 60 billion per month.

Observers now expect the ECB to highlight economic risks 'balanced' between positive and negative, justifying dropping one or both commitments to signal growing confidence in the economy.

That would not herald a quick exit from bond-buying.

Draghi told European Parliament

lawmakers last week he is 'firmly convinced' the eurozone's newfound robustness depends on ECB interventions.

The coming months will see policymakers "tipping towards a winding down of asset purchases in 2018", Berenberg's Schmieding said, with an interest rate hike far over the horizon.

New economic forecasts next week from the ECB's staff are expected to show lower inflation expectations than previously, lending support to governing council members who want to stay the course.

Taper tantrum

The ECB is keen to avoid financial market upsets as it heads for the exit from its bond-buying program.

Removing its demand for government bonds from the market could drive up yields, the returns investors can expect when buying government debt, for the eurozone's weaker economies.

But it is also under pressure to end the scheme, as some governing council members believe it is no longer justified without deflation risks.

Meanwhile, pressure from politicians in fiscally conservative countries like Germany is mounting over low inflation's impact on savers.

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble has also blamed the ECB for trade tensions with the United States, charging that the bank's policy makes German exports too cheap.

And technical considerations could soon limit the number of government bonds available for the ECB to buy, cramping the program's effectiveness.

Even given those constraints, "the ECB does not seem to be in any rush", ING's Brzeski said.

Central bankers "will do everything possible to avoid" spooking markets by announcing any changes gradually between next week and the end of the year, he predicted.

Main Indices of TSE

Index	Value	Change	Percent
Total Index	80295.7	0	0
Industry Index	69027.4	(18.3)	(0.03)
Free Float Index	87480.7	86.3	0.1
First Market Index	55350.1	(34)	(0.06)
Second Market Index	180073.8	192.8	0.11

Overall Index details on 20170606

First	80557.5	Change end of year(%)	918.32%
High	80332.6	Historical highest	89500.6 (20140105)
Low	80283.5	Historical lowest	100 (1369/1/6)
Close	80295.7	Base Value	100 (1369/1/6)
Change	0		

Industry Index details on 20170606

First	69244.6	Change end of year(%)	1027.74%
Max Value	69056.5	Historical highest	75181.9 (20140105)
Max Value	69610.5	Historical lowest	1226.8 (1377/8/25)
Closing	69027.4	Base Value	
Closing	(18.3)		

Free Float Index details on 20170606

First	87742.4	Change end of year(%)	
Max Value	88753.6	Historical highest	105040 (20140105)
Max Value	88687.9	Historical lowest	
Closing	87480.7	Base Value	
Closing	86.3		

Main Board Index details on 20170606

First	55588.5	Change end of year(%)	777.1%
Max Value	55373.4	Historical highest	67441.4 (20140105)
Max Value	55990.5	Historical lowest	
Closing	55350.1	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	(34)		

Secondary Index details on 20170606

First	180229.9	Change end of year(%)	1345.03%
Max Value	180317.9	Historical highest	181353 (20170522)
Max Value	181452.5	Historical lowest	
Closing	180073.8	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	192.8		

Japan wage growth returns in April

Wage growth returned to Japan in April, with a revision wiping out the contraction from the month prior and suggesting the outlook for lifting inflation may be less dire than previously thought — albeit still far from ideal.

Labor cash earnings growth rose to 0.5 percent year on year in April, up from a revised reading of no growth in March (previously a contraction of 0.4 percent) and besting a median forecast of 0.3 percent from economists surveyed by Bloomberg.

But real cash earnings, which account for inflation and often correlate with household spending, were static from a year prior in April after shrinking a revised 0.3 percent (previously contraction of 0.8 percent) in March.

Overtime pay shrank 0.2 percent, improving further from a revised dip of 0.6 percent in March (previously contraction of 1.7 percent).

Marcel Thieliant at Capital Economics said: Following an unusually weak reading in March, the rebound in wage



japantimes.co.jp

growth in April came as no surprise. But the bigger picture is that labor cash earnings are not growing fast enough to create noticeable cost pressures.

He added, "The current pace of wage growth remains far too slow to generate any cost pressures. Output per worker has risen by 0.5 percent per annum over the last five years. Accordingly, wages would have to rise by at least 2.5 percent per annum to generate two percent inflation."

German PMI hits 73-month high in May

Germany's private sector grew to 73-month high in May, Markit's survey showed, suggesting the continuing momentum in the European largest economy.

IHS Markit composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), which tracks the manufacturing and services that account for more than two-thirds of the economy, rose for the fourth time in six months, to 57.4 from 56.7 in April.

It was the highest reading since April 2011, well above the no-change mark of 50.0 and beating market's forecasts, according to Xinhua.

Trevor Balchin, senior economist at IHS Markit said: "German economic growth strengthened in May to the fastest in just over six years, according to the final composite PMI data."

"The acceleration was driven by the manufacturing sector, where output growth continued to outpace services expansion."

"Notably, manufacturing new export orders rose at the fastest rate in seven years, suggesting that net exports will



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continue to boost GDP growth in the second quarter," Balchin said.

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit Germany Services PMI Business Activity Index in May remained unchanged from April at 55.4, close to March's 15-month high of 55.6, signaling a sustained strong expansion in service sector output.

The headline figure also remained above its long-run average of 53.2 since the survey began in June 1997. Activity has risen continuously for four years — the second-longest sequence of growth in the survey history.

IMF mission starts work in Belarus

The International Monetary Fund mission has begun its work in Belarus, the IMF office in Belarus told local media.

The local IMF office said that IMF experts will discuss with the representatives of the state authorities the economic situation in Belarus and will conduct preparatory work ahead of the annual IMF mission on Article IV, which is expected in October, Xinhua reported.

Belarus is discussing with the IMF the possibility of implementing a three-year cooperation program that will be supported by a loan of \$3 billion.

The IMF calls on the Belarusian authorities to implement a comprehensive reform strategy for state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in order to increase their productivity and efficiency, as well as to reduce financial risk.

The IMF also recommends Belarus to continue its work on strengthening the budget framework and pursue prudent monetary and credit policies to maintain macroeconomic and financial stability.

The IMF mission is working in Belarus from June 5 to 12.



en.ctv.by

Major Currencies

Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2830	Chinese Yuan	0.1471
Euro	1.1248	UAE Dirham	0.2721
British Pound	1.2932	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2987
Australian Dollar	0.7483	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0912	Saudi Riyal	0.2666

Major Commodities

Crude Oil	\$47.21	Silver	\$17.62
Gold	\$1291.60	Platinum	\$960.30
Copper	\$2.56	Wheat	\$431.25

Climate change raises new risk: Are inland bridges too low?

A century-old train trestle stands as one of the trophies of Des Moines' push to spruce up its downtown. Bicyclists and pedestrians pose for pictures beside the brightly painted beams of the Red Bridge and gather on viewing platforms overlooking the Des Moines River.

But little more than a decade after it was restored, crews went back to the site with a crane to hoist the span 4½ feet higher, at a cost of \$3 million, after experts concluded that the river's flooding risk was nearly double earlier estimates. Climate change was likely to blame, phys.org wrote.

"It was like a bomb was dropped off in our lap," City Engineer Pam Cooksey said of the revised flood forecasts from the Army Corps of Engineers. The findings suggested that the bridge could act as a dam during bad storms, sending waves of backed-up floodwater into the refurbished business district.

Climate change is often seen as posing the greatest risk to coastal areas. But the nation's inland cities face perils of their own, including more intense storms and more frequent flooding. Even as US President Donald Trump has announced intention for his country to withdraw from a global climate agreement, many of the nation's river communities are responding to climate change by raising or replacing bridges that suddenly seem too low to stay safely above water.

The reconstructed bridges range from multi-lane structures that handle heavy traffic loads to small rural spans traversed by country school buses and farmers shuttling between their fields. The bridges are being raised even in states such as Texas, where political leaders have long questioned whether climate change is real.

In Milwaukee, climate change has been raised as part of \$400 million in flood-management projects across a metro area with 28 communities. In Reno, Nevada, officials spent about \$18 million to replace a bridge over the Truckee River last year and plan to replace three more after flood-danger projections were increased by up to 15 percent.



piranshahr.com

39 ancient sites identified in northwest Iran

Cultural Heritage Desk

Thirty nine ancient sites including mounds, castles and graveyards pertaining to various cultural-historic eras were identified in the vicinity of Silveh Dam, Piranshahr, northeast of Iran, said the head of the archeology team in the region.

Afasiab Geravand further said that northwest of Iran, which links Iranian Plateau, Caucasian, Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, played a great role in establishing cultural ties throughout history.

He added that Silveh Plain — due to its permanent rivers, springs, flora and fauna species, pastures and fertile lands — has been apt for human settlement since olden times.

Silveh Plain stretches over an area of 99 sq.kms. to the northwest of Piranshahr, he added.

Based on studies conducted on potteries found in the area, he said, it was evident that the relics pertained to Neolithic, Copper Stone, Brass, Iron and early-Islamic eras.

Piranshahr is located in West Azarbaijan Province and is one of the Iran's oldest cities. Its establishment dates back

to the pre-Islamic era of Iran and the emergence of the Median dynasty.

In Piranshahr every literate person knows how to communicate in Persian language.

The city is one of the fastest-growing in Iran. The history of Piranshahr can be traced back to the Paleolithic period. In recent discoveries, archeologists have found artifacts dating back to the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron ages. The earliest evidence of settlement in the Piranshahr region dates back to about 14,000 years ago.

Charting a course to blue Commonwealth

The United Nations Ocean Conference offers a historic opportunity to safeguard the ocean environment and support small islands and vulnerable developing coastal states, who depend on the seas for national economic growth and sustainable development.

This summit is about navigating a course to deliver on the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable

Development, in particular Goal 14 to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources". As we set our eyes on this goal, it is worth considering what the oceans mean to coastal communities, IPS reported.

Forty-five of the Commonwealth's 52 member countries are

ocean states, including most of the world's small island developing states. For our member countries, the sea is a precious ecosystem, and also deeply rooted in traditional culture.

It also provides jobs and immense potential economic opportunity — Vanuatu for instance has a maritime territory 56 times

greater than its terrestrial footprint.

The whole Commonwealth family is immensely proud of Fiji, which has the special privilege of being co-chair of the Ocean Conference alongside Sweden. The commitment shown by Fiji's Prime Minister, J.V. Bainimarama, is testament to the Pacific

region's leadership and advocacy on oceans.

Pacific countries, and in particular its small island developing states, have in recent years agreed powerful joint declarations on the sustainable use and management of the ocean. These have had a direct impact on influencing national policies to manage access to their waters while setting vital conservation limits.

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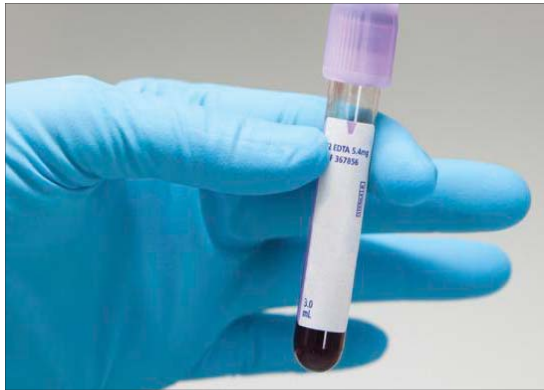
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Blood cancer treatment called 'revolutionary'

The results of new multiple myeloma research are 'very remarkable' not just for how many responded but how well, said Dr. Kenneth Anderson of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

Doctors are reporting unprecedented success from a new cell and gene therapy for multiple myeloma — a blood cancer that's on the rise. Although it's early and the study is small — 35 people — every patient responded and all but two were in some level of remission within two months, cbsnews.com reported.



cbsistatic.com

In a second study of nearly two dozen patients, everyone above a certain dose responded.

Experts at an American Society of Clinical Oncology conference in Chicago, where the results were announced Monday, say it's a first for multiple myeloma and rare for any cancer treatment to have such success.

Chemotherapy helps 10 to 30 percent of patients; immune system drugs, 35 to 40 percent at best, and some gene-targeting drugs, 70 to 80 percent, "but you don't get to 100", said Dr. Len Lichtenfeld, deputy chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society.

"These are impressive results" but time will tell if they last, he said.

Multiple myeloma affects plasma cells, which make antibodies to fight infection. More than 30,000 cases occur each year in the United States, and more than

115,000 worldwide.

It's the second fastest growing cancer for men and the third for women, rising two to three percent per year, according to the National Cancer Institute. About 60,000 to 70,000 Americans have it now.

Nine new drugs have been approved for it since 2000 but they're not cures; only about half of US patients live five years after diagnosis.

With cell therapy, "I can't say we may get a cure but at least we bring hope of that possibility," said Dr. Frank Fan. He is chief scientific officer of Nanjing Legend Biotech, a Chinese company that tested the treatment with doctors at Xi'an Jiaotong

University.

The treatment, called CAR-T therapy, involves filtering a patient's blood to remove immune system soldiers called T cells. These are altered in a lab to contain a gene that targets cancer and then given back to the patient intravenously.

Doctors call it a 'living drug' — a one-time treatment to permanently alter cells that multiply in the body into an army to fight cancer. It's shown promise against some leukemias and lymphomas, but this is a new type being tried for multiple myeloma, in patients whose cancer worsened despite many other treatments.

In the Chinese study, 19 of 35 patients are long enough past treatment to judge whether they are in complete remission, and 14 are. The other five had at least a partial remission, with their cancer greatly diminished. Some are more than a year past treatment with no sign of disease.

First-of-its-kind immune cell therapy appears to cure baby's leukemia

Most patients had a group of side effects common with this treatment, including fever, low blood pressure and trouble breathing. Only two cases were severe and all were treatable and temporary, doctors said.

The second study was done in the US by Bluebird

Bio and Celgene, using a cell treatment developed by the National Cancer Institute. It tested four different dose levels of cells in a total of 21 patients. Eighteen are long enough from treatment to judge effectiveness, and all 15 who got an adequate amount of cells had a response. Four have reached full remission so far, and some are more than a year past treatment.

The results are 'very remarkable' not just for how many responded but how well, said Dr. Kenneth Anderson of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

"We need to be looking for how long these cells persist" and keep the cancer under control, he said.

Dr. Carl June, a University of Pennsylvania researcher, who received the conference's top science award for his early work on CAR-T therapy, said "it's very rare" to see everyone respond to a treatment. His lab also had this happen — all 22 children testing a new version of CAR-T for leukemia responded, his colleagues reported at the conference.

"The first patients we treated in 2010 haven't relapsed," June said.

Dr. Michael Sabel of the University of Michigan called the treatment "revolutionary".

"This is really the epitome of personalized medicine," extending immune therapy to more types of patients, he said.

Divorces may affect children's immune systems

An unfriendly divorce can raise a child's risk of colds in adulthood, a new study suggested.



wholeparent.com

"Early life stressful experiences do something to our physiology and inflammatory processes that increase risk for poorer health and chronic illness," explained researcher Michael Murphy of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, according to UPI.

"This work is a step forward in our understanding of how family stress during childhood may influence a child's susceptibility to disease 20-40 years later," Murphy said in a university news release. He's a psychology postdoctoral research associate.

The study found that children whose parents separate and don't speak are at increased risk for colds as adults.

Previous research has shown that adults who experience the split of parents during childhood are at increased risk for poorer health. The authors of this new study believe their work may help explain why that's so.

The study included more than 200 healthy adults exposed to a common cold virus. Those whose parents lived apart and didn't talk to each other during the participant's childhood were more than three times more likely to develop a cold than those whose parents remained together.

While the study only found an association and not a cause-and-effect link, one reason suggested by the researchers for the increased risk of a cold was heightened inflammation in response to viral infection.

Meanwhile, the researchers found that adults whose parents separated during childhood but remained in contact were not at increased risk of catching a cold.

"Our results target the immune system as an important carrier of the long-term negative impact of early family conflict," said Sheldon Cohen, a professor of psychology at Carnegie Mellon.

"They also suggest that all divorces are not equal," Cohen said. Continued communication between parents buffers harmful effects of separation on the health path of the children, he added.

The results were published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The American Academy of Pediatrics explains how to support children of separated/divorced parents.

Study: Cirrhosis may increase stroke risk

Cirrhosis — a stiffening of liver tissue — may also raise an older person's odds for a stroke, a new study suggested.

"In a US nationally representative sample of elderly patients with vascular risk factors, cirrhosis was associated with an increased risk of stroke, particularly hemorrhagic stroke," wrote a team led by Dr. Neal Parikh, of Weill Cornell Medicine and New York-Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, upi.com reported.

Hemorrhagic or "bleeding" stroke comprises about 13 percent of strokes and occurs when a blood vessel ruptures, according to the American Stroke Association. The majority of strokes — 87 percent — are ischemic, meaning they are caused by clots.

In the new study, Parikh's team tracked 2008-2014 data for more than 1.6 million Medicare patients older than 66.

The research showed that while just over one percent of people who did not have cirrhosis suffered a stroke during the average year, that number jumped to just over two percent for people with the liver disease.

The study couldn't prove that the cirrhosis actually caused any of the strokes. According to the authors, possible explanations for the association between cirrhosis and increased stroke risk include impaired clotting ability. Or, patients' heart risk factors may be exacerbated by cirrhosis and the underlying causes of cirrhosis, such as alcohol abuse, hepatitis C infection and metabolic disease, they said.

Two experts in stroke care weighed in on the findings, which were published in the journal JAMA Neurology.

Dr. Ajay Misra is chair of neurosciences at NYU Winthrop Hospital in Mineola, NY. He said that, in the past, doctors had thought that cirrhosis somehow helped lower a person's risk for clot-linked, ischemic stroke, but the new study "dispels" that myth.

And Dr. Anand Patel, a neurologist at Northwell Health's Neuroscience Institute in Manhasset, NY, noted that the degree of cirrhosis was important.

"The risk of stroke appears to [rise] in proportion to the severity of cirrhosis," he said.

Patel also pointed out that the study offers little information on how helpful blood thinner medications might be in helping people with cirrhosis avoid strokes.

Parikh's team said further research is needed to help 'yield opportunities for stroke risk reduction and prevention' in these types of patients.



upi.com



uhhospitals.org

One in five weight-loss surgery patients get hooked on opioids

One in five adults who undergo weight-loss surgery will get hooked on prescription painkillers for years after, alarming new statistics showed.

Although most patients wean themselves off their post-operation pills in a matter of months, figures showed a fifth of them will gradually return to them within a matter of years, dailymail.co.uk wrote.

In fact, patients are more likely to pick up the habit even if they were not prescribed potentially addictive opioids during their recovery period, according to the data compiled by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

Many patients undergo bariatric surgery to alleviate obesity-related pain in their joints and organs.

However, the researchers warn this study — one of the largest, longest-running studies of adults who underwent weight-loss surgery — shows the operation may not be enough to curb that pain and prevent painkiller addiction.

"Almost half of patients reporting opioid use at the time of surgery reported no such use following surgery," said lead author Dr. Wendy C. King, associate professor of epidemiology at Pitt Public Health.

"However, among the much larger group of patients who did not report opioid use pre-surgery, opioid use gradually increased throughout seven years of follow-up.

"Thus, post-surgery initiation of opioid

use explains this phenomenon."

The CDC recently presented an evidence-based guideline stating that opioids should not routinely be used to manage chronic pain.

However, the Pitt study showed the rate of patients using opioids is far higher seven years later than when they initially got treatment for weight loss.

Starting in 2006, King and her colleagues followed more than 2,000 patients participating in the NIH-funded Longitudinal Assessment of Bariatric

Surgery-2 (LABS-2), a prospective observational study of patients undergoing weight-loss surgery at one of 10 hospitals across the United States.

About 70 percent of the patients underwent Roux-en-Y gastric bypass (RYGB) — a surgical procedure that significantly reduces the size of the stomach and changes connections with the small intestine.

The majority of the remaining participants had a less invasive procedure, laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding, where the surgeon inserts an adjustable

band around the patient's stomach, lessening the amount of food the stomach can hold.

Before surgery, 14.7 percent of the participants reported regularly taking a prescription opioid. Six months after surgery the prevalence decreased to 12.9 percent, but then it rebounded, progressing to 20.3 percent of participants regularly taking opioids seven years after surgery.

Among participants who were not taking opioids at the time of surgery, rates increased from 5.8 percent six months after surgery to 14.2 percent seven years later. Hydrocodone was by far the most commonly reported opioid medication, followed by Tramadol and Oxycodone.

There also was an increase over time in the use of medications typically prescribed for opioid dependence, although use of such medications remained rare, with less than two percent of patients using them through the years of follow-up.

"Our nation is in an epidemic of opioid abuse, addiction and overdose. Recent reports have suggested that bariatric surgery patients are at elevated risk of chronic opioid use," said coauthor Dr. Anita P. Courcoulas, chief of minimally invasive bariatric and general surgery at UPMC.

"Our study does not prove that bariatric surgery causes an increase in opioid use. However, it does demonstrate the widespread use of opioids among post-surgical patients, thereby highlighting the need for alternative pain management approaches in this population."

Robots to replace humans in all work within 120 years

A robot workforce will completely replace humans within 120 years according to scientists who have predicted exactly how they are doing it.

Experts believe artificial intelligence will be better at humans than playing simple games within seven years, with researchers choosing Angry Birds as their example for the sake of the research, express.co.uk wrote.



express.co.uk

By 2027, the researchers state there is a good chance artificial intelligence will be winning the World Series Poker.

And by 2049, robots will be able to write a best-selling book, with AI able to exceed performance of humans as surgeons just four years later.

The predictions were made after 350 academics were surveyed on when they believed the crucial turning points in robot advancement would take place.

Researchers, at the University of Oxford, then took the average of their answers to come to their conclusion.

The team believe "there is a 50-percent chance of AI outperforming humans in all tasks in 45 years".

The research added that all human jobs could become automated within 120 years, with those who work in a driving capacity to be one of the soonest to be replaced, thanks to the introduction of driverless cars.

The study published in arXiv read: "Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) will have massive social consequences.

"Self-driving technology might replace millions of driving jobs over the coming decade.

"In addition to possible unemployment, the transition will bring new challenges, such as rebuilding infrastructure, protecting vehicle cyber-security, and adapting laws and regulations."

It also said that Asian respondents expect "these dates much sooner than North Americans".

Collateral damage from cosmic rays increases cancer risks for astronauts

The cancer risk for a human mission to Mars has effectively doubled following a UNLV study predicting a dramatic increase in the disease for astronauts traveling to the red planet or on long-term missions outside the protection of Earth's magnetic field.

The findings appeared in the May issue of Scientific Reports and were presented by UNLV scientist Francis Cucinotta, a leading scholar on radiation and space physics, phys.org wrote.

Previous studies have shown the health risks from galactic cosmic ray exposure to astronauts include cancer, central nervous system effects, cataracts, circulatory diseases and acute radiation syndromes.

Cosmic rays, such as iron and titanium atoms, heavily damage the cells they traverse because of their very high rates of ionization. Conventional risk models used by NASA and others assume DNA damage and mutation are the cause of radiation cancers.



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This is based on studies at high doses where all cells are traversed by heavy ions one or more times within much shorter-time periods than will occur during space missions.

"Exploring Mars will require missions of 900 days or longer and includes more than one year in deep space where exposures to all energies of galactic cosmic ray heavy ions are unavoidable," Cucinotta explained. "Current levels of radiation shielding would, at best, modestly decrease the exposure risks."

In these new findings, a non-targeted effect model — where cancer risk arises in bystander cells close to heavily damaged cells — is shown to lead to a twofold or more increase in cancer risk compared to the conventional risk model for a Mars mission.

"Galactic cosmic ray exposure can devastate a cell's nucleus and cause mutations that can result in cancers," Cucinotta explained. "We learned the damaged cells send signals to the surrounding, unaffected cells and likely modify the tissues' microenvironments. Those signals seem to inspire the healthy cells to mutate, thereby causing additional tumors or cancers."

Cucinotta said the findings show a tremendous need for additional studies focused on cosmic ray exposures to tissues that dominate human cancer risks, and that these should begin prior to long-term space missions outside the Earth's geomagnetic sphere.

"Non-Targeted Effects Models Predict Significantly Higher Mars Mission Cancer Risk than Targeted Effects Models", appeared online in the journal Scientific Reports.

Hottest planet ever found:

Scientists unveil KELT-9b which reaches 4,327°C

The hottest planet ever found has been unveiled by scientists.

According to express.co.uk, its surface reaches a hellish 4,327°C — smashing the previous record by more than 1,100°C.

The huge gas giant is 650 light years away and so close to its host star its orbit takes just a day and a half.

Named KELT-9b, it lies in the constellation of Cygnus and is hotter than most stars.

The landmark crosses the latest frontier in space exploration and may help astronomers search for extraterrestrial life.

Despite the planet being completely uninhabitable, its scorching skies shed fresh light on the atmospheres of alien worlds.

While missions such as NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite are designed to find habitable places in other solar systems, there is a good reason to also study ones uninhabitable in the extreme.

Professor Scott Gaudi, of The Ohio State University, said: "The astronomical community is clearly focused on finding Earth like planets around small, cooler stars like our Sun.

"They are easy targets and there is a lot that can be learned about potentially habitable planets orbiting very low mass stars like our Sun.

"On the other hand, because KELT-9b's host star is bigger and hotter than the Sun, it complements those efforts and provides a kind of touchstone for understanding how planetary systems form around hot, massive stars.

The exoplanet is a "hot Jupiter" — a gas giant that orbits its star closer than Mercury does the Sun.

It sports a glowing, comet style tail as it literally evaporates under the ultraviolet radiation from KELT-9 — the host star which at 9,897°C is almost twice as hot as our Sun (5,600°C).

KELT-9b is almost three times bigger than Jupiter — yet only half as dense — because KELT-9 has caused its atmosphere to puff up like a balloon.

It is locked to the star by enormous



The planet lies in the constellation of Cygnus.

SWNS

gravitational tidal forces — as the moon is to Earth — but the day side is perpetually blasted by extreme radiation.

As a result molecules such as water, carbon dioxide and methane cannot form.

Gaudi said: "It is a planet by any of the typical definitions based on mass, but its atmosphere is almost certainly unlike any other planet we have ever seen just because of the temperature of its day side."

The study published in Nature and presented at an American Astronomical Society meeting in Austin, Texas,

found KELT-9 is roughly two-and-a-half times bigger than our Sun. It's stripping away the outer atmosphere of KELT-9b.

Stassun explained: "KELT-9 radiates so much ultraviolet radiation it may completely evaporate the planet."

"Or, if gas giant planets like KELT-9b possess solid rocky cores as some theories suggest, the planet may be boiled down to a barren rock, like Mercury."

But if the star begins to expand, it will engulf the closely orbiting planet. Stassun said: "KELT-9 will swell to become a red giant star in about a

billion years. The long term prospects for life, or real estate for that matter, on KELT-9b are not looking good."

The planet was identified three years ago using the Kilodegree Extremely Little Telescope (KELT) at Winer Observatory in Arizona but its temperature has only now been calculated.

As it eclipsed its star, the intensity of starlight dropped by about 0.5 percent, enough to indicate a planet had passed in front.

The brightness dipped once every 36 hours showing this is all it takes to complete a circuit.

Karen Collins, also of Vanderbilt University, said: "We were pretty lucky to catch the planet while its orbit transits the face of the star."

"Because of its extremely short period, near polar orbit and the fact its host star is oblate, rather than spherical, we calculate orbital precession will carry the planet out of view in about 150 years, and it won't reappear for roughly three and a half millennia."

The telescope is one of two such instruments specially designed to detect planets orbiting bright stars and cost less than £58,000, compared to the millions spent on the biggest ones.

Where other telescopes are designed to look at very faint stars in small sections of the sky at very high resolution KELTs look at millions of very bright stars at once, over broad sections of sky, at relatively low resolution.

Professor James Neff, astronomical sciences program director at the US National Science Foundation, which partially funded the research, added: "This result demonstrates even 'extremely little' telescopes can play an important role in discovery."

The team hopes to take a closer look at KELT-9b with the Spitzer and Hubble telescopes — and eventually the much larger James Webb after its launch next year — to estimate how much longer the hellish planet will survive.

Previously the hottest known planet was WASP-33b — 380 light years away in the constellation of Andromeda which reaches 3,200°C.

A new study out of Harvard University reveals that the protective stratospheric ozone layer above the central United States is vulnerable to erosion during the summer months from ozone-depleting chemical reactions, exposing people, livestock and crops to the harmful effects of UV radiation.

Powerful storm systems common to the Great Plains inject water vapor that, with observed temperature variations, can trigger the same chemical reactions over the central United States that are the cause of ozone loss over the polar regions, according to a new paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, phys.org wrote.

The paper, led by James G. Anderson, the Philip S. Weld Professor of Atmospheric Chemistry at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), found that stratospheric ozone concentrations over the United States in summer are vulnerable to both increases in water vapor and observed variations in temperature from storm systems over the Great Plains. Increased frequency and intensity of these storm systems, as well as longer-term decreases in stratospheric temperatures, are expected to accompany climate change.

Using extensive aircraft observations in the Arctic stratosphere

from the early 2000's, researchers established the chemical framework defining enhanced ozone loss rates with respect to temperature and water vapor.

Then they employed recent NEXRAD weather radar observations to demonstrate that on average 4,000 storms each summer penetrate into the

light from the Sun.

"These developments were not predicted previously and they represent an important change in the assessment of the risk of increasing UV radiation over the central US in summer," said Mario J. Molina of the University of California San Diego, the 1995 Nobel Prize winner in strato-

spheric chemistry, who was not involved in this research. Stratospheric ozone is one of the most delicate aspects of habitability on the planet. There is only marginally enough ozone in the stratosphere to provide protection from UV radiation for humans, animals and crops.

Medical research specific to the United States has determined that a one-percent decrease in the amount of ozone in the stratosphere corresponds to

a three-percent increase in the incidence of human skin cancer. There are now 3.5 million new cases of skin cancer each year reported in the US alone. Thus, for each one-percent reduction in ozone, there would be an additional 100,000 new cases of skin cancer annually in the United States.

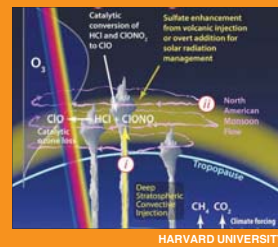
The future. The results strongly motivate the need for increased meteorological and chemical observations of such storms." Steven C. Wofsy, the Abbott Lawrence Rofsy Professor of Atmospheric and Environmental Science at SEAS and coauthor of the study, added, "Every year, sharp losses of stratospheric ozone are recorded in polar regions, traceable to chlorine and bromine added to the atmosphere by industrial chlorofluorocarbons and halons."

"The new paper shows that the same kind of chemistry could occur over the central United States, triggered by storm systems that introduce water, or the next volcanic eruption, or by increasing levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide. We don't yet know just how close we are to reaching that threshold."

The scientific community has observed the chemical reactions that attack ozone over the polar regions in winter, but the important combination of observations that define the cause and the rate of stratospheric ozone loss have never been made over the central US in summer.

This represents a major shortcoming in researchers' ability to forecast increases in UV radiation that might result from a volcanic event or climate change now and in the years to come.

Evidence shows increased risk of ozone loss over the US



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

stratosphere over the central United States, which is far more frequent than was previously thought.

This combination of circumstances puts the stratosphere over states including Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, the Dakotas and states that border the Great Plains, at risk for chemical reactions that deplete ozone during summer, potentially leading to higher levels of exposure to damaging UV

spheric chemistry, who was not involved in this research.

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"Thunderstorms that hydrate the stratosphere can have significant local and regional impacts on Earth's radiation budget and climate," said Cameron R. Homeyer of the University of Oklahoma, a co-investigator on the paper.

"This work demonstrates our increasing knowledge of such storms using ground-based and airborne observations and evaluates their potential for depleting stratospheric ozone now and in

Students at Venice High School, located in Los Angeles, the US, walked out of classes to protest what they allege to be racist and discriminatory behavior by their principal.

Half of Indian children live in poverty

At least half of all children living in India are poverty stricken, according to a new Oxford study which found that the nation has the highest number of poor people among South Asian countries.

Across the 103 low and middle income countries surveyed, children were found to constitute 34 percent of the total population, newindianexpress.com reported.

However, they constituted about 48 percent of the poor, based on a measure that assesses a range of deprivations in health, education and living standards.

In 36 countries, including India and Pakistan, at least half of all children are poor. In Ethiopia, Niger and South Sudan over 90 percent of all children are poor.

Over 528 million Indians are poor — which is more people than all the poor people living in sub-Saharan Africa combined. Of these, almost 50 percent are under the age of 18.

The study highlights the extent of the challenges facing the UN's new Sustainable Development Goals for the eradication of child poverty.

"These new results are deeply disturbing as they show that children are disproportionately poor when the different dimensions of poverty are measured," said Sabina Alkire, from the University of Oxford in the UK.

Nearly two out of every five children (37 percent), a total of 689 million children, are



spiblog.org

classified as multidimensionally poor.

Multidimensional poverty is made up of several factors that constitute poor people's experience of deprivation — such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standard, lack of income, disempowerment, poor quality of work

and threat from violence.

Of these, 87 percent are growing up in South Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa — 300 million in each region. Half of South Asia's children and two-thirds of Sub-Saharan children are multidimensionally poor.

The report disaggregates the latest figures for the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by age group to analyze the particular situation of 1.8 billion children who live in 103 countries. The international definition of a child, used here, is anyone less than 18 years of age.

Police officers speak less respectfully to black residents than to white

The first systematic analysis of police body camera footage shows that officers consistently use less respectful language with black community members than with white community members, according to new Stanford research.

Although they are subtle, these widespread racial disparities in officers' language use may erode police-community relations, said the researchers who conducted the study, published June 5 in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, phys.org wrote.

"Our findings highlight that, on the whole, police interactions with black community members are more fraught than their interactions with white community members," explained Jennifer Eberhardt, co-author of the study and professor of psychology at Stanford.

The racial disparities in respectful speech remained even after the researchers controlled for the race of the officer, the severity of the infraction, and the location and outcome of the stop.

To analyze the body camera footage, a multidisciplinary team from Stanford's psychology, linguistics and computer science departments first developed a new artificial



jwpsrv.com

intelligence technique for measuring levels of respect in officers' language. They then applied this technique to the transcripts from 981 traffic stops the Oakland Police Department (OPD) made in a single month.

The researchers' novel technique demonstrated that white residents were 57 percent more likely than black residents to hear a police officer say the most respectful utterances, such as apologies and expressions of gratitude like "thank you."

Meanwhile, black community members were 61 percent

more likely than white residents to hear an officer say the least respectful utterances, such as informal titles like "dude" and "bro" and commands like "hands on the wheel."

"To be clear: There was no swearing," said Dan Jurafsky, a study coauthor and Stanford professor of linguistics and of computer science.

"These were well-behaved officers. But the many small differences in how they spoke with community members added up to pervasive racial disparities."

Rob Voigt, a Stanford

linguistics doctoral student and lead author of the study, noted, "The fact that we now have the technology and methods to show these patterns is a huge advance for behavioral science, computer science and the policing industry."

"Police departments can use these tools not only to diagnose problems in police-community relations but also to develop solutions."

The study is not the first time Eberhardt has collaborated with the OPD to study possible racial disparities in policing. In 2014, the City of Oakland

contracted with Eberhardt and her team to assist the Oakland Police Department in complying with a federal order to collect and analyze data from traffic and pedestrian stops by race.

OPD, like many police departments nationwide, has been using body-worn cameras to monitor police-community interactions. But drawing accurate conclusions from hundreds of hours of footage is challenging, Eberhardt said. Just "cherry-picking" negative or positive episodes, for example, can lead to inaccurate impressions of police-community relations overall, she said.

"The police are already wary of footage being used against them," Eberhardt said. "At the same time, many departments want their actions to be transparent to the public."

To satisfy demands for both privacy and transparency, the researchers needed a way to approach the footage as data showing general patterns, rather than as evidence revealing wrongdoing in any single stop.

Yet "researchers can't just sit and watch every single stop," Eberhardt explained. "It would take too long. Besides, their own biases could affect their judgments of the interactions."

Violence, poverty, politics inextricably linked

By Justin Stoler*

Gun violence is an urgent public health issue. We are accustomed to media reports about the politics of gun ownership, but gun injuries belong in the same category as influenza and motor vehicle collisions. Nationally, all claim similar numbers of lives each year.

Gun violence has become a silent epidemic among select Miami-Dade communities, leading to hundreds of intentional injuries every year. We call it "silent" because most of the burden is borne by just a handful of communities — ones that have been marginalized for decades, miamiherald.com wrote.

We have witnessed this burden from two perspectives. One of us is a trauma surgeon at the Ryder Trauma Center, Jackson Memorial Hospital, extracting bullets from dying teenagers every week. One of us specializes in the geography of health and helped map Ryder's gunshot-wound cases to look for patterns of injury across the city.

Our study of gunshot-wound injuries in the county revealed that these injuries increased, trended toward younger, black — African American and Haitian — male patients; and remained stubbornly clustered around Liberty City (and nearby, predominantly black, low-income areas) for at least 11 years. Rarely do the geographical patterns of health outcomes tell such a striking story. In these communities, gun violence is anything but silent.

The persistence and gross inequality of this epidemic represents a stunning failure of basic governance: ensuring the safety and security of local constituents.

How did this happen? Surely analysis of other hospital records and police reports would show the same trends, though gun violence research has been stifled for years by the gun lobby's efforts to limit the collection of gun-related data.

But social issues such as race and poverty — long embedded in Miami politics — have deprived many communities of resources needed to strengthen communities from within.

This has created a legacy of structural violence — the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs — that has led to an entire generation of impoverished youth for whom violence and the "code of the street" are a way of life, while remaining invisible to those in power.



indybay.org

Some say that we should just "Lock 'em all up." But this viewpoint ignores some of the basic dynamics of structural violence and street life.

Violence is a response to inequality and lack of opportunity, and when it becomes part of a community's social fabric, non-violent offenders will be waiting to replace those packed into prisons.

With a criminal record comes the denial of meaningful economic and educational opportunities and, therefore, engagement in desperate, high-risk income generation to survive. We need to confront the roots of violence to break the cycle, and this means overcoming generations of historic violence, neglect, and discrimination. It won't be easy.

Recall the public outrage over lead in Flint's drinking water in 2015, or the hysteria over the first local transmission of Zika in Miami in 2016.

Miami residents should be just as outraged to hear that gun violence that leads to hundreds of intentional, yet preventable, injuries each year within our community. Gun violence has social costs, traumatizing youth and filling prisons, which tears families, neighborhoods apart.

The economic costs are equally devastating and include increasing healthcare costs, creating social welfare program dependency, disinvestment in communities and capital flight. It affects us all; it affects us as a city.

Several organizations, with impassioned, dedicated individuals, seek to reduce gun violence around the county. But without dismantling the unequal system of structural violence that leads to direct violence, needless deaths will continue.

A truly holistic response to gun violence requires a multi-pronged approach to ending the school-to-prison pipeline. We need basic food security, hands-on youth mentoring and educational programs, and economic opportunities that offer parents meaningful employment and that allow leisure time to care for their children.

Most of all, we also need to work with organizations in affected communities (churches, schools, social service providers) to understand and prioritize their needs. These organizations stand ready and willing to promote proud messages of empowerment with local law enforcement as community partners, not enforcers of an unjust status quo.

In summary, we need to provide economic and youth developmental opportunities that are perceived as a better alternative than picking up a gun.

This requires leadership that champions our youth and believes that eliminating poverty will make Miami-Dade stronger for everyone. We can do this, but we need systemic changes to allow our communities to flourish so that all of Miami's children can develop their full potential.

*Justin Stoler is an assistant professor of geography and public health sciences at the University of Miami.

UK depressed elderly face NHS discrimination

UK elderly patients with common mental health problems are facing "clear discrimination" at the hands of the National Health System (NHS), experts warned.

A study found that people in their 70s with depression or anxiety were four times less likely to be referred for therapy than those in their 20s.

The researchers, led by experts at the University of West London, said the elderly are being "under-referred" for talking therapy by GPs, despite evidence they are more likely to turn up and generally respond better to treatment than younger people, Daily Mail wrote.

The team found that 23 percent of people aged 20 to 24 with mental health problems were referred for talking therapies — four times the proportion of 70 to 74 year-olds, of whom only six percent received a referral.

The researchers, led by Dr. Sophie Pettit, wrote in the British Journal of General Practice: "Once referred, adherence to and recovery resulting from treatment increases with age, and higher proportions of older adults are accessing and engaging with treatment than the 20- to 24-year-olds, who are being referred more frequently."

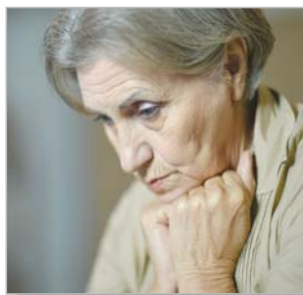
There is growing concern among experts of a rising toll of mental health problems among the elderly, who are increasingly isolated and lonely.

While such problems were previously considered more prevalent among the young, this latest research reveals the elderly are affected nearly as much. The researchers calculated that 15 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds were affected, compared to 10 percent among over-70s.

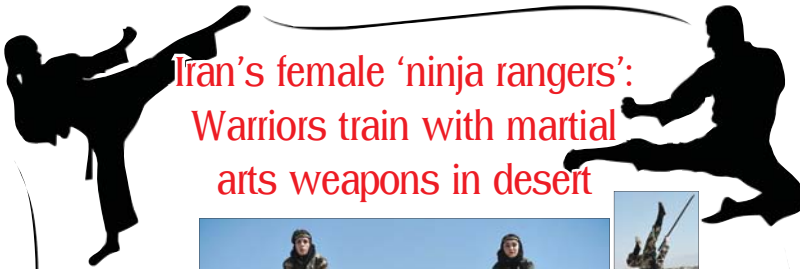
The Local Government Association estimates that more than one million people in Britain aged over 65 experience loneliness — a known risk-factor for depression and anxiety.

Dr. Amanda Thompsell, chairman of the Old Age Faculty at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, said: "This report shows clear discrimination against older people when it comes to talking therapies."

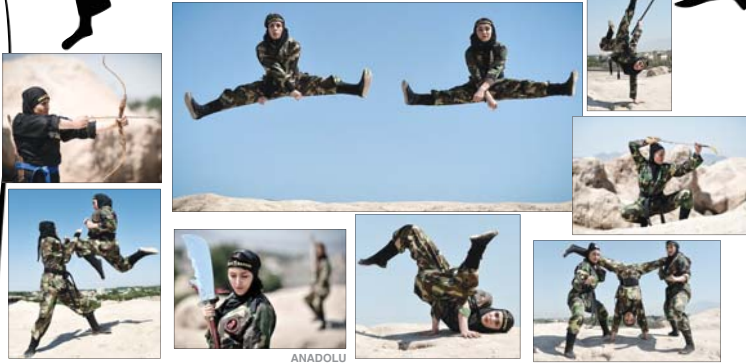
"Many of the barriers deterring access to the elderly remain: From a lack of provision for home visits or transport to and from appointments, to problems using the internet and their generation's stoical belief in just getting on with things."



discovermagazine.com



Iran's female 'ninja rangers': Warriors train with martial arts weapons in desert



ANADOLU

It may look like a scene out of Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon — but these Iranian women are practicing their moves in a bid to become highly-trained ninjas. They were pictured brandishing deadly weapons while performing back flips and gravity-defying stunts in Iran — where the specialist martial art of Ninjutsu is popular with female pupils, dailymail.co.uk wrote.

At this club which opened in 1989 and is based at the Jughin castle 25 miles outside of the capital Tehran there are 4,000 women in training to become kunoichi — female ninjas. They learn to climb and jump walls, hide in the mountains and 'slice the neck of a rival without making a sound'.

Ninjutsu instructor Fatima Muamer had previously said that the sport increasingly appeals to women as it helps maintain balance between the body and the mind. Iran has a mandatory Army conscription for men aged 18, but it is limited to 18 months service, so these kunoichi could prove very useful.

Muamer said: "The most important lesson in ninjutsu is respect and humility. They learn to respect themselves — first to respect their existence and then the art that they are mastering. Calmness is the most important lesson they learn."

Pupils at the school are taught to use dangerous weapons — including the bow, swords, nun chucks and shurikens — small traditional Japanese implements known as 'swords in the hand'.

Akbar Faraji was the first to introduce ninjutsu to Iran when he set up the club 22 years ago — which now has 24,000 members.

He said: "In ninjutsu, we call men ninjas, while females are called kunoichi.

"Being a ninja is about patience, tolerance and fortitude. Literally it means the art of becoming invisible.

"Ninjutsu, or martial arts in general, can be described as a medicine. Just like snake poison, despite the fact that it can be very dangerous, it can be a good antidote as well."

Ninjutsu is considered to be one of the deadliest martial art forms and is associated with covert agents and mercenaries specializing in unorthodox methods of war in Japan between 1185 and 1868.

One of the ninjas-in-training, named Melika, told El Mundo: "Here we are free. We live art ninja as a philosophy of life.

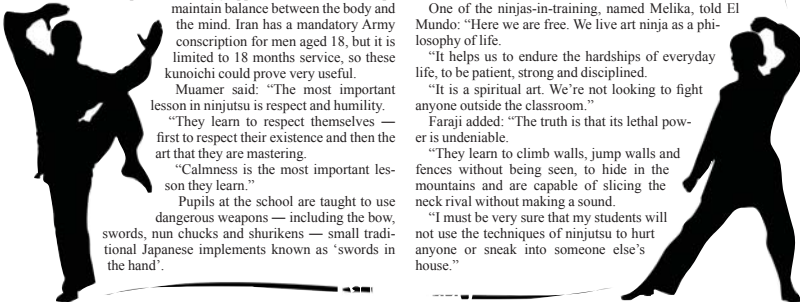
"It helps us to endure the hardships of everyday life, to be patient, strong and disciplined.

"It is a spiritual art. We're not looking to fight anyone outside the classroom."

Faraji added: "The truth is that its lethal power is undeniable.

"They learn to climb walls, jump walls and fences without being seen, to hide in the mountains and are capable of slicing the neck rival without making a sound.

"I must be very sure that my students will not use the techniques of ninjutsu to hurt anyone or sneak into someone else's house."



70-year-old veteran walks miles to see his wife

Rain or shine, James Wright is walking to see "the most beautiful woman in the world".

The 70-year-old veteran from Alabama walks miles every day just so he can visit his wife with dementia who lives in a nursing home, sunnyskyz.com reported.

"I don't care if it's raining, snowing, or what, I'm going to see my wife. Even if I have to crawl," Wright said.

Wright's love story was highlighted in a recent Facebook post after Lt. Charles Plitt of the Weaver Police Department noticed Wright walking down a highway looking exhausted.

"I tried, but I just can't make it... I can't walk no more," Wright told Plitt. "I just can't walk no more and I want to see my wife."

Plitt asked Wright where his wife was and offered to drive him there.

"After he got in, I thought



sunnyskyz.com

back to how many times I tell people to be cautious about picking up strangers and about being very careful about picking up hitchhikers and such — usually preaching about not doing it at all, but for some reason I knew this situation was different," Plitt wrote in a Facebook post.

Once they arrived at the nursing home, Wright was ecstatic.

"You see that window with the shades pulled back? That's my wife's room. She's going to be so happy I'm here!" Wright exclaimed.

The community is reportedly helping Wright get his truck fixed.

But for now, Wright said he will continue to walk while he still can to see his wife.

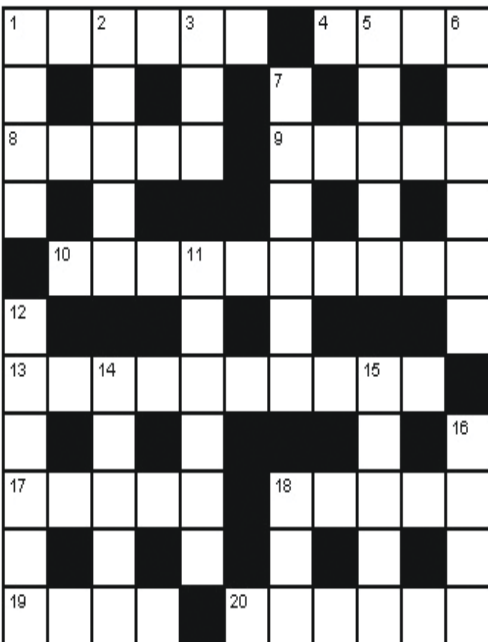
PICTURE OF THE DAY



PHAM NGOC THANH/WAPA

Beekeeper Bui Duy Nhat, 41, is one of a few people in Nua Ngam, Vietnam, who can engage in bee boarding. Without using any protective gear, apart from covering his ears, he can talk and move while covered with thousands of wild bees.

Quick Crossword



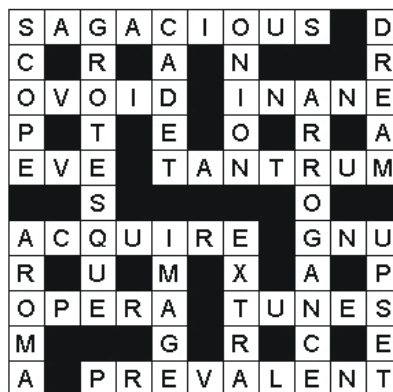
DOWN

- Mentor (4)
- Evade (5)
- Point (3)
- Breed of dog (5)
- Answer (6)
- Outcome (6)
- Mystery (6)
- Collector's item (6)
- Motionless (5)
- Oversight (5)
- Portable shelter (4)
- Atmosphere (3)

ACROSS

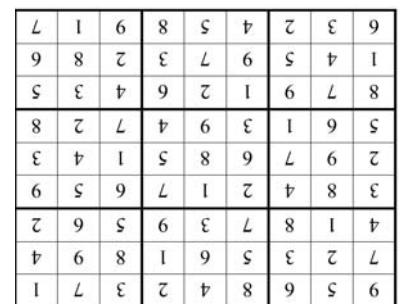
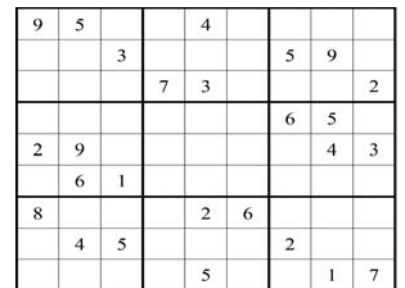
- Constant (6)
- Evidence of past injury (4)
- Haggard (5)
- Fiends (5)
- Salutary (10)
- Clearly (10)
- Dialect (5)
- Copious (5)
- Part of an egg (4)
- Pressing (6)

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.



Arsenal announced the Bosnia-Herzegovina international left back Sead Kolasinac, 23, will join the Gunners this summer from German club Schalke 04 on a free transfer.

Persepolis learns fate in ACL



Persian Gulf Pro League champion, Persepolis, will face Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli in the quarterfinals of 2017 AFC Champions League (ACL).

The ACL quarterfinal ties were confirmed on Tuesday following the competition's Knockout Stage draw in Kuala Lumpur. 2016 runner-up Al Ain will have home advantage in the first leg of its quarterfinal encounter with Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal, with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Persepolis set to pit its wits against 2012 runner-up Al Ahli from Saudi Arabia in West Asia's other intriguing last eight fixture. Meanwhile in East Asia, China's Shanghai SIPG will come up against domestic rival and two-time AFC Champions League winner Guangzhou Evergrande, while Kawasaki Frontale has been drawn to face compatriot and 2007 winner Urawa Red Diamonds.

From West Asia: Al Ahli (KSA), Al Ain (UAE), Al Hilal (KSA) and Persepolis (IRN)

From East Asia: Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN), Kawasaki Frontale (JPN), Shanghai SIPG (CHN) and Urawa Red Diamonds (JPN)

West

Quarterfinal 1
Aug. 21, 1st leg: Al Ain v Al Hilal
Sept. 11, 2nd leg: Al Hilal v Al Ain

Quarterfinal 2
Aug. 22, 1st leg: Persepolis v Al Ahli (KSA)
Sept. 12, 2nd leg: Al Ahli (KSA) v Persepolis

Semifinal 1
Sept. 26, 1st leg: winner of QF1 v QF2
Oct. 17, 2nd leg: QF2 v QF1

East

Quarterfinal 3
Aug. 22, 1st leg: Shanghai SIPG v Guangzhou Evergrande
Sept. 12, 2nd leg: Guangzhou Evergrande v Shanghai SIPG

Quarterfinal 4
Aug. 23, 1st leg: Kawasaki Frontale v Urawa Red Diamonds
Sept. 13, 2nd leg: Urawa Red Diamonds v Kawasaki Frontale

Semifinal 2
Sept. 27, 1st leg: winner of QF3 v QF4
Oct. 18, 2nd leg: QF4 v QF3

2017 AFC Champions League Final
Nov. 18, 1st leg: winner of SF1 v SF2
Nov. 25, 2nd leg: SF2 v SF1

For the competition's semifinals, the winners of both QF1 and QF3 will host the first leg, with the winners of QF2 and QF4 due to host the return fixture. While for the final, the winners of SF1 - West Asia - will host the first leg, and the winner of SF2 - East Asia - will host the second leg.

The former Newcastle United midfielder Cheick Tioté died after reportedly suffering a heart attack while training with his club in China.

The Ivory Coast international joined the Chinese League One side Beijing Enterprises in January having spent seven years at St James' Park. The 30-year-old was reported to have collapsed at the training ground on Monday and been taken to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The Guardian reported.

"I can confirm that my client Cheick Tioté sadly passed away today after collapsing in training with his club Beijing Enterprises," his agent, Emanuele Palladino, said in a statement. "We cannot say any more at the moment and we request that his family's privacy be respected at this difficult time. We ask for all your prayers."

A statement from Beijing Enterprises added:

Cheick Tioté, former Newcastle, Ivory Coast midfielder dies aged 30

"During a routine training session at 6 p.m. today (Monday), Ivory Coast player Cheick Tioté suddenly fainted and the club immediately rushed him to hospital, but unfortunately efforts to save him failed and he passed away at 7 p.m. The player's relatives have been informed. Beijing Enterprises football club expresses its deep sorrow and profound condolences for Mr. Tioté's untimely death."

It is understood that Tioté had been living in China on his own since leaving the north-east in January and his wife Madah is expecting their third child this week. His former manager at Newcastle, Alan Pardew, said he was devastated by the news.

"From the moment I arrived at Newcastle Cheick was a wonderful presence around the dressing room and his performances on the field often defied belief," said Pardew. "There were days when he must have covered every blade of grass on a football field."

"None of us will ever forget that incredible day when our Newcastle team came from 4-0 down to draw an unbelievable Premier League game against Arsenal, with Cheick's



incredible goal. I loved him. He was everything that you want in a Newcastle player. Life is not fair sometimes and I will remember Cheick Tioté as a giant of a midfielder whom I loved to manage."

Newcastle released a statement which read: "We are devastated to have learnt of the tragic passing of Cheick Tioté at the age of just 30. The thoughts of everyone at Newcastle United are with Cheick's family, friends, team-mates and everyone connected with the club he represented."

The Newcastle manager, Rafa Benítez,

said: "It is with great sadness that I have this afternoon learned of Cheick's death. In all the time that I have known him he was a true professional, dedicated and above all a great man. Our hearts go out to his family and friends at such a sad time."

Tioté began his career in his homeland with Bibo before moving to Anderlecht as a teenager.

He also played under Steve McClaren at Twente in the Netherlands before joining Newcastle in 2010 for £3.5m, going on to make more than 150 appearances.

A statement from the Professional Footballers' Association read: "Desperately sad news that Cheick Tioté has passed away, aged just 30. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and former team-mates."

Cheick Tioté spent seven years in England playing for Newcastle United before moving to China in January to play for Beijing Enterprises.

Dortmund appoints Peter Bosz as new head coach



Peter Bosz took over at Borussia Dortmund having led an exciting Ajax team to the final of the Europa League in 2016/17 season.

Borussia Dortmund appointed Peter Bosz as its new head coach.

The 53-year-old, who led Ajax to the Europa League final in his sole season in charge of the Amsterdam club, has signed a two-year deal to succeed Thomas Tuchel, who left the Bundesliga club last week, The Guardian reported.

"Peter Bosz will be BVB's new head coach. Contract to 2019," read a tweet from Dortmund's official account.

Bosz was under contract at the Amsterdam ArenA until 2019, so Dortmund has had to agree a compensation package to secure his services.

Ajax confirmed on its official website that an agreement had been reached with Dortmund, with general manager Edwin van der Sar describing it as a "good deal". The former Manchester United goalkeeper said: "I have mixed feelings about this move. When we brought Peter to Ajax last summer it was not the intention that the partnership would end after one year."

"We have had a great season, especially in the Europa League. As with our players, the coach also attracts the attention of clubs from Europe's top leagues."

Bosz guided an exciting

young Ajax side to its first European final in 21 years, where the Dutch club was beaten by Manchester United, but missed out on the Eredivisie title by a point to Feyenoord and ended the season without silverware.

The former Holland midfielder's only previous coaching job outside his home country was a brief stint in charge of Israeli side Maccabi Tel Aviv before he took over at Ajax.

Dortmund finished third in the Bundesliga last term to qualify for the Champions League, and also won the German Cup.

Saints to report Reds



Virgil van Dijk joined Southampton from Celtic for £13m in September 2015.

Southampton will report Liverpool to the Premier League over an alleged illegal approach for center back Virgil van Dijk.

The 25-year-old wants to move to Anfield if he leaves St Mary's, BBC reported.

The £50m-rated Netherlands defender signed a new six-year contract last year, having joined Southampton from Celtic for £13m in September 2015.

Liverpool is yet to formally approach Saints to ask for permission to speak to Van Dijk.

The Reds refused to comment on renewed speculation on Monday, while Southampton is adamant it does not need to sell the defender.

Saints are irritated by what they see as an

attempt to unsettle Van Dijk and are ready to reject an official offer.

Chelsea and Manchester City have both been heavily linked with the Dutchman, but City's interest has cooled as The Citizens are not prepared to pay as high a fee as Liverpool.

Former club Celtic is also understood to have a 10% sell-on agreement.

Van Dijk missed the final five months of the season after sustaining an ankle injury following a challenge by Leicester City's Jamie Vardy in Southampton's 3-0 win at St Mary's on January 22.

It forced him to miss Southampton's EFL Cup final loss to Manchester United at Wembley.

Art & Culture

12-year-old Iranian boy raises the bar at Dubai Qur'an contest

A 12-year-old Iranian boy, who memorized the entire Holy Qur'an in 11 months, raised the bar of competition with his impeccable rendition leaving the audience mesmerized at the Dubai International Holy Qur'an Award (Dihqa). Reciting from five passages of the Qur'an randomly chosen by a computer software for each candidate, Ali Feizi had the listeners swooning to his booming voice, IQNA reported.



ISNA

The sixth grade student, who completed memorizing the entire Qur'an at the age of seven, is the winner of the Iranian national Qur'an recitation contest and is participating in an international competition for the first time.

"By the grace of God, I think I have done well to be among the top five. I was surprised by my performance and now we will have to just wait and watch because there are many other real good candidates competing here," said Feizi.

Feizi is among 103 participants this year competing for the coveted prize of Dh250,000.

"I have been participating in national recitation programs before but this is the first time I am taking part in an international competition and it is an honor to be here. The standards are very high and the competition is very tough. I am grateful to God that I could manage to get through all the five passages without any mistakes," added Feizi, who wants to be a scholar of Qur'an when he grows up.

The competition saw seven other candidates demonstrating their skills with Lebanon's Ebrahim Mohammad Al Sabra standing out alongside Feizi.

Al Sabra, 20, also completed memorizing the Qur'an in a year's time though he started late.

"I started memorizing the Holy Qur'an after completing my secondary education. I took a break and finished memorizing the Qur'an in a year before I started my degree in Islamic studies," said Al Sabra, who is a student at the University of Tripoli.

Rare Shakespeare folio receives VIP treatment

Designated seats are usually reserved for human travelers but a rare copy of Shakespeare's first folio took a flight from Sydney to Brisbane safely buckled up.

In celebration of Queensland Day — the day the sunshine state became a self-governing colony — the NSW State Library has loaned the rare book to the Queensland State Library.

Escorted by Maggie Patton, the manager of research and discovery at the NSW library, the precious book was in Queensland for Tuesday only, abc.net.au wrote.

"And it is in remarkably good condition for a book that is 394 years old.

"It has been rebound in the 1880s. It would have been an original calfskin, but inside the papers are very clean, very white — a paper-based cloth," she said.

Along with its own plane seat, the folio travels with its own pillow that has been designed to protect the binding and the spine.

The original print run of 750 copies was published in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death.

Only 235 copies are known to have survived and this is the only copy in Australia.

Patton said it was not only the age of the book that was significant. "It's the first time Shakespeare's plays were printed in one volume and 18 of those 36 plays had never been printed before," she said.

"It's highly likely if they hadn't been printed they would have been lost. But it's also important because it's a fantastic example of publishing and printing in the early 17th century."

Staff at the State Library of Queensland has been looking forward to its arrival and it was greeted with intrigue.

Senior conservator Rachel Spano said there was interest in how the historic book had been bound.

"As conservators, we like materials and the paper, what the paper quality is like," she said.

"All the intricacies around that and also the wonderful history of it and it's such an important piece of literature."

While the book is in Queensland it will be stored under tight security in a climate-controlled environment, just like home.

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HADI HIRBODVASH/jameonline.ir

The 25th International Qur'an Exhibition is underway at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Grand Prayer Grounds (Mosalla) until June 16, 2017.



Iran's 'Retouch' grabs two Krakow Film Festival awards

Compiled from Dispatches

Iranian short film 'Retouch' won two awards at the 57th Krakow Film Festival in Poland and was named for the second time to attend Academy Awards.

Directed by Kaveh Mazaheri, the flick won the Silver Dragon for the director of the best short fiction film at the Polish festival.

The film received the award for a poignant portrait of a woman who has to face the choice between life and death, freedom and captivity in the world where no rights exist.

Meanwhile, the panel of jury for the International Federation of Film Societies (IFFC), which included Samiran Biswas (India), Eva Campos Suárez (Spain), Sylwia Hamerska (Poland), decided to grant the Don Quixote Award to Mazaheri's 'Retouch' and the Special Mention to the film 'The Origin of Trouble' directed by Tessa Louise Pope (The Netherlands).

The Golden Horn for the director of the best film went to Pero Kvesić for 'Dum Spiro Spero' (Croatia), while the Silver Horn for the director of the best medium-length documentary film was presented to Audrius Stonys for 'The Woman and the Glacier' (joint Lithuania-Estonia production).

Golden Dragon for the director of the best film went to Matteo Garriglio for the film 'En La Boca' (Switzerland, Argentina).

The Iranian film was selected as the Best Narrative Short at the 16th Tribeca Film Festival in New York City and was named for participation in the Academy Awards. This is the second time that Mazaheri's film has been introduced to Oscars.

'Retouch' won Crystal Simorgh for Best Short Film at Fajr Film Festival as well as grabbing the best short title from Iran Cinema Celebration.

Krakow Film Festival is one of the oldest in Europe dedicated to documentary, animated and short feature



krakowfilmfestival.pl

films. Its core consists of four competitions of equal rank: Documentary film competition, short film competition, national competition and music documentary film competition DocFilmMusic.

This year, about 1,800 short feature films, 500 documentary films and 300 animated films were submitted to the competition. In the competition, 32 films were shown, including five from Poland.

The 57th Krakow Film Festival was held from May 28 through June 4 in Krakow, Poland.

Iran attends Asia Media Summit 2017 in China

The eastern Chinese city of Qingdao in Shandong Province is hosting the 14th Asia Media Summit 2017 which is being attended by media delegations from Asian countries, including Iran.

Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Abdolali Ali-Askari led the Iranian delegation to the event, which was held on Tuesday.

The Chinese capital of Beijing hosted another edition of the meeting in 2010, in which more than 600 representatives from Asia media participated.

The program, themed 'Leading Media, World Development', deals with ways to overcome international and regional challenges such as the environ-

ment, natural resources, climate change and economics.

In his address on the first day of the

summit, Ali-Askari spoke about issues such as the threat of terrorism and the role of media in informing societies

about the danger.

He added that the media's role today is to promote peace, friendship, and ethics as well as to fight religion-phobia to provide the world with societies independent of color, race and bias. The head of the Iranian delegation further noted that Internet is a super-media and an international forum that has done away with borders between countries to change almost everything in culture, politics, economics and lifestyle.

Ali-Askari also discussed cooperation with the head of China's state broadcaster, CCTV, before the summit.

The 14th Asia Media Summit started on June 6 and will end on June 8.



IRNA

Weather

