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Ferrovie dello Stato's CEO Renato Mazzoncini (L) and the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Managing Director Saeed Mohammadzadeh inked the MOU in Tehran on Tuesday.

EU: Nuclear deal doesn't belong to one country

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Federica Mogherini, the European Union foreign policy chief, said on Tuesday that the July 2015 Iran nuclear agreement doesn't belong to a single country.

"The nuclear deal doesn't belong to one country, it belongs to the international community," Reuters quoted Mogherini as saying in a news conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Brussels.

"We have the responsibility to make sure that this continues to be implemented," she added.

According to the nuclear accord signed between Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council —

Russia, China, the U.S., France and Britain — Tehran agreed to limit its nuclear work in exchange for a lifting of economic and financial sanctions.

The nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed on July 14, 2015 in Vienna.

On July 20, 2105 the UN Security Council adopted a resolution endorsing the nuclear deal. The deal went into force on January 16, 2016.

The new administration of U.S. President Donald Trump said in April it was launching an inter-agency review of whether the lifting of sanctions against Iran was in Washington's national security interests. **→2**

Threats against Qatar wrong: Rouhani

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday renewed Tehran's opposition to the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar, saying threats and sanctions against Qatar is "wrong".

"Threatening, pressuring and imposing sanctions on a neighboring country like Qatar is a wrong approach and all should make efforts to end tension in the region," Rouhani said during a meeting with Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah who was on a tour of Iran.

On June 5 Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain cut diplomatic ties

with Qatar and introduced land, sea and air routes to the country under the pretext that Doha supports Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and have good relations with Iran. A few days they set certain conditions to end the blockade including curtailing ties with Iran and closing Al-Jazeera network.

Rouhani also said certain countries' "wrong decisions" have also caused crises in Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, noting such a situation is harmful to the entire regional countries.

Iran has been a local critic of the Saudi-led war against Yemen which have caused a human catastrophe. **→2**

Iraqi military rejects Amnesty report on Mosul 'abuses' as baseless

A senior Iraqi military official has rejected as "baseless" an Amnesty International report accusing government forces of human rights violations during the months-long battle to liberate Mosul from Daesh terrorists.

The Amnesty released a report on Tuesday, saying, "Iraqi government and U.S.-led coalition forces appear to have committed repeated violations of international humanitarian law, some of which may amount to war crimes."

Mosul's liberation operation officially came to an end on Monday, with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declaring victory in the city, three years after it fell to Daesh.

However, Iraq's Joint Operations Command (JOC) spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Rasool defended on Wednesday the performance of Iraqi armed forces during the liberation operation, saying the Amnesty report is baseless, and does not reflect the realities on the ground in Mosul.

He said the Iraqi army used light and medium arms during the offensive in Mosul, and was careful in using heavy weaponry for fear of civilian lives.

During their advances, Iraqi forces would discover mutilated bodies scattered on the streets of Mosul, said the commander, stressing that they were appalled by the disturbing scenes in the city, which once served as Daesh's main stronghold in the country.

Amnesty's report further said during the part of the fight aimed at freeing the city's western side, civilians were "subjected to relentless and unlawful attacks by Iraqi government forces and members of the U.S.-led coalition. Residents of west Mosul count themselves lucky if they escape with their lives."

The report cited the Airwars monitoring group as saying that "between 19 February and 19 June 2017, attacks launched by Iraqi and coalition forces may have caused the deaths of as many as 5,805 civilians." **→13**

200 plains in Iran are in critical thirsty: official

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Director of the environment committee at the Energy Ministry has said of 600 plains in Iran, 200 are a "critical condition" in terms of water scarcity.

In an interview with the Persian language E'temad newspaper published on Tuesday, Mohammad Ali Hamed said the water scarcity may lead to conflicts between people in the country.

"It means that a tough competition may heat up between water consumers in different parts of the country," Hamed warned.

"There had been fierce conflicts over water at times especially at the time of drought in Iran in the past; however, the conflicts may re-escalate once the water crisis worsen," Hamed explained.

Drying lakes and rivers, declining groundwater resources, land subsidence, water contamination and rationing, agricultural losses, salt and sand storms, and ecosystem damage

es are reaching alarming levels in Iran.

Recently, head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Majlis (Iranian parliament) has warned of the severe outcomes of water shortage in the country which is believed to pose a threat to the national security.

Hamed said just like oil, water is a national resource and the government has every right to transfer water from one city to another.

Some 63 percent of the country's population inhabit the central plateau which is a big but arid and semi-arid area, the Energy Ministry official said.

He said this uneven distribution of the population is a product of the flawed policies of the past 60 years and now "we are obliged to transfer water to these densely populated districts."

■ **'Displace population or transfer water'**

In addition to the decline of Iran's freshwater

resources per capita, the water is unevenly distributed so the government must make a choice between displacing the population or transferring water, he highlighted.

"It sounds more logical to displace the population but it is not possible to force the population to move to another area; we should accelerate development in other areas with richer water resources so that the population opt for moving there."

The current looming water crisis did not emerge after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 but it started from the 1960s, Hamed stated, saying, "While we had to move towards industrialization we instead choose the agricultural-based economy, which meant depletion of underground resources that continued to the present time. Currently, out of 600 plains in Iran, 200 plains are in a critical condition." **→13**

Russia disagrees with U.S. on Iran's missile program

By staff and agency

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov, who was in Tehran on Tuesday for talks Iranian deputy ministers Abbas Araqchi and Majid Takht-Ravanchi, has said that Moscow categorically disagrees with the U.S. claims that Iran's missile program contravenes the UN Security Council resolution endorsing the July 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and great powers.

The resolution 2231, adopted immediately after the conclusion of the nuclear deal, calls upon Iran "not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of

delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology."

Under the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Iran only accepted limits to its nuclear program not its missile defense program.

"Neither JCPOA nor SC Res prohibits Iran from missiles not designed for nuclear warheads," Zarif wrote in March 2016.

According to Sputnik, Ryabkov said some Western countries, including the U.S., are attempting to paint the Iranian missile program in a false light, "present the case in such a way

that this program, including test launches of ballistic missiles, does not meet the requirements of resolution 2231."

The new U.S. administration imposed a new round of sanctions against Iran in February 2017 over its January medium-range ballistic missile test.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved in May the most sweeping sanctions against Iran since the nuclear deal was reached in 2015.

The measure is claimed to be punishing Iran over its ballistic missile program, alleged support for terrorism and human rights violations.



IRNA/Reza Akbari

Russia naval group visits northern Iran port

A Russian naval group berthed at the northern Iranian port city of Anzali on a friendly four-day visit.

The fleet, the fifth one to dock at Iran's Caspian Sea coast, entered the port on Wednesday. It features Russia's Makhachkala battleship from the country's Caspian Sea Marine Brigade.



EDITORIAL

By Hassan Lasjerdi

Tehran Times editor-in-chief

Islamic State and key questions

As the Iraqi nation is in euphoria over the recapture of Islamic State's last stronghold in Mosul, other regional countries also feel more confident.

Beyond the triumph, however, what is essential for the restoration of peace and stability to the Middle East is the way regional governments decide to deal the remaining terrorist group and its minions.

While it seems that many ISIS fighters have been killed in the Iraqi battlefield, some have managed to flee the country, either getting back to their normal life or resuming terrorist activities in a new geography.

A deeper look at ISIS in the Middle East and/or other contexts, indicates that for the terrorist group not to have a rebirth, it is necessary to seek answers to a number of critical questions. Or at least, we need to come up with a set of such questions to be explored by think tanks and analysts.

Here are those questions:

1- Where is the ideological birthplace of ISIS?

2- Who were behind the group and what efforts did they make to expand it?

3- To what financial resources did they have access?

4- Which countries were ISIS main sympathizers?

5- Under which pretexts did ISIS commit its heinous crimes?

6- How was ISIS manipulated by intelligence services to reach their own goals?

7- Why did countries who claim to fight terrorism fail to eradicate ISIS?

8- What social and cultural factors did contribute to increasing ISIS recruits?

Relevant answers to the above-mentioned questions will help clarify ambiguities in the public opinion and provide the global community with improved ability to fight terrorism.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Majlis security committee drafts second 6-month JCPOA report

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has drafted its second six-month report on the JCPOA, the official name for the nuclear agreement between Iran and great powers.

Speaking to ISNA on Wednesday, MP Mojtaba Zonnuri said the draft has been seconded by the committee and handed over to the Majlis presiding board.

Among other topics, the report reviews cases of the U.S. violation of the JCPOA as well as Iran's reciprocal measure plan, the lawmaker said.



Customs officials uncover human trafficking incident

POLITICS TEHRAN — Customs officials in Iran have uncovered seven Afghan nationals involved in trafficking Afghans into Iran, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Officers found out that Afghan nationals, hiding under a water tank in a bus at the Milak customs checkpoint in the border with Afghanistan, were trafficked into Iran.

In addition to 50 incidents over the last year, the country's customs officers have found three cases of human trafficking over the current calendar year which began on March 21.



Iranian army officer killed in Syria

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian artillery officer Mehdi Joudi was killed by terrorists in Syria on Tuesday.

Joudi was killed in Aleppo on a military advisory mission, Mehr reported.

Following the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Iran dispatched several advisory missions to shore up Syrian armed forces against terrorist groups, including Daesh.



UN maritime agency praises Iran activities

POLITICS TEHRAN — The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has appreciated Iran's efforts and its participation in the international body's activities, ILNA reported on Wednesday.

In a letter to Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Saeed Nejad, IMO Secretary General Kitack Lim praised Iran for its commitment and continuous supports.

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, IMO is the global standard-setting authority for the safety, security and environmental performance of international shipping.



U.S. having hardest time to make decisions on Iran: Rouhani

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the United States has never had a harder time to make decisions vis-à-vis Iran than today, thanks to the nuclear deal.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said prior to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the official name for the nuclear agreement, the U.S. was able to adopt virtually any decision about Iran, such as taking Iran's case to the United Nations Security Council, pushing for resolutions, etc., IRIB reported.



Principlist parliamentary group forms workgroup to discuss next cabinet

POLITICS TEHRAN — The principlist Velayee parliamentary group has formed a 15-memebr team to discuss the makeup of the future cabinet, the group's spokesman Hossein Naqavi Hosseini said on Wednesday, Fars reported.

On the same day, Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Hossein Ali Amiri said President Hassan Rouhani is attempting to propose his ministers on his inauguration day on August 5.

Water provides cooperation ground between Tehran, Ankara: envoy

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ankara's **d e s k** ambassador to Tehran said on Wednesday that water should be a matter of cooperation not discrepancy between Turkey and Iran provided that it is not addressed "emotionally".

"As a matter of fact, we consider the water issue as a fertile ground for cooperation not disagreement," Reza Hakan Tekin said in a press conference held in the Turkish embassy days before the first anniversary of the abortive July 15 coup in Ankara in 2016.

"We hope the Iranian side and media outlets avoid approaching the issue emotionally as it shuts the door to dialogue," the diplomat added.

From an environmental challenge, water is increasingly turning into a political, existentialist crisis in the Middle East region.

Iraq, Iran and Syria have been long holding Turkey accountable for intensifying water shortages in their homelands, and formation of hotspots and dust storms.

Iraq and Syria rely mostly on the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris for their agriculture. Unsurprisingly, the development of engineering projects on the two rivers, notably large dams and irrigation works, has been a source of growing tension between Iraq and Turkey on one hand and Syria and Turkey on the other.

Although outright violence has been avoided, hostilities have mounted each time that a new dam has been built.

The ambassador denied that his country's damming projects are to blame for the current dire environmental crises in



Turkish Ambassador to Tehran Reza Hakan Tekin

Turkey is ready to cooperate with the United Nations or any other international body to address water concerns, ambassador Tekin says.

the region, casting doubt on data put out by neighboring countries.

"We believe this is far away from scientific facts, and the dams built on the Euphrates and Tigris have left not so much serious consequences," he asserted.

Turkey has built 19 dams on the two rivers and has plans for three more.

Authorities in Tehran, however, offer a different narrative. Ziaeddin Shoaee, head of Iran's sand and dust storms control body, voiced deep concern over Ankara's

water policies, saying its damming projects give the country an upper hand in case of political rows.

"Turkey can now exercise full control over the Euphrates and 60-percen control over the Tigris in case of political crises," the ISNA news agency quoted Shoaee as saying on Wednesday.

Speaking at a UN-endorsed conference in Tehran on preventing or minimizing sandstorms running between July 3 to 5, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani

criticized Turkey's construction of dams, saying such projects can be "dangerous" for the whole region.

"Many of these sorts of activities should be stopped," Rouhani said. "Construction of dams without sufficient studies can be dangerous for the future of the region," he added without elaborating.

Experts have linked sand and dust storms, which repeatedly hit south and southwestern Iran and other regions including capital Tehran, to upstream dam projects.

According to the Turkish envoy, Tehran has not been responsive to an action plan on environmental issues which followed an agreement between presidents of the two countries in April 2015.

"We hope that Iran will reply to our initiative," the grayish-white envoy stressed.

"Turkey is ready to cooperate with the United Nations or any other international body in this regard," he added.

In an email interview with The Tehran Times last week, Erik Solheim, executive director of the UN Environment Program (UNEP), saw such disputes "completely normal."

"First of all I think we should consider these disputes as completely normal. I've hardly ever been in any country in the entire world where there are no disputes among those upstream and downstream. It is not just Tigris and Euphrates; there is Nile and also disputes among the states in India. So this is completely normal simply because you, Turkey and Iraq have different perspectives on Tigris and Euphrates," said Solheim.

EU: Nuclear deal doesn't belong to one country

Mogherini says nuclear deal 'belongs to the international community'

1 → Last month Mogherini said she was confident the U.S. would stick to the nuclear accord, despite its protestations to the contrary, as the deal is working.

"In any case the European Union will guarantee that the deal keeps, that we stick to that ... and that our policy of engagement with Iran continues," the EU chief diplomat asserted.

On June 29, 2017 the UN Security Council renewed support for the nuclear deal, underscoring that Tehran has shown full commitment to the accord and the resolution supporting it.

"The Secretary-General believes that the comprehensive and sustained implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action will guarantee that

Iran's nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful, while allowing for transparency, monitoring and verification,"

Jeffery Feltman, the under-secretary-general for political affairs, told the UN Security Council.

On Tuesday Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov, who was on a trip of Iran, called the JCPOA a "balanced" deal for which there is no "alternative".

Threats against Qatar wrong: Rouhani



Omani FM Yusuf bin Alawi (L) shakes hands with President Rouhani.

1 → Saudi Arabia has also sent troops to Bahrain to suppress the pro-democracy movement there which began some six years ago.

Rouhani told the Omani chief diplomat that Tehran welcomes any attempt to end conflicts in the Middle East, adding negotiation is the only way to settle crises in Yemen and Bahrain.

The president also said Tehran has helped countries in fight against terrorists.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has given positive response to the governments which asked for help in fighting terrorism," he stated.

Rouhani said Iran stood beside the Iraqi people in fighting the terrorists and will continue to support them in this respect in the future, Rouhani pointed out.

"All countries' cooperation and help are required to eradicate terrorism as a contagious disease," the Iranian president said whose initiative for a "World against Violence and Extremism" was okayed by the UN General Assembly in 2013. For his part, the Omani minister highlighted the importance of putting an immediate end to crises in the region through diplomatic ways.

Bin Alawi added Iran has played an "effective" role in fighting terrorism.

'Iran-Oman Strong ties'

Commenting on relations between Iran and Oman, Rouhani said that the two countries have had "friendly" and "brotherly" relations in the past years.

Alawi also called relations with Iran "strong" and expressed Oman's willingness to expand ties with Tehran.



Central Bank Of Iran

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No. : 96 - K/166

Second Announcement

■ **Tender Holder:** Security Paper Mill of Central Bank of I.R.Of Iran.

■ **Tender Subject:** Purchase of 42 Spare Parts for Vacuumatic Counter Machines.

■ **Tender Deposit:** an unconditional and extendable Bank guarantee from Iranian Bank for the amount of 27,470 Euro or 1,000,000,000 Iranian Rials.

■ **Deadline for receiving tender documents:**

Maximum ten days after second advertisement

■ **How to get document:** Bidder can receive the tender documents by sending their written inquiry to Fax: +981143132566 or sending letter to email address Info@takab-cbi.ir or refer to national_database portal of Iran Tenders Information [http:// Iets. Mporg.ir](http://Iets.Mporg.ir)

■ **Deadline for submitting offers:**

Maximum until dated 2017 August 26(96/06/04)

■ **Time period of financial offers:**

Maximum Three week after deadline submitting offer

■ **Validity period of financial offers:**

The offers must be valid for ninety days after 2017 August 26 (96/06/04)

■ The offers no sign, conditional, altered and the offers that submit after the expiration of the period of bid submission will be considered as null and void.

■ Tender Holder reserves the rights to reject some or all of the offers.

The winner of tender must be submitting an unconditional and irrevocable performance bond guarantee equal to 10% of value of the contract.

■ All the cost of published advertisement must be paid by winner of tender

■ **Place for receiving and submitting tender documents:**

7th km Chamestan Road, Amol, Mazandaran, Iran, Security paper Mill-

Department of the commercial department building

■ **Delivery time:** 4 month after signing the contract for further information, prospective bidder may contact us via the following

Tel: +98 11 43 13 26 30 , 43 13 37 51 - Fax: +981143132588

Web site: [http:// www.takab-cbi.ir](http://www.takab-cbi.ir) - E-mail: [info @ takab-cbi.ir](mailto:info@takab-cbi.ir)

Leaked documents 'reveal Saudi and Emirati crown princes' support for al-Qaeda and ISIL in Yemen'

A leaked Qatari diplomatic communique alleges that the crown princes of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates supported two Yemeni backers of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the ISIL terrorist group.

The nine-page document was published by Egyptian newspaper al-Badil in April - before the outlet was banned by Cairo - accusing Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Abu Dhabi's Mohammed bin Zayed of providing aid to the two extremists.

The communique - sent to Qatar's foreign minister on October 26, 2016 - outlines the minutes of communications between Qatar's ambassador to Washington and the U.S. Treasury Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.

The New Arab could not independently verify the authenticity of the documents.

"The Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence reported that the information available to them indicated that Prince Mohammad bin Salman has been in constant communication with the figures listed in the report," the leaked notes read.

"The prince has managed, according to the Under Secretary, to assemble out of some groups loyal to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula [AQAP] a force against the Houthis.

"The Under Secretary expressed his concern that Prince Mohammad bin Salman was working with al-Qaeda and extremist Salafi groups in the region without prior coordination with us," they added.

The report said bin Salman has been communicating with al-Hasan Ali Ali Abkar and Abdallah Faysal Sadiq al-Ahdal, who the U.S. imposed sanctions on in 2016 for setting up a "front charity" to support AQAP.

The U.S. considers the Yemen-based AQAP to be the group's most dangerous branch and has conducted a long-running drone war against its leaders.

AQAP has taken advantage of war between the Saudi-backed Yemen government and the Houthi rebels to expand its presence in several areas of



eastern and southern Yemen.

"Since at least autumn 2012, Abkar was a AQAP fighter and travelled with a group of other sheikhs to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to meet with Saudi princes and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed," the Qatari documents alleged.

They also revealed that Abkar received \$1.6 million in 2015 through Saudi intelligence chief Khalid bin Ali al-Humaidan to provide military equipment to AQAP and the ISIL terrorist group.

In December 2016, the two Yemeni men and the Rahmah Charitable Organization were added to the U.S. Treasury's list of specially designated nationals and entities that support or engage in terrorism.

The department said in a statement at the time that Abkar had provided monetary and military support to AQAP since 2014 and that he was a com-

mander responsible for the Marib and al-Jawf areas.

It added that Ahdal had supported AQAP since 2009 by supplying funds and managing foreign fighters and that he had been a senior tribal leader in the Hadramawt region.

Bin Salman, the chief architect of Saudi Arabia's devastating two-year war in Yemen, was appointed as heir to the throne last month by royal decree, removing the country's counter-terrorism czar from the royal line of succession.

The 31-year-old is also thought to be behind Riyadh's recent attempted isolation of Qatar.

On June 5, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt abruptly severed diplomatic ties with Qatar and accused Doha of funding extremist groups.

Qatar has categorically denied the charges.

(Source: The New Arab)

Twenty-second anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre

Thousands gathered in Srebrenica, to mark the 1995 massacre of about 8,000 Bosnian Muslims, Europe's worst atrocity since World War II, with some relatives of the victims giving their loved ones a proper burial for the first time.

The remains of 71 victims of the bloodshed, which has been ruled genocide by international courts, were laid to rest in a joint funeral at a memorial cemetery in Potocari, near Srebrenica.

They included a 33-year-old woman and seven people who were under 18 when they were killed.

Adela Efendic said she had come to "finally say goodbye" to her father Senaid, who was 35 when he was killed.

"His remains were found nine years ago in a common grave, but only a few bones," the 22-year-old said,

her head covered with a violet veil and tears streaming down her cheeks.

"We were waiting, hoping to find more, but nothing turned up... We decided to bury him now so his bones find peace," said Efendic, who was just 20 days old when her father died.

"I have only one photo of him, a small one, like for an ID card. But my mother told me a lot about him... it allows me to imagine him."

Bosnian Serb forces captured the eastern Bosnian town, a UN-protected enclave at the time, on July 11, 1995, five months before the end of Bosnia's inter-ethnic war.

In the following days they summarily killed some 8,000 Muslim men and boys

(Source: Yahoo News)



Trump and Macron may not be an odd couple after all

U.S. President Donald Trump's relationship with Emmanuel Macron got off to an awkward start, with a jaw-clenching handshake at a summit in Brussels before the French president rebuked the U.S. leader for his stance on climate change.

The two men would appear to have little in common. Trump, 71, is an anti-globalist elected on a pledge to "make America great again" who is unpredictable on foreign policy. Macron, 39, is an ardent European integrationist more than three decades younger who sees himself as an honest broker of international relations.

Trump's visit to Paris this week, to celebrate 100 years since U.S. troops entered World War One on the side of France and Britain, follows bruising talks on trade and climate policy that pitted him against leaders from the world's major economies at a G20 summit last weekend.

In Paris, Trump will seek common ground on diplomatic and military endeavors. Both he and Macron have a political interest in building rapport, and both have a corporate background that may help underpin their relationship.

Trump could use a friend overseas. His preference for a more unilateral, transactional diplomacy has unsettled traditional allies in Europe and left the U.S. president appearing isolated among world leaders.

"Sometimes Trump makes decisions we don't like, such as on climate, but we can deal with it in two ways: we can say, 'We are not going to talk to you,' or we can offer you our hand to bring you back into the circle," government spokesman Christophe Castaner told French news channel LCI. "Macron is symbolically offering Trump his hand."

Political outsiders

Trump and Macron are political outsiders, the American a real estate mogul, his French counterpart a former investment banker. Both love a good deal,



demand tangible results rather than lofty ambitions, and have a penchant for showmanship.

Like Macron, Trump will be looking for common ground.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One returning from the G20 meeting in the German city of Hamburg, Gary Cohn, director of the White House National Economic Council, said Trump and Macron enjoyed a "great" relationship.

"You know, Macron and the president have somewhat different views on how to achieve the end goal, but I think the end goal is the same," Cohn said.

Trump announced in June that the United States would pull out of a landmark international accord reached in Paris in 2015 to fight climate change. In hard-fought negotiations in Germany, Macron tried to soften U.S. language on climate policy.

Cohn played down talk of tensions with Macron over climate policy. He said he expected meetings in Paris on military and security matters as well as "a long bilateral meeting between the two men."

Having reshaped their countries' political landscapes, both now have certain shared objectives, making crushing Islamic State and countering global terrorism a leading priority.

It is unclear whether the leaders will address thornier issues such as policy toward Iran, possible American tariffs on steel and Russia sanctions legislation in the U.S. Congress that might derail a 9.5 billion euro (\$10.9 billion) gas pipe project in which France's Engie SA (ENGIE.PA) has a stake.

The United States and France hold differing views on Iran.

On a visit to Saudi Arabia in May, Trump singled out Iran as a key source of funding and support for militant groups. During the U.S. presidential race, he threatened to tear up an international agreement on Iran's nuclear program, branding it "the worst deal ever negotiated."

So far Trump has stopped short of killing an accord that has allowed French companies including planemaker Airbus SE(AIR.PA), oil major Total SA (TOTF.PA) and automobile manufacturers Peugeot SA(PEUPPA) and Renault SA(RENA.PA) to sign initial deals.

'A win-win for both'

Just as Macron flattered Russian President Vladimir Putin with a meeting at the gilded Versailles palace of France's former monarchy, Trump will bask in a Bastille Day ceremony on Thursday laden with pageantry and military pomp, with U.S. soldiers parading down the

Champs Elysees.

For Macron, France's youngest leader since Napoleon two centuries ago, it is an opportunity to use soft diplomacy to win Trump's confidence and set about influencing U.S. foreign policy at a time European diplomats say Washington lacks direction.

"The visit is a win-win for both," said one French diplomat. "Trump remains unchallenged and gets the grandeur that he enjoys. Macron remains unchallenged and gets a no-fuss picture with the leader of the 'free world'."

Macron is concerned about Trump feeling backed into a corner, French diplomats said. Moreover, he senses an opportunity to sway U.S. thinking and elevate the role of France, a nuclear power and permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, in global affairs, in particular on Syria and the Middle East, they added.

France is the second-biggest contributor to the U.S.-led coalition in Syria, and French officials have expressed fears that the United States has no clear vision beyond taking the military fight to Islamic State.

It is one reason, the diplomats say, that in his first two months as president, Macron has sought warmer ties with the Kremlin, just as Trump is left hamstrung in his relations with Moscow by allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election to help Trump win and possible collusion with Russia by people close to him.

"The Russians are pleased to have a grown-up to talk to in Europe," a second French diplomat said.

Daniel Fried, an expert on U.S.-European relations who served under presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, said Trump had nothing to gain politically at home or abroad by isolating himself. "By reaching out to the French I suspect he hopes to show he can be a viable actor on the world stage."

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. created ISIL, allowed regional states to fund terror group: Nasrallah

The secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement says the U.S. created the ISIL (Daesh) terrorists and gave regional states the green light to fund and support the Takfiri militant group.

Sayed Hassan Nasrallah made the remarks during a live broadcast from Beirut on Tuesday evening following the Iraqi victory over the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group in the northern city of Mosul, which marked the end of the nine-month battle for control over the extremists' former stronghold and Iraq's second largest city.

Nasrallah further went on to praise Iraqi Shia paramilitary forces for the key role in routing Daesh from Mosul.

The Popular Mobilization Units, commonly known by their Arabic name Hashd al-Sha'abi, along with Iraqi army soldiers have been made sweeping gains against Daesh since launching the Mosul operation on October 17, 2016.



He also stressed that contrary to claims by the U.S. army that the battle against terrorism will take years, it in fact only requires a concerted international effort.

The Lebanese leader also slammed some Arab media outlets for their attempts to fuel sectarianism and encourage the Takfiri terrorists to kill innocent people.

He further hailed Iraqi ethnic groups for their unity in the battle against terrorism. He also noted that a religious fatwa by Iraq's top cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani -- which was issued after Mosul fell to the terrorists -- served to galvanize tens of thousands of Iraqi Shias.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi formally declared triumph over Daesh in Mosul on Monday evening.

"I announce from here the end and the failure and the collapse of the terrorist state of falsehood and terrorism, which the terrorist Daesh announced from Mosul," Abadi said, adding, "It was due to the Iraqi nation's united front and sacrifice that we are now celebrating the victory over Daesh. This is the victory over darkness and terrorism."

The recapture of Mosul marked the biggest blow to the Takfiri extremist group since it declared its so-called caliphate three years ago.

(Source: Press TV)

Trillion-tonne iceberg breaks off Antarctica

One of the biggest icebergs in history has snapped off the West Antarctic ice shelf, according to scientists who have been monitoring a growing crack for months.

Satellite images confirmed that the trillion-tonne iceberg had broken away and was adrift at sea.

"The calving occurred sometime between Monday, July 10 and Wednesday, July 12, when a 5,800-square kilometer section of the ice shelf finally broke away," the Swansea University said in a statement on Wednesday.

The massive sheet of ice with an area nearly as large as the size of the U.S. state of Delaware had been developing a crack across the Larsen C ice shelf over the past few years.

Ice shelves are floating masses of ice, hundred meters thick, that are fed by slow-flowing glaciers from the land.

Several ice shelves have cracked around northern parts of Antarctica in recent years.

By itself, the massive iceberg will not add to sea levels when it melts, but scientists worry about the effects it will have on inland glaciers.

The ice shelves act as giant brakes, preventing glaciers from flowing directly into the ocean.

If the glaciers held in check by Larsen C split into the Antarctic Ocean, it would lift the global water mark by about 10 centimeters, researchers have said.

The calving of ice shelves occurs naturally, though global warming is believed to have accelerated the process.

Warming ocean water erodes the underbelly of the ice shelves while rising air temperatures weaken them from above.

Man-made global warming has already lifted average global air temperatures by about one degree Celsius since pre-industrial levels.

Antarctica is one of the world's fastest-warming regions.

(Source: AP)

Erdogan says lifting emergency rule currently out of question

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday ruled out an immediate end to the year-old state of emergency imposed after a failed coup, saying it could only be lifted once the fight against terrorism was finished.

Earlier on Wednesday Turkish authorities detained 14 army officers and issued warrants for the detention of 51 people, including 34 former employees of state broadcaster TRT, for suspected links to the coup, local media reported.

"There can be no question of lifting emergency rule with all this happening," Erdogan said in a speech to investors in Ankara. "We will lift the emergency rule only when we no longer need to fight against terrorism. Lifting the emergency rule can be possible in the not-too-distant future."

He did not give a more specific time frame.

Ankara imposed the state of emergency soon after the coup attempt last July, when a group of rogue soldiers commandeered tanks, helicopters and warplanes and attacked parliament in a bid to overthrow the government, killing more than 240 people.

(Source: Reuters)

I wouldn't rule out another financial crisis, says IMF's

The International Monetary Fund's Managing Director, Christine Lagarde, has said that she would not rule out another financial crisis in her lifetime, indicating that comments made recently by Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen may have been premature.



"There may, one day, be another crisis," Lagarde told CNBC on the sidelines of a joint conference with the IMF and the Croatian National Bank in Dubrovnik.

Lagarde's comments responded to a statement made by Yellen a fortnight earlier in which she said she does not expect to see another financial crisis in her lifetime.

"I plan on having a long life and I hope she (Yellen) does, too, so I wouldn't absolutely bet on that because there are cycles that we have seen over the past decade and I

wouldn't exclude that," Lagarde said.

She, however, noted the unpredictability of financial crises and said that finance ministers and policymakers should act with caution to prepare for such eventualities.

"Where it will come from, what form it takes, how international and broad-based it will be is to be seen, and typically the crisis never comes from where we expect it," she added.

"Our duty, and certainly the message that we give to the finance ministers, to the policymakers, is 'be prepared'. Make sure that your financial sector is under good supervision, that it's well regulated, that the institutions are rock-solid, and anticipate at home with enough buffers so that you can resist the potential crisis."

Janet Yellen is to outline her Monetary Policy Report to Congress later Wednesday in a meeting which is also likely to also pose questions about the Fed's «tapering» plans and her own future at the central bank. (Source: cnbc)

U.S. should not block Chinese chip acquisitions: China think-tank

BEIJING (Reuters) — The United States should not block Chinese acquisitions of U.S. semiconductor technologies, a leading state think-tank in Beijing said on Wednesday, as Washington heightens scrutiny of Chinese investments in the sector.

Acquisitions and joint ventures are becoming more difficult for Chinese firms, Hu Zhijian, president of the Chinese Academy of Science and Technology for Development (CASTED), told reporters in Beijing on Wednesday.

"It is not wise for the U.S. to close its doors in industries that are declining in profit ... the United States should step forward and develop new technology areas," said Hu.

U.S. regulators have called for heightened scrutiny of Chinese chip acquisitions leading to a chill in overseas M&A activity by Chinese chip firms, with a number of high-level deals failing to gain approval.

In December the Obama administration blocked China's Fujian Grand Chip Investment Fund (FGC) from completing the acquisition of German semiconductor firm Aixtron (AIXGn.DE) over national security concerns related to Aixtron's U.S. assets.

In March China-backed buyout fund Canyon Bridge Capital Partners LLC resubmitted a \$1.3 billion bid for U.S. chip firm Lattice Semiconductor Corp (LSCCO) to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) after the initial review period expired.

More than 20 U.S. Congress members signed a letter to the U.S. Treasury in December calling for a block on the Lattice deal, saying it could disrupt the U.S. military supply chain and increase reliance on foreign chipmakers.

"The United States should not be afraid of other countries catching up," Hu said, adding that China is seeking technologies the United States has already developed in the past two decades and Chinese investment could boost profitability in the sector.

Washington recently sought to strengthen the role of CFIUS, the inter-agency committee that reviews foreign acquisitions of U.S. companies on national security grounds.

U.S. politicians and lawmakers have called for the committee to increase deal scrutiny in areas where China is seeking to build world-leading technology, including artificial intelligence.

China will release a national artificial intelligence plan in the coming months, following a similar roadmap released by the United States, Hu said.

Philippines' central bank chief: We're watching financial risks closely

The Philippines' central bank is watching financial risks in the country closely and is ready to act should the situation demand attention, its new governor told CNBC.

One of the fastest growing economies in Asia, the Philippines posted GDP growth of 6.4 percent in the first quarter of 2017 from a year ago — even amid political tensions with President Rodrigo Duterte declaring martial law in Mindanao. Recently, the country has seen Chinese investments pouring in.

The rapid pace of growth is sparking some concerns, but Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' governor Nestor Espenilla said the institution is watching.

"If we're talking about the formation of asset bubbles in real estate, that's certainly an area that we have been closely tracking, drawing from lessons from other countries and from the past," said Espenilla.

"The BSP has been quite vigilant in assessing the situation and deploying measures to deal with the situation," he said, citing the set-up of a stress test to monitor the property market.

Espenilla, who took office just last week, was previously the deputy governor in charge of banking supervision. He replaced respected career central banker Amando Tetangco who served a maximum two terms for 12 years. (Source: cnbc)

Iran, Italy pen €1.2b rail MOU

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, known also as RAI, and the Italian state-run railway company, Ferrovie dello Stato (FS), on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding worth €1.2 billion on construction of a high-speed railway between the Iranian central cities of Arak and Qom.

During a joint seminar held at the headquarters of RAI in Tehran, some knowledge transfer MOUs were also signed between the two sides.

An MOU was inked between the two state-run bodies and Iran University of Science & Technology, while some other MOUs were inked between the named Iranian academic body and an Italian university.

These MOUs were signed by the CEO of FS, Renato Mazzoncini, and the head of RAI, Saeed Mohammadzadeh. The signing ceremony was attended by the chancellor of Iran University of Science & Technology, Mohammad-Ali Barkhordari, the Italian Ambassador to Tehran, Mauro Conciatori, and some other Iranian and Italian officials and entrepreneurs.

On the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Mohammadzadeh expressed hope that all the inked agreements will pave the way for development of the Iranian rail sector and transfer of knowledge to the Islamic Republic.

As Mohammadzadeh said, designing and building of the Qom-Arak high-speed railway will kick off in the next Iranian calendar year (starts on March 21, 2018). The project, financed by Italy, will become operational jointly by Iranian contractors and FS.

Improvement of railway services is one of the top priorities defined in the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) and the transport ministry seeks to develop this sector to reach the target, Mohammadzadeh, who is also the deputy transport minister, said.



Chancellor of Iran University of Science & Technology, Mohammad-Ali Barkhordari (L) and Head of RAI, Saeed Mohammadzadeh (M) at RAI-FS joint seminar in Tehran

"Based on the sixth development plan, one percent of Iran's crude oil income should be allocated to the expansion of railways," he underlined.

During the past four years, \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion of direct investments have been attracted by the railway sector per year and \$7.5 billion have been allocated by the government to guarantee investments in this sector, he added.

As Mohammadzadeh told the Tehran Times, RAI is also holding talks with German and Spanish companies on some other railway development projects.

■ **'No obstacles for financing'**

Mazzoncini, for his part, expressed satisfaction with the MOUs, saying that the two countries are to enter a new chapter in their relations after the lifting of sanctions and the penned MOUs will go through operational phases within the next six months. He hoped that regarding the current conditions, there will be no obstacles consider-

ing the required financial issues and credit lines for the project.

The relation between Iran and Italy is, as you know, very important and also the cooperation between the universities is also important, he said.

"One of the agreements we signed today is for training engineers and technicians in Iran to create competence in Iran," he added.

■ **'Iran-Italy economic ties on positive track'**

In an interview with the Tehran times, the Italian ambassador to Tehran predicted a bright future for mutual economic ties between Tehran and Rome.

"This is a very positive trend, above all, thanks to the small and medium-sized enterprises of the two countries and it is time to pave the way for something more substantial and strategic and this one is an important step," Mauro Conciatori said.

"For the moment, great boost is on joint venture [between Iran and Italy] in small and medium-sized enterprises and after



Italian Ambassador to Tehran Mauro Conciatori

that we must go for infrastructure and productive activities in oil, gas, and power generation," he further elaborated. "It is normal that this will take a little bit time but I think that we are on a very positive track."

Iran's oil output up 16.7% in June: sources

ENERGY DESK **TEHRAN** — According to OPEC's latest monthly report published on July 12, Iran's oil output in June reached 3.790 million barrels per day (bpd), a 16.7 percent rise from 3.774 million bpd in May based on secondary sources.

The OPEC's report also announced Iran's oil output based on direct communication. It said the country's oil production in June reached 3.880 million bpd, a 13 percent decline from 3.893 million bpd in May.

Meanwhile, Iran's oil exports to Europe and Asia stood at 2.15 million bpd in June, IRNA reported on Monday citing Oil Ministry's website.



According to the report, Iran's oil exports hovered around 2.1 million bpd on average since

the beginning of 2017 of which near 1 million barrels were sent to the European markets.

After the implementation of the nuclear accord (called JCPOA), Iran has been seeking the expansion of its target markets and as a result the oil exports to Europe rose by more than 300 percent since then.

Earlier this month, OPEC released its Annual Statistical Bulletin report in which they said Iran's oil exports in 2016 reached 1.921 million bpd, a 77.6 percent rise compared to 2015.

The country's crude exports stood at 1.081 million bpd in 2015 which indicates that the 2016 figure is 840,000 bpd more than that of the 2015 average.

Indian companies interested in project to develop Iranian port

India is keen to rapidly develop Iran's Chabahar Port, a strategic facility that New Delhi hopes will help expand its trade with Afghanistan and energy-rich Central Asia by circumventing Pakistan.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Iran in May 2016, a commercial contract on Chabahar Port was signed between India Ports Global Pte. Ltd., or IPGPL, and Iran's Aria Banader, envisaging development and operation of two terminals and five berths with multipurpose cargo-handling capacities.

New Delhi has committed to invest \$500 million in Chabahar's first phase of development, which includes a \$150 million credit facility to Iran through the Ex-

port-Import Bank of India.

"Two major Indian conglomerates have bid for supplying four key mounted quay cranes at Shahid Beheshti Port, Chabahar," India's PTI news agency quoted an unnamed official as saying in a report Sunday. The bids invited on behalf of IPGPL, a company established by the Indian government in January 2015 for development of ports overseas, "are under evaluation and a final call will be taken soon," the official said.

The story said the process is on to expand the financial eligibility criteria to attract more bidders for the project, whose first phase the Modi government hopes to complete next year.

UK pay squeeze intensifies as real wages continue to fall

UK consumers are suffering a sustained fall in living standards as real pay fell again in the three months to May, piling more pressure on cash-strapped households.

Regular pay adjusted to account for the impact of inflation fell by 0.5% year on year over the period, shrinking family incomes and signalling a weaker outlook for consumer spending.

It followed a 0.6% drop in real pay in the three months to April, and a 0.4% fall in the previous three months, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics.

Real pay fell despite a surprise drop in the unemployment rate from 4.6% to 4.5%, which was the lowest since May to July 1975. The employment rate rose to 74.9%, the highest since comparable records began in 1971.

The TUC general secretary, Frances O'Grady, said the government must intervene to address the pay squeeze.

"Three months of falling pay is three months too many. The clock is ticking while workers wait for the government to act.

"Ministers must set out a plan to get real wages rising across the public and the private sectors. They should start by scrapping the unfair pay restrictions on nurses, midwives and other public sector workers. And the minimum wage must be raised to £10 as quickly as possible."

Damian Hinds, the employment minister, focused on the strong employment figures, describing them as "another reminder that our strong economy is giving record



numbers of people the chance to find and stay in work".

The prolonged drop in real wages reflects the rising pressure on household budgets as prices rise at a faster rate than pay.

The ONS said that before inflation, regular pay growth excluding bonuses picked up slightly to 2% year on year in the three months to May, from 1.8% in the three months to April.

However, that was still well below inflation, which hit a four-year high of 2.9% in May. Inflation has risen rapidly since the Brexit vote last June triggered a sharp drop in the value of the pound. A weaker pound pushes up the price of goods imported from abroad, feeding through to higher shop prices.

John Hawksworth, the chief economist at PwC, said it

was a striking point of the modern economy that wage growth was so weak despite low unemployment.

"In the 1970s or 1980s such low unemployment, combined with inflation rising towards 3%, could have set off a wage-price spiral.

"Real earnings growth remains deep in negative territory and this seems unlikely to change any time soon. This will dampen consumer spending power, though the continued strength of the jobs market should prevent the recent slowdown in the economy turning into a recession."

The ONS has calculated that adjusted for inflation, UK employees are now earning £15 less a week after tax and deductions than they were in March 2008, six months before the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the global financial crisis.

Ian Kernohan, an economist at Royal London Asset Management, said the Bank of England was unlikely to raise interest rates at next month's policy meeting given the weakness of pay growth.

"Inflation is now above the Bank's target level and real earnings growth has slipped into negative territory," he said. "This is having a negative impact on household spending. With uncertainty gathering over the Brexit negotiations, the Bank of England's monetary policy committee would need to see a distinct improvement in earnings growth towards 3% and above, to be in a position to raise interest rates." (Source: The Guardian)

Iran expects to sign more big oil deals ‘within weeks’

The Iranian government is negotiating oil projects worth \$200 billion with 27 foreign companies, deputy minister for international affairs Amir Hossein Zamaninia said on Tuesday, and some of those deals could be struck very soon.

France's Total and China's state oil company CNPC signed a multi-billion dollar deal last week to develop the country's giant South Pars gas field, the first investment of its kind since sanctions on Iran were relaxed last year.

"I can assure you this isn't the last one," Zamaninia told CNNMoney Emerging Markets Editor John Dettferios at an oil conference in Istanbul, Turkey. "We'll see other contracts being made within the next few weeks."

Zamaninia said Iran was talking to companies in Europe and Asia, including BP (BP), Russia's Gazprom (GZPFY) and Lukoil, and Malaysia's Petronas, among others. He did not mention any American companies.

Lukoil declined to comment on the details of the talks, but added that it had previously expressed an interest in developing two fields in Iran.

BP, Gazprom and Petronas did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Iran's economy was isolated for decades under sanctions implemented by the U.S. and world powers. They were eventually eased in early 2016 after Tehran promised to roll back its nuclear program.

President Trump had previously threatened to scupper the nuclear deal, which was negotiated by the Obama administration. But in May, Trump signed a series of waivers without which sanctions would be reimposed.

That appears to have broken the investment logjam, sending an important signal to companies eager for access to Iran's huge energy reserves.

"Many did not say they were waiting for President Trump to sign the waiver, but in reality they did," said Zamaninia. "After his signature...these negotiations



took place."

The U.S. still has restrictions in place that block most American companies from investing in Iran. And some Western companies have been reluctant to jump in since there are still restrictions on doing business with Iran in U.S. dollars.

Iran has significantly ramped up its energy production since the sanctions were relaxed. It was granted an exemption from an OPEC deal where members of the

oil cartel agreed to cut production to reduce a supply glut.

Oil prices have not received the boost the cartel had hoped for, and are still trading around \$44 a barrel.

"There is an oversupply of oil in the global market but we think by the end of 2017, the last quarter, we would see a better result [in terms of oil prices]," Zamaninia said.

(Source: CNNMoney)

Oil rises above \$48 as API reports drop in U.S. fuel stocks

Oil rose above \$48 a barrel on Wednesday in response to a fall in U.S. fuel inventories and a cut in the U.S. government's forecast for crude output next year which raised hopes that a supply glut is easing.

U.S. crude inventories fell by 8.1 million barrels, industry group the American Petroleum Institute said on Tuesday, much more than the forecast.

Brent crude, the global benchmark, was up 86 cents, at \$48.38 a barrel by 0824 GMT. U.S. crude gained 93 cents to \$45.97.

"While further upside could be expected in the short term amid the speculations of a cut in U.S. production, gains may be limited by the firm oversupply dynamics of the markets," FXTM analyst Lukman Otunuga said.

The U.S. crude stocks drop will raise hopes that a long-awaited market rebalancing is under way. A supply glut has stuck around for three years, despite an OPEC-led output cut in 2017, keeping oil at less than half its price of mid-2014.



Also supporting prices, the EIA said on Tuesday it expected U.S. crude oil production to rise by less than previously forecast next year due to a lower price outlook.

The lower 2018 forecast of 9.9 million

barrels per day will ease concerns that the OPEC-led supply cut will lead to a flood of competing U.S. shale supplies, swamping the OPEC effort.

Still, output of 9.9 million bpd would be

a record for U.S. production.

The supply cut led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries has lent prices some support, but in recent weeks rising output from Libya and Nigeria - OPEC members exempt from the deal - has pushed supply higher.

OPEC production has risen in June by more than 300,000 barrels per day, (bpd) according to figures seen by Reuters that the exporter group uses to monitor its supply, as more oil from the exempt countries countered high compliance by many others.

Top exporter Saudi Arabia plans to export less. A Saudi industry source said on Wednesday Riyadh planned to cut shipments in August by more than 600,000 bpd, taking exports for that month to their lowest level this year, to balance a seasonal rise in domestic use.

The latest OPEC monthly report, containing June production figures, is scheduled to be published later on Wednesday. (Source: Reuters)

Shale investment booms, but global oil has a big problem

By Nick Cunningham

The multi-year downturn in upstream oil and gas investment could come to an end this year, according to a new report from the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The IEA's World Energy Investment 2017 report predicts a slight increase in oil and gas investment this year, rising by 3 percent. That comes after a plunge of 44 percent between 2014 and 2016, a steep drop off due to the crash in oil prices. In 2016 alone, spending on oil and gas fell by 26 percent from a year earlier, dropping to \$650 billion. This year's expected increase will halt the slide in spending.

However, things are not all well. The only reason the industry might avoid another year of spending contraction is almost entirely due to U.S. shale, which will see investment increase by 53 percent. Investment in the Middle East and Russia is "resilient," but the global oil industry on the whole is retreating from complex megaprojects that, while expensive, represent consistent sources of supply over the long run. Instead, oil companies are focusing on short-cycle shale projects that recycle cash

quickly, reducing risk. So even as spending on shale is bouncing back strongly, expenditures on exploration will continue to contract, falling by a projected 7 percent this year after plunging by half in the previous two years.

Sharply lower levels of investment in large-scale projects increases the odds of a supply crunch "at some point down the line," even if that shortage is not immediately imminent, the IEA says. The number and volume of new projects given the greenlight by the industry is at its lowest level in 70 years. As these projects fail to come online in five years' time, the market could find itself short on supply.

Moreover, depletion at older oil fields has accelerated to its fastest rate in a quarter century, with conventional fields in China (down 9.5 percent in 2016) and the U.S. (-8.3 percent) suffering from particularly high rates of decline last year.

The IEA is not alone in its concerns over the notion that an investment slump since 2014 could lead to a supply crunch in the early 2020s. "The long-term situation of oil supplies...is becoming worrying," Saudi Aramco's CEO Amin Nasser said at the World

Petroleum Congress in Istanbul on Monday, the same industry conference at which the IEA unveiled its Energy Investment report. Nasser warned that the shortfall in investment will mean the world struggles to come up with the additional 20 million barrels per day that will be needed over the next five years. "Investments in smaller increments such as shale oil will just not cut it," he added.

Meanwhile, falling investment in oil and gas combined with cheaper renewable energy meant that the electricity sector surpassed fossil fuel supply as the largest source of energy investment in 2016 - for the first time in history. And within that electricity component, renewable energy captured the largest slice of investment at \$297 billion in 2016.

At the same time, investment in renewable energy is 3 percent lower than it was five years ago, although that should not be viewed as a sign of weakness. Falling costs mean that more solar and wind can be deployed with less and less capital. As evidence, while renewable investment was 3 percent lower in 2016 than it was five years ago, renewable capacity installations were

up by 50 percent.

The surge in renewable energy, along with the dramatic fall of coal over the past few years, helped contribute to a third consecutive year of stagnant carbon dioxide emissions last year. However, the IEA warns that the slowdown in nuclear and hydropower will entirely offset the new generation from wind and solar.

For the oil industry, however, the main takeaway is the increasing divergence of the oil industry into a sort of two-track market: an ongoing slump for non-U.S. production, and a sharp rebound in U.S. shale. The flip side of that is that the cost of production is also different in different places. Globally, costs will continue to fall by 3 percent this year, led mainly by falling costs in the offshore sector. U.S. shale, however, will see costs rise by 17 percent, which is mainly the result of higher drilling activity and a tighter market for oilfield services.

Overall, the industry will welcome the end of the three-year freefall in investment, but with little chance of a sharp rebound in spending, there are very serious questions about what happens with oil supply over the long-term. (Source: oilprice.com)

Saudis to cut August oil exports to lowest level this year

Saudi Arabia will cut crude oil shipments to its customers in August by more than 600,000 barrels per day to balance the rise in domestic consumption during the summer, while staying within its OPEC production commitment, a Saudi industry source said.

"There is strong demand for our crude but we are sticking to our OPEC commitments," the source, who is familiar with the kingdom's oil policy, said on Wednesday.

"In order to meet its OPEC quota and meet its domes-

tic demand during summer, Saudi Arabia has made big cuts in allocations internationally by more than 600,000 bpd for the month of August," the source said.

Crude exports for August will fall to their lowest level this year at around 6.6 million bpd, the source added.

Crude allocations to Asia for August will be reduced by about 200,000 bpd to 3.5 million bpd, while allocations to Europe will be down by around 70,000 bpd at 520,000 bpd.

Oil majors were allocated some 200,000 bpd less in August at 780,000 bpd.

Exports to the United States will be below 800,000 bpd in August, the source said.

Saudi Arabia told the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries its oil production in June rose to 10.07 million bpd, slightly above its OPEC target, mainly due to an increase in domestic crude burning for power during summer. (Source: Reuters)

New Iran commission to oversee Total gas deal

Iran is forming a government commission to oversee its deal with France's Total to develop the South Pars gas field, the first major Western energy investment in the Islamic Republic since the lifting of sanctions last year.

The commission will include representatives from the judiciary, the head of parliament's energy commission and of its planning and budget commission, speaker Ali Larijani said Wednesday, according to state media.

The South Pars project will cost up to \$5 billion, including an initial stage of around \$2 billion, and production is expected to start within 40 months, the oil ministry said this month.

Total will be the project's operator with a 50.1 percent stake, Chinese state-owned oil and gas company CNPC will hold 30 percent, and National Iranian Oil Co subsidiary Petropars will have 19.9 percent.



Production capacity is seen at 2 billion cubic feet per day, or 400,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day including condensate, Total said in a statement this month.

The gas will supply the Iranian domestic market starting in 2021.

The announcement of a commission followed a parliamentary session on Wednesday where oil minister Bijan Zanganeh spoke to MPs about the details of the project.

Each year of delay in developing South Pars can cost Iran up to \$5 billion, Zanganeh told parliament, according to oil ministry news agency SHANA.

He added that Iran has lost some \$22 billion because of delays in developing South Pars.

Over the course of 20 years the field is expected to produce 335 billion cubic meters of natural gas as well as 290 million barrels of gas condensate, Zanganeh said, according to SHANA.

The deal with Total increases Iran's energy security and is likely to encourage other foreign companies to invest in Iran, Zanganeh told parliament.

(Source: Reuters)

Germany generated 35% of its electricity with renewables in H1

In the first half of 2017 Germany derived 35.1 percent of its electricity needs from renewable sources, according to the German Renewable Energy Federation (BEE). In a press release, the country's trade body announced that Germany has successfully met its 2020 target for "share of gross electricity consumption." It helped that from April 30 to May 1, the country generated 85 percent of its energy needs using renewable wind, solar, biomass and hydroelectric power.



Germany has steadily increased its production of clean electricity over the past few years. In the first half of 2015, for instance, the country generated 32.7 percent of its energy needs from renewables, and 32.7 percent in the first half of 2016.

Though the new record is positive news, progress in other sectors has been slow, specifically in the transportation and heating sectors. Said Haraold Uphoff, the acting director of BEE, "The power generation in Germany is progressing far too slowly." Fortunately, the country is well on its way to producing 45 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2040, and 60 percent by 2050.

The report details a jump in offshore wind energy in the first half of 2017. As Clean Technica reports, onshore wind energy grew "from 34.08 TWh in the first half of 2015, to 34.71 TWh a year later, but jumping to 39.75 TWh in the first half of this year. Offshore wind also jumped, from only 2.15 TWh in the first half of 2015 to 8.48 TWh this year." Solar PV, as well, has seen incremental increases in growth. In 2015, output has increased from 19.50 TWh in 2015 to 21.74 in the first half of 2017.

Time and again, Germany has proven its commitment to bettering the environment by taking action to meet goals outlined at the Paris Climate Change Conference. Their most recent effort includes signing a joint statement on climate cooperation with California earlier this month. The agreement was a "reaffirmation of joint ties" between the two to continue working on the persistent issue of global warming.

(Source: inhabitat.com)

Is Emmanuel Macron right about Africa?

By Curt Mills

The new French wunderkind, seemingly unstoppable politically, hits his first public-relations flap as president.

Emmanuel Macron, the new leader of France, is experiencing his first major controversy since becoming president in May. At a G-20 press conference, he characterized Africa's problems as "civilizational" and lamented that women in many countries there are having "7 or 8 children." Critics quickly cried racism, finding the president's comments evocative of France's fraught colonial past. But it's a bum rap. Like with many of his remarks, Macron is stating an obvious, uncomfortable truth.

Since upending the French political system by winning an independent-party bid for the Élysée Palace in April, Macron has emerged, especially in the Trump era, as a major force — and a darling of liberals, though not the hard Left. Attractive, remarkably young for a leader of a major country (thirty-nine) and extremely ambitious, he has been described as the great

new defender of democracy and the globalized economy, and also, an heir to Napoleon and Louis XIV.

■ Bastille Day

Macron's Jupiterian vision very much extends to the international scene. This coming Friday, he's hosting Trump in France for Bastille Day. On Tuesday, he arrived in Switzerland, trying to outflank the U.S. president and win the 2024 Olympic Games (a senior U.S. administration official assured reporters Tuesday that the two have a great relationship, albeit with some disagreements). Macron's streak of unfettered success has seemingly reached a pause, however, after being asked by a reporter in Hamburg on Saturday why there was no Marshall Plan for Africa, referring to the U.S.-led program that once rebuilt Europe.

"Such a Marshall Plan as you desire is also a plan that will be administered by African governments and regional blocs," Macron told a reporter from Cote D'Ivoire. "It's by a more rigorous governance, a fight against corruption, a fight for good governance, a successful demographic transition when countries today have 7 or 8 children per woman." The part about birth rates is what has drawn the most attention.

"Good God," reacted MSNBC host Chris Hayes on Twitter. "The hero of European centrism, everybody," tweeted popular UK socialist commentator Owen Jones. "Nice," Elizabeth Bruenig of the Washington Post remarked sarcastically. "Are we finally realizing that Macron isn't that liberal after all?" reads a headline Tuesday in the Independent. He has been similarly played in Vox and Quartz, with the latter declaring "of course what Emmanuel Macron said was racist."

The brewing firestorm comes on the heels of a less publicized hot-mic joke Macron made in June about migrants.

"When Macron was elected, commentators and observers celebrated that French liberalism still lived. What many fail to realize was that French liberalism — like liberalisms across the West — has always been marked by condescension, paternalism, and racism towards the non-white peoples of the world," Daniel Magaziner, a historian of twentieth-century Africa at Yale, tells the National Interest. "Emmanuel Macron is apparently keeping that French liberal tradition alive as well."

But Politico Europe argued that some of Macron's remarks have been taken out of full context by many publications and users on social media. Macron noted that something "more sophisticated" than the Marshall Plan would be required to really help the continent, which is slated to experience explosive population growth this century. "The Marshall Plan was ... a material plan in a region that already had its equilibriums, its borders and its stability. The problems Africa faces are completely different and are much different and are civilizational," Macron said.

And others are asking: was what Macron said actually fair and warranted?

■ The French president's remarks

Responding to MSNBC's Hayes, Scott McConnell, the founding editor of the American Conservative, tweeted, "Chris is really triggered by Macron saying out loud what everyone says and knows in private, including Chris." In comments to the National Interest, McConnell nodded to the fact that Macron had probably been widely taken out of context, but he also defended the whole of the French president's remarks. "I thought his overall comment was sophisticated, but the part that gained all the negative attention — the birth rates — is part of the subject too, and I think Macron did well to mention it," McConnell says.

Indeed, in economics and other social sciences, so-called neo-Malthusians reigned. "If the world's population had the productivity of the Swiss, the consumption habits of the Chinese, the egalitarian instincts of the Swedes and the social discipline of the Japanese, then the planet could support many times its current population without privation for anyone," wrote the MIT political economist Lester Thurow in 1986, in what the Guardian noted was a "very different world." But others have said that the global struggles of recent years signal a comeback for the controversial nineteenth-century thinker, who warned about population growth. "As the world approaches a new era of dearth, misery and its old companion, vice, are set to make a mighty Malthusian comeback," the financial historian and prominent commentator Niall Ferguson wrote in the Los Angeles Times in 2007, just as the global economy began collapsing.

Whether Macron subscribes to such sentiments is unclear. Clearer is that maybe the critics are right: he's not much of a liberal. Macron, who just announced that he wants to pass tax cuts for the wealthy and press a pro-business agenda, seems to follow Anglo-Saxon economics more than he does French dirigisme. Maybe he really is a French revolutionary.

(Source: The National Interest)

Republicans can't give Trump team a pass on this one

By Julian Zelizer

When Donald Trump Jr. tweeted out the email exchange that led to his meeting with a Russian lawyer about potentially damaging information on Hillary Clinton in the summer of 2016, you could hear the silence among fellow Republicans.

The latest revelations seem to be the most damaging yet, providing some damning evidence that high-level members of the Trump campaign were having conversations with Russians who they thought had clear connections to Russian government and were willing to engage with them in search of damaging information about Clinton.

"They wanted it so badly," Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya, who met with Trump Jr. last year, said on NBC's "Today" show. The emails and the reports of the conversation leave many questions unanswered, questions investigators will no doubt examine in great detail. In the rapid-fire pace through which this scandal keeps unfolding, it is extremely important for every elected official to take a breath before reaching judgment and to make sure they have a full understanding of new information and the context in which it was produced.

■ Far-reaching issue

But the biggest political question remains: How long will Republicans stand by this president? With Republicans in control of Congress, this may be the most far-reaching issue in terms of how this scandal will unfold.

It keeps getting harder for Republicans to absorb this heat and fend off the controversy. With Donald Trump Jr. releasing the emails himself (apparently in advance of another New York Times story on them), the President can't call it "fake news."

Republicans have many reasons to stop defending the President. Trump and his administration have a credibility crisis that is unlike anything we have seen in recent decades. At this point, Republicans have sat on their hands as the President and members of his team have repeatedly hidden information, twisted and changed their positions (sometimes, in the course of one day), lied about basic facts and acted to impede investigation.

If the Trump team is really innocent of any wrongdoing, they certainly don't act this way. Their strongest and most consistent defense has been to keep blasting the alleged "fake news" industry, despite the fact that much of the false information comes right from them. Right now, a Republican would be almost foolhardy to publicly vouch for anything that the president says.

The Russia chaos has put a stran-



Republicans recalling the most virtuous moments in their party's past must be thinking about how much damage they are willing to see inflicted on the party's brand name before saying, "enough."

glehold on the Republican legislative agenda. This is the anti-New Deal, not because President Trump's legislative accomplishments are so conservative, but because they don't exist. The Republican dreams about what united government could bring back in January 2017 today seem comical.

The party is struggling to squeak out of Congress one single major bill, the effort to repeal and replace Obamacare, which at this point seems to be in total jeopardy. The President's antics and inability to stop this scandal have been extremely detrimental to Sen. Mitch McConnell, who has received no assistance, just obstacles, from the president of his own party. Many in the GOP had to spend time back in the district hearing from angry constituents over the Fourth of July recess, or literally trying to avoid the public celebrations that members of Congress usually treasure as a way to showcase themselves when back at home.

The Republican Party has prided itself as being the party that is tough on defense and firm with dangerous adversaries. It spent much of President Obama's term blasting the administration for being too open about dealing with adversaries such as Iran.

■ Diplomatic strategy

Yet the information revealed this week suggests that much of Trump's early em-

brace of Russia had little to do with détente or some grand diplomatic strategy, and was simply about the crass goal of winning a presidential election.

"I love it," Trump Jr. wrote about the prospect of getting Russian information on Hillary Clinton and he released the emails without expressing any shame.

The President's two-hour plus meeting with Putin at the G-20 Summit, regardless of anything said in the meeting, did exactly what the Russian leader has been hoping to achieve -- it elevated his country's standing despite the its aggression in the Ukraine and the intervention into elections here and around the world. For a party that prides itself on patriotism, as Republicans have for decades, it keeps getting harder to justify what certainly appears like a self-interested embrace of a dangerous and threatening regime.

Partisanship is an extraordinarily powerful force -- and President Trump's supporters love to point to his strong approval ratings with "the base" and with the Republican Party more broadly -- but it is not impenetrable.

Presidents can do things to make it almost impossible for fellow party members to stand by their side. Republicans initially were very defensive about Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal, but ultimately approached him and asked him to resign. Information can become so

damning that it becomes impossible for all of the GOP to stay on the same page.

Some Republicans who are looking at 2018 and 2020 must be thinking how high of a cost they are willing to bear to defend the President. Republicans recalling the most virtuous moments in their party's past must be thinking about how much damage they are willing to see inflicted on the party's brand name before saying, "enough." Those are the kinds of considerations that could put President Trump in the greatest peril.

It is possible to look into the eyes of congressional Republicans who are being interviewed about the recent news and see the anger, as well as frustration, they are feeling. There is probably a feeling sweeping through the party that it becomes harder day by day to keep saying there is clearly "nothing there" and that the country should move on, especially when the White House is doing very little to help with an agenda on Capitol Hill.

But when more Republicans will start to act on these feelings and fears remains unclear. Would they just look at a smoking gun and act as if nothing was there, or would some Republicans finally feel compelled to speak out against this administration? If that party loyalty starts to fall apart, that would be the game changer.

(Source: CNN)

Is the stage set for a strong German leader to eclipse America?

By Johanna Schuster-Craig

What does it take to be elected chancellor of the most populous country in Europe four times in a row?

Germany does not have a system of term limits for heads of state. Candidates for chancellor can seek reelection as long as their party continues to support their candidacy. However, it's not common. The only postwar German politician to be elected for four consecutive terms was current Chancellor Angela Merkel's mentor, Helmut Kohl, who passed away last month.

Germany's general election will take place on Sept. 24. Chancellor Merkel is likely to be elected for a fourth term. Her party, the Christian Democratic Union, is currently polling near 40 percent.

This was not the case just two short years ago. Her decision to open the borders to refugees fleeing along the Balkan Route in 2015 was criticized for being illegal and haphazard. The year before, she had faced criticism for her handling of the Greek financial crisis. Back then, it seemed Merkel would never survive a fourth election.

■ Global political landscape

Then the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. That vote was followed by President Donald Trump's America First policies and conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. These events have fundamentally changed the global political landscape and created an opportunity for Merkel's style of leadership to prevail.

Journalists and commentators frequently assert that Merkel has become the leader of the free world.

Despite negative images of riots in Hamburg during the recent G-20 summit, the German magazine Der Spiegel reports that Merkel's campaign hardly took a hit. Instead, the mayor of Hamburg is being criticized.

How is Merkel so politically invincible? As a professor of German studies, I have blogged and commented on Merkel's political appearances since 2015. One of her political strengths is her understated reaction to international conflicts. The other is her "party-manager" style of governance at home.

■ Deliberate approach to conflict

The G-20 summit was an important show of Merkel's global leadership. Against this backdrop, Merkel's



Merkel said, "Apparently the American administration no longer wants to be the peacekeeping power per se for all regions of the world."

slow and steady approach to governing stands in sharp contrast to the charisma of recently elected President Emmanuel Macron in France, the tendencies of President Vladimir Putin of Russia and the impulsivity of President Trump.

Before the G-20, Merkel stated in an interview that she acknowledged the vacuum of power left by Trump's policies. Merkel said, "Apparently the American administration no longer wants to be the peacekeeping power per se for all regions of the world." She acknowledged that this might be good or bad, depending on the context.

Several weeks before the G-20 Summit, Merkel traveled to South and Central America to shore up trade relations. She stopped in Mexico and pledged her support to President Enrique Peña Nieto in upcoming talks on the North American Free Trade Agreement. After that, she traveled to Argentina, where journalists asked her whether this international tour signaled that she was preparing to assume the mantle of the leader of the free world. Merkel replied diplomatically, saying that "no one alone in this world, no single person and no country

alone can solve the problems [we have]."

This rhetoric is similar to previous appearances in which she has emphasized European unity and the need for international partnerships.

■ Merkel the party manager

Back home in Germany, Merkel's leadership style is described as that of a "party manager." Merkel attempts to keep the many factions of her party in her corner at any one given time. This strategy succeeds because the Christian Democratic Union is a "catch-all" party. A catch-all party tries to maintain diverse ideological viewpoints so that it can capture the support of a broad swath of the electorate.

In the two-party American system, both the Democratic and Republican parties have functioned as catch-all parties. In the multi-party German system, it is possible to have a political party gain representation in Parliament even with a focused ideology, like the Green Party's focus on sustainability and social justice.

Merkel's identity facilitates a party-manager approach because she holds a variety of minority identities. Merkel is female, Protestant in a previously predominantly Catholic party and grew up in the former East Germany.

As a party manager, Merkel maintains a strategy of keeping all options open as long as possible. In German, her governance style has earned its own verb. "To merkel" is to deliberate, evaluate a course of action and eventually choose a suitable option at the last possible moment.

This tactic drives her opponents crazy, and Germany's dominance in the European economy and now global politics has strained the country's relationship with some European partners.

Merkel may not like the title "leader of the free world." She may also be merkeling, or waiting until the last possible moment to claim it. But with an election campaign that seems assured of success, a variety of international partners pledging their support and an acknowledgment by more than just Merkel after the G-20 that President Trump's policies leave a diplomatic vacuum, all signs point to a very powerful position for the German chancellor after Sept. 24.

(Source: Newsweek)

United Nations Adopts Historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

By Carla Stea

At approximately 11AM on July 7, 2017, following a recorded vote of 122 states in favor, 1 opposed (Netherlands in opposition, on behalf of all NATO states), and 1 abstention (Singapore), Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gomez, Costa Rican Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, and President of the "United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination," announced the adoption of this treaty, which had been awaited for 70 years, the legally binding norm prohibiting nuclear weapons.

Following Ambassador Whyte's announcement, the entire assembly of ambassadors, other delegates and non-government organizations in Conference Room 1 immediately stood, many embraced and all 122 States in support exultantly applauded this historic and long overdue achievement by the majority of member states of the United Nations, none of whom possess nuclear weapons, and all of whom are unified in seeking to end the reign of terror imposed on the world by certain of the states possessing nuclear weapons.

Excerpts from the preamble to this landmark treaty state:

"The States Parties to this Treaty,

PP1: Determined to contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

PP2: Deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons, and recognizing the consequent need to completely eliminate such weapons, which remains the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances,

PP4: Cognizant that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socio-economic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations, and have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, including as a result of ionizing radiation,

PP5: Acknowledging the ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament and the urgency of achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world, which is a global public good of the highest order, serving both national and collective security interests,

PP9: Basing themselves on the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, in particular the principle that the right of parties to an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited, the rule of distinction, the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks, the rules on proportionality and precautions in attack, the prohibition on the use of weapons of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, and the rules for the protection of the natural environment,

PP10: Considering that any use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, in particular the principles and rules of international humanitarian law,

PP11: Reaffirming that any use of nuclear weapons would also be abhorrent to the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience,

PP14: Concerned by the slow pace of nuclear disarmament, the continued reliance on nuclear weapons in military and



France, the United Kingdom and the United States have not taken part in the negotiation of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to it.

security concepts, doctrines and policies, and the waste of economic and human resources on programmes for the production, maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons,"

The 24 paragraphs of the preamble set forth incontestable reasons for the imperative and immediate adoption of this treaty by all member states of the United Nations. Reference to the full text of this treaty makes this imperative explicit, and in great detail.

The operative section of the treaty includes 20 Articles. Article 1, entitled "Prohibitions" states:

"1. Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to:

Develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

Transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly;

Receive the transfer of or control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices directly or indirectly;

Use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

Assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty;

Seek or receive any assistance, in any way, from anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty;

Allow any stationing, installation or deployment of any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control."

Although none of the states possessing nuclear weapons participated in the negotiations leading to the adoption of this treaty, it is, nevertheless a major achievement of the United Nations, and a fulfillment of one of the most important sections of the United Nations Charter. It is the expectation of those member states who participated in this long and grueling process culminating in the successful adoption of this treaty, that the very establishment of this treaty provides a legal norm which will exert significant pressure upon the states possessing nuclear weapons, and places the nuclear weapons states in de facto violation of international law. This newly adopted United Nations based legal norm stigmatizes the nuclear weapons states precisely for their possession of these

ultimate weapons of mass destruction.

During the September 26, 2016 meeting calling for this treaty, it was emphasized that there are treaties prohibiting the possession and use of biological weapons, there are treaties prohibiting the possession and use of chemical weapons, but at that time there was absolutely no legal prohibition against the possession and use of the most devastating and horrific of all weapons of mass destruction ever devised by the human species, nuclear weapons. At that time powerful calls for this just adopted treaty were made by many states, in particular, forceful and eloquent speeches by South Africa, Sweden and numerous others.

On October 27, 2016 the UN General Assembly voted on Resolution L.41, to convene negotiations in 2017 on a "legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination." It is of great significance that, alone among the states possessing nuclear weapons, only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea voted "yes," in support of these negotiations to create a "legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons," which is powerful and virtually incontestable evidence that North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is purely and exclusively defensive.

The Press Statement by the US, UK, and France

At 12:51 AM on July 7, a joint press statement was issued by the Ambassadors of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, and reads:

"France, the United Kingdom and the United States have not taken part in the negotiation of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to it"

The statement then comments, irrationally, and absurdly, that the new treaty will create "even more divisions at a time when the world needs to remain united in the face of growing threats, including those from the DPRK's ongoing proliferation efforts.

This treaty offers no solution to the grave threat posed by North Korea's nuclear program." No sane person would consider that the tiny number of defensive nuclear weapons allegedly possessed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could possibly be a threat in any way comparable to the more than 15,000 advanced, sophisticated nuclear weapons possessed by the US, the UK and France, a nuclear arsenal capable of

obliterating all life on earth. The exploitation of the DPRK's tiny defensive weapons as a cynical justification for retaining the gargantuan arsenals possessed by the authors of this press statement also reveals dangerous paranoia by the most militarily powerful nations on earth. Indeed, even The New York Times, on July 9, page 10 acknowledges that:

"During the Korean War, North Korea was hit with thousands of tons of American bombs. The conflict technically continues, and North Korea claims it needs a robust defense program to protect itself in case of a renewed American attack."

It is surprising that the U.S., the U.K. and France have issued a statement flaunting their violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty: they are required by Article 6 of that treaty "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control," which is precisely what the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons constitutes.

The authors of this press statement evidently consider themselves above international law, and not beholden to any legal restrictions on their use of force. With this press statement, the US, the UK and France have forfeited moral legitimacy, and as permanent members of the Security Council are divested of any authority to sanction North Korea. Further, they should themselves be sanctioned for their violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Their indifference to this new treaty's basis in international humanitarian law, one of the treaty's pillars, gives the lie to their pretense of concern for humanitarian considerations which they frequently cite, deceptively, during their speeches at the Security Council.

But July 7, 2017 will remain a pivotal date in the history of the United Nations, the day on which the majority of countries of the developing world, and many of the responsible and mature nations of the "developed world" have confronted the nuclear states with the uncivilized character of their possession of nuclear weapons, and the moral and practical imperative of divesting themselves of these insane instruments of horror.

(Source: Global Research)

Toward a safer world: NPT a prelude to total elimination of nuclear weapons

By Mohsen Ebrahimi

The adoption of the historic treaty for prohibition of nuclear weapons by 122 countries on July 7th was a diplomatic feat which is a prelude to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The treaty prohibits nations from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. It also prohibits them from assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in any of those activities. In addition, nations must not allow nuclear weapons to be stationed or deployed on their territory. The treaty is a legally binding instrument which means after entering into force it permanently turns into international law. This major achievement was largely due to a smart decision by international community to adopt the "humanitarian approach" to nuclear disarmament in 2010. Furthermore, civil society and ordinary citizens which represent the public conscience played an unprecedented active role by providing assistance and support in every step before and during the adoption of the treaty.

The U.S. attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 which marked the beginning of the nuclear age showed the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Since then, many efforts have been made to curtail the spread of nuclear weapons. But the cold war and rivalry between the two superpowers overshadowed the disarmament treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and effectively led to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Even after the cold war, the NPT, which has acquired a near universal status and has a provision for the elimination of nuclear weapons in its Article VI, was not fully complied and did not lead us to a nuclear-weapon-free-world. This is the case generally because the nuclear-weapon states maintain that the deterrence and geostrategic balance which were the arguments for nuclear proliferation during the cold war era still hold true. They also contend that it is not obligatory under the NPT to pursue total nuclear disarmament.



As the history of disarmament demonstrates, the first step towards elimination of a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) is banning or stigmatization stage otherwise the real process for total elimination cannot even start. That is, the nations should first renounce the possession and use of a WMD so that they can move towards its total elimination. Use and possession of many other WMDs had already been banned and abhorred by international treaties, for instance, biological weapons, chemical weapons, landmines, and cluster bombs were prohibited respectively in 1972, 1993, 1997 and 2008 but the nuclear weapons had yet to be banned since their advent in 1945. Today, no country can boast about possession of biological or chemical weapons or use of them under any circumstances but currently there are countries who take pride in possession of nuclear weapons or even perceive these weapons as a national honor. In fact, this should be the other way around considering the vast indiscriminate humanitarian and long-term environmental consequences which follows an event of either intentional or unintentional nuclear explosion. This treaty which was adopted on Friday actualizes the stigmatization and de-legitimization of specter of nuclear weapons and paves the way for the total elimination of them.

For decades, after adoption of NPT, the legalistic or militaristic approaches made up the dominant discourse of nuclear disarmament but the 2010 NPT Review Conference was an inflection point for nuclear disarmament which strengthened the humanitarian movement against nuclear weapons. The final document of the 2010 Review Conference read: "The Conference expresses its deep concern at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that these weapons could be used and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons." The humanitarian approach had clearly enough potential to gather strong support and build major consensus for nuclear disarmament but still the environment of NPT Review Conferences was not conducive to the humanitarian approach and there was an urgent need to give a new momentum to this approach. Therefore, three conferences on "The Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons" were organized and 158 countries including the nuclear weapon states and even states outside the NPT welcomed and supported the conferences. These efforts were also supported by the civil society, NGOs and international organizations such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement which is the pioneer of humanitarian approach and a bastion of international humanitarian law which specifically protects innocent civilians.

The provisions of the nuclear ban treaty clearly demonstrate the serious determination of 122 countries to create a safer and peaceful world. The treaty prohibits nuclear weapons with unambiguous terms because it relies on the logic that the indiscriminate mass killing of civilians is unacceptable and that it is not possible to use nuclear weapons consistent with the laws of war. Under this treaty and based on a time-bound plan, nations should irreversibly eliminate their nuclear-weapons-related facilities and they should also accept stringent inspection plans which ensures that no state party will try to acquire nuclear weapons. The treaty also does not allow states to withdraw from it if they are engaged in an armed conflict. That is why it is widely believed that the treaty in its essence offers a vision of a safer world.

Being a Muslim woman in the West

By Catherine Shakkam

A stain on the Judeo-Christian world Islam - and those who abide by its tenets, whether Sunnis or Shiites, remain the object of much ire and controversy. Branded THE Terror among all terrors for a minority few chose to diverge, as to rise an ideological aberration upon the Islamic World, Muslims have been vilified to such an extent that their humanity could soon be forfeited.

First they labelled, then came the accusations and calls for righteousness vindication ... finally it is violence and retribution many have clamoured, so that their world would be washed of the infamous "other" whose difference was said to be nefarious.

If disease in fact there is, if danger in fact there is to fear and abhor, it is that created by our desire to exclude, dismiss and prejudice against that which we do not understand. Islam cannot be blamed for the insanity a demented few architected to legitimise their claims to power.

Muslims cannot be held accountable for those legions whose murderous campaigns saw slaughtered their kin. Why lay blame on those victims who suffered most of all? Why demand that the oppressed be made to carry the crimes of their oppressors, if in fact it is justice we are calling for?

For every age, Society has needed a nemesis, an enemy to exist against, rather than define itself from within

the confines of tolerance and acceptance. The real danger here is not so much Terror but our own inability to see others' humanity in their respective differences.

Muslims now exist on the fringe - the new pariah to be maligned and ostracised ... and still Terror's patrons have been washed clean from guilt ... and still mainstream media spin the tale of widespread Terror rather than admit to the manufacture of a propaganda of war and division.

In the midst of such fury sit women ... Muslim women.

Muslim women have become targets on account they wear their faith. Their hijab ... excuse my turn of phrase, has become a dangerous cross to bear.

What we all once said would never happen again is coming to pass. A people, a faith is being held hostage to bias, hatred and disdain. A world religion has been tried for sins it has not committed.

It is not that Islam has been taken out of context and its tenets misinterpreted, it is rather than an elite few has worked to sell the world a lie and call it truth. Deceivers, Terror's ideologies have defiled the Scriptures so that God's religion could be remade to their hateful image - divorced from all mercy, compassion and justice.

No faiths, and no religions profess hate, it is men who do.

Being Muslim in the UK and beyond that the western world has become difficult, being a Muslim woman who adorns the hijab has become hardship - the focal point of a hatred which reasoning is anchored in ignorance.

So what are Muslim women supposed to do? My question is in no way rhetorical. What do you do when who you are, your faith, your beliefs and the manner in which you dress has become maligned by society to the extent that some individuals may wish you harm?

Over the past month I have received dozens of emails, all from Muslim women: from all schools of thoughts asking me the same question: "Should we cave in for the sake of our safety and abandon our hijabs. Is our duty to the headscarf or do we choose to keep our family and ourselves safe from harm?" I am now turning the question onto you?

We are being asked to conform to a society that denies us the right to choose and abide by the tenets of our faith. We are being bullied into a corner that requires us to either stand to be persecuted by the Judeo-Christian world or be shun by our community for being weak in our religious obligations.

And so I ask again: What shall we do!

Should we resist as so many brave souls have done in the past and put ourselves into harm's way?

Should we for a time "comply" while we work to heal those divisions?

Should we withdraw behind our differences and stand in defiance but away from Society as a whole for we have been branded?

I am asking for I do not have any one answer to give ... rather I would say that our imams, and our religious leaders have there to offer us solutions and guidance.

Mystery of the missing president fuels political intrigue in Nigeria

By Emmanuel Akinwotu and Ruth Maclean

Nigeria's ailing president has not been seen in two months and has spent over a third of the year so far abroad, with no known plans to return.

More than a month since the two-year midpoint of his presidency, Muhammadu Buhari is still in London receiving treatment for a mystery illness that many believe to be cancer.

His aides refuse to say what is wrong with him, and on his last trip back to Nigeria, Buhari said only that he had never been so sick, and hinted that he had received a blood transfusion.

The president's spokesman, Garba Shehu, refused a request from the Guardian this week to comment on Buhari's whereabouts.

The first lady, Aisha Buhari, reassured Nigerians that her husband was "recovering fast" in June, on her return from a week-long visit to London, but did not share any pictures of her husband like the ones published after an earlier visit. She left again for London last week.

■ Endemic corruption

The 74-year-old president came to power in 2015 promising to fight endemic corruption and Boko Haram, the militant group that has rampaged through Nigeria's north-east. Buhari has ruled the country once before, having taken

power in a military coup in the 1980s. He was deposed in another coup, but when he came to power for the second time in 2015 he was hailed as a scrupulously honest man and a strong hand who would deal efficiently with Nigeria's problems.

However, his long absences have left Nigerian politics beset with rumor and political power play, on edge and uncertain.

His first trip to the UK was presented by his spokesman as nothing to provoke concern: Buhari was "holidaying" and taking "routine medical tests", the spokesman said.

But on his return to Nigeria in March Buhari admitted he had been seriously ill and only partly reassumed his presidential duties. When 82 of the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram were released in a prisoner exchange in May, Buhari stayed in Abuja only long enough for a photoshoot with them, flying back to London the same night for more care.

This time there was no timeframe as to when he would return. His wife has insisted he is "not as ill as is perceived". Since then there has been a reel of written statements by the presidency, quoting Buhari's condolences for deceased figures, his recommendations and sentiments. But without the customary public appearances, these have only emphasized his absence.

An audio clip of Buhari's message to Muslims, spoken in Hausa, was released for Eid celebrations, but in it his voice was notably weak.

The effect of the reluctance to tell Nigerians the truth about their president's condition has fuelled rumor and uncertainty. Even senior figures in the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party are increasingly speculating over the severity of Buhari's illness and whether he can remain a viable leader. Suspicions that there is an attempt to control who takes power after Buhari are constant.

In May, Bola Tinubu, the APC leader, called on the army to prevent any attempted coup after reports that a group of military officials were aligning with certain politicians.

Buhari's illness is being cast as a return to the past for Nigeria. Umaru Yar'Adua, a northern Muslim professor who became president in 2007, was absent for months, with the government of the time refusing to give details about his condition until he finally died in 2010.

Many see the prolonged absence of another ill and aged leader as a precursor to a power play like the one that followed Yar'Adua's death.

■ Presidential candidates

Presidential candidates are expected to alternate between northern and southern leaders, a key destabilizing factor in Nigeria's politics, which is often dominated by regions, ethnicity and religion. Should Buhari be unable to finish his term, his popular vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo,

a Christian from the south-west, would be constitutionally mandated to succeed him. Yet that would only be the starting gun for political tussles.

Meanwhile, the country's challenges continue to mount. Over three years after they were kidnapped, 113 of the 276 Chibok girls remain missing, along with thousands of others who have also been abducted. Despite progress in suppressing Boko Haram's occupation of urban territory, the group remains a threat, with attacks in rural areas increasing in the last few months.

The resulting humanitarian crisis in the country's north-east has worsened over the last two years.

The economy has been in recession for over a year, with the fall in oil prices damaging to Nigeria's oil-reliant economy.

Unemployment has risen and businesses have found it hard to import goods due to tougher foreign exchange rules. The government has made a concerted effort to diversify the economy, making the agriculture sector more productive and profitable. There has also been a mass recovery of looted public funds and new social investment programs.

Reports of corruption by figures in Buhari's own government, as well as criticisms of his anti-corruption campaign, have further diminished his support.

(Source: The Guardian)

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4 natural remedies for sunburn relief

By Cathy Wong

Mild sunburn can cause redness, pain, and slight swelling for about three to seven days. There may also be some skin peeling and itchiness. Consider the following home remedies to provide relief from too much fun in the sun.

Hydrotherapy

Brief baths, showers, and towel compresses may help to keep the sunburn cool and hydrated. The temperature of the water should be cool to lukewarm. Water that is too hot can strip the natural oils of the skin.

For a mild sunburn, try taking a cool bath or shower. You can also place wet, cool towels on the affected areas for 10 to 15 minutes, several times a day.

Aloe vera gel

Aloe is a plant native to Africa. The long green leaves contain aloe gel. Aloe gel is believed to have anti-inflammatory effects and is used topically to soothe burned skin and to help heal wounds.

Pure aloe vera gel can be found in many drug stores and health food stores. The fresher the gel, the more effective it is believed to be. You can even use a real aloe plant. Cut off a spear, split it open, and rub the clear gel from the inside of the leaf on the sunburn. Avoid the sticky yellow latex. (Aloe gel should not be used for severe burns or wounds.)

Studies have not confirmed the effects of aloe vera gel. A small Thai study, however, did examine the effectiveness of aloe vera cream for preventing and treating sunburn and suntan.

In the study, aloe vera cream was applied to skin 20 minutes before, immediately after, or before and after



ultraviolet (UV) exposure. Additionally, the aloe vera was applied to test subjects twice daily for three weeks. The results showed that aloe vera had no sunburn or suntan protection and no efficacy in sunburn treatment compared with a placebo.

Topical vinegar

Plain white vinegar is a popular sunburn remedy. Although there is no evidence behind this folk remedy, many people who try it say it helps to relieve pain when applied to the skin.

Vinegar can be applied as a compress. Soak clean towels in a very weak water-vinegar solution. Wring

the towels and apply on the affected areas, avoiding contact with broken skin and the eye area. Another option is to fill a clean spray bottle with the water-vinegar solution and spritz it onto your skin.

Hydration

It is important to drink plenty of fluids—we lose more water when we're out in the heat and the sun. Dehydration can cause headaches and fatigue.

A word from verywell

It's important to note that self-treating a condition and avoiding or delaying standard care may

have serious consequences. If you've had a sunburn and are considering using home remedies, make sure to consult your primary care provider first.

See a doctor immediately if there are signs of shock or heat exhaustion, such as:

- Dizziness
- Rapid pulse
- Rapid breathing
- Nausea, fever, or chills
- Severe skin blisters
- Extreme thirst, diminished/no urine output

(Source: verywell.com)

Water that is too hot can strip the natural oils of the skin.

Plain white vinegar is a popular sunburn remedy.

What's the best time of day to exercise?

By Robert J. Davis

Some fitness gurus recommend working out first thing in the morning because that's when you're least likely to have scheduling conflicts and therefore more likely to exercise regularly. Plus, early exercisers often say that a morning routine leaves them feeling more energized and productive during the day.

But if you are not a morning person and shudder at the thought of getting out of bed for a 6 a.m. workout, I have good news: We perform best at exercise (especially high-intensity exercise) later in the day.

Research shows that strength and flexibility are greatest in the late afternoon and that perceived exertion -- meaning how hard you feel that your body is working -- is lowest. Scientists attribute these effects to our circadian rhythm, the body's 24-hour clock, which causes body temperature to rise slightly throughout the day and peak in late afternoon.

Of course, none of this means that you're doomed to a subpar workout if you exercise in the morning. By doing so consistently, you can eliminate the morning performance gap, according to research, which shows that athletes who train in the morning improve their performance to levels seen in the afternoon. That's worth keeping in mind if you're planning to run, say, a 5K with a 7 a.m. start time. Your performance will be best if you train at that hour.



Research shows that strength and flexibility are greatest in the late afternoon and that perceived exertion -- meaning how hard you feel that your body is working -- is lowest.

Some people do aerobic exercise first thing, before they've eaten, because they think it will help them burn more fat. Indeed, there's some evidence that this practice, sometimes called "fasted cardio," may boost fat burning, but only fleetingly. Over the course of days or weeks (which is what counts), research shows that it doesn't seem to offer any

advantages.

For example, in a four-week trial that randomly assigned young women to either fast or drink a 250-calorie shake before their aerobic workouts (while otherwise eating a low-calorie diet), both groups lost the same amount of fat and weight. Similarly, a study involving overweight women who did high-intensity interval workouts for six weeks after either fasting or eating found no differences in fat loss.

Because exercise revs up your body, conventional wisdom has it that working out in the evening interferes with sleep. But overall, research has failed to support this assertion. For example, a small study of young adults found that doing vigorous aerobic exercise two hours before bedtime did not impair their ability to fall asleep or sleep soundly. Likewise, a study involving older people showed that low-impact aerobic workouts done between 7 and 8:30 p.m. were just as effective as morning workouts at improving their self-reported sleep quality.

Of course, everyone is different, so it's possible that nighttime exercise may make it harder for you to sleep. But the only way to know for sure is to try.

All in all, the best time to work out is whenever you can. If you exercise at different times of the day, be sure to note the hour as you're tracking your progress. That way, you'll know when your body clock may be to blame for a less-than-optimal workout.

(Source: CNN)

Teenager dies from allergic reaction 'after cheese prank'

'He was a bright, bright boy. He was kind and gentle. We are just devastated,' say his family

The mother of a boy who died after a severe allergic reaction has demanded answers about whether her son was bullied.

Karanbir Cheema, 13, was taken ill at William Perkin C of E High School in Greenford, west London, on 28 June.

He was taken to hospital in a life-threatening condition but died with his parents by his side on Sunday.

The reaction he suffered last month was thought to have been caused by exposure to cheese. His school said it had been in contact with the Cheema family following what it called 'unfounded rumours'.

His mother, Rina, told the Daily Mail he had led a normal life despite

his multiple allergies. She said: "What exactly happened I do not know.

"I want answers, I want to get to the bottom of what happened, I will be asking the school if he was bullied but my son was very popular, you could not help but like that child, he never made enemies."

When he died, "he had a smile on his face when he went and we prayed until the final second," she added.

Karanbir's father, Amarjeet, said his death "doesn't make any sense".

He told the Evening Standard: "We were in hospital. I had to watch him die - no parent should have to go through that. While he was in hospital we were fully concentrated on his condition. Now we want answers. How could this have happened?"

"My son had allergies but he was very careful. He had an allergy

to dairy products but was good at avoiding them. I don't how a piece of cheese hitting him could have killed him, it doesn't make any sense. We have been told very little."

Mr Cheema said his son was an "amazing" student who had talked about being a computer engineer, adding: "We were so proud of him. He had a very bright future. There are a million things he could have done with his life.

"He was a bright, bright boy. He was kind and gentle. We are just devastated."

Police have arrested a 13-year-old boy on suspicion of attempted murder, the Metropolitan Police said.

A post-mortem examination is due to take place on Wednesday.

A statement on the school's website said: "The school community

is deeply saddened at the loss of a Year 8 student who died on Sunday July 9 at hospital following a severe allergic reaction.

"Students have been supported at school in the face of this tragic incident and many good wishes have been posted in the school chapel in memory of this popular and well-liked student.

"The school has kept in close contact with the family, particularly in light of a number of unfounded rumours which have circulated over the past days.

"The student in question had always dealt responsibly with his multiple allergies and medical staff were therefore able to respond quickly with his agreed care plan during the incident on Wednesday June 28."

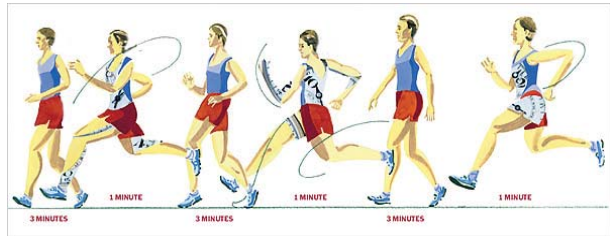
(Source: The Independent)

Put some pep in your step!

Interval walking may improve endurance and help you get fit faster.

Warm weather is here, and you may be walking more to take advantage of being outside. Why not ramp up your routine with bursts of fast-paced walking? The technique, known as interval walking, "is a great way to get the most exercise bang for your buck," says Dr. Aaron Baggish, associate director of the Cardiovascular Performance Program at Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital.

About interval training



Interval walking is a form of interval training, which describes any form of exercise in which you purposely speed up or slow down at regular intervals throughout the session. The benefits of interval training in athletes and people in cardiac rehabilitation are well studied. Dr. Baggish says interval walking hasn't been examined as much, but he believes the same benefits apply. "Something about strenuous exercise is good for the body. It improves endurance, reduces blood pressure, and helps with weight loss," he explains.

Interval training may also burn more calories, and help you get fit faster. For example, a small observational study published last year in PLOS ONE suggested that three 20-second sprints during a 10-minute cycling workout produced benefits similar to a 45-minute cycling workout.

Master the basics

Before attempting interval walking, first make sure that your doctor approves, especially if you have heart disease or joint pain. You'll also need a solid walking program in place. "A well-established routine would be at least two or three months of being able to walk 20 to 30 minutes a day without any limitations," says Dr. Baggish. Ideally, you should walk at least five days a week.

Also important: walk with a partner, for safety and motivation, and bring a cellphone in case you need to call for help.

Remember to dedicate five minutes each to warm-up and cool-down as part of the walking routine. This can simply involve walking at a comfortable pace.

Work your way up

When you're ready to add interval walking to your routine, start slowly. Introduce one or two segments of fast-paced walking into your 30-minute walk. Each segment should last a minute or two. Try that during each walking workout for a few weeks.

How much should you pick up the pace during an interval? "Walk as fast as you can, at a pace you can do briefly, but can't do forever," suggests Dr. Baggish. He adds that you don't have to worry about trying to reach a particular heart rate, unless your doctor directs you to do so.

Gradually add more intervals into your routine, with an ultimate goal of walking 50% of the time at the higher intensity. There's flexibility in how that can be done — one minute on, one minute off, or two minutes on, two minutes off. Play around with it, and see what's best for your body.

The right path

The route you take will be particularly important when you're interval walking, since you won't have as much time to avoid potential hazards if you're pouring on the steam.

Look for smooth terrain in public areas. Neighborhoods, busy parks, and shopping malls are all good candidates for walking routes. "Soft surfaces like dirt or grass are easier on the joints than asphalt or concrete," says Dr. Baggish.

You may also choose to do interval walking on a treadmill. Just crank up the speed or the incline for a minute or two to get your heart, lungs, and muscles working harder.

It also helps to know how far you're walking. Find out by driving the route and using your car odometer, if the route is along neighborhood streets; using a pedometer; or calling the management office at a shopping mall, if you're walking inside.

Final tips

Adding 60 seconds of fast-paced intervals to your routine will be tricky without a way to keep track of the time. That's because it can be challenging to count silently when you hear the rhythm of your footsteps and breathing.

Save yourself the hassle; wear a watch with a second hand, or a digital watch with a stopwatch feature.

Another idea is to use landmarks. Maintain an interval for several mailboxes (if you're walking in a neighborhood), or stores (if you're walking in a shopping mall).

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

Seljuk-era monument in Kerman undergoes restoration

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The mausoleum of Khajeh Atabak dating from the Seljuk dynasty (1037–1194) in Kerman province, southeastern Iran, has undergone restoration.

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization and Kerman Municipality have jointly carried out the project.



A view of Khajeh Atabak mausoleum surrounded by scaffolding poles

The octagonal mud brick structure is adorned with plaster and brick works as well as calligraphic ornaments both internally and on its facade.

Seljuk Empire dominated parts of Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and most of Iran. Their advance marked the beginning of Turkish power in the Middle East. The last of the Iranian Seljuqs died on the battlefield in 1194, and by 1200 Seljuq power was at an end everywhere except in Anatolia.

Since antiquity, big and sprawling Kerman province in southeastern Iran has been a cultural melting pot, blending Persians with some subcontinental tribes. It is home to many historical sites such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bath-house and Malek Jameh Mosque to name a few.

South Korea tourism hit by China ban

South Korea's tourism body fears a huge drop in visitors, as a diplomatic row with China starts to bite.

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) predicted there could be 4.7 million fewer foreign tourists this year than in 2016 – a drop of about 27%.

China has banned travel agencies from selling package tours to Korea in protest at Seoul allowing a U.S. missile defense system. Visitors from China made up 46.8% of tourists in South Korea last year.

■ 'Long-term depression'

Tourist numbers into South Korea saw double digit growth in the first two months of the year, the KTO said, but have declined every month since then.

May was particularly bad, with arrivals falling 34.5% against a year ago, and dropping below a million for the first time since the MERS epidemic in mid-2015.

"With the current trend, South Korea's tourism industry could enter a long-term depression," an unnamed KTO official told Yonhap.

The group tour ban came into force after the U.S. military started to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea.

While supposed to guard against North Korea's shorter-range missiles, it has drawn criticism from China, which claims the powerful radar can probe deep into its territory.

Although the U.S. insists it's a purely defensive weapon, China says it undermines regional security. (Source: BBC)



ROUND THE GLOBE Ningaloo Coast

The 604,500 hectare marine and terrestrial property of Ningaloo Coast, on the remote western coast of Australia, includes one of the longest near-shore reefs in the world.

On land the site features an extensive karst system and network of underground caves and water courses. The coastal waters host a major near shore reef system and a directly adjacent limestone karst system and associated habitats and species along an arid coastline.

The property holds a high level of terrestrial species endemism and high marine species diversity and abundance. An estimated 300 to 500 whale sharks aggregate annually coinciding with mass coral spawning events and seasonal localized increases in productivity.



A scuba diver looks at a sea turtle at Ningaloo Coast, Australia

The marine portion of the nomination contains a high diversity of habitats that includes lagoon, reef, open ocean, the continental slope and the continental shelf.

Intertidal systems such as rocky shores, sandy beaches, estuaries, and mangroves are also found within the property. The most dominant marine habitat is the Ningaloo reef, which sustains both tropical and temperate marine fauna and flora, including marine reptiles and mammals.

Above ground, the Cape Range Peninsula belongs to an arid ecoregion recognized for its high levels of species richness and endemism, particularly for birds and reptiles. (Source: UNESCO)

Isfahan pushes private sector for tourism, heritage projects

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Isfahan province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department promotes any public-private partnerships in restoring historical sites and carrying out tourism projects across the province.

"Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year [March 21], the private sector has invested over 1 trillion rials (about \$27 million) for restoring several heritage sites and implementing tourism projects in the province," ISNA quoted Hamid Amini, an official with the department, as saying on Tuesday.

In this regard, the cities of Isfahan, Fereydunshahr, Chadegan, Semirom and Kashan have the largest shares of private sector participation, the official added.

Some 85 thousand foreign travelers visited Isfahan in the first calendar month of Farvardin, setting a new record for the past 40 years, the department announced in May.

Isfahan is Iran's top tourist destination for good reason. Its profusion of tree-lined boulevards, Persian gardens and important Islamic buildings gives it a visual appeal unmatched by any other Iranian city, and the many artisans working here underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.



A view of the 17th-century Khaju Bridge, a main tourist destination of Isfahan, central Iran

Iranian airline to launch weekly Tabriz-Hamburg service

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran's Qeshm Air on Friday will start its maiden weekly flight connecting Tabriz to Hamburg with return legs set to be operated on Saturdays, asiran.com reported.

Arrangement for the Tabriz-Hamburg service started about six months ago by the Qeshm Air and other associated establishments, considering potential applicants and the fact that Tabriz has been selected as the Tourism Capital of Islamic Countries in 2018, the website quoted Mostafa Safaei, the director general of East Azarbaijan province's airports, as

saying.

Last November, the private airline received its TCO (third country operator) license from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), announcing five flights to Europe.

Refurbishing Iran's aviation industry is essential for tourism boom in the country that aims to lure 20 million foreign travelers annually by 2025.

Tabriz has been a place of cultural exchange since antiquity and its UNESCO-inscribed historic bazaar complex is one of the most important commercial centers on the Silk Road.



How to save on your trip to a theme park

Want to go an unlimited number of times for the rest of the year? It's \$99.99.

■ Don't scour for online coupons

Searches for "Disneyland coupons" on the Internet may yield a lot of results, but they're almost guaranteed to end in disappointment. It isn't worth your time. Targeting the smaller parks yields more promising results: Groupon, for example, offers discounted tickets to the Raging Waters park in Los Angeles.

■ Purchase tickets ahead of time

You can buy theme-park tickets at the gate, but that doesn't mean you should. Parks always want to know when you're coming (it helps them determine their discount and blackout days, for example), and they love to have your money upfront.

In return, many parks (with the notable exception of Disney) offer significant discounts for buying online.

■ Be flexible about dates

Do you absolutely have to visit Disneyland on Christmas Day? You're going to pay for it. That is the peak period, when

you'll pay \$124 a ticket. If you're willing to go midweek in September, however, you can expect to pay less: a mere \$97.

■ Find discounts at local stores

Making use of your department stores and supermarkets can help you save money, and you also have the security of knowing you're dealing with a reputable merchant.

■ Weigh your dining options

Conventional wisdom says that a good way to save money on the egregious pricing of food items is to bring your own; many parks will allow visitors to bring snacks, within reason.

But toting your own food doesn't appeal to everyone. "That's not really something I want to do when I'm on vacation," Ms. Marino says.

■ Follow social media

To get notifications about possible sales and discounts, follow your favorite parks on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio, for example, notified its Twitter followers about a flash

sale earlier this year. Social media is also a good way to keep up to date about things like special events and ride openings and closings.

■ Protect your electronics

Many parks have water rides, and water is not your smartphone's friend. It sounds simplistic, but you'll be kicking yourself after drenching your \$800 iPhone. Bring a sealable plastic bag to protect your phone during water rides. It costs virtually nothing, and can potentially save you a major headache.

■ Do some planning

You can find maps of most parks online. It doesn't hurt to glance at one for a few minutes and formulate an attack plan before you go. Upon arriving, pick a designated meeting point in case anyone in your party gets separated, especially if there are children. The last thing anyone — young or old — wants to hear at a theme park is their name being called over a loudspeaker.

(Source: The New York Times)

Bagh-e Dolat Abad: An epitome of Persian Garden

TOURISM TEHRAN Photo depicts people visiting Bagh-e Dolat Abad, a richly manicured historical garden in Yazd, central Iran, on July 10, 2017. An octagonal pavilion surmounted by an imposing wind tower is seen in the picture as well.

The interior of the pavilion seems superb to almost all visitors, with intricate latticework and exquisite stained-glass windows.

For centuries, such indigenous design has brought comfort to dwellers in summer times. It is part of an innovative architecture when combined with cold and fresh subterranean waters flowing beneath mudbrick houses of the ancient city.

Located on the margins of a desert, Yazd is famous as the city of wind towers. Moreover, the city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture. On July 9, the historical structure of Yazd was made a United Nations World Heritage site.

The genuine concept of the Persian Garden that is deeply rooted in time interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.



Study says life on Mars will have fungus: can space travelers risk infection?

There's a fungus among us wherever we go, even Mars, so scientists are studying fungi in space habitats to better understand how those microorganisms will affect astronauts on a mission to Mars or in a space colony.

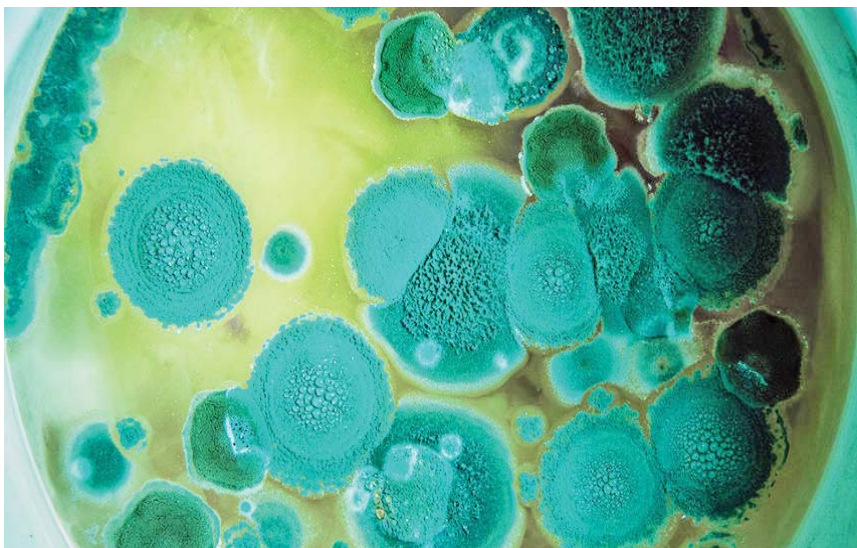
They used an inflatable habitat with similar conditions to the International Space Station — although on Earth, it simulates the sort of closed system astronauts would live in on the moon or on Mars, complete with air filtration.

As students occupied the habitat for 30 days, the researchers collected fungus samples to find species that were environmentally common as well as pathogens that could infect humans. According to their study in the journal *Microbiome*, the "fungal community" became more diverse during the course of the human habitation, "therefore, it is crucial to properly maintain a closed habitat to preserve it from deteriorating and keep it safe for its inhabitants."

The research took place alongside other studies of how humans react to a confined environment on a physical health level as well as on a psychological and behavioral level. Samples were taken from locations around the habitat throughout the length of the experiment.

■ Abundant fungi

Some of the most abundant fungi collected were ones that are known to trigger allergies and asthma. And because previous research has shown that astro-



naut immune systems behave differently in space, the crew could face serious health risks. If stress leads to a decreased immune response in the space travelers, they could be more susceptible to a pathogen.

Some of the most abundant fungi collected were ones that are known to trigger allergies and asthma. And because previous research has shown that astronaut immune systems behave differently in space, the crew could face serious health risks.

"Understanding the microbiome of a closed system and its association with human inhabitation will help to assess the correlation between human health and microbiome of the habitat," the study says. Cleaning procedures might be im-

plemented as a safety measure during a colonization of Mars or another space journey, and indeed the researchers note that weekly cleanings in their model habitat included antibacterial wipes and could have affected the fungus samples they were able to collect.

■ Harsh conditions

But fungi tend to be hardy, so they present a challenge: "Fungi are extremophiles that can survive harsh conditions such as low nutrient, desiccation, high/low temperatures, acidic/alkaline, radiation, and other environments," according to the research.

"Fungal species not only have been isolated from all known environments on Earth, including barren lands like deserts, caves, or nuclear accident sites, but also are known to be difficult to eradicate from other types of environments including indoor and closed spaces."

Even ones within the fungal community, known as a mycobiome, that are not known to cause deadly infection can be a problem. A report by journal publisher BioMed Central explained that one of the fungi collected is a common outdoor organism and while it does not often cause an infection in humans, it could trigger an asthma attack, particularly in someone whose immune system has been weakened during space travel.

(Source: IBT)

The mystery of the missing last great auk skins

On a small island off the coast of Iceland, 173 years ago, a sequence of tragic events took place that would lead to the loss of an iconic bird: the great auk.

The great auk, *Pinguinus impennis*, was a large, black and white bird that was found in huge numbers across the North Atlantic Ocean. It was often mistaken to be a member of the penguin family, but its closest living relative is actually the razorbill, and it is related to puffins, guillemots and murres.

Being flightless, the great auk was particularly vulnerable to hunting. Humans killed the birds in their thousands for meat, oil and feathers. By the start of the 19th century, the north-west Atlantic populations had been decimated, and the last few remaining breeding birds were to be found on the islands off the south-west coast of Iceland. But these faced another threat: due to their scarcity, the great auk had become a desirable item for both private and institutional collections.

Between 1830 and 1841 several trips were taken to Iceland's Eldey Island, to catch, kill, and sell the birds for exhibitions. Following a period of no reported captures,

great auk dealer Carl Siemsen commissioned an expedition to Eldey to search for any remaining birds.

■ Dangerous landing

Between June 2-5 1844, 14 men set sail in an eight-oared boat for the island. Three braved the dangerous landing and spotted two great auks among the smaller birds that also bred there. A chase began but the birds ran at a slow pace, their small wings extended, expressing no call of alarm. They were caught with relative ease and killed, their egg, broken in the hunt, was discarded.

But the birds — a male and a female — were never to reach Siemsen. The expedition leader sold them to a man named Christian Hansen, who then sold them on to Herr Möller, an apothecary in Reykjavik. Möller skinned the birds and sent them, and their preserved body parts, to Denmark.

In 1999, great auk expert Errol Fuller proposed a list of candidate specimens, the origins of which were not known, which he believed could be from the last pair of great auks. But how to find which of these were the true skins? For this



we turned to the field of ancient DNA (aDNA).

In the last 30 years, aDNA technology has progressed greatly, and has been used to address a wide range of ecological and evolutionary questions, providing insight into countless species' pasts, including humans.

(Source: *The Conversation*)

Chinese scientists just teleported an object into Earth's orbit for the first time

Not long ago, in the early 1990s, scientists only speculated that teleportation using quantum physics could be possible.

Since then, the process has become a standard operation in quantum optics labs around the world. In fact, just last year, two separate teams conducted the world's first quantum teleportation outside of a laboratory.

The satellite, called Micius, is a highly sensitive photo receiver capable of detecting the quantum states of single photons fired from the ground.

Micius was launched to allow scientists to test various technological building blocks for quantum feats including entanglement, cryptography, and teleportation.

This teleportation feat was announced as one of the first results of these exper-

iments. Not only did the team teleport the first object ever from the ground to orbit, they also created the first satellite-to-ground quantum network, smashing the record for the longest distance for which entanglement has been measured.

"Long-distance teleportation has been recognized as a fundamental element in protocols such as large-scale quantum networks and distributed quantum computation," says the Chinese team to MIT Technology Review.

■ Distant locations

"Previous teleportation experiments between distant locations were limited to a distance on the order of 100 kilometers, due to photon loss in optical fibers or terrestrial free-space channels."

Your brain might conjure images of Scotty beaming up the Enterprise crew in

Star Trek, but it's actually quite a different process than sci-fi films present.

Quantum teleportation relies on quantum entanglement — a situation where one set of quantum objects (such as photons) form at the same instant and point in space. In this way, they share the same existence. This shared existence continues even when the photons are separated — meaning a measurement on one immediately influences the state of the other, regardless of the distance between them.

This link can be used to transmit quantum information by "downloading" the information associated with one photon over an entangled link to another photon. This second photon takes on the identity of the first.

They then beamed one of these pho-

tons to the satellite, and kept the other photon on the ground. Finally, they measured the photons on the ground and in orbit to confirm that entanglement was taking place.

It's worth noting that there are some limits to this technology. Transporting anything large, for instance, is a ways off.

In theory, there's also no maximum transportation distance, but entanglement is fragile, and the links can easily be broken.

Despite these limits, this research paves the way for even more ambitious studies of quantum teleportation. "This work establishes the first ground-to-satellite up-link for faithful and ultra-long-distance quantum teleportation, an essential step toward global-scale quantum internet," says the team.

(Source: *Business Insider*)

Bank Mellat Unveils Payment System Using NFC Technology

Bank Mellat's new mobile payment system using NFC technology was unveiled in the presence of Director General of Central Bank of Iran for IT Affairs, Chairman of Monitoring and Controlling Group of CBI's Payment Systems Department, senior officials of Informatics Services Company and also chief executives of the bank officially, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Director General of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) for IT Affairs Eng. Hakimi was the first speaker who said: "As compared with other banks, Bank Mellat is the leading bank in the country which has taken giant strides in the field of boosting technology and gaining customers' satisfaction."

Banking services offered by the bank are unique of its kind and unprecedented in MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries, he maintained.

He pointed to the salient achievements of the banks in the country and said: "Iranian banks took giant strides in the toughest period of sanctions imposed on Iran and saved economy of country to a great extent."

In the contemporary world of today, boosting information technology is inevitable, he emphasized.

It should be noted that Bank Mellat reopened its branch in Seoul, South Korea.

For his part, Iranian Ambassador to South Korea Hassan Taherian said: "Bank Mellat's branch was active in South Korea before sanctions period but when a landmark nuclear deal inked between Iran and six world's major powers, the bank reopened its branch office in this Asian country."

In the end, the ambassador pointed out that Bank Mellat has opened its first Letter of Credit (L/C) in South



Korea and said: "It is hoped that the bank will take more steps in line with materializing its objectives."

Bank Refah Named Sponsor of 1st Iran Tourism Cycle Competition

Bank Refah Kargaran sponsored organizing the first round of Tourism Cycle Competitions, held in Kerman Province, Public Relations Dept. of the Bank reported.

In line with living up to its social

responsibilities and on the occasion of Anti-Drug Week, a number of 29 cyclists competed with one another and visited sceneries and breathtaking views of the province such as Shahzadeh Mahan and RAYAN Waterfall, etc.

The cyclists pedaled 310 km distance during four days.

Esmaeili Chairman of Kerman Province Cycling Board announced the above statement and appreciated the key role of the

bank in the field of promotion of sport and sports activities in this province.

In the end, winners of the competition were awarded with valuable prize by Bank Refah Kargaran.

Floating city could be answer to rising sea levels

As the world population continues to rise and open space becomes more scarce, water might become the next human frontier, in the form of a floating city.



According to a report from news service Agence France-Presse, Dutch researchers have a model for such livable space, which could include homes, farms and parks. The news agency says the floating city concept could become a reality within a couple of decades for the Netherlands, a small country in Europe where space is at a premium and which has a history of taming water for human habitation — Holland, including the capital Amsterdam, is notorious for its canals, which have been used for defense, irrigation, for travel and for improving city habitability.

"In these times of rising sea levels, overpopulated cities and a rising number of activities on the seas, building up the dykes and pumping out the sands is perhaps not the most efficient solution," Olaf Waals, from the Maritime Research Institute of the Netherlands, told AFP. "Floating ports and cities are an innovative solution which reflect the Dutch maritime tradition."

The Netherlands' concept, a project called "Space at Sea," includes 87 triangular pieces of various sizes that would come together to make almost 2 square miles of space, a floating island of concrete or steel that would be anchored to the seafloor and attached to the shore. For now, however, it is just a small wooden model.

If floating cities were to become the homes of the future, there is plenty of space to work with: Oceans cover more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface.

The Netherlands is not the only nation to explore this idea. The French Polynesia government, for example, is thinking about building a bunch of habitable floating islands in its area of the South Pacific Ocean.

(Source: IBT)

Coal-fired plants top polluters in Europe

Coal-fired power stations are responsible for the most pollution in Europe, with Britain among the top polluters, the European Union says.

The European Environment Agency said in a report late Sunday that half of the plants responsible for the largest releases of air and water pollution were in Britain, with a total of 14. Germany was second with seven, followed by France and Poland, each with five.

The agency reviewed emissions data from 35,000 industrial plants in 2015 — the latest available data — including power stations, petrochemical refineries and metal processing units from the 28 members of the European Union, and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Serbia.

It said that "good progress is being made by the EU toward its climate and energy policy objectives for 2020 and 2030." However, it noted that coal remains the most used fuel in large combustion plants — power plants, refineries, large chemical plants and steelworks — despite a decreasing amount being used over recent years, and a threefold increase in biomass use between 2004 and 2015.

Coal is still responsible for the largest releases of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides into the environment, although some plants have significantly improved their environmental performance over recent years, releasing fewer emissions into the environment.

The worst in 2015 were the Belchatow power plant in Poland, which released the highest amounts of the three pollutants, while the Drax power station in Britain, Jaenschwalde in Germany, and Kozenice in Poland were listed as top polluting plants for each of the three pollutants.

(Source: AP)

'Dynamic defrosting' tech to clear your windshield 10 times faster

One of the absolute worst things about winter living in a cold place is having to defrost your car windshield every morning. Fortunately, researchers from Virginia Tech are here to help, courtesy of new technology that's capable of defrosting surfaces 10 times faster than normal.

"What we have developed is a water-repellent aluminum surface that traps millions of tiny air pockets underneath a sheet of frost growing atop the surface," Jonathan Boreyko, an assistant professor in Virginia Tech's Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics (BEAM) department, told Digital Trends.

"Picture a person lying on top of a bed of nails, but now replace the person with a sheet of frost. Surfaces that trap air underneath water drops are called superhydrophobic and have been well known for about two decades now. But what makes our findings so exciting is that we extend the concept to frost, instead of just liquid water. This is exciting because during defrosting, the underlying air pockets enable the melting ice to rapidly roll down the surface, even at very low tilt angles."

The researchers call this "dynamic defrosting" — and say it could be used for everything from the aforementioned mid-winter car windshields to airplanes to heat pumps. The work is described in a paper published in the journal *ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces*.

(Source: *Digital Trends*)

Green meetings seeking environmental consciousness

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Environmentalists and NGOs **d e s k** can play a significant role in raising awareness and channeling efforts into promoting environmental values and protecting it.

Green meetings incorporate environmental considerations to minimize negative impacts on the environment.



Over the second week of summer (July 6-12) environmentalists gathered together in different parts of the country and took steps towards protecting the environment and encouraging more eco-friendly behaviors.

1) Environmentalists from around Iran gathered together last week at Gahar Lake, a freshwater lake located on the slopes of Oshorankuh Mountain, western Lorestan province and enjoyed a three-day event with various workshops, competitions, litter clean-up programs, and other recreational activities.

2) Khuzestan province society for environment and natural resources arranged and ran a meeting with high ranking and provincial officials discussing water and safety.

3) An animal welfare group in Lorestan province fed animals on the outskirts of Khorramabad. The group feed animals on a weekly basis.

4) Najian-e Nabz-e Zamin (literally meaning saviors of the Earth's pulse) got together in Al-ghadir Beach Park, West Azarbaijan province, and cleared up cigarette butts from the area.

5) Firefighters rallied in support for the 'car-free Tuesdays' (a campaign calling for not using cars on Tuesdays nationwide) in Shiraz, Fars province.

6) A campaign against animal abuse run by actor, director, and ambassador of the environment Meysam Mousavi, drew up and circulated petition for approval of animal protection law.

7) Environmentalists, firefighters, and workers at Paveh department for natural resources joined together to extinguish the wildfire in Zagros forest area in Kermanshah province. Moreover, a brave woman helped in putting out the fire.

8) Baloutban Society, an NGO in Lorestan province, watered saplings at Khorramabad rock climbing area.

9) In Peace with Nature Society cleaned up riversides in Isfahan province on Friday.

10) In Yasouj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Zagros green movement NGO distributed cloth bags in shopping centers on the occasion of the International Plastic Bag Free Day, July 3. Every Tuesdays the NGO encourages the shoppers to use reusable cloth bags instead of plastic bags.

11) The Zagros green movement NGO also watered saplings planted during the month of Farvardin (March 21 to April 22) in Yasouj forest park.

LEARN ENGLISH The Weekend - Going to the Playground (C0335)

A: Hey honey! Where were you?

B: I decided to take Kenny to the **park** and get some fresh air.

A: How was it? Were there a lot of kids?

B: It wasn't too **crowded**, but we had a great time! We got on the **see-saw** together, they went on a couple of different **slides** and then I tried to go with him in the jungle gym, but I didn't fit.

A: Sounds like fun! When we go he always just likes to play in the **sandbox**.

B: Yeah, but today he was really **hyper**. He even got on the monkey bars and then he went on to go on the **swings** for a half hour. I'm **exhausted**!

A: You should go to the park more often since you don't go to the gym anymore!

■ Key Vocabulary

park: an area of land, for the enjoyment of the public

crowded: A filled to excess; packed.

see-saw: a plank used to balance

slide: a smooth surface for sliding on

sandbox: a box for holding sand, large enough for children to play in

hyper: overexcited; overstimulated

swing: a seat hanging from ropes or chains, usually used by children play on by moving it forwards and backwards using their legs

exhausted: very tired

■ Supplemental Vocabulary

merrygo-round: a revolving, circular platform with wooden horses or other animals, benches, etc., on which people may sit or ride

hop scotch: a children's game in which one hops across square spaces

marbles: a game for children in which a marble is propelled by the thumb to hit another marble

skipping rope: a length of rope that is swung around while someone jumps over it

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Have an idea?
Be in touch!
lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

Boston Children's Hospital protests deportation of leading Iranian cancer researcher

An Iranian cancer researcher who had been headed to a prominent Boston hospital to work as a scholar was sent back to his country on Tuesday, a day after U.S. immigration officials detained him and his family, media said.

Mohsen Dehnavi, his wife and three children were put on a return flight at about 9pm after being detained late on Monday at Logan International Airport, the Boston Globe said, citing Stephanie Malin, a spokeswoman for US Customs and Border Patrol.

The detentions were apparently unrelated to President Donald Trump's executive order temporarily banning travelers from six majority-Muslim countries, according to Boston Children's Hospital and immigration law specialists, who said Dehnavi had a valid entry visa.

"Based on what we know, it's not travel-ban related. It's probably something much more stupid than that," said Susan Church, chair of the New England chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

"The rules say if you have a valid visa you have to be let in," she told Reuters.

A spokesman for U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement did not immediately respond to telephone calls and emails to seek comment.

Two weeks ago, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a revised version of Trump's ban on travelers from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, though it excluded visitors with a "bona



People listen to speakers at a demonstration against racism and conservative presidential candidate Donald Trump's recent remarks concerning Muslims on December 10, 2015 in New York City.

fide" family tie. The executive order itself did not apply to travelers with valid visas.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump had called for a "complete and total shutdown" of Muslims entering the United States, a move he called necessary to protect

national security in the wake of attacks at home and abroad by Islamist extremists.

Opponents of the idea called it a violation of the U.S. Constitution's protections for free expression of religion.

Trump's initial January version of the order, which also applied to Iraq, caused a weekend of chaos at U.S. airports as travelers were turned away upon arrival and crowds of thousands turned out to protest against the move.

(Source: Reuters)

100 global corporations now committed to 100% renewables

With the new additions of AkzoNobel N.V., AXA, Burberry and the Carlsberg Group, The Climate Group's RE100 initiative – representing large businesses transitioning to 100% renewable energy globally – has reached a 100-member milestone.

According to The Climate Group, RE100 members, including 30 Fortune Global 500 companies, have a total revenue of \$2.5 trillion. Together, they are creating around 146 TWh in demand for renewable electricity annually – about as much as it takes to power Poland, the group says.

Consuming roughly 16 TWh annually, AkzoNobel has become the second-biggest electricity user to join RE100 after Walmart. The Dutch paints and coatings company aims to be carbon-neutral and use 100% renewable energy by 2050.

In addition, French insurance company AXA is targeting 100% renewable electricity by 2025, and luxury fashion brand Burberry is aiming to procure 100% of electricity from renewable resources by 2022. The



Carlsberg Group, one of the world's biggest brewers, is switching to 100% renewable electricity at its breweries by 2022 as a step toward its target to become carbon-neutral in 2030.

Hungarian hospital helps injured birds back into the skies

A unique veterinary hospital in eastern Hungary is saving the lives of wild birds, including many who sustain severe injuries during their long migratory journey to Africa to escape the harsh winters of northern Europe.

Located in the Hortobagy National Park, a World Heritage site on the Great Hungarian Plain, the hospital treats, among others, protected birds like cranes, storks and eagles that have flown

into power lines, breaking their legs or wings, or have been poisoned or hit by vehicles on highways.

The wide open spaces of the National Park have preserved their traditional pastoral use, with herds of gray cattle grazing in the pastures and wetlands, a perfect place for a stopover for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds each year.

Doctors at the hospital have been

saving the lives of these protected birds since 1999, by giving them prosthetic legs and fixing their wings, with around 40 percent of them eventually returning to the wild after a full recovery.

"What we love the most is when we receive birds that we can treat to full recovery, and set them free again," said veterinary physician Janos Deri, who founded the hospital. The birds which cannot return to the wild stay at the

center, to the delight of tens of thousands of visitors every year.

They can watch the birds being operated on and treated, as the hospital also serves as an education center.

"We ... have learned about some of the birds in the area and it is good to see the injured birds that are being taken care of," Greg Lauttrull, 57, a structural engineer, visiting from Houston, Texas.

(Source: Reuters)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ج

WAIC 2018 meeting in Tehran to spotlight urban environment

The World Assembly of Islamic Cities (WAIC) meeting in 2018 will be held in Tehran with the theme of urban environment, WAIC President Masoud Nosrati announced on Monday.

Tehran will host the event, during which, the latest information and achievements in the realm of environment and urban development will be discussed.

The event is supported by the UN-Habitat, the United Nations program promoting socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

Relying on the spiritual and metaphysical values of Islam and their application in the urban realm of Islamic countries, WAIC hope to provide an appropriate framework to promote sustainable settlement and introduce successful sustainable cities – in form and experience to the world.

ENGLISH PROVERB

When poverty comes in the door, love goes out the window

■ **Explanation:** When a couple loses everything, their relationship becomes difficult

■ **For example:** My father-in-law's only word of advice when I asked for his daughter's hand in marriage were about money, he only said 'when poverty comes in the door, love goes out the window!'

PHRASAL VERB

Write in

■ **Meaning:** send a letter to a TV station, etc.

■ **For example:** People have written in to complain about the show.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Walk a tightrope

■ **Explanation:** If a person is walking a tightrope, they are in a difficult or delicate situation where they must act carefully.

■ **For example:** The management is walking a tightrope in their efforts both to keep the costs down and satisfy the trade unions.

Top U.S. diplomat begins tough Persian Gulf talks on easing Qatar row

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson began talks with four Arab states on Wednesday in efforts to ease a boycott of Qatar after the countries labelled a U.S.-Qatar terrorism financing accord an inadequate response to their concerns.

Any resolution of the dispute must address all the key issues for Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, including Doha's undermining of regional stability, a senior UAE official said ahead of the talks in Saudi Arabia. His comments shed light on Tillerson's uphill challenge.

The four countries imposed sanctions on Qatar on June 5, accusing it of financing extremist groups and allying with the Persian Gulf Arab states' arch-foe Iran. Doha denies those accusations. The four states and Qatar are all U.S. allies.

Tillerson arrived in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah where he met ministers from the four nations to seek an end to the worst dispute among Persian Gulf Arab states since the formation of their Persian Gulf Cooperation Council regional body in 1981. Kuwait, which is mediating in the dispute and not boycotting Qatar, also sent an envoy.

Tillerson also met Saudi King Salman and they discussed regional developments, especially efforts to combat terrorism and its financing, the Saudi state news agency SPA said.

On Tuesday, shortly after Tillerson



signed a memorandum of understanding in Doha on combating the funding of terrorism, the four countries issued a statement labelling it as inadequate.

They also reinstated 13 wide-ranging demands they had originally submitted to Qatar, the world's biggest producer of liquefied natural gas, but had later said were void.

The demands include curbing relations with Iran, closing the widely watched Al Jazeera TV channel, closing a Turkish military base in Qatar and handing over all designated terrorists on its territory.

The crisis goes beyond the financing of terrorism, said Jean-Marc Rickli, a risk analyst at the Geneva Center for Secu-

rity Policy, pointing to Persian Gulf fears about the role of Iran, internal instability and the regional influence of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as competition for regional leadership.

■ Absence of trust

The four boycotting states said in a joint statement on Tuesday they appreciated U.S. efforts in fighting terrorism.

"... (But) such a step is not enough and they will closely monitor the seriousness of Qatar in combating all forms of funding, supporting and fostering of terrorism," the statement said, according to the UAE state news agency WAM.

Anwar Gargash, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said the dispute was rooted

in an absence of trust and that any solution must address the four states' grievances.

"Diplomacy must address Qatar's support for extremism and terrorism and undermining regional stability. A temporary solution is not a wise one," he wrote on Twitter overnight.

The United States worries the crisis could affect its military and counter-terrorism operations and increase the regional influence of Iran, which has been supporting Qatar by allowing it to use air and sea links through its territory.

Qatar hosts Udeid Air Base, the largest U.S. military facility in the Middle East, from which U.S.-led coalition aircraft stage sorties against Daesh (ISIL) in Syria and Iraq.

Some Persian Gulf Arab media took a critical stance towards Tillerson ahead of his visit to Jeddah.

"What makes Wednesday's meeting in Jeddah difficult is that Tillerson has, since the beginning of the crisis, appeared to be taking the Qatari side," a commentary published in Saudi-owned Asharq al-Awsat and Arab News newspapers said on Wednesday.

"Tillerson cannot impose reconciliation, but he could reduce the distance between the parties in the diplomatic rift - all of which are his allies - rather than taking the side of one against the other," wrote columnist Abdulrahman al-Rashed, the former general manager of the Saudi-owned al-Arabiya channel.

(Source: Daily Star)

Trump Jr: President knew 'nothing' about Russia meeting

The son of U.S. President Donald Trump has insisted that his father knew nothing about a meeting with a Russian lawyer who allegedly said she had "compromising" information on Hillary Clinton that could help with Trump's 2016 election campaign.

"There was nothing to tell," Donald Trump Jr told Fox News late on Tuesday when asked if he had told his father anything about the meeting.

He added that meeting was a "wasted 20 minutes" and "in retrospect" he would have "done things a little different".

The White House has maintained that President Trump only found out about the June 2016 meeting between Trump Jr, Jared Kushner, Paul Manafort and Russian Lawyer Natalia Vesernitskaya in the last few days.

Earlier on Tuesday, Trump Jr released an email chain that shows him discussing plans to hear damaging information on Clinton, which was described as part of a Russian government effort to help Trump in the 2016 election.

"This is obviously very high level and sensitive information, but is part of Russia and its government support for Mr. Trump," read an email, dated June 3, 2016, from music publicist Rob Goldstone who helped arrange the meeting.

Trump Jr responded, saying "if it's what you say, I love it".

Trump Jr released the emails after a New York Times report revealed that he knew that the source of the "compromising" information being offered to him was the Russian government.

Vesernitskaya has said she was not working for the Russian government and never had information on Clinton.

■ 'Disturbing'

On Tuesday, the U.S. president released a statement calling his son a "high-quality person" and praising "his transparency".

But Democrats have been highly critical of the meeting, with some calling it proof that the Trump campaign "colluded" with the Kremlin.

The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is investigating allegations that Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential campaign, said the emails are "very significant".

"I think [the emails] made quite clear that the Russian government had possession of damaging information," Adam Schiff told reporters on Tuesday.

Trump Jr has already said he is willing to work with the committee, which is expected to conduct its first interviews with Trump campaign officials this week.

Another senior member of the committee, Democratic Senator Ron Wyden, said the emails show Trump's

campaign "sought to collude with a hostile foreign power to subvert America's democracy".

Wyden added that the "question is how far the coordination goes".

While many Republicans have remained quiet on the subject, Senator Lindsey Graham called the emails "disturbing".

"I don't know what Mr. Trump's version of the facts are. [He] definitely has to testify. That email is disturbing," Graham told reporters on Tuesday.

The Senate Judiciary Committee requested information from the Departments of State and Homeland Security about the Russian lawyer who met the Trump campaign.

Allegations of the Trump campaign's ties to Russia have cast a shadow over the president's first five months in office.

This week's revelations come after President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the allegations of election meddling during the summit of leaders from the Group of 20 major economies in Hamburg, Germany.

The Kremlin has denied U.S. intelligence agencies' conclusion that Moscow tried to tilt the election in Trump's favor, using such means as hacking into the emails of senior Democrats.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

200 plains in Iran are in critical thirsty: official

1-➔ ■ Many dams are constructed in vain

"While everyone accuses numerous damming projects of the main culprits of water shortage in Iran I believe that a lack of proper and operable irrigation network [one that contains conduits (canals and pipes) that supply water to irrigated lands from an irrigation source such as a dam] is the main problem," he pointed out.

For instance, water behind the dams must be used for irrigation purposes but without setting up irrigation networks the water would evaporate and go into waste, he underlined.

Building a dam might only take 5 years but developing irrigation networks is an extremely complex matter which might take much longer and without that building a dam would be in vain, the official explained.

■ Extraterritorial farming, virtual water may help

"It is a catastrophe that we think developing agriculture sector would create jobs. On the contrary, creating jobs in tourism, industry and service sectors would be much more logical," he suggested.

He further commented on the idea of virtual water [water used to produce the goods and services that we consume and use] and extraterritorial farming [using agricultural lands in other countries to cultivate the crops and import them to Iran] as two feasible solution to water crisis in Iran.

"Providing food security does not necessarily mean producing it domestically but importing and extraterritorial farming are also two practical solutions," he highlighted.

■ Crisis can be over in the long run

Moving towards industrialization, limiting the water consumption in agriculture sector and creating alternative jobs would help to overcome water shortage in a span of 10 to 15 years, he said, adding this might cause tension for some time but in order to succeed the government should finally cave.

Iraqi military rejects Amnesty report on Mosul 'abuses' as baseless

1-➔ It said the figure might even amount to an underestimation as it has been difficult for monitors to record deaths and injuries due to the intensity of the fighting and Daesh's ban on the use of mobile phones in areas under its control.

Over all, the Amnesty said, the anti-terror fight generated a "civilian catastrophe".

Also reacting to the accusations, Col. Joe Scrocca, a coalition spokesman, described the report as "irresponsible" and said, "War is not pleasant, and pretending that it should be is foolish and places the lives of civilians and soldiers alike at risk."

The Washington-led alliance launched its aerial military campaign in Iraq in June 2014.

The coalition has, time and again, been accused of disregard for civilian lives during the campaign.

In another part of its report, the rights group accused the Daesh terrorists of flagrantly violating international humanitarian law by deliberately putting civilian lives at risk and using them as shields to protect the militants and impede the advance of Iraqi and coalition forces.

(Source: al Alam)

Toward a safer world: NPT a prelude to total elimination of nuclear weapons

7-➔ Although it is clear that for attaining the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons, a vast majority of nations including the nuclear-weapon states should also accept and join the treaty but the nuclear ban treaty can "establish a norm" whereby the use or possession of nuclear weapons under any circumstances would become illegitimate and illegal for even the states outside the treaty. Indeed, the joint statement of 3 nuclear-weapon states which was released hours after the adoption of the treaty testifies that the treaty can present a serious challenge to them through creation of such norm. Furthermore, the Head of the ICRC's Arms Unit, Kathleen Lawand has said "We know that the adoption of this treaty by itself will not make nuclear weapons disappear overnight. Our collective work is far from complete." Therefore, the deliberation on many issues is still underway and will continue in the future and the treaty requires its parties to meet regularly on a biennial basis in order to consider and, where necessary, take decisions in respect of any matter with regard to the application or implementation of the treaty or on further measures for nuclear disarmament. Moreover, civil society will also remain active to support and follow up the implementation of the treaty and as the ICRC President Peter Maurer has noted the ICRC and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world will even support the ratification of the treaty.

Iranians also played a major role during the negotiations of the treaty as they acted in capacity of vice president in the conference. This is mostly due to the fact that Iran has been a major victim of WMDs. Furthermore, in order to use the maximum capacity of public conscience, the treaty in its preamble recognizes the role of religious leaders in the furthering of the principles of humanity for nuclear disarmament which was a creative move, pushed and supported by the Iranian delegation during the negotiations.

The treaty by putting human beings at its center seriously challenges current military and security policies and believes that nuclear disarmament promotes international peace and security. This treaty through humanitarian approach not only consolidates the NPT and the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty), but also complements them. Finally, considering the history of other WMDs, it is clear that after prohibition of a WMD there is a long way to reach the stage of its total elimination so every state should remain active and think positively about the future of this treaty.

Gulen says he would not flee U.S. to avoid extradition to Turkey

Fethullah Gulen, the U.S.-based Muslim cleric accused by Turkey of instigating last year's failed coup, says he has no plans to flee the United States and would accept extradition if Washington agrees to a request by Ankara to hand him over.

In an interview in his gated compound in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, Gulen, 79, denied a Turkish government allegation from February that he was preparing to leave for Canada to avoid extradition.

"The rumors aren't true at all," he told Reuters.

"If the United States sees it appropriate to extradite me, I would leave (for Turkey)," he said, sitting in an ornate meeting room, its walls lined with Islamic scripture.

President Tayyip Erdogan and the Turkish government accuse Gulen of orchestrating last July's attempted coup, in which rogue soldiers commandeered tanks and fighter jets, bombing parliament and trying to abduct or kill Erdogan. More than 240 people were killed in the violence.

The Turkish Embassy in Washington declined to comment on Gulen's latest remarks. The White House did not respond immediately to requests for comment. Officials in Ankara could also not immediately be reached for comment.

Erdogan said in May he would pursue "to the end" Turkey's demand for the extradition of Gulen, who denies any involvement in the coup attempt. But there has been little or no concrete progress on the Turkish request.

U.S. officials have said privately that even though Erdogan has appealed directly to U.S. President Donald Trump on the matter, Turkey has yet to provide enough evidence for the Justice Department to act.

The issue has been a major sticking point in the relationship between the two

NATO allies.

Gulen said he hoped that the Trump administration would not allow his extradition to move forward, especially after the resignation of former national security adviser Michael Flynn, a White House aide who quit just weeks after Trump's inauguration.

Flynn, who resigned over his failure to disclose the extent of his contacts with Russia, had performed paid lobbying work that "could be construed to have principally benefited" the Turkish government, according to his lobbying registration filings, and was outspoken in favor of Gulen's extradition.

Gulen said he felt "pity" for Flynn but acknowledged that the former Trump aide's departure might have helped his case.

The Justice Department declined to comment on the status of Turkey's extradition request. There was no immediate response from Flynn's lawyer to a request for comment.

---- Frail Exile

Gulen, a former Erdogan ally, has lived in self-imposed exile since 1999, presiding over what he says is a humanitarian religious movement. His followers operate a global network of schools and businesses that has been linked to the Gulenist movement.

His network was declared a terrorist group by Turkey's national security council two months before the failed coup. Since then, Gulen himself has become an increasingly marginalized figure across the political spectrum.

Following the putsch, a wide crackdown, which the government says is targeting Gulen's followers, has seen 50,000 people arrested and 150,000 state workers including teachers, judges and soldiers suspended under emergency rule.

Gulen denounced Erdogan's consolidation of power and the seizure of media outlets, comparing him to a "dictator"



He urged the Trump administration and European governments to do more to encourage the restoration of political freedoms in Turkey.

"(If Erdogan hears) a strong voice from the United States or European Union, European Parliament, Brussels, saying: 'What you are doing is wrong ... your judicial system is not working,' then maybe he will change his mind," the cleric said.

European leaders have been critical of Erdogan's crackdown, but Washington has been more muted in its response. In a meeting in Washington in May, Trump made no mention of Erdogan's record on dissent and free speech.

The Turkish government has repeatedly said its actions are justified by the gravity of the threat posed to the state by last year's coup, and rejected suggestions that it is clamping down on dissent.

"The rule of law is upheld in Turkey, and it is not just about gaining more power or punishing the opposition," Revza Kavakci Kan, deputy chair of Erdogan's ruling AK Party, told a conference in Washington on Monday.

Gulen praised the political opposi-

tion in Turkey and stressed that any fresh effort to remove Erdogan should be through peaceful protest and elections, not non-democratic means.

His followers say his global movement - known as "Hizmet," which means "service" in Turkish - seeks to spread a moderate brand of Islam, which promotes Western-style education, free markets and interfaith communication.

"I have never supported a coup or an ouster," he said.

Today, Gulen is an isolated figure in Turkey, reviled by Erdogan's supporters but also shunned by much of the opposition, who see his network as having conspired over decades to undermine the secular foundations of the modern republic.

Hundreds of thousands of opposition supporters took to the streets of Istanbul on Sunday to protest against Erdogan's crackdown, but there was no sign of sympathy for Gulen.

Gulen appeared frail in the interview, walking with a shuffle, and keeping his longtime doctor close at hand.

(Source: Reuters)

Monaco royalty hands Mbappe warning over leaving too soon

Prince Albert II has warned Kylian Mbappe he would not be a regular starter if he left Monaco this summer.

The France forward has been linked with the likes of Real Madrid, PSG and Arsenal this summer, who are all seemingly prepared to break the world transfer record to land the teenager.

Mbappe would likely cost in excess of £100million if he left the Principality this summer, but the reigning monarch of Monaco expects him to stay.

"I don't think it will happen," Prince Albert II said when asked if Mbappe will leave.

"There are ongoing discussions, which suggest to me that he will stay at Monaco next season.

"The discussions are regarding increasing his salary, but he and his father understand that it's not in his interests to go to a big club, where he will not be a certain starter."

(Source: Team Talk)

Atletico Madrid confirm contentious Vitolo signing from Sevilla

Atletico Madrid have agreed a five-year deal to sign Vitolo from Sevilla, but the winger will play for Las Palmas in the first half of the season due to his new club's transfer ban.

Diego Simeone's side, currently serving the final window of their FIFA signing ban, will register Vitolo from January 1, before which he will play for fellow LaLiga side Las Palmas.

The complex transfer comes two days after Sevilla president Jose Castro claimed the 27-year-old had in fact signed a new five-year deal with his club.

"Atletico de Madrid has reached an agreement with Victor Machin Perez, Vitolo, for the next five years after the player rescinded his contract with Sevilla," read Atletico's statement on Wednesday.

"Due to FIFA's sanction that forbids the club from registering football players during the current summer market, the player will play the first half of the season with Las Palmas and will join our team starting on January 1, 2018.

"The Spain international has signed with our club until the June 30, 2022." Castro claimed on Tuesday that Vitolo had agreed a new deal with Sevilla, but not physically signed it, and the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan club are reportedly considering legal action.

Vitolo played for Sevilla for four seasons after signing for them from Las Palmas, his hometown club to whom he now returns for the first half of 2017-18.

He won the Europa League three times in Seville and has earned 11 caps for Spain, including five in the current World Cup qualifying campaign.

Premier League club Chelsea had been heavily linked with move for Vitolo, but missed out on his signing - as they did with Manchester United striker Romelu Lukaku.

(Source: Soccerway)

Russian Olympic bobsledder banned for whereabouts violation

Russian Olympic bobsledder Nadezhda Paleeva has been banned for two years for a violation of anti-doping whereabouts rules, Russia's national anti-doping agency RUSADA said.

The announcement comes as Russia is stepping up efforts to rehabilitate RUSADA, which was suspended by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 2015 over evidence of state-sponsored doping and systematic violations to anti-doping regulations.

Paleeva, who finished 16th in the two-woman bobsleigh at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, had not provided sufficient information about her whereabouts to be reached by anti-doping control officers, according to the president of Russia's bobsleigh federation, two-time Olympic gold medalist Alexander Zubkov.

"She did not cooperate with anti-doping organizations and did not provide the necessary information about herself in the ADAMS system," TASS news agency quoted Zubkov as saying on Wednesday, referring to a database system used to monitor the testing of athletes.

Zubkov added that Paleeva had received several warnings ahead of the ban.

In its statement late on Tuesday, RUSADA also said a four-year ban had been imposed against bobsledder Dmitry Piskunov, who placed 13th in the four-man bobsleigh at the Europe Cup in January, for failing to turn up for doping tests.

Russia last year was stripped of hosting the 2017 bobsleigh and skeleton world championships amid calls for a boycott in protest at doping in Russian sport. WADA last month allowed RUSADA to plan and coordinate testing under the supervision of international experts but has stressed that much remains to be done for the agency to retrieve its accreditation.

(Source: Reuters)

UAE para athlete killed in World Championships training in London after being 'struck by metal pole'

Para athlete Abdullah Hayayei has died following a training incident in London ahead of the upcoming World Para Athletics Championships, the International Paralympic Committee has announced.

The 36-year-old, who represented the United Arab Emirates in the F34 class javelin and shot put at Rio 2016, was training at Newham Leisure Centre in preparation for the championships, which begin on Friday at the London Stadium.

An IPC statement said: "Emergency services were called shortly after 17:00 to reports of a seriously injured man. Police, London Ambulance Service and London's Air Ambulance attended the scene. At 17:20 the athlete was pronounced dead at the scene.

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police said: "At this early stage, it is believed the man was struck by a metal pole which formed part of training facilities at the center.

"It can be confirmed that the man was a competitor at the World Para Athletic Championships being held in London. His next of kin have been informed. Police officers remain at the scene and cordons are in place. The Health and Safety Executive have been informed."

"The athlete's family who are in the UAE have been informed of his death and the UAE team were brought together at the team hotel to be informed of the tragic news."

A moment of silence will be held to remember Hayayei during Friday's opening ceremony.

IPC president Sir Philip Craven said: "We are all truly devastated by this tragic news and the passing of Abdullah.

"The thoughts, prayers and condolences of the whole Paralympic movement are with Abdullah's family, friends and team-mates as well as the whole



of the National Paralympic Committee of the UAE. We are all in a state of shock at this terrible tragedy."

Ed Warner, co-chair of London 2017, added: "This is a devastating event and everyone within the London 2017 organising committee is shocked and saddened.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with all of Abdullah's family and team-mates at what is undoubtedly a very difficult time for them. We will be working closely with all the competitors and teams over the days ahead to offer support wherever it is needed."

(Source: Telegraph)

Donnarumma apologizes after AC Milan renewal: I'm sorry to fans who felt betrayed



Gianluigi Donnarumma has apologized to AC Milan supporters after signing a new contract with the club until 2021.

Having previously rejected a new deal to extend beyond 2018, the 18-year-old performed a U-turn on Tuesday to commit his future to the club in a deal that will reportedly pay him €6million-per-year.

It marked the end of a dramatic saga in the transfer window, in which relations with his agent Mino Raiola and Milan soured as Donnarumma was linked with a host of Europe's top clubs, including Real Madrid and Juventus.

Milan celebrated the renewal with a media event on Wednesday, where they also presented his brother Antonio as a new signing, and Donnarumma took the opportunity to say sorry to fans who had been upset by a dramatic period.

"I'm delighted and proud to be at Milan," said the goalkeeper.

"I was born and raised at this club and I never had any doubts about staying in my mind.

"I'm sorry to the fans who felt betrayed, but I repeat that was not my

intention.

"I'm sorry to them and thank them for their affection for these two years. I am proud to be here."

In a tumultuous period after his initial contract rejection, Donnarumma deleted his Instagram account and claimed it was hacked during the European Under-21 Championship after posting a string of mixed messages on social media.

He also had fake money thrown at him by angry supporters during Italy's match against Denmark in that competition.

The keeper's decision to stay will further bolster Vincenzo Montella's plans for 2017-18, with the likes of Hakan Calhanoglu, Franck Kessie, Ricardo Rodriguez, Mateo Musacchio, Andre Silva and Fabio Borini having been brought in.

On the negative fan reaction to the saga, Donnarumma added: "Some things have hurt. But I'm a big fan of AC Milan forever.

"We have great motivation, we want to get back into the Champions League and that is our goal."

(Source: Soccerway)

Michael Jordan is part of investor group bidding to buy baseball team



The groups bidding to purchase the Miami Marlins (an American professional baseball team) are quickly adding some star power as the sales process nears its final stages.

According to the New York Post, retired New York Yankees star Derek Jeter is back in the mix — this time with former NBA great Michael Jordan among a group of investors. Rapper Pitbull, also is now part of another group, according to the Miami Herald.

There are currently three groups in the hunt to purchase the franchise from owner Jeffrey Loria: Jeter's contingent; one led by New York-based Wayne Rothbaum that counts former Florida Governor Jeb Bush (and now Pitbull) among its investors; and another headed by Miami business owner Jorge Mas.

"We have three viable bidding groups that are essentially in the same place in terms of price," MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred told reporters assembled for Tuesday night's All-Star Game at Marlins Park.

Jeter's initial bid to purchase the team — which had included Bush — fell apart after questions surfaced

about whether his group had the financial backing to run the franchise. The New York Post reported on Tuesday that the new effort includes Jordan, but, more importantly, money manager Bruce Sherman.

Loria is seeking between \$1.1-\$1.3 billion in an all-cash deal with hopes the deal can be completed by the All-Star break. Any sale would need approval by MLB ownership.

The Marlins are projected to lose \$62 million this season, according to investors who have viewed the Marlins' books. On top of the annual losses, the team also has about \$500 million in debt with more than \$400 million committed to future salaries.

The team also has the lowest-paying TV contract (\$20 million per year) that runs through the 2020 season.

Loria has been part of MLB ownership since 1999, owning a minority stake in the the Montreal Expos at the time before he acquired a controlling interest. He purchased the Marlins for \$158.5 million in 2002 in an ownership swap that led to the Expos relocation to Washington to become the Nationals.

(Source: USA Today)

Mayweather, McGregor press tour kicks off with a war of words

Undefeated boxer Floyd Mayweather and mixed martial arts champion Conor McGregor traded barbs during a lively press conference in Los Angeles on Tuesday, delighting a rowdy crowd ahead of their Aug. 26 fight in Las Vegas.

The media conference was the first in a four-day international tour promoting the bout.

The contrasts between the two was immediately apparent as McGregor, wearing a navy pinstriped suit and tie, danced around the stage smiling while Mayweather, wearing a track suit with American flag details, looked on stonefaced.

As is expected in the bout, McGregor was the aggressor, wasting no time bringing up reports that Mayweather earlier this month asked the IRS for more time to pay his 2015 tax bill.

"He's in a track suit," McGregor told the crowd of more than 11,000 people, who largely cheered the Irishman and booed the American. "He can't even afford a suit anymore."

Later when Mayweather, whose nickname is "Money"



and who frequently uses cash as a prop, pulled out a \$100 million cheque on stage, McGregor told him to "give it to the taxman".

When asked about the tax issue, Mayweather said his attorneys were working on it and did not worry him.

The cheque appeared to be the \$100 million he earned for his victory over Manny Pacquiao two years ago.

Mayweather was more subdued than the fiery

28-year-old, reminding reporters that even though he is a heavy favorite, he is 40 years old and that anything can happen in a fight.

He said he expected McGregor, who has never fought a professional boxing match, to try to pummel the defensive-minded Mayweather, who is putting his perfect 49-0 record on the line.

"He's upset, I've seen it before," Mayweather said. "And when these fighters get upset with me they come out and they try to kill me," he said with a laugh.

"My job is to do what I do and keep my composure."

The crossover fight has been criticized as a publicity stunt by boxing purists who give McGregor no chance. But UFC president Dana White said the fight is one that fans of both sports have wanted.

"When two guys get in there and start throwing punches, anything is possible," White said.

"If you are a fan of combat sports, there has never been a better time."

(Source: Reuters)

Hamed Haddadi's chance of playing at FIBA Asia Cup is 50-50

S P O R T S Iran basketball national team center d e s k Hamed Haddadi says that he has no idea if he is fit enough to play at the FIBA Asia Cup.

The 2017 FIBA Asia Cup will be held in Lebanon from August 8 to 20.

"I already spoke with our coaches and our federation to give me time for rest. My chances of playing at FIBA Asia Cup is just 50-50," said Haddadi in a fiba.com report.

The hulking 2.18m center has revealed his plans to rest an injury he sustained last year in preparation for the Asia Qualifiers to the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 in November.

"After the FIBA Asia Challenge last year, I had an injury and had to rest, but I still needed to play with Si-chuan in China," he shared. "My injury got worse after, and now I need to rest this summer and be ready for the Asia Qualifiers."

This is a big development for Iran, of course, as Haddadi is not only the team's best big man, he is also a valuable veteran presence on a squad now dominated by up-and-coming players.

Haddadi would have been able to not only anchor Team Melli's interior play but also help guide some of the young guys on the national team.

"They are young and need to be in the camp and practice," he said. "If we want the national team to improve and be stronger, we should trust the young players and give them more time."

Among the young players expected to see action for Iran at the Asia Cup are hotshots Behnam Yakhchali, Sajjad Mashayekhi and Vahid Dalirzahan - all of whom played for Iran at the WABA Championship 2017. With these players making an impact for Iran, Haddadi is confident they will be a force to reckon with at the Asia Cup.

"Our national team is doing the best because we have good preparation with the young players for the



FIBA Asia Cup," he explained. "I see the motivation in players' faces, and I know everybody will do the best for the national team."

One stumbling block for Iran will be the inclusion of Australia and New Zealand in the Asia Cup this year. Both the Boomers and Tall Blacks are elite national sides, and having them may dampen the odds of Iran returning to the top of the podium. Haddadi, however, welcomes this development. He knows that for the level of play in Asia to further improve, teams will need to play much better competition.

"I believe New Zealand and Australia will improve Asian basketball," he said. "If we want to play at the world

quality, then we should play with more great teams, and these teams can help us."

Haddadi has been included in Iran's 24-man pool, but should he, indeed, miss the Asia Cup, coach Mehran Hatami will still have some rising stars who can carry the scoring, rebounding and shot-blocking cudgels. These include Rouzbeh Arghavan, Arsalan Kazemi and perhaps even Mohammad Torabi. Still, there is something to be said about having Asia's most dominant center of the past decade playing for your team, and Team Melli will most certainly still prefer having Haddadi on board for the Asia Cup.

Bayern Munich cancel Allianz Arena contract with 1860 Munich



Bayern Munich have cancelled the contract with former Bundesliga champions TSV 1860 Munich at their Allianz Arena stadium.

The cancellation follows talks between 1860's managing director Markus Fauser, and Jan-Christian Dreesen, Bayern's finance director and vice chairperson.

"The agreement precludes 1860 from returning to the Allianz Arena at a later date," Bayern announced in a statement.

Since 2004-05 both Munich clubs have staged their home games at the Allianz Arena. 1860, the first Munich side ever to win the Bundesliga in 1966, previously held an equal share in the stadium, which was built for the 2006 World Cup in Germany. Bayern acquired those shares in 2006 for €11 million, but allowed their neighbours to stage homes games as a tenant.

1860 are bankrolled by Jordanian investor Hasan Ismaik, who hired former Porto coach Vitor Pereira last December, promising to lead the former European Cup Winners' Cup finalists back to

the top echelons of the game.

However, despite heavy investment, 1860 were relegated from the second tier in May and immediately dropped another level for failing to transfer about €5m to the German Football Federation (DFB) for a third-division licence.

Amid chaotic scenes on and off the pitch, former Liverpool CEO Ian Ayre quit on the eve of 1860's relegation showdown with Regensburg after only eight weeks at the club. Ayre, 54, had left his role at Anfield in February to become general manager in Munich, but said constant battles between the club's shareholders had drained him.

Having staved off bankruptcy on Tuesday, 1860 are now preparing for Regionalliga fourth-tier football this season at the Grunwalder Stadium, where they played their home games when winning the Bundesliga title over 50 years ago. 1860 start their Regionalliga campaign at the Grunwalder in the suburb of Giesing against Wacker Burghausen on July 21.

(Source: ESPN)

Mesut Ozil wants to remain at Arsenal and Alexis Sanchez to stay too



Mesut Ozil says he wants to stay at Arsenal -- and is hoping Alexis Sanchez will as well.

Ozil told reporters at Arsenal's kit launch in Australia that his "preference" is still to remain at the club, but that talks are not due to resume until after the team's preseason tour is over.

But the Germany international admitted that he does not know whether Sanchez intends to stay with Arsenal, saying it would "hit the team quite hard if he left."

"It is definitely my preference to stay," Ozil was quoted as saying at the launch of Puma's new grey-and-pink third kit. "It is such a great club and I have always said that I feel very good at Arsenal."

"Once everyone is back in London we will sit down and discuss about the future. For now the most important thing is our preseason and getting through the tour, training and getting fitness. When I'm back in London, we will sit down and discuss."

(Source: Soccernet)

Motor racing: Hamilton aims for Silverstone four-timer

LONDON (Reuters) — Lewis Hamilton will head to Silverstone for this weekend's British Grand Prix with the circuit as much in the headlines as the home hero.

Both have said "no" to Formula One at the start of a big week in Britain -- Hamilton the only driver to snub a major event in London on Wednesday and Silverstone calling time on the race contract after 2019.

"We had a fantastic response from all the teams and 19 of the drivers," said a Formula One spokesman, without naming Hamilton, ahead of the F1 Live London event featuring demonstration runs on the streets of Westminster.

Hamilton told his fans on social media on Tuesday that he was going on a break. His Mercedes team confirmed that only Valtteri Bottas would be in London.

"Two day holiday before the greatest race weekend of the year!!," Hamilton told his 4.5 million followers on Instagram alongside a photograph of himself and friends on the steps of his private jet.

The Briton will be back on Thursday as the focus of attention, bidding to match his late compatriot Jim Clark as the only driver to have won four British Grands Prix in a row and five in total.

The triple world champion is in need of home com-



forts after setbacks beyond his control in Azerbaijan and Austria left him 20 points behind Ferrari's championship leader Sebastian Vettel as the season approaches the halfway stage.

For the first time since March 2014 Hamilton has been off the podium for two successive races and he has no intention of completing that hat-trick at a circuit that ranks among his favorites.

Iran volleyball team to play Turkey in friendlies

Iran will play two friendly matches with Turkey as part of preparation for the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship qualification.

The Iranian team will hold a training camp in Turkey from August 1 to 4 and play two matches with Turkey national volleyball team.

The 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship qualification will be held in Ardabil, Iran from August 10 to 14.

Iran, China, South Korea, Qatar and Kazakhstan are in Pool A. Igor Kolakovic's men will start the competition with a match against South Korea on August 11.

(Source: Tasnim)

Hassan Rahimi remains top of world's wrestling rankings

Hassan Rahimi from Iran remained at top of the 57kg weight class in the United World Wrestling freestyle rankings for July.

Georgi Edisherashvili from Azerbaijan is second in the class and Turkey's Suleyman Atli came third.

In the 86kg weight class, Iranian Olympics gold medalist Hassan Yazdani is second in the rankings.

Abdulrashid Sadulaev from Russia sits top of the class and his countryman Dauran Kurugliev is third.

Komeil Ghasemi from Iran is third in the 125kg weight class after Turkey's Taha Akgul and Geno Petriashvili from Georgia.

(Source: United World Wrestling)

Iran to issue commemorative stamp on Team Melli qualification

The Supreme Stamp Council of Iran's Ministry of Communication & Information Technology has agreed to a request to issue a special stamp commemorating the qualification of Iran men's national football team, domestically known as Team Melli, for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Iranian Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Masoud Soltanifar put in the request with Minister of Information and Communications Technology Mahmoud Vaezi soon after Team Melli became the first Asian team - and the third team after Brazil and hosts Russia - to secure its place at the quadrennial international football tournament.

"The well-deserved qualification of Iran national football team to 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia filled the Iranian nation and sports circles with pride and happiness. You are hereby kindly requested to support Iranian footballers and order the necessary measures to be taken concerning the design and issuance of the postage stamp commemorating this sports achievement," the letter of request read.

Iran's Supreme Stamp Council granted the request on Tuesday, and Team Melli's qualification for the FIFA World Cup is going to be commemorated on the stamp.

On June 12, the Iranian team, which has so far kept its clean sheet record unblemished at the third round of the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualification tournament, became the first Asian team - and the third squad after Brazil and hosts Russia - to secure its place at the quadrennial international football tournament.

Iranian national football team defeated Uzbekistan 2-0 at Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Iranian professional footballer Sardar Azmoun, who currently plays as a striker for FC Rostov in the Russian Premier League, opened the scoring for the host team in the 23rd minute.

Taremi found the back of the net from inside the area in the 88th minute, and finished off the White Wolves.

This is the second time in a row that Team Melli has won the ticket for the FIFA World Cup finals under the tutelage of 64-year-old Portuguese head coach Carlos Queiroz.

(Source: Press TV)



Road to AFC Asian Cup 2023 begins

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup 2023 Bid Workshop for Bidding Member Associations (BMAs) began in the AFC house in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Wednesday with the three remaining potential hosts - China PR, Korea Republic and Thailand - in attendance.

Staging the AFC Asian Cup, which is the biggest single-sport event in Asia, will involve a broad range of activities, including major investments in stadiums and infrastructure, transporting millions of people to the matches, recruiting and training thousands of volunteers, providing an event that is accessible for everyone, and servicing the 24 participating teams and world's media.

To ensure that the planning and delivery of the AFC Asian Cup 2023 enhances the positive impact of the event, the AFC and the BMAs will work together to develop a comprehensive vision.

AFC General Secretary Dato' Windsor John, who gave the opening remarks, welcomed the BMA representatives from China PR, Korea Republic and Thailand, said: "Each edition of the competition represents a huge opportunity: in terms of technical development, commercially, for the global visibility of Asian football, infrastructure development, for the teams and participating Member Associations, the host country and the cities."

(Source: AFC)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Book on ancient Iran history republished in Germany

A R T TEHRAN — German orientalist Theodor Nöldeke's 1887 book "Aufsätze zur Persischen Geschichte" (Essays on Persian History) on the ancient history of Iran has recently been republished by Forgotten Books Publications in Germany.

T.O. Weigel in Leipzig was the original publisher of the book.

Sony Music, Spotify strike licensing deal: Billboard

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Sony Music Entertainment has reached a licensing agreement with streaming music service Spotify, Billboard reported, citing sources.

The terms of the deal were not clear, Billboard reported. The deal with Sony would be the second major label deal for Spotify, which is looking at a possible floatation this year.

The company signed a multiyear license agreement with Universal Music Group in April.



Headphones are seen in front of a logo of online music streaming service Spotify, February 18, 2014.

(Reuters/ Christian Hartmann)

The music streaming service remains in licensing talks with Warner Music Group, Billboard reported.

Spotify declined to comment. Sony Music and Warner Music Group were not immediately available for comment outside regular business hours.

Tired of war, South Sudanese youth turn to art to push for peace

JUBA (Reuters) — South Sudanese activists are using music, poetry, theater, comedy, dance and fashion to preach tolerance in the world's youngest nation which has been divided by years of civil war.

South Sudan won independence from Sudan in 2011 but descended into war in 2013 after President Salva Kiir fired his deputy Riek Machar, unleashing a conflict that has spawned armed factions often along ethnic lines.

Supporters on both sides, many of whom reside outside of the country due to the conflict, have taken the hostilities to the Internet, using Facebook and Twitter to take each other on with posts that are sometimes deemed hate speech.

Enter Ana Taban, which means "I'm tired" in Arabic, a group of young musicians, fashion designers and poets who are using art and culture to demand peace in their homeland.

"I hope for better serviced institutions, better opportunities for youth, a country where I don't need to be from a specific tribe," said Ayak Chol Deng, 31, an epidemiologist, spoken word poet and activist who co-founded the group about a year ago.

The group holds regular open-air performances around the capital Juba and in other towns to call for peace and to educate their fellow citizens on the need for a non-violent resolution of the conflict that has cost thousands of lives.

Meen Mabior Meen, 30, a rap musician and founding member of Ana Taban, said it is a platform for the youth to tackle issues that can change the country. He spoke at his home in Juba, sitting next to the crib of his new-born child.

Such powerful aspirations are also attracting people outside of the country to the group, at #Anataban, in order to play their role in encouraging peace.

They include Abul Oyay, 30, a university student in neighboring Kenya.

Ana Taban's members do not limit themselves to theatrical performances. Bright murals with messages calling for peace, created by its members, can be seen on walls around Juba.

"We are focused on bringing the country together, bringing people together. We are neutral, we are non-partisan," said Jacob Bul Bior, 28, a radio and theater actor.

Arsalan Fasihi: Iran's literary world suffers from bad translations

A R T TEHRAN — Arsalan Fasihi, a Persian translator of works by Turkish writers Orhan Pamuk, Aziz Nesin and Elif Safak, has said that the Iranian literary world is suffering from bad translation of foreign books.

"The badly translated works have caused damage to our language and I can say that all languages except English are suffering from this defect," he told the Persian service of ISNA on Wednesday.

He noted that 80 percent of Persian translators provide a word-by-word translation of foreign works and added, "Many of these translators are not acquainted with the written and literary language in Persian."

"These translators have not read Persian books and cannot write in Persian, and since Persian is their native language they assume that they can be translators," he lamented.

Fasihi said that some translators copy books already translated by their colleagues, and called this plagiarism.

Joining the Berne convention on copyright will prevent plagiarism as well as having several translators working on the same foreign book.

"I am opposed to parallel translations," Fasihi noted and said, "There is no way to stop this chaos except by joining the Berne convention."

Earlier in June, translator Ali Qane' criticized those translators who work on a single foreign book at the same time.

He said that since his publisher has obtained the copyright on Paula Hawkins "Into the Water", at least five of his colleagues are working separately on the novel.

Iran does not hold a membership in any international copyright convention.



Visitor decide what to buy during the 30th Tehran International Book Fair at the Shahr-e Aftab Fairground on May 7, 2017. (Jamejamonline/Chavosh Homavandi)

Italian festival to screen films from Iran

A R T TEHRAN — Five Iranian films will go on screen in the official selection of the Lucania Film Festival, which will take place in the southern Italian town of Pisticci from August 9 to 13.

"Immortality" by Mehdi Fard-Qaderi will go on screen in the Feature Films category, the organizers have announced.

A one-shot feature film, "Immortality" tells the story of some strangers who have to spend a rainy night together on a train.

"Without Morning" by Mohammad Baqi is an entry to the Narrative Short Films category, while "By My Side" by Zaniar Mohammadi-Neku



A poster for the short film "Without Morning" by Mohammad Baqi

and "Track" by Reza Golchin will be screened in the Documentary Short Films section.

"From Hasake with Love", a short film by Mohammad Farahani, is also an entry to the Extra Screenings section.

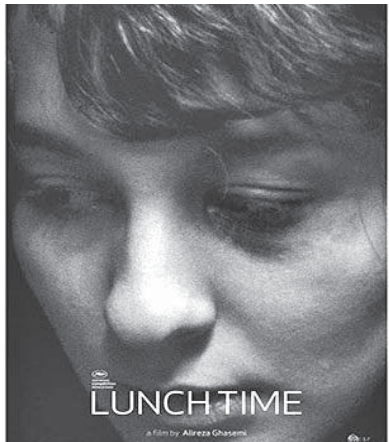
"Lunch Time" wins awards at Brazilian festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director and writer Alireza Qasemi's "Lunch Time" won three awards at the 5th FRAPA Porto Alegre Screenwriting Festival, which was held in the Brazilian city from July 4 to 7.

The film won awards for the best title, the best dialogue and the best screenplay in the short film section of the festival.

"Lunch Time" tells the story of a 16-year-old girl who deals with the harsh bureaucracy to fulfill her responsibility of having to identify the body of her mother.

The festival is the largest event focusing on screenwriting for television and film in Latin America.



A poster for "Lunch Time"

Melbourne film festival to screen Abbas Kiarostami's "24 Frames"

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami's new experimental work "24 Frames" is among the highlights of the Melbourne International Film Festival running from August 3 to 20.

Kiarostami completed "24 Frames" months before his death in July 2016. "It began with musings on epochal paintings and evolved with the photographs I had taken over the years," Kiarostami once said about his film.

"A Man of Integrity" by Iranian filmmaker Mohammad Rasuloof will also be screened at the festival.

The film won the top prize in the Un Certain Regard category at the 70th Cannes Film Festival in May 2017.



A scene from "24 Frames" by Abbas Kiarostami

"A Man of Integrity" is about a gold-fish farmer who is battling corporate oppression in northern Iran.

"Animal", co-directed by Bahram and Bahman Ark, will go on screen in the short film section of the festival, while

"Ascribed Achievements" by Samaneh Shojaei is another entry in this section.

"Animal", which tells the story of a man who attempts to cross a frontier disguised as a ram, won the second prize of the 20th Cinéfondation Selection at the 70th Cannes Film Festival.

"Ascribed Achievements" is about a man who is dissatisfied with his hereditary appearance so he decides to end his life. But his failed suicide creates a new situation in his life.

"The Butterfly Tree" by Priscilla Cameron and "The Silent Eye" by Amiel Courtin-Wilson, both from Australia, and "Girl Unbound" by Erin Heidenreich from USA, Canada and Pakistan are among other highlights of the festival.

Russian minister had 'long chat' with Bolshoi before ballet premiere pulled: TASS

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russia's minister for culture had a long conversation with the Bolshoi Theatre before it announced it was postponing the world premiere of Nureyev, a ballet about the famous Russian dancer, the TASS news agency reported on Monday.

The long awaited premiere of the ballet about Rudolf Nureyev, one of the first Soviet artists to defect to the West, was due to be held on July 11, but the Bolshoi said on its website late on Saturday it would not take place.

Vladimir Urin, the theatre's director general, told a news conference on Monday it had been pulled because rehearsals had shown it was not ready. He said it would be staged in May next year instead.

"We watched one run-through, and given the quality of the ballet, we realised it was bad," Urin told reporters.

But TASS cited a spokeswoman for Vladimir



ballet director of the Bolshoi Theatre, attends a news conference on the postponement of the world premiere of the Nureyev ballet, weeks after its director Kirill Serebrennikov was questioned as a witness in a fraud investigation, at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Russia, July 10, 2017. (Reuters/ Maxim Shemetov)

Medinsky, the culture minister, as saying he had spoken to Urin beforehand, suggesting there were other concerns.

"Yes there was a long conversation with Urin," TASS cited Irina Kaznacheeva, the spokeswoman, as saying. "But a ban is the not the ministry's working style." She said she did not know details of the conversation.

In 1958-61 Nureyev was a principal dancer of the Kirov (now Mariinsky) Ballet in St Petersburg. He asked for political asylum in France while on tour in Paris in 1961.

The postponement has caused a scandal in Moscow. The Bolshoi, which was founded in 1776, was last embroiled in controversy in 2013 when its then artistic director, Sergei Filin, had acid thrown in his face in an episode which lifted the lid on poisonous rivalries over roles, money and power at one of Russia's most prominent cultural institutions.

Men who stopped train attack to star in Clint Eastwood film

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The three California men who thwarted a terror attack on a French train in 2015 will make the rare move of playing themselves in a Clint Eastwood-directed film about their heroics, a studio announced Tuesday.

Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone, Oregon National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos and civilian Anthony Sadler, all childhood friends from California, will star in "The 15:17 to Paris," a film based on the book they co-wrote about taking

down a terrorist, Warner Bros. said in a statement.

The film, which began production this week, follows the lives of the three friends from childhood to the evening when they helped subdue the man who opened fire inside a train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris.

The Sacramento-area men were vacationing in Europe when they tackled Ayoub El-Khazzani. El-Khazzani had boarded the Paris-bound train with a Kalashnikov rifle, pistol and box cutter.

The film will be the latest of several about real-life heroes that Eastwood has taken on, including 2014's "American Sniper", and 2016's "Sully". But the leads in those films were played by Oscar nominee Bradley Cooper and Oscar-winner Tom Hanks, respectively, not their actual subjects.

It's common to give cameo roles to the subjects of films that don't require more than a line or two, but this case is nearly unprecedented in recent Hollywood history. There are no

reports of the men having any acting experience, though Skarlatos appeared on "Dancing with the Stars" soon after the Paris incident.

Nearly all who have played themselves on screen were actors to begin with, such as Kumail Nanjiani in the current release "The Big Sick" or John Malkovich in 1999's "Being John Malkovich."

The studio's statement did not elaborate on what prompted Eastwood and Warner Bros. to cast the men.