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Iran crowned champion in Asian youth karate meet

Sports Desk

Iran clinched the top spot in the 2017 AKF Cadet, Junior & U-21 Championships in the Kazak capital city of Astana on Friday.

Iranian boys and girls collected a total of 32 medals including 16 golds in the competitions to finish above Japan and Kazakhstan which grabbed 26 (eight golds) and 18 (seven golds) medals respectively.

Iran's Hossein Khedri (-57kg), Erfan Davoudi (-63kg) and Kamran Basiri (+70kg) claimed three gold medals in the kumite competitions of the men's cadet.

In junior contests, Iran's men and women kata teams both won the title. The country's Hadish Jamal also won gold in the women's individual kata contests.

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Trump expected to certify Iran's compliance with nuclear deal

President Donald Trump is expected to re-certify that Iran is complying with its nuclear deal, multiple US administration officials said, meaning Trump will go along with a deal which he once promised to "tear up."

Trump is required to certify Iran's compliance every 90 days and the officials told CNN that he is expected to do so, cautioning, however, that Trump can be unpredictable and could change his mind at the last minute. Trump, the

officials said, is taking his cues from Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who has argued that sticking to the deal is the best way to verify Iranian compliance.

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Japanese, South Korean firms to fund Siraf refineries

A consortium of South Korean and Japanese companies signed agreements to build and implement a chain of condensate refining projects in southern Iran a project known as the Octopus of the Persian Gulf.

The agreements were signed between South Korea's Daewoo and

Hyundai as well as Japan's Chioda — all partners in the project to construct Siraf refineries in Iran's southern province of Bushehr. The combined value of the investments in Siraf could be around \$3 billion, IRNA reported.

A majority of the funding — \$2 billion — will come from the Export-Im-

port Bank of Korea (KEXIM) as well as the Korea Trade Insurance Corporation (K-Sure). The remaining \$1 billion is to be made available by Japanese financial institutions including Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI).

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Iranian math genius battles cancer

Internationally-renowned Iranian mathematician Maryam Mirzakhani has been hospitalized in the US for deteriorating health conditions caused by cancer recurrence.

According to one of her relatives, Mirzakhani is currently receiving treatment at a hospital in the US after medical tests confirmed that cancer has spread to her bone marrow a few weeks ago, the Iranian Haft-e Sobh daily reported.

Maryam's parents travelled to the US on Monday to join their daughter and her family and take care of them.

Mirzakhani had been diagnosed with breast cancer four years ago, a year before she set the record of the first ever woman to win the prestigious Fields Medal, also known as the Nobel Prize of mathematics.

The medical team has put the genius mathematician under intensive care to treat her third recurrence of cancer.

The 40-year-old mathematician, currently a professor at Stanford University, was the first Iranian woman elected to the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in May 2016, in recognition of her "distinguished and continuing achievement in original research."

With past honorees, including renowned physicist Albert Einstein, and inventors Thomas Edison, and Alexander Graham Bell, being a member of the organization is considered to be as one of the highest achievements for scientists in the United States. Born in 1977 in Tehran, Mirzakhani was raised in the Iranian capital. As a brilliant teenager, she won gold medals in both the International Mathematical Olympiad (Hong Kong 1994), in which she scored 41 out of 42 points, and the International Mathematical Olympiad (Canada 1995) with a perfect score of 42 out of 42 points, ranking her first jointly with 14 other participants.

The math genius received her Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Iran's prestigious Sharif University of Technology in 1999. She later went to the US to further her education, earning a PhD degree in mathematics from Harvard University in 2004. She became full professor of mathematics at the age of 31 in 2008 at Stanford University where she is currently lecturing.

Mirzakhani received Blumenthal Award from the American Mathematical Society in 2009.

She was also awarded the 2013 biennial Ruth Lyttle Satter Prize in Mathematics by the American Mathematical Society, and garnered the 2014 Clay Research Award from the Clay Mathematics Institute.

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PERSPECTIVE

US hands off Iran



By Dan Kovalik*

I just travelled to Iran where was I invited to speak at the University of Tehran about human rights and "humanitarian intervention." I put this term in quotes because I've rarely ever seen any intervention that was truly humanitarian or that produced humane results, but more on that later.

Before I traveled to Iran, a number of friends and family members expressed shock that I would go there, feared for my safety and well-being, with some urging me not to go at all. Of course, this is not surprising given the antipathy of the US towards Iran and how that country is portrayed in the mainstream press.

We in the US are constantly told that Iran is our enemy; that it is indeed part of some "axis of evil" that must be sanctioned, fought against and even subject to "regime change." In terms of the first assertion — that Iran is our enemy — we are usually told that this is so because Iran is allegedly a "state sponsor of terrorism." This is a quite curious claim given that Iran is a sworn enemy of Isis and Al-Qaida, and indeed was set to help fight Al-Qaida and the Taliban after the 9/11 attacks until Donald Rumsfeld intervened.

Meanwhile, the US's close ally Saudi Arabia — a country we just sold \$110 billion of arms to — has been covertly and overtly supporting Isis and Al-Qaida for years. Recall that fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 attackers were indeed from Saudi Arabia and that Saudi Arabia aided and abetted some of the 9/11 attackers.

The claim about Iran sponsoring terrorism is also ironic given the US's support for the cultist Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) organization which itself wants to topple the Iranian government, despite its unpopularity in Iran, and which was actually designated by the US as a terrorist organization from 1997 to 2012.

As the London Guardian notes, the MEK has "claimed responsibility for murdering thousands of Iranians" since 1981 (my friends in Iran put the figure of those killed at 17,000); supported the seizure of the US Embassy in Iran in 1979 and the holding of the American hostages; joined Saddam Hussein in fighting Iran during the Iran-Iraq war; and killed at least six Americans during the 1970s. Yet, the MEK, which was holding a conference in Paris while I was in Iran, is now a darling of such US political bigwigs as John Bolton, Newt Gingrich, Joe Lieberman, Howard Dean and Rudy Giuliani.

Another claim that is made about Iran is that it is a despotic, sexist theocracy which is offensive to our Western values and sensibilities (as if those are the gold standard).

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Catalonia hit by resignations in pre-referendum crisis

Three prominent members of Catalonia's government have quit after cracks emerged in the Spanish region's separatist executive just months before a planned independence referendum opposed by Madrid.

Catalonia leader Carles Puigdemont told the press on Friday that ministers in charge of interior matters and education, as well as government spokeswoman Neus Munte had stepped aside, AFP reported.

He did not give a reason for their departure, but Catalonia's executive has recently been embroiled in heated debate over the vote planned for October 1 as Madrid piles pressure on members of the northeastern regional government.

The first major sign of tensions came earlier this month when Jordi Baiget, in charge of business, expressed doubts over whether the referendum could ever take place, given the power of Madrid.

Puigdemont promptly announced Baiget's departure — a decision that was criticized by some of the most fervent supporters of independence.

Madrid is fiercely opposed to a referendum, deeming it illegal and a threat to Spain's unity.

The Constitutional Court has already quashed a resolution approved by Catalonia's parliament calling for the referendum to take place.

It has also warned Catalonia's elected officials that they will face legal consequences if they take any steps towards holding such a vote.

Catalonia's former president Artur Mas was banned from holding office for two years for organizing a referendum in 2014. The vote he held was merely symbolic and non-binding.

The referendum planned for October will be binding, according to Catalonia's executive, which has said it will declare independence within 48 hours if the region's voters opt to separate from Spain.

Civil servants in Catalonia are in a tough situation, struggling to decide whose orders to follow — those of their Catalan bosses or of the national government in Madrid.

They will be called upon to organize the referendum by carrying out such steps as opening schools to serve as polling stations, or policing the 7.5-million-strong region.

If they disobey orders from their Catalan bosses, they could face disciplinary action but if they obey, they will go against Spanish law and will therefore face sanctions, which could even lead to job losses. Madrid has also warned companies against any involvement in the referendum, such as providing ballot boxes for the vote.



GETTY IMAGES

US judge hands latest defeat on travel ban

In another setback for US President Donald Trump, a federal judge in Hawaii further weakened his already diluted travel ban by vastly expanding the list of family relationships with US citizens that visa applicants can use to get into the United States.

The ruling is the latest piece of pushback in the fierce fight set off by the ban Trump first attempted in January. It will

culminate with arguments in front of the US Supreme Court in October, AP wrote.

The current rules aren't so much an outright ban as a tightening of already-tough visa policies affecting citizens from six Muslim-majority countries: Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Iran and Yemen. People from those countries who already have visas will be allowed into the country. Only narrow categories of people,

including those with relatives named in Thursday's ruling, will be considered for new visas.

US District Judge Derrick Watson on Thursday ordered the government not to enforce the ban on grandparents, grandchildren, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins of people in the United States.

"Common sense, for instance, dic-

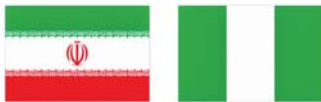
tates that close family members be defined to include grandparents," Watson said in his ruling. "Indeed grandparents are the epitome of close family members."

Watson also ruled that the government may not exclude refugees who have formal assurance and promise of placement services from a resettlement agency in the US.

Iran, Nigeria seeking technology cooperation

Iran and Nigeria have expressed their willingness to strengthen partnership in technology.

During a meeting between Iran's Ambassador to Abuja, Morteza Zarchi and Nigeria Minister of Science and Technology, Ogbonnaya Onu, the Nigerian official expressed his country's desire to consolidate relationship with Iran, especially in the area of technology.



Onu said that both countries have had a warm relationship, noting that there is need for the relationship to grow from strength to strength, vanguardngr.com reported.

The Nigerian minister said that science and technology would help the African country to use its resources more efficiently to create jobs. He told the Iranian official that Nigeria would be happy to cooperate with Iran.

"I must commend you for the good work you have done to promote good relationship between Iran and Nigeria... I also commend Iran for its commitment in using science and technology for nation building", the Nigerian minister told the Iranian envoy.

Zarchi stressed that Nigeria and Iran were exploring sources of revenue by diversifying their economies to technology and agriculture. He said that Iranian investors were interested in partnering with Nigeria in the science sector.

Trump expected to certify Iran's compliance with nuclear deal

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The Trump administration last certified the agreement in April.

The deal, signed between Iran and six world powers two years ago, was a frequent focus of Trump's ire on the campaign trail. He railed against it at events saying dismantling it was his "number one priority."

One official explained Trump's plan to certify the deal was more of a requirement than something the president wanted to do. The deal, the official said, is under review through a process being led by the National Security Council and State Department. The review should be completed by the end of the summer and the officials said the administration appears to be moving toward a policy of strengthening implementation of the deal and planning for when the deal expires.

But one official said that Trump's plan to certify Iran as compliant by Monday doesn't mean he wouldn't pull out of the deal soon after.

"He does not like this deal. He thinks it is a major national security weakness for the United States," the official said, adding that the "question is when and in what fashion" the United States gets out of the deal.

The deal gets to re-certify, though, means Iran will continue to benefit from the sanctions relief outlined in the agreement.

Republicans have urged Trump not to certify the agreement. The Weekly Standard first reported Trump's plan to certify the deal by Monday.



On second anniversary of Iran nuclear deal

Zarif says US not fully compliant with spirit of deal

The Iranian foreign minister lashed out at the US for its failure to completely observe its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal by occasionally preventing Tehran from enjoying the full benefits of the agreement which turned two yesterday.

Speaking to reporters upon his arrival in New York, Mohammad Javad Zarif stressed that all parties to the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), must remain committed to the terms of the agreement, Press TV reported.

Zarif is in New York to attend the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development on Friday.

"Unfortunately up until now, the United States, while remaining at the very least possible level compliant with the agreement, has failed to observe, in times, the letter and mostly the spirit of the agreement by not allowing Iran to enjoy the full benefits of the nuclear deal. We believe they need to reconsider that position, because it is not conducive to the sustainability of the agreement," Zarif said.

Zarif argued that the West's policy of pressure against Iran has proved to be ineffective, adding, "The JCPOA is a multilateral agreement that was the result of many years of negotiation."

"It was also the result of many years of pressure. After all those pressures failed to bring about the results that were expected from those who were imposing pressure on the Iranian people, there was no other choice but to reach a negotiated settlement," added the Iranian minister.

"I think at the end of the day, everybody will see that the agreement will represent an outcome that was the best possibility for all concerned," he pointed out.

Second anniversary of nuclear deal

Zarif's comments come on the second anniversary of the landmark deal, which was inked on July 14, 2015, between Tehran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia – plus Germany. The JCPOA was later endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution.

Since January 16, 2016, when the JCPOA took effect, the International Atomic Energy Organization, which monitors the technical implementation of the deal, has in numerous reports confirmed Iran's compliance.

During his presidential campaign, US President Donald Trump described the



nuclear accord with Iran as a "disaster" and vowed to unilaterally scrap it.

While he has not carried out that threat, his administration is conducting a "review" to see whether the provision of sanctions relief to Iran – a US commitment under the deal – is in America's "national interest."

On Tuesday, the European Union's foreign affairs chief, Federica Mogherini, described the historic nuclear deal with Iran as an international agreement that "does not belong to one country," noting that all the parties to the deal "have the responsibility to make sure that this continues to be implemented."

In response to a question about the possibility of any meeting between Iranian and American officials during the New York visit, Zarif said, "For this visit, no meetings have been planned. I plan to meet not with US officials, but with members of the wider intellectual community that have impact on US policy-making."

Fighting terror in region

Zarif pointed to the ongoing campaign against terrorism and extremism across the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria, and noted that the current crisis is

mainly caused by the US interventionist policies in the region.

"The nightmare that we are facing in the region is a consequence of many years of intervention and short-sighted policies by the US in the region which has resulted, as expected, in the exacerbation of extremism and terrorism in our region," he said.

The foreign minister said Iran has been "in the forefront of fighting terrorism and extremism in the region" and expressed satisfaction over the fact that the people and governments of Iraq and Syria have succeeded in retaking their territories.

"This menace ... has been the result of short-sighted policies from the outside and unfortunately, negative policies by countries in the region who continue to sponsor, to support and provide arms and money to terrorists and extremist organizations and unfortunately provide the ideology of hatred and exclusion which lies at the heart of these extremist movements," Zarif noted.

The remarks come after Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi formally declared victory of the country's forces over the Daesh terrorist group on Monday, one day after the country's military and Popular Mobilization Forces took full control

of the strategic city of Mosul.

Zarif underlined Iran's determination to help end violence in Syria through a negotiated settlement at Astana peace talks, adding, "We support a comprehensive cease-fire throughout Syria, excluding obviously terrorist and extremist organizations, particularly Daesh and Al-Nusra."

"We have been in consultation with Russia and Turkey in the Astana process and outside the Astana process in order to make sure that successful implementation of our agreements would continue and would further be enhanced in order to make sure that the suffering of the Syrian people is reduced and hopefully move forward to humanitarian assistance to all Syrians throughout Syria," the top diplomat pointed out.

Syria's warring parties have attended five rounds of peace talks brokered by Iran, Russia and Turkey in the Kazakh capital, Astana. The Astana discussions produced a memorandum of understanding on de-escalation zones in Syria that sharply reduced fighting in the Arab country.

The negotiations are aimed at bringing an end to the foreign-backed militancy in Syria, which began in March 2011.

Iranian math genius battles...

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But the most important of all her awards is the 2014 Fields Medal that she won in recognition of her contributions to the understanding of the symmetry of curved surfaces.

This medal, commonly viewed as the highest honor a mathematician can receive, is given every four years to mathematicians under the age of 40, by the International Congress of the International Mathematical Union (IMU). Mirzakhani's research interests mainly include Teichmüller theory and ergodic theory. About her mathematical approach to developing new proofs, she has said "it is like being lost in a jungle and trying to use all the knowledge that you can gather to come up with some new tricks, and with some luck you might find a way out."

Mirzakhani is married to Jan Vondrák, a Czech theoretical computer scientist who works at IBM Almaden Research Center.

They have a daughter named Anahita.

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Again, given that the US is in lock-step with the retrograde, misogynistic monarchy of Saudi Arabia, this claim rings hollow. Moreover, as any visitor to Iran will tell you, Iran is actually a quite modern, Western country where many people speak English. It is also a country where women, though certainly not as liberated as they should be, for the most part wear minimal head coverings, such as colorful silk scarves (which nearly all of the women on my flight from Frankfurt began to put on their heads as we descended toward the Tehran airport); freely drive cars and are found in every sector of public and commercial life.

Most importantly, though, talk about "regime change" begs the question of what the regime will be changed to and how it will be changed. In the case of one of the most notable recent acts of regime change the West has effected – Libya – we see that the West is content to topple a government, doing great damage to the people, civilian infrastructure and ancient antiquities in the process, and leave nothing but chaos in its wake. In my view, the West seems to have the same plans for Syria where it has aimed at toppling the Assad government

US hands off Iran

while claiming to support "moderate rebels" who do not seem to exist. The regime changes in Iraq and Afghanistan have not produced much better results with tens of thousands being killed, the countries being laid to ruin, and at best weak governments resulting from the ashes.

As I walked through the beautiful streets of Tehran and Isfahan, was warmly greeted by the beautiful people of Iran who actually love Americans as I came to find; and witnessed Iran's wealth of ancient architecture, including functioning Armenian Christian Churches and Jewish synagogues, I couldn't help but feel pangs of fear and even anger at the thought of but another "humanitarian intervention" which would surely lay waste to many of the people and antiquities I was encountering.

And, I wondered what the plan would be for Iran if the US were to seek "regime change." Would the US put in power the unpopular and bizarre MEK? Or, maybe the US would put in power the son of the last Shah (i.e., King) who apparently is making noises of wishing to return. Recall that the US installed the Shah in 1953 after overthrowing the democratically-elected Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh because Mossadegh wished to nationalize Iran's oil

fields and use the oil revenue for the benefit of the Iranian people – an unforgivable offense. The Shah was kept in power until the 1979 revolution through the help of the SAVAK – a brutal security apparatus which the CIA helped to set up and train in torture techniques to prevent democracy from breaking out in Iran. I had the chance to tour the main SAVAK prison and torture center – now a museum – and see the rows and rows of photos of those imprisoned, tortured and killed by the SAVAK. Is the US interested in again handing over Iran to this terrible regime?

The truth is that Iran is a society which is progressing, if slowly and in its own way. It has a democratically-elected president and legislature and a vibrant civil society which is pushing for ever greater freedoms and reforms. If we haven't learned by now, it is up to the Iranian people to decide their own fate and what type of government they will have. I am confident the Iranian people will find their way, in their own manner and in their own time, if we just allow them to do so.

**Dan Kovalik is an American human rights and labor lawyer. This article was first published by The Huffington Post.*

WHO warns of cholera risk at annual hajj pilgrimage



REUTERS

International Desk

A cholera epidemic in Yemen, which has infected more than 332,000 people, could spread during the annual hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia in September, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Friday.

The pilgrimage draws 2.4 million Muslims every year, including 1.5-2 million foreigners, raising the risk from diseases such as dengue, yellow fever, Zika virus and meningococcal disease as well as cholera, the WHO said, Reuters reported.

The organization also praised Saudi

preparedness with Dominique Legros, a WHO cholera expert, saying Saudi Arabia had not had a cholera outbreak in many years thanks to reinforced surveillance and rapid tests to detect cases early.

Yemen has been devastated by a Saudi Arabia's 27-month-old war on the impoverished country, making it a breeding ground for the disease, which spreads by feces getting into food or water and thrives in places with poor sanitation.

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

The incubation period of the disease,

which spreads through ingestion of faecal matter and causes acute watery diarrhoea, is a matter of hours. Once symptoms start, cholera can kill within hours if the patient does not get treatment.

But people with symptoms are just the tip of the iceberg because 80 percent of patients show no symptoms, Legros said on Friday.

"That's why we advise countries against airport screening for patients. The Saudis don't do that. It's useless, technically speaking."

The United Nations has blamed the warring sides in Yemen and their international allies, including Saudi Arabia,

for fueling the 11-week cholera outbreak, driving millions of people closer to famine, and for hindering aid access.

The WHO has rolled out an emergency treatment program, based on the vestiges of Yemen's shattered health system, to try and catch new cases early and stop the explosive spread of the disease.

The number of new cases has continued to grow by about 6,000 per day, but the number of deaths appears to have slowed dramatically, according to Reuters analysis of WHO data.

Death rates have slumped from 20-40 in recent weeks to an average of nine per day over the past six days.

Brazilian president wins corruption charges reprieve

A congressional committee in Brazil voted against recommending President Michel Temer be tried in the Supreme Court on corruption charges.

The vote reduces the chances of the president appearing in the dock, BBC reported.

But it is non-binding and still needs to be approved by the full Parliament. The public prosecutor has said he will instigate new corruption charges.

Earlier ex-President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said he would seek reelection despite a corruption conviction.

Temer was charged last month, accused of plotting to receive bribes from the boss of a giant meatpacking firm. He has denied any wrongdoing.

The final decision on whether he is tried by the Supreme Court lies with Parliament that is expected to vote on the matter within days.



REUTERS

In order for Temer to face prosecution two-thirds of the 513 deputies in the lower house need to approve the charges against him. The government is confident it has sufficient votes to block an eventual trial.

The charges on Thursday were the first of several against the president made by Prosecutor General Rodrigo Janot, who has said he will present more in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, the former president Lula gave his first public reaction after being convicted of corruption charges and sentenced to nine and a half years in prison.

Vowing to appeal, he called the case politically motivated and said he plans to run for president in 2018.

"If anyone thinks that with this move against me they have taken me out of the game, they are wrong. I am in the game," he said.

Despite the conviction, and four more upcoming trials, Lula remains a popular figure.

Iraq faces pockets of Daesh resistance in Mosul's Old City



REUTERS

Iraqi forces faced further pockets of resistance from Daesh terrorists in Mosul's Old City on Friday, four days after the prime minister declared victory.

Iraqi Army helicopters flew overhead and explosions could be heard, residents said, while videos of alleged revenge attacks against people detained during the retaking of Mosul underlined future security challenges, Reuters reported.

"Three mortars landed on our district," a resident of Faysaliya, in east Mosul, just across the Tigris river, said by telephone.

A few hundred Daesh terrorists swept into Mosul three years ago, imposed a reign of terror after the Iraqi Army collapsed and declared a caliphate spanning Iraqi and Syrian territory seized in a shock offensive.

The victory of US-backed Iraq forces in Mosul marked the biggest defeat for Daesh, which is under siege in the eastern Syrian city of Raqqa, its operational base.

Even though the terrorist group's caliphate is now crumbling, it is expected to revert to an insurgency and keep carrying out attacks in the Middle East and West.

Securing long-term peace in Iraq will not be easy. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi faces the

challenge of preventing revenge killings that could create more instability, along with sectarian tensions and ethnic strife that have dogged Iraq since a US-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the country's top Shia Muslim cleric, urged Iraqis to avoid violence and sectarianism in his first Friday sermon since the proclamation of victory in Mosul, Iraq's second largest city.

More than 800,000 people still displaced

The UN said on Friday more than a million people were displaced from Mosul by the battle in the Iraqi city against the terrorists, but nearly 200,000 have returned home.

Out of nearly 1.05 million people who fled the fighting after the offensive against Daesh began last October, 825,000 remain displaced, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said in a statement, AFP reported.

The city on the Tigris River in northern Iraq had an estimated population of two million in 2014.

IOM's chief of mission in Iraq, Thomas Lothar Weiss, said the new displacement figures underscored "the enormous crisis" in the area.

UN calls on Bahrain to release rights activist Nabeel Rajab

The UN human rights office called on Bahrain on Friday to "unconditionally and immediately" release rights campaigner Nabeel Rajab, who was sentenced to two years in jail this week.

Rajab, a leading figure in a 2011 pro-democracy uprising that was crushed by the government, was sentenced on Monday, supporters said, for allegedly making "false or malicious" statements about authorities, Reuters reported.



"Human rights defenders in Bahrain must be able to carry out their work without fear of reprisals and should not face detention or prosecution for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Criticizing the government should not be a crime," UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Liz Throssell told a Geneva news briefing.

"We note that Mr Rajab has been in detention since June 2016. We call on the Bahraini authorities to immediately and unconditionally release him," she said.

Scores of people have died in the Manama government crackdown on dissent since 2011, when the public rose in peaceful pro-democracy protests.

Ankara, Doha insist Turkish base will stay in Qatar

Turkey and Qatar on Friday insisted Ankara would keep a new military base in the emirate, rejecting demands from other Persian Gulf countries for the facility to be closed.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain last month cut diplomatic ties with Qatar over what they allege is Doha's support for extremist groups and ties to Iran, AFP reported.

Qatar denies the accusations.

They then issued 13 wide-ranging demands to lift a blockade placed on Qatar, including the closure of the Turkish military base in the emirate.

"No country has the right to raise the issue of the Turkish base or the military cooperation between Qatar and Turkey as long as this cooperation respects international law," Qatar Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told reporters in Ankara.



AFP

Speaking after meeting Al Thani, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the demands to close the base "go against the two countries' sovereignty."

"A third country has no right to say something to Qatar or Turkey. Everyone must respect this," he added.

Cavusoglu added that until now, there had been "no objections" over the base, Turkey's first military facility in the Persian Gulf region.

The crisis has put Turkey in a delicate position since Qatar is its main ally in the Persian Gulf, but Ankara does not want to antagonize key regional power Saudi Arabia.

Shortly after the crisis unfolded, Ankara fast-tracked the deployment of troops at the base as part of a bilateral defense deal agreed in late 2014.

Turkey now has 150 troops at the base, Hurriyet daily reported on Wednesday, up from 80 first sent after the Parliament approved the deployment.

Cavusoglu also pointed to the lack of objections to the presence in Qatar of the largest American airbase in the Middle East, seen as crucial to the US-led campaign against the Daesh terrorist group.

Doha visit

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said he will visit the key players in the crisis - including Saudi Arabia and Qatar - in the next weeks.

The Qatari top diplomat, who will meet Erdogan later, said Doha was being subjected to an "unjust siege" imposed "without any reason."

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson left Qatar on Thursday after a tour of Persian Gulf Arab countries aimed at easing the worst regional dispute in years, saying he had made proposals that would help resolve the crisis.

During his trip Tillerson signed a US-Qatari accord on combating the financing of terrorism in an effort to help ease the crisis. Qatar's opponents said it fell short of allaying their concerns, but Cavusoglu said it showed Qatar's sincerity.

SPECIAL NEWS

Domestic Economy Desk

South Korean convenience store chain taps Iran market

BGF Retail Co., the operator of South Korea's largest convenience store chain CU, said Friday it signed a master franchise deal with an Iranian company marking the first overseas expansion for a convenience store operator.



IRNA

Under the agreement signed at the company's headquarters in Samseong-dong, southern Seoul, home appliances firm Entekhab Investment Development Group will take charge of investment and operation of the outlets in the Middle Eastern country, Yonhap reported.

The announcement came as the competition in South Korea's convenience store business, dominated by three chains — CU, GS25 and 7-Eleven — is heating up with an increased number of outlets.

The market size for convenience stores in South Korea surpassed 20 trillion won (\$17.5 billion) last year, up 18.6 percent from 17.2 trillion won the previous year, backed by fast growing single-person households and an aging society, according to industry data.

A master franchise contract is a deal in which a brand operator provides a franchisee company know-how, management systems and control rights to run the brand in a specified territory in return for loyalty fees. In this instance it means that Entekhab will take charge of opening and operating CU branches in Iran.

Through the deal, BGF Retail received an initial fee of €3 million (\$3.4 million). It will receive more loyalty fees in the future as more branches are established in Iran, although the company did not share details on exactly what they would be.

"Master franchising is a method to stably receive loyalty while minimizing risk in foreign markets," said BGF Retail in a statement.

Local partner Entekhab Investment Development Group is one of the largest retail companies. The group has over two decades experience working with South Korean companies.

An Entekhab spokesman said, "Because convenience stores don't exist here, we're expecting branches to expand rapidly to 300 by 2020 and 1,000 by 2022."

Populated with more than 80 million people, Iran is one of the Middle East's biggest markets. After the United Nations lifted economic sanctions against the country in 2016, Iran has risen as one of the few remaining blue ocean markets for global companies.

Moreover, its GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity is \$18,100, three times more than Southeast Asia's rising economic leader, Vietnam.

"An interesting point we found while looking into the Iranian market was that 60 percent of the population is aged under 40," said a BGF Retail spokesman. Young people account for 50 to 60 percent of convenience store revenue.

"The contract is a notable event for the company in that it implies CU's competence as a leading convenience store was acknowledged in the global market," said BGF Retail CEO Park Jae-koo.

Production of cooking oil could help Iran save \$4b per year

Production of oil cake, cooking oil and soy could help Iran save up to \$4 billion per year, said an agricultural official.

Alireza Mohajer, an official with Agriculture Ministry, said that the country spends \$4 billion on importing oil products per year while domestic production of these items will help cut expenses, IRNA reported.



Calling for producing cooking oil products domestically, he added that about 90 percent of oil consumed in Iran are being imported.

According to the official, cooking oil in Iran mostly come from palm and soy seeds which are imported from Brazil, Argentina, Malaysia and Indonesia.

He added that the per capita consumption of cooking oil in Iran stands at 20 kilograms per year. Iran had earlier announced plans to produce 200,000 tons of rapeseed in the year to March 2018.

Mining projects worth \$7b revived since 2013

Domestic Economy Desk

Iran Mines and Mineral Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMMIDRO) has commissioned mining and mining industries projects worth \$7 billion since 2013, said the organization's managing director.

Mehdi Karbasian added that in 2013 when Iranian President Hassan Rouhani took office, unfinished IMMIDRO projects were revived in cooperation with domestic companies despite a severe lack of liquidity brought about by the stiff Western sanctions, IRNA reported.

He added then, the private sector provided assistance to the organization to undertake new ventures.

Karbasian said projects worth \$1 billion will become operational by September 22.

The IMMIDRO CEO added Shadegan's direct-reduced iron (DRI), also known as sponge iron, plant is his organization's first project to be completed and inaugurated using domestic technology in a ceremony attended by top Iranian officials.

He further said two other sponge iron production units in Mianeh in the north-western Iranian province of East Azarbaijan and Neyriz in the southern province of Fars will become operational on July 23 and August 22 respectively.

Karbasian noted that another sponge iron plant will begin production by September 23 in Sabzevar in Khorasan Razavi Province, east Iran.

The IMMIDRO chief added other provincial sponge iron production projects will be completed by mid-March 2018.

Karbasian said following the commissioning of IMMIDRO's projects, aimed at processing minerals in coming months, the organization will prevent exports of raw materials during Rouha-



IRNA

ni's second term in office — to begin in early August.

He underlined this will also help create more value-added in the mining sector.

Karbasian said Moteh gold mine meets a part of its need to raw materials by making purchases from the country's small mines, adding this has brought prosperity to private sector mines.

Commenting on the project to set up a port in Parsian Special Economic Energy Zone in the southern Iranian province of Hormuzgan, he said the plan will soon enter the executive phase.

Karbasian stressed that Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has recently announced that his ministry will support the project by supplying gas to the region.

He said up until 2013, a number of projects in Sangen, Khorasan Razavi Province, were left unfinished, adding currently, the zone's first iron pellet production unit is almost ready for inauguration while another plant in the region is in queue to become operational following that. "As a result, 4,000 jobs have been created."

IMMIDRO chief added that since the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — also known as the nuclear deal signed between Iran and the P5+1 — went into effect, IMMIDRO has managed to attract investments from foreign companies to complete its projects.

He noted that his organization obtained finance for implementing huge projects such as the titanium production plant in Kahnuj, Kerman Province, and the zinc factory in Mahdi Abad, Yazd Province, during the incumbent government's tenure in office.

Swiss company starts construction of 30-MW solar plant

Domestic Economy Desk

A Swiss company began the construction of a solar plant with 30 MW capacity in Jajarm, North Khorasan Province on Thursday in a ceremony attended by Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian.

During the ground-breaking ceremony, Chitchian said that North Khorasan Province will be promoted to the country's clean energy hub once the power plant comes on stream. IRNA reported.

Pointing to impacts of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the minister said that cooperation between the Swiss firm as well as companies from Spain and France with their counterparts in Iran shows the successes of the government in attracting foreign investment.

In July 2016, the Renewable Energy Organization of Iran (SUNA) and a group of investors from Switzerland and Italy signed a contract to build a solar power plant in North Khorasan Province.

Following agreements with German firms for the construction of solar plants in Iran, the government decided to also work with the Swiss and Italians who have agreed to invest €7.5 million (\$4.4 million) in Iran's renewable energy sector.

Based on the contract, the solar plant with a capacity of 30 MW will be wholly designed, built, installed and launched by

the European firm.

Alireza Sabouri, managing director of North Khorasan Electric Distribution Company, told IRNA that Hamoun Mehr Afarin company will cooperate with

the European firm. Alireza Sabouri, managing director of North Khorasan Electric Distribution Company, told IRNA that Hamoun Mehr Afarin company will cooperate with

the European firm. Alireza Sabouri, managing director of North Khorasan Electric Distribution Company, told IRNA that Hamoun Mehr Afarin company will cooperate with



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Swiss Ecofinance Company on constructing the solar plant.

Sabouri said in July 2016 that SUNA has provided the foreign company 60 hectares of land near a 400-kilovolt power station in the city of Jajarm to transfer its power output.

Pointing to a directive by the state-run Tavanir company on the optimal use of domestic equipment and facilities, the of-

cial underlined that except solar panels and inverters, all other parts and components of the solar project will be built and supplied by Iranian firms.

In line with its declared policy to raise investments in renewables, the government will buy the electricity from renewable plants at a tariff that is 17 percent more than the regular price and will increase the tariff by an additional 30 percent if domestic equipment are used in building the plants.

Sabouri said the Swiss company has plans to gradually expand solar power infrastructure in Iran to 300 MW.

German, UK, Italian Cooperation

The Energy Ministry and the British Photovoltaic Association (BPVA) signed a memorandum of understanding in July 2016 to construct a huge 1,000 MW solar power plant in Iran.

According to Reza Sheybani, chairman of the BPVA, the agreement seeks not only to build a cutting-edge solar power plant at an estimated cost of \$1.6 billion but also to establish a solar panel factory as well as transferring the much-needed technology to Iran.

In January 2016, German investors voiced interest in constructing a large solar power plant in Sazgi region in the central province of Isfahan.

Ashton J Flooring, a representative of one of the German companies, said in a conference in Isfahan, "The mega solar power project will supply electricity to 475,000 households for 30 years. The plan is among the largest solar projects in the world."

Italian energy company Carlo Maresca also will participate in building a 50-MW solar unit in Iran's Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf.

Iran has a diverse climate of vast windy lands and more than 300 sunny days throughout the year, which makes it ideal for producing electricity from wind and solar energies, but its total output from renewables does not exceed a few hundred megawatts.

Japanese, South Korean firms to fund Siraf refineries

From Page 1

The project could lead to a 22-percent growth in Iran's refining capacity and would also raise its production of petrochemicals by 57 percent.

The period of the project would be four years and would fetch Iran \$13 billion per annum.

The Siraf refineries project — considered as one of the largest in the world — consists of eight independent gas condensate refineries with the total capacity of 480,000 barrels per stream day (bpsd).

Hydrocarbon condensate feed will be mainly supplied from existing gas refineries in the nearby Assaluyeh energy zone which hosts South Pars Gas Field.

The project is expected to have a daily production of 15,296 barrels of LPG, 120,568 barrels of light naphtha, 167,984 barrels of heavy naphtha, 81,888 barrels of kerosene and 86,680 barrels of diesel conforming to Euro-V specifications.

Earlier in June, Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh in a directive identified Siraf as a top priority of the Oil

Ministry underlining that it needed to get off the ground at the earliest.

Preceding Siraf in terms of priorities was the Persian Gulf Condensate Refinery (PGCR) that has already begun early production and is near full completion. Once developed, the PGCR is expected to have a refining capacity of 360,000 bpsd.

Honda Motor Co. Ltd. has recalled 1.2 million Accord cars in the US from the 2013-16 model years because a battery sensor can short out and potentially cause a fire, according to reports.

UK public finances face twin threat from Brexit, downturn

Britain's public finances are in worse shape to withstand a recession than they were on the eve of the 2007 financial crash a decade ago and face the twin threat of a fresh downturn and Brexit, the Treasury's independent forecaster warned.

The Office for Budget Responsibility — the UK's fiscal watchdog — said another recession was inevitable at some point and that Prime Minister Theresa May's failure to win a parliamentary majority in last month's election left the public finances more vulnerable to being blown off course than they were in 2007, The Guardian reported.

In its first in-depth analysis of the fiscal risks facing Britain, the OBR said its main message was clear: "Governments should expect nasty fiscal surprises from time to time — because policy can only reduce risks, not eliminate them — and plan accordingly."

"And they have to do so in the context of ongoing pressures that are likely to weigh on receipts and drive up spending and a variety of risks that governments choose to expose themselves to for policy reasons. This is true for any government, but this one also has to manage the uncertainties posed by Brexit, which could influence the likelihood or impact of other risks."

The OBR said the size of the UK's Brexit divorce bill — currently a matter of dispute between London and Brussels — would have little impact on the public



The OBR said governments should expect nasty fiscal surprises from time to time.

finances.

But it noted that even a small fall in Britain's underlying growth rate after departure from the EU would lead to a big increase in the country's debt burden.

If a knock to trade with the rest of Europe caused productivity to slip by just 0.1 percentage points over the next 50 years, tax receipts would be £36 billion lower. With spending growth left unchanged, the debt-to-GDP ratio would end up around 50 percentage points higher, the OBR added.

The campaign group Open Britain said the OBR's report showed "a hard Brexit poses a real threat to our economy. People

voted for £350 million a week for the NHS, not a £36 billion black hole in the public finances that could mean severe cuts to the NHS."

The shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, said years of austerity and the decision to gamble on a general election victory had left Britain in a weaker position going into the Brexit talks.

"The Tories want to blame Brexit for their failures on the economy. But what this report really reveals is that one of the biggest risks to our economy is Theresa May's weak government and the last seven years of economic failure," he said. The Liberal Democrat spokesman

Vince Cable warned that the underlying weakness of government tax receipts and a "reckless approach to Brexit" were a toxic recipe likely to damage the economy. "Even a small deterioration in growth could mean billions of pounds less funding for our public services in the long term," he said.

The OBR noted that Brexit was not the only threat to the government's aim of eliminating the UK's budget deficit. It said a hung parliament and "austerity fatigue", alongside longer-term developments such as a rapidly aging population, were also factors putting upward pressure on the deficit.

The almost inevitable likelihood of a recession in the years ahead, along with higher interest rates and inflation, also posed significant risks to the public finances, threatening to put them on an "unsustainable path".

Robert Chote, the OBR's chairman, explained that government could be landed with a higher interest bill on its debt mountain after selling billions of pounds worth of bonds with an interest rate linked to the retail prices index. A rise in inflation would add billions of pounds to the cost of financing the UK's debts, he said.

The warning comes as Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond prepares the ground for his autumn budget, which he has already said should stick to current plans to bring down the deficit by the mid-2020s.

Poverty in Italy at worst

The number of people living in poverty in Italy climbed to its highest level for more than a decade in 2016 despite a modest economic recovery, data showed on Thursday, in a report that could hurt the ruling Democratic Party (PD).

According to Reuters, those living in "absolute poverty" rose to 4.74 million last year, or 7.9 percent of the population, up from 7.6 percent in 2015 and the highest since current records began in 2005, national statistics

bureau ISTAT reported.

ISTAT defines absolute poverty as the condition of those who are unable to buy goods and services "essential to avoid grave forms of social exclusion".

Italy emerged from a long recession in 2014, but the report shows that the slow growth posted since then has done little to help the poorest sectors of society.

Gross domestic product is forecast to rise by around 1.1 percent this year — up from 0.9 percent in 2016 — but

leaving Italy in its customary position among the euro zone's most sluggish economies.

The country faces elections next spring, and opposition parties were quick to blame the PD and its leader, Matteo Renzi, for the record poverty levels.

Giovanni Barozzino, a senator for the Italian Left party, which split from the PD in 2015, said: "When a government is unable to provide for people's basic needs, we can undoubtedly say it has failed."

US to renegotiate 2012 free trade deal with South Korea

The United States formally declared on Thursday it wants to renegotiate its free trade agreement with South Korea, as the world's biggest economy seeks to re-do the global commerce system in its favor under President Donald Trump.

then, from \$13.2 billion in 2011 to \$27.6 billion last year. Seoul put the 2016 figure at \$23.2 billion.

In a statement, US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said he had called a joint committee meeting under Korea



HINDUSTAN TIMES

Trump railed against trade agreements on the campaign trail, blaming them for the loss of American jobs as he courted support from working-class voters, while supporters say that removing barriers to business increases prosperity overall, japantimes.co.jp wrote.

He has already pulled the US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a proposal led by the Obama administration to create the world's biggest trade pact, which was signed in February last year but never went into force.

And talks are due to start next month on renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico, after Trump backed down from a threat to withdraw unilaterally from the pact, which has boosted industry and created tight manufacturing, agriculture and business links throughout the region.

The US-Korea Free Trade Agreement, known as KORUS, took force in March 2012. Washington says its trade deficit with Seoul has more than doubled since

"to start the process of negotiating to remove barriers to US trade and consider needed amendments to the agreement."

Trump has described KORUS as a "horrible" deal for the US, and in a letter to South Korea's trade minister, Lighthizer said there were "problems regarding market access in Korea for US exports" and Washington wants to see a "more balanced trade relationship".

The joint committee should meet next month in Washington, he added.

Seoul reacted skeptically, with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy saying in a statement that the deal can only be changed by mutual agreement.

"Under the FTA, it is not necessarily obligatory for our side to comply with the US proposal for amending the FTA," it said in a statement.

"First of all," it added, officials should "study, analyze and assess the effect of the KORUS FTA and determine whether the FTA should be blamed for the trade imbalance."

Turkey, China partner up for 1.2-GW solar plant

An investment that will contribute to the infrastructure of solar panel production — currently approaching 1,400 megawatts (MWs) in Turkey — will soon be put into effect.

Smart Energy Group, which has solar power plant investments in Turkey and Balkan countries including Bulgaria and Greece, providing turnkey GES installation services to other investors, has undertaken the new solar panel investment, dailysabah.com wrote.

The Turkish solar company Smart Energy Group will build a 1,200-MW solar panel plant in the Gebze

Organized Industrial Zone (GOIZ) in collaboration with Chinese company, Phono Solar, which with roughly 400 MWs expected to begin production soon.

The partnership aims to generate domestic sales as well as exports to the US and Europe.

Smart Energy Chairman and CEO Halil Demirdağ said that the decision to produce solar panels has been fueled by new regulations in Turkey's import sector, adding that Smart Energy has successfully convinced China's Phono Solar, one of the key brands approved by major banks and insurance companies worldwide, to be a strategic partner.

Approximately 400 MWs of the solar panel factory's four production lines in GOIZ — Tembelova — will soon be commissioned. Noting that the partnership includes plans for an annual production capacity of up to 1,200 MWs and

the factory building has been designed in accordance with this goal, Demirdağ said there is no land problem, adding that the production line will be installed into an available building across an area measuring 23,500 square meters.

Demirdağ stressed that upon approval, Phono Solar's world-renowned products will begin production in Gebze, noting: "Therefore, the products to be released from the factory on the first day will meet international standards and include insurance guarantees."

"We aim to complete the first panel production in August. The customers of the first-party products to be released from this band are ready and have already been sold domestically."

Demirdağ went on to say that Chinese partner Phono Solar will supply the appropriate raw materials for the panel plant in Gebze.

Stressing that production in Turkey is also advantageous for the Chinese because of the anti-dumping practices applied against Chinese products in the US and European countries, Demirdağ said, "For our strategic partner, we will produce at a certain profitability rate plus cost. In other words, our facilities are planned to be commissioned in a way that will allow us to create our own market."

Demirdağ emphasized that the Tembelova panel plant in GOIZ not only targets the Turkish market but European markets, as well.



SOLARPV TV

Reforming the International Financial System

By Jomo Kwame Sundaram*

When we fail to act on lessons from a crisis, we risk exposing ourselves to another one. The 1997-1998 East Asian crisis provided major lessons for international financial reform. Two decades later, we appear not to have done much about them. The way the West first responded to the 2008 global financial crisis should have reminded us to do more. But besides accumulating more reserves, Southeast Asia has not done much else, IPS wrote.

First, existing mechanisms and institutions for preventing financial crises remain grossly inadequate. Financial liberalization continues despite the crises engendered. Too little has been done by national authorities and foreign advisers to check short-term capital flows while unwarranted reliance has been put on international adherence to codes and standards. There is also little in place to address the typically exaggerated effects of movements among major international currencies.

Second, existing mechanisms and institutions for financial crisis management are grossly inadequate. The greater likelihood, frequency and severity of currency and financial crises in emerging market economies in recent times — with devastating consequences for the real economy and innocent bystanders — makes speedy crisis resolution imperative.

Economic liberalization has also compromised macro-financial instruments available to governments for crisis management and recovery.

Instead, governments have little choice but to react pro-cyclically, which tends to exacerbate economic downturns. Governments thus fail to act counter-cyclically to avoid and overcome crises, which have been more devastating in developing countries. There is a need to increase emergency financing during crises and to establish adequate new procedures for timely and orderly debt standstills and work-outs. While IMF financing facilities were significantly augmented in 2009, little else has changed. Only governance reform of international financial institutions can ensure more equitable participation and decision-making by developing countries.

The concentration of power in some apex institutions can be reduced by delegating authority to others, and by encouraging decentralization, devolution, complementarity and competition with other international financial institutions, including regional ones.

International financial institutions, including regional institutions, should be able to provide adequate counter-cyclical financing, including for "social protection". Instead of current arrangements which mainly benefit foreign creditors, new procedures and mechanisms can help ensure that they too share responsibility for the consequences of their lending practices.

Developmental reforms

Third, international financial reform needs to go beyond crisis prevention and resolution to improve provision of development finance, especially to small and poor countries that face limited and costly access to finding their development priorities. For years now, the World Bank and other multilateral development banks have abandoned or cut industrial financing.

Fourth, powerful vested interests block urgently needed international institutional reforms. Only governance reform of international financial institutions can ensure more equitable participation and decision-making by developing countries. The concentration of power in some apex institutions can be reduced by delegating authority to others, and by encouraging decentralization, devolution, complementarity and competition with other international financial institutions, including regional ones.

Fifth, reforms should restore and ensure greater national economic authority and autonomy, which have been greatly undermined by national level deregulation as well as international liberalization and new regulation. These can enable more effective, especially expansionary and counter-cyclical macroeconomic management, as well as adequate development and inclusive finance facilities.

One size clearly cannot fit all. Policy ownership will ensure greater legitimacy, and should include capital account regulation and choice of exchange rate regime. As likely international financial reforms are unlikely to adequately provide what most developing countries need, national policy independence in regulatory and interventionist functions must be assured.

Regional cooperation

Finally, appreciation is growing of the desirability of regional monetary cooperation in the face of growing international financial challenges. The Japanese proposal for an Asian monetary facility soon after the outbreak of the 1997 crisis could have helped check and manage the crises, but US opposition blocked it. With its opposition to more proactive global initiatives, alternative regional arrangements cannot also be blocked. Such regional arrangements also offer an intermediate alternative between national and global levels of action and intervention, besides reducing the monopoly power of global authorities. To be effective, regional arrangements must be flexible, but also credible and capable of both crisis prevention and management.

*Jomo Kwame Sundaram is a prominent Malaysian economist.

Major Currencies

Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2802	Chinese Yuan	0.1474
Euro	1.1414	UAE Dirham	0.2722
British Pound	1.2957	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2993
Australian Dollar	0.7759	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0088	Saudi Riyal	0.2667

Major Commodities

Crude Oil	\$45.94	Silver	\$15.60
Gold	\$1217.10	Platinum	\$960.9
Copper	\$2.66	Wheat	\$517.50

Missouri River needs a plan

A recent study looks at the history of the Missouri River, damages and changes from the 2011 flood, and its current post-flood condition. The study concludes that the river needs a comprehensive plan with multi-state cooperation.

More foreign tourists visiting Kerman

Cultural Heritage Desk

Kerman officials intend to boost tourism across this south-central province and introduce its potentials. They intend to increase the length of stay by foreign tourists in Kerman.

A marathon is to be held in Lut Desert with the participation of world's top runners. Tourists and runners from seven countries travel to Iran to participate in the second biggest marathon in hottest spot of the world.

Also, an Italian ecotourist is to travel to Gandom-e Beryan Region in Lut desert to walk 80km in July 21 when the temperature reaches 65°C-70°C. Two Guinness experts will accompany the ecotourist to record the feat.

In addition, private sector has established guesthouses and accommodation for the tourists. There are 110 ecotourism resorts across the province which have been warmly received by foreign tourists particularly in Shahdad Desert.

The number of foreign tourists visiting Kerman Province has increased significantly.

Mohammad Jahanshahi, deputy head of Kerman Cultural, Handicrafts and Tourism Department, said tourism projects worth about 30 trillion rials (\$1 billion) have been considered for Kerman, of which schemes valued at about 12

billion rials (\$400,000) have gotten underway.

Mohammad-Hassan Kermani, the president of the Association of Air Transport and Tourist Agencies, said Kerman boasts huge diversity in cuisines and cookies.

Also, Ebrahim Pourfaraj, chairman of the Iranian Tour Operator Association said Kerman officials should designate a 'Kerman Day' in the calendar — like the city of Tabriz — to introduce Kerman Province.

Tourism has been thriving across Kerman Province in recent years in view of the huge publicity given to tourism hubs such as Mahan, Rayen, Bam and Jiroft.

The number of Iranian and foreign tourists visiting Kerman Province has increased. Renovation of Kerman Grand Bazaar and Fat'habad Garden is key to boosting tourism in Kerman.

Kerman Province, as one of the main tourism hubs of Iran, has 7,000 historical and natural sites, of which 700 have been registered on the National Heritage List.

It boasts seven globally registered heritage sites and five dossiers awaiting global registration. It has significant sites such as Lut Desert, Meymand Village, Bam Citadel, Shazdeh Garden and an ancient aqueduct.

Kerman Province is also of significance great archeologically. It is home to Jiroft archeological site, which was once

the location of one of the most important civilizations in the region. Excavations have shown that the Jiroft civilization interacted with Mesopotamia, the Indus valley and Central Asia in the early Bronze Age.

Archeological findings further indicate that various civilizations inhabited the area during different periods in history.

Experts say the archeological remains from these civilizations may be traced at depths of up to 11 meters.

Kerman Province is considered a paradise for paleontologists in view of the abundant vertebrate fossils from diverse geological eras.

Fossils include Placodermi, jawed and jawless armored fish dating back to the Devonian period (395 to 365 million years ago), dinosaurs (195 to 66 million years ago) and mammals from the Tertiary period (ranging from two to seventy million years ago).

The history of human settlements in the territory of Kerman go back to the fourth millennium BC. This area is considered as one of the ancient regions of Iran and valuable historical vestiges have been found here.

Jiroft is an example of a previously unknown settlement dating back to around 2500 BCE which has just been established by archeologists.

Kerman has an abundance of historical sites and landmarks,

283 in total, according to Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

Ancient citadels such as Arg-e Bam and Rayen castle have been preserved in the desert for thousands of years.

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در مناطق شمالی تهران نیازمندیم

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جهت اجاره به یک سفارتخانه
و کمپانی های خارجی نیازمندیم

Blood test help catch pancreatic cancer early

A new, low-cost blood test may be an effective way to detect pancreatic cancer early, a research team said.

The nation's No. 4 cancer killer, pancreatic cancer often goes undiagnosed until it is too far along to remove, UPI wrote.

Study author Kenneth Zaret, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Regenerative Medicine, said, "Current screening techniques typically catch it only after it causes pronounced symptoms, when it has advanced far enough to be lethal."

"Sometimes it's found during a body scan for another health issue. But such scans are too costly for routine screening, even for people with a high risk of pancreatic cancer."

That includes parents, siblings or children of people who have had pancreatic cancer; those with some gene mutations; and people over 50 who suddenly develop diabetes.

Zaret added, "A low-cost, noninvasive test, such as we have developed, could be useful for routine screening of individuals who are at high risk for pancreatic cancer."

Current screening focuses on shifting levels of tell-tale blood proteins, according to the American Cancer Society.

But such tests are considered unreliable, and the ACS does not recommend routine screening for those who are not known to be at high-risk.

Zaret's team set out to find new, reliable markers for early stage pancreatic cancer.

To begin, the researchers genetically 'reprogrammed' late-stage cancer cells to mimic cells at the early stage of cancer.



digitaltrends.com

They identified several new cellular 'biomarkers' triggered by the onset of disease.

Then, the team did three rounds of testing in roughly 700 blood samples. Samples were drawn from pancreatic cancer patients (at different stages of disease) and from healthy people.

Researchers were able to diagnose early stage pancreatic cancer — with 98 percent accuracy — by screening for two of the new biomarkers they identified, called THBS2 and CA19-9.

Zaret expressed confidence in the results so far.

He said that the screening tool

would, at minimum, appear to be 'useful' for testing people known to be at high risk for pancreatic cancer.

"It might lead to development of new, early stage treatments."

"It is noteworthy that the biomarker panel employs existing technology that is routinely available in diagnostic clinics around the country, facilitating the dissemination of the test, with further validation."

But that validation will require a much larger study to find out whether the new approach holds up as a screening tool for the general population.

Dr. Victoria Rutson, chief medical

officer for the network, based in Manhattan Beach, Calif. said, "It's important to build on the new study."

"It is imperative that we develop early detection methods to help impact the mortality of the disease."

"The results show THBS2 and CA19-9 markers may improve detection of pancreatic cancer."

"Significant progress continues to be made, and it is important to further confirm and expand upon these results with additional studies."

This year, more than 53,000 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.

Why being miserable is actually the secret to happiness

Happiness is overrated. Instead, try allowing yourself to be totally miserable. It might make you happier than you have ever been. Let us explain.

Browsing social media and being confronted with friends scoring dream jobs, creating perfect families and sunning themselves on beaches can create the impression that everyone else is in some unending state of euphoria, independent.co.uk wrote.

And there you are, laying on the sofa with one hand in a bag of crisps and the other holding your phone, an hour into a scrolling session.

But constant happiness is overrated. Not only is it overrated, but it's totally unachievable.

In fact, said Gina Clarke, a psychotherapist at Click for Therapy, expecting to be constantly happy is harmful.

"Everybody's mood fluctuates, we all have ups and downs and a wider range of emotions," she said, pointing towards the kids movie Inside Out as an analogy.

"If we expect to be constantly happy, then we judge that to feel any other emotion is wrong and therefore we internalize that we are bad if we feel sad, angry, frustrated, and so on, when in actual fact in order to feel happy, to process the difficult stuff that happens, we need to accept other emotions."

And if, as studies suggest, half of workers in the UK would rather be in a different job; some 60 percent of people report being in an

unhappy relationship; and social media is making us unsatisfied, it's unlikely that everyone around you is as happy as they seem.

And you might hope that we're not all doomed to endure these feelings for the rest of our lives.

That's why experiencing sadness or discomfort can be useful. Take running: Every second of pain is being invested into a healthier body and better mental health.

Clarke said, "Feeling sad or uncomfortable is similar to standing on a broken leg and feeling pain."

"When we feel sad or uncomfortable it is our mind's way of telling us that we are out of balance, that emotionally we are in pain and we need time to heal."

"With a broken leg we ask for help, see a specialist. If we did this when we felt sad or uncomfortable it would help us to process and heal."

"The first step is acknowledgement and then assessment — do I need to leave the situation, ask for help, talk with a friend, and seek professional support?"

When feelings of sadness and worthlessness are all-consuming, it is vital to visit a doctor and assess your mental health, as these can be symptoms of depression or other serious conditions.

But dredging going into work but feeling happy in other aspects of life, or the odd pang of sadness can be a catalyst for trying to unpick what is causing these feelings.

Psychotherapist Hilda Burke said, "From what I've seen, and

I've worked with a lot of clients, a valuable key to contentment and or fulfillment is acceptance."

"Acceptance of ourselves, acceptance of what's happening in our lives, acceptance of those around us."

"On the other hand, wishing things were other than what they are is a sure fire way of making ourselves unhappy as it keeps us in a stuck place in our heads where we are imagining how life could be better another way, with another partner, in another job and as such we're inevitably missing what's just under our noses and failing to appreciate that good things that are there."

"This is where self-reflection is key."

"If we feel unhappy in the moment we should ask ourselves why, what's going on and assess our emotions over time."

"Some people write it down, journal, some talk with others, some just note their feelings."

Chimes Phillip Adcock, psychologist and author of 'Master Your Brain', added, "Once you get to the root causes of how you feel, it becomes much easier to change your mood."

"I recommend playing the why, why game. In it, you ask yourself why you feel unhappy, and why is that, and why is that really. Keep going until you get to the root cause of your unhappiness."

In the long term, then unhappiness might just be the key to happiness.

Simple test to slash risk of suffering heart attack

Scientists developed a life-saving test to reveal those who are at increased risk of heart attack or stroke.

The early warning can identify people whose blood vessels contain fatty deposits that are in danger of causing a lethal blockage, according to express.co.uk

The risk cannot be detected reliably with current scanning technology.



express.co.uk

Experts predict the new method — known as fat attenuation index — will radically improve the diagnosis of coronary artery disease.

Developed by researchers at Oxford University the imaging technology tracks the changes in the fat surrounding inflamed arteries.

It also detects plaques that are prone to causing sudden blockages, flagging up those at the highest risk. Identifying individuals without narrowings but with inflamed heart arteries could allow doctors to intervene early enough to prevent heart disease.

Professor Charalambos Antoniadou, who led the research published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, said: "The new scan offers the potential to find people at an earlier stage of disease and before the damage becomes irreversible."

"By providing an early warning of disease the new imaging technique can be used by doctors as the trigger for more powerful treatments designed to reduce the risk of a future heart attack."

Vitamin D deficiency in pregnancy detrimental to child

Research suggested that a vitamin D deficiency in pregnancy has negative effects on social development, motor skills in preschool age children.



pinterest.com

Researchers from the University of Surrey and the University of Bristol in Britain gathered data from more than 7,000 mother-child pairs, finding pregnant women who were deficient in vitamin D were more likely to have children with low scores in preschool development tests of gross and fine motor development at the age of two and a half, UPI reported.

The study, published in the British Journal of Nutrition, also showed that vitamin D insufficiency during pregnancy affected a child's social development at the age of three and a half.

But no link was found between maternal vitamin D levels and cognitive abilities at older ages such as seven to nine.

Dr. Andrea Darling of the University of Surrey, said, "The importance of vitamin D sufficiency should not be underestimated."

"It is well-known to be good for our musculoskeletal systems, but our research shows that if levels are low in expectant mothers, it can affect the development of their children in their early years of life."

Researchers state that interactions between vitamin D and dopamine in the brain of the fetus are vital to the neurological development of brain areas that control motor and social development.

Vitamin D comes from the Sun and diet, including dairy products, oily fish, red meat, eggs and fortified foods.

Darling added, "Many pregnant women, especially those from minority groups with darker skin [e.g. African, African-Caribbean or South Asian], will still need to take a 10 micrograms vitamin D supplement daily, particularly in the autumn and winter when vitamin D cannot be made from the Sun in the UK."

Treatment may be on the horizon for leukemia

Leukemia and lymphoma sufferers could soon have a new treatment option after the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) endorsed a first-of-its-kind therapy.

The FDA showed enthusiasm for the treatment which uses patients' revved-up immune cells to fight cancer, express.co.uk reported.

A unanimous recommendation from the Oncologic Drugs Advisory Committee means it could be approved by the end of September.

Timothy Cripe, a panel member who is an oncologist with Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, called the treatment the most exciting thing I've seen in my lifetime.



cityofhope.org

Novartis, the drug maker behind the CAR T-cell therapy in question, has been seeking to use it for children and young adults whose leukemia doesn't respond to traditional treatments.

However, the treatment is also being tested for effectiveness on non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma and solid tumors.

Unlike traditional gene therapy, this won't replace disease-causing genes with healthy ones.

Instead doctors would use technology to re-program immune cells, called T cells, to target and attack malignancies.

In a previous trial by Novartis, 83 percent of the patients went into remission after the treatment.

However, there had been concerns over potentially dangerous side-effects from the treatment.

Most patients in the study experienced cytokine release syndrome, which causes fever and flu-like symptoms.

Others also had neurological problems, including seizures and delirium.

But there were no instances of fatal brain swelling, which had occurred in another company's trial.

While the FDA isn't required to agree with the endorsements of its advisory committee, it usually does.

David Maloney, medical director for cellular immunotherapy at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, said: "It represents a paradigm shift in treating cancers."

However, one of the big issues with the therapy — the cost — wasn't discussed.

It's thought it could be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

High-speed hyperloop project ready for key test in Nevada

Engineers will soon conduct a crucial test of a futuristic technology championed by entrepreneur Elon Musk that seeks to revolutionize transportation by sending passengers and cargo packed into pods through an intercity system of vacuum tubes.

According to Reuters, spokeswoman Marcy Simon said, "Hyperloop One, the Los Angeles-based company developing the technology, is gearing up to send a 8.5 meter-long pod hurtling down a set of tracks in a test run in Nevada in the next few weeks."



A Hyperloop One test vehicle is prepared at a DevLoop track in the Nevada Desert in a photo taken May 12, 2017 and released July 13, 2017. REUTERS

Hyperloop One is working to develop a technical vision proposed by Musk, the founder of rocket maker SpaceX and electric car company Tesla Motors. In 2013, he suggested sending pods with passengers through giant vacuum tubes between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Hyperloop aims to achieve speeds of 402 km/h in its upcoming phase of testing. As it gears up for that experiment, the company released the results from a May 12 test in the Nevada desert.

Simon said, "A Hyperloop One sled on wheels for the first time coasted above a track using magnets."

The company said in a statement that it levitated for 5.3 seconds in a vacuum-sealed tube and reached speeds of 113 km/h.

By comparison, another test by Hyperloop One that made national headlines last year was done on an open-air track, not in the tube, a key to achieving high speeds.

Backers of the project envision the pods reaching speeds of 1,200 kilometers per hour, but skeptics say the hyperloop idea faces real-world challenges ranging from obtaining construction permits to making turns at jet speed.

Hyperloop One has raised \$160m in funding and has touted the technology's potential as a rapid-transit option.

Shervin Pishevar, co-founder and executive chairman of Hyperloop One, said, "Hyperloop One will move people and things faster than at any other time in the world."



Astronomers find the smallest star ever

Astronomers have found the smallest star ever, and it might offer a hint of the search for other Earth-like planets.

The tiny Sun is just a little smaller than Saturn and is probably the tiniest that stars can actually be, independent.co.uk reported.

If it were any smaller, there would be so little pressure at its center that it would be unable to support the process of fusion and stop being active.

Alexander Boetticher, the lead author of the study, and a Master's student at Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory and Institute of Astronomy, said, "Our discovery reveals how small stars can be."

"Had this star formed with only a slightly lower mass, the fusion reaction of hydrogen in its core could not be sustained, and the star would instead have transformed into a brown dwarf."

And the star might even offer a hint at planets where we might find life. Such tiny, relatively cool stars — like Trappist-1 — are probably our best

shot at finding planets like our own.

Coauthor Amaury Triaud, senior researcher at Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy, said, "The smallest stars provide optimal conditions for the discovery of Earth-like planets, and for the remote exploration of their atmospheres."

"However, before we can study planets, we absolutely need to understand their star; this is fundamental."

Such small stars are by far the most common in the Universe. But it's difficult often to spot them, precisely because they are so tiny and dim that it's much more difficult to see them from afar.

Scientists now hope that they can use the project that spotted this star — known as WASP, a planet-finding mission that involves a range of different UK universities — to see more of those stars.

When they do, they will be able to explore them and understand the stars that are most likely to support life.

Coauthor Professor Didier Queloz of Cambridge

Cavendish Laboratory, said, "Thanks to the EBLM project, we will achieve a far greater understanding of the planets orbiting the most common stars that exist, planets like those orbiting TRAPPIST-1."

The new star is known as EBLM J0555-57Ab and sits about 600 light years away.

It's part of a binary system and was spotted when it traveled in front of the much bigger other half of its pair.

Von Boetticher said, "This star is smaller, and likely colder than many of the gas giant exoplanets that have so far been identified."

"While a fascinating feature of stellar physics, it is often harder to measure the size of such dim low-mass stars than for many of the larger planets."

"Thankfully, we can find these small stars with planet-hunting equipment, when they orbit a larger host star in a binary system."

"It might sound incredible, but finding a star can at times be harder than finding a planet."

Mini cellular antennae helps turn muscle into fat

No matter how much you diet and hit the gym, muscle cells turn to fat as the body ages. Toned biceps inevitably become flabby. Blame it on the cilia.

New research shows the tiny cellular antennae plays a key role in the muscle-to-fat transformation process, UPI reported.

While the realization is unlikely to unlock the fountain of youth, it could help scientists develop new types of regenerative therapies.

The growing amounts of fat cells interspersed with muscle cells helps explain why humans become weaker as they age.

Dr. Jeremy Reiter, a professor of biochemistry and biophysics at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), said, "The frailty of age is a huge biomedical problem."

"This study helps pave the way to learn how muscles normally age and provides a new way to possibly improve muscle repair."

Until recently, cilia were mostly ignored by researchers. Most scientists believed the tiny tentacle-like appendages extending from the surface of cells served no real function.

Over the last decades, scientists have been taking a closer look at primary cilia.

The rigid appendages are found on the surfaces of all types of cells, and the latest research suggested they act like antennae, sensing and translating all kinds of observational data — light, temperature, salinity, gravity.

The cilia's transmission abilities are used by a variety of cell-signaling pathways.

In a previous study, UCSF researchers found injured muscles tend to generate a large number of fibro/adipogenic progenitors, or FAPs, fat-forming cells that live alongside muscle cells.

These fat cells are more likely to host primary cilia.



In a new study, researchers prevented the degeneration of muscle into fat in mouse models. UPI

Researchers hypothesized cilia play an important role in the formation of fat cells.

In the latest experiments, researchers tested their hypothesis by studying muscle injuries in mouse models in which scientists blocked the ability of FAPs to form cilia.

Researchers measured lower concentrations of fat cells in the mouse models. Mice with both acute muscle injuries and chronic muscle injuries showed greater rates of muscle generation when

less cilia were formed.

Simply by blocking the formation of cilia on FAPs, researchers were able to heal the muscles of a mouse with Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Further analysis showed cilia-free FAPs triggered a so-called hedgehog signaling pathway, a pathway key to cell formation and generation.

The pathway encouraged a higher muscle-to-fat ratio in mouse muscle. Scientists determined that the protein TIMP3 was key in this process, and were able to trigger the fat-killing pathway using batimastat.

batimastat, a molecule that mimics the effects of TIMP3.

Daniel Kopinke, a postdoctoral fellow in the Reiter lab, said, "Now for the first time we have a handle on the cell type that turns muscle into fat, and we have a handle on the signaling pathway that controls the conversion."

"Maybe one day we could use this knowledge to improve muscle function."

Researchers detailed their latest findings in the journal Cell.

Micromotors powered by bacteria, controlled by light

When researchers deposit a drop of fluid containing thousands of free-swimming, genetically engineered *E. coli* onto an array of micromotors, within minutes the micromotors begin rotating.

Some of the individual bacteria have swum head-first into one of the 15 microchambers etched on the outer edge of each micromotor and with their flagella protruding outside the microchambers, together the swimming bacteria cause the micromotors to rotate, somewhat similar to how a flowing river rotates a watermill, according to phys.org.

The researchers, led by Roberto Di Leonardo, a physics professor at Sapienza Università di Roma and at NANOTEC-CNR, both in Rome, have published a paper on the bacteria-powered micromotors in a recent issue of Nature Communications.

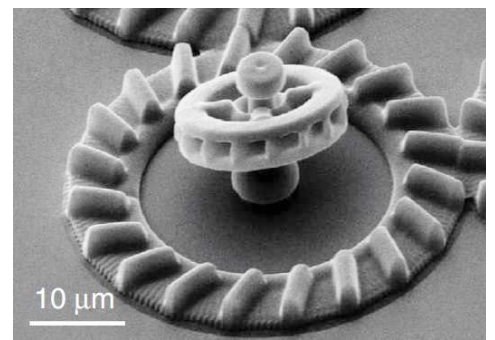
Di Leonardo said, "Our design combines a high rotational speed with an enormous reduction in fluctuation when compared to previous attempts based on wild-type bacteria and flat structures."

"We can produce large arrays of independently controlled rotors that use light as the ultimate energy source."

"These devices could serve one day as cheap and disposable actuators in microrobots for collecting and sorting individual cells inside miniaturized biomedical laboratories."

A fluid such as the one used here, which contains large amounts of swimming bacteria, is called an "active fluid" due to the mechanical energy it contains.

In order for active fluids to be used as a fuel for propelling micromachines, the disordered motion of the bacteria must be controlled so that all (or most) of the bacteria move in the same direction.



A micromotor, with microchambers shown in the inner cylindrical structure. phys.org

This is essentially what the micromotors do. The microchambers along the edges of each micromotor are tilted at an angle of 45°, which maximizes the total torque with which the bacteria can cause the motors to rotate.

In their design, the researchers also built a radial ramp with strategically placed barriers that direct the swimming bacteria into the microchambers.

In experiments, the researchers found that a micromotor's rotational speed increases linearly with the number of captured bacteria, and they could easily achieve rotational speeds of 20 revolutions per minute.

Another important requirement for any bacteria-powered micromotor is the ability to control the micromotor's motion.

To do this, the researchers genetically modified the *E. coli* strain to express a light-driven proton pump called proteorhodopsin that uses photon energy to pump protons against the

electrochemical gradient, which increases the bacteria's swimming speeds.

By illuminating the bacteria-powered micromotors with different light intensities, the researchers could then control the speed of the micromotors.

In order for these systems to be used in practical applications, it's also important that all of the micromotors in an array have average speeds that are uniform and have little fluctuation.

With the help of a feedback algorithm that uniformly illuminates the system every 10 seconds, the researchers demonstrated that the micromotors can effectively be synchronized with very little variation in speed.

Using this light-control method, the researchers could rotate a set of micromotors in unison at a particular speed.

The bacteria-propelled micromotors have potential medical applications, such as drug and cargo delivery, which the researchers plan to investigate in the future.

2b people don't have access to clean water



UNICEF



GETTY IMAGES

More than two billion people lack access to clean and safe drinking water, according to a new report released by World Health Organization (WHO).

Although significant progress to ensure access to drinking water has been achieved, there is still a long way to go to ensure its quality — deemed free from pollutants and safe for drinking, IPS wrote.

Sanjay Wijesekera, chief of water, sanitation and hygiene at UNICEF, said: "Clean water and sanitation is central to other outcomes, for example, nutrition among children. While many countries like India have made it a top priority, many others haven't been able to emphasize the issue yet."

As many as 400 million people still rely on distant water sources — traveling to and from their homes to pick it up. Some 159 million people, according to the report, rely on untreated water from lakes and streams.

This puts lives, especially of young children, at great risk.

"Every day, 800 children under the age of five die from waterborne diseases like diarrhea. In fact, diarrhea is the second biggest cause of death in the world," Wijesekera added.

A lack of access to clean drinking water is also bad news for hygiene and sanitary levels. In many countries, open defecation due to the lack of in-house toilets poses a significant challenge.

"The sheer indignity of openly defecating, especially among young girls, takes a toll on other aspects of their lives — such as their poor attendance in school where there aren't toilets," Wijesekera explained.

This is especially true in rural areas. While the global drop in open defecation from 20 to 12 percent between 2000 and 2015 is a welcome fact, the rate of decline, at just seven percent every year, puts pressure on governments to do

more. To eliminate open defecation by 2030, for example, the rate of decline has to double.

Still, some countries like Ethiopia have combated the issue of open defecation successfully.

"In Ethiopia, the percentage has dropped from 80 to 27 percent between 2000 and 2015. Critical building blocks like stronger policies at the government levels and dutiful allocation of funds can go a long way," Wijesekera said.

These issues — from access to safe drinking water to sanitation supplies — mostly affect the poorest families.

For example, Angola, which has performed better than other sub-Saharan African countries and achieved overall basic access to water for its citizens, still shows a gap of 40 percent between people who live in urban and rural areas.

Similarly, Panama's capital city has achieved universal access to clean drinking water, but other sub-regions

in the country remain marginalized.

Meanwhile, the report has drawn criticism from other NGOs for being incomplete.

Al-Hassan Adam, the international coordinator at End World Poverty, a coalition organization that campaigns for water rights and sanitation, said: "The report is a good starting point but the current data only reflects 35 percent of the global population across 92 countries. Big countries like China and India have been left out."

He added, "Bigger industries have to do more to protect water resources. In countries like Mexico, water is still contaminated. In other poorer countries, infrastructure to ensure safely managed water is missing in the first place."

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN strongly focus on reducing inequality between and within countries, and commit member states to "leave no one behind".

Students seek postgraduate study to shelter from Brexit

Brexit has plunged graduates from Britain's leading universities into deep pessimism about their career prospects, with students shunning sectors such as finance and accountancy over fears of disruption resulting from exiting the European Union.

According to The Guardian, a survey of 20,000 students finishing their undergraduate studies this summer found their outlook had turned gloomy for the first time since the global financial crisis. Nearly three out of four students said they expect a tougher job market in the aftermath of the EU referendum result.

The survey of 20,000 final year undergraduates — carried out by a recruitment consultancy, High Flyers Research — revealed that while management consultancy and the media remained the most popular sectors for job seekers, there were sharp falls in the proportion applying for jobs thought to be exposed to Brexit turmoil.

The numbers applying for jobs in investment banking fell by nearly 16 percent in 2017 compared with a year earlier, while 18 percent fewer applied for jobs in finance and the numbers applying for accountancy positions was down 21 percent.

The survey also found that an increasing proportion of students continue into postgraduate study, confirming a trend in official data that has seen more recent graduates enroll in advanced degrees with the availability of postgraduate loans to pay for tuition fees.

Martin Birchall, managing director of High Flyers Research, said: "Our survey shows just how quickly the impact of last year's Brexit vote has been felt by university students."

"Despite many of the country's best-known employers maintaining a 'business as usual' approach to recruitment, almost three-quarters of the class of 2017 leaving university this summer fear that there will be fewer graduate jobs available as a direct result of the uncertainty caused by Brexit."

Asked specifically about the impact of Brexit, 71 percent of final year undergraduates said it meant fewer graduate jobs in 2017, while just five percent

also showed a dip in numbers applying, which may be the result of lower pay in the profession along with more attractive options in other parts of the labor market.

The survey was carried out in February, through one-to-one interviews with final-year undergraduates at 30 British universities, with Oxford, Cambridge and other members of the research-intensive Russell Group of universities alongside others such as



There have been sharp falls in the proportion of final-year university students applying for jobs thought to be exposed to Brexit turmoil.

thought it would mean more jobs. The survey found that 92 percent of respondents had voted to remain.

Some 24 percent of students were pessimistic about the labor market in general, describing it as "limited" — the first increase in five years.

Teaching, a profession which usually attracts a high number of graduates,

Leeds, Leicester and Strathclyde universities.

The number of finalists who had already secured jobs or careers ahead of graduation varied considerably, with students at the London School of Economics appearing to be the most highly motivated — making on average 12 applications per person. Students at

Bristol made fewer than seven applications each.

While just 17 percent of LSE students expected to study at postgraduate level, some 58 percent expected to find a professional job soon after graduation. Overall, 42 percent expected to find a graduate-level job, with a further 26 percent taking postgraduate degrees instead.

A DfE spokesperson said: "Our universities rank among the best in the world and recent figures show that just six months after graduating over 70 percent of students were already employed in professional occupations."

"Graduates also earn, on average, substantially more than people with A-levels who did not go to university, showing that a degree can lead to rewarding and well-paid jobs."

"Young people recognize this, with more of them going to university than ever before — including a record number of 18-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds."

The survey also showed a further widening in student debt levels, with those attending colleges in and around London reporting debts of more than £40,000 each at the end of their courses — around double those of students at some universities in Scotland, where residents pay no tuition fees.

Students at Imperial College, London, were leaving with £45,000 in average debt, while those at Strathclyde in Glasgow — where many students live at home — owed just £16,000.

One in eight of the students said their parents had paid for their tuition fees up-front, while the majority had financial assistance from parents with their living costs.

The Arab youth bulge and the parliamentarians

More than ever before, the Arab region now registers an unprecedented youth population growth while facing huge challenges such as extremely high unemployment rates — more than half of all regional jobless population — and inadequate education and health provision, in particular among young women.

These challenges come amidst increasing population pressures, advancing drought and desertification, and alarming growing water scarcity, all worsening as a consequence of climate change, IPS wrote.

One of the main consequences is an increasing social unrest like the one that led to the so-called Arab Spring in 2011. Let alone massive migration — now it is estimated that 25 to 35 percent of Arab youth appear to be determined to migrate.

More than 100 Arab and Asian legislators are set to focus on these and other related challenges in Amman, Jordan, during the Asian and Arab Parliamentarians Meeting and Study Visit on Population and Development (July 18-20, 2017).

Organized by the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), which is the Secretariat of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPPF), in close consultation with Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAPPD), participants have been selected based on their needs for capacity enhancement and priority policy interventions where knowledge-sharing can be most effective.



Students from Al-Amal Preparatory School for Girls in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, participate in psychosocial support activities.

According to APDA, over the past decades, while the Arab region has shown remarkable socio-economic improvement including education and health, it has faced profound changes and challenges. Among them is the 'youth bulge', which describes the increasing proportion of youth in relative to other age groups.

Such increase, together with overall Arab population pressures, has resulted in an unprecedented youth population growth in the region's history, it added.

One of the most challenging issues facing young Arabs are the high-unemployment rates.

"The region has one of the highest regional youth unemployment rate seen anywhere in the world," it warned, adding that in 2009, more than 20 percent of Arab youth were unable to find a job, which constituted more than half of the total unemployment.

Such high youth unemployment, combined with a demographic youth bulge, provoked the Arab Spring — a civil uprising mainly by Arab youths — and regional instability, according to APDA.

Moreover, despite overall progress in the health sector in many Arab countries over the past years, Arab youth still suffer from inadequate health provision and poor access to health facilities, lack of access to health information and services, especially for reproductive health.

"This is especially true for young women, youth in rural areas, and youth with disabilities and putting many in a vulnerable situation."

Organized under the theme 'From Youth Bulge to Demographic Dividend: Toward Regional Development and Achievement of the SDGs', the Amman meeting aims at enhancing the roles of parliamentarians in enacting legislation to formulate policies and mobilize budget that takes population issues into account is a driver to promote socio-economic development.

In fact, legislators have a significant part to play in linking demographic dimensions with sustainable development and turning them into advantages to produce socio-economic outcomes.

"For instance, the youth bulge presents not only development challenges but also opportunities, if appropriate policies are adopted to invest in the youth and reap the full potential of them."

The Amman event will be followed by one in India in mid-September, and another one in the Republic of Korea towards the end of October 2017.

South Sudanese activists turn to art to push for peace

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.

According to Reuters, 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.

Ayak Chol Deng, 31, an epidemiologist, spoken word poet and activist who co-founded the group about a year ago, said: "I hope for better serviced institutions, better opportunities for youth, a country where I don't need to be from a specific tribe."

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.

Girl trains cow to jump like a horse

Hannah Simpson jumps over large logs on the back of a dairy cow.

"Why ride a horse when you can ride a cow?" the dairy farmer asked on Facebook, where people have started noticing her unlikely pastime, mirror.co.uk reported.

Now 18, Simpson, from an Invercargill farm on New Zealand's South Island, has been riding her heifer for years.

On her eleventh birthday, the Kiwi was told that a pony or horse would be too expensive. She was dared by her brother to try riding Lilac instead — and their relationship blossomed.

Simpson said the Swiss Brown breed is her 'best friend'. She shares proud selfies. Simpson is, absolutely, a cow girl.

"Lilac was only six months then and I was just a midget," Simpson told Eleanor Ainge Roy in New Zealand.

"It was a dare from my brother to jump on and she seemed OK with it so we kept going. Before then I'd only ridden a pony twice, and a sheep."

These days, Simpson and Lilac are a daily sight in the area. Simpson has taught her cow to jump, and although the heifer isn't quite as precise or sophisticated as a horse, it's more than capable.

When she's in the mood, Lilac is apparently able to scale obstacles up to 1.4 meters high.

She added: "She is a cow and I can't expect her to ride like a horse. Without a bit of prodding she wouldn't really do anything, she has a very chilled-out nature."

Simpson works on a dairy farm in nearby Southland. She said her cow doesn't enjoy cantering around the place or running up and down hills, but prefers gentle strolls through the bush, and gentle river swims. But Lilac also loves jumping on occasion.

"Lilac was always jumping out of the cow shed when she was young so I think she likes it, too," she explained.

"We started her off with stepping over logs and it just got bigger and bigger."

A 'horse saddle' is a step too far for Lilac. Simpson rides bareback with a halter — she's been bucked off a fair few times. But Lilac is, on the whole, a faithful, triumphant steed. Despite the rarity of Simpson and Lilac's bond, the duo have only shot to fame in recent weeks. It's thanks to a video of Simpson cow jumping that was posted on a New Zealand farmers Facebook page. Her Instagram is gaining traction. Rightly so. She should milk her new-found fame. Simpson doesn't enter competitions with Lilac, but she's soon to be featured on local television.



INSTAGRAM/HANNEY_SIMPSON

PICTURE OF THE DAY



A bull enters the ring as runners protect themselves at the end of the seventh bull run in Pamplona, Spain.

JESUS DIGES/EPA

Quotes from Pelé, the greatest football legend

Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known as Pelé, is one of the greatest footballers ever.

According to the IFFHS, Pelé is the most successful league goal scorer in the world, with 541 league goals.

In total, Pelé scored 1,281 goals in 1,363 games, including unofficial friendlies and tour games, for which he was listed in the Guinness World Records for most career goals scored in football.

Here are some inspiring quotes from Pelé:

I represent Brazil all over the world. Wherever I go I have to do my best, to not disappoint the Brazilian people. And that I've done.

Everything is practice.

Enthusiasm is everything. It must be taught — vibrating like a guitar string.

The World Cup is a very important way to measure the good players and the great ones. It is a test of a great player.

A penalty is a cowardly way to score.

The bicycle kick is not easy to do.

Everything on Earth is a game. A passing thing. We all end up dead. We all end up the same, don't we?



If you don't give education to people, it is easy to manipulate them.

Sport is something that is very inspirational for young people.

The level of football in England is the top. English football is the leader in the world.

Pele doesn't die. Pele will never die. Pele is going to go on forever.

I always think that I would have become an actor if I hadn't been a soccer player.

Gull steals fish from mouth of colorful seabird



CTERS NEWS AGENCY

Seagulls are known for targeting tourists to steal a snack but as these incredible pictures show, they're also not afraid to nab food from puffin's mid-flight.

This cheeky black-headed gull was spotted trying its luck during a mid-air battle on the Farne Islands: National Nature Reserve off the Northumberland coast, dailymail.co.uk wrote.

The hungry bird saw the puffin with several fish in its mouth and immediately seized its opportunity for a free lunch — snatching the fish away.

However, the gull managed to lose some of the catch in the scuffle and escaped with just one tiny fish.

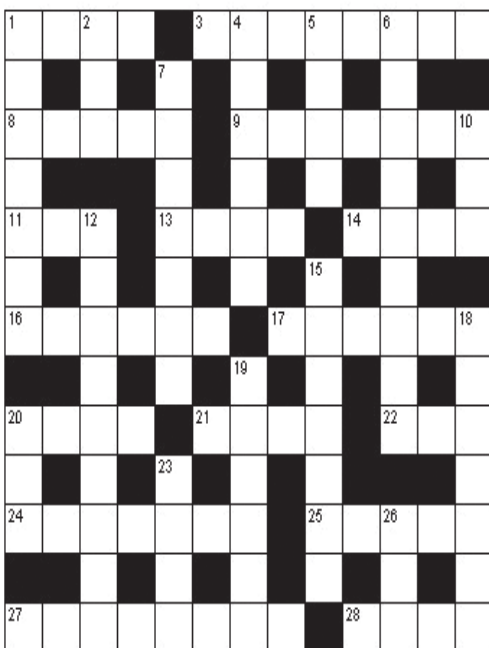
The extraordinary moment was caught on camera by Neo Ng, a freelance photographer from Hong Kong.

He said: "This was one amazing moment. The puffin was coming back from sea with a mouth full of fish."

"Usually, a puffin would be able to escape because of their speed but this time the wind changed and it lost its momentum."

"That was the only reason I was able to get the shots."

True or False Crossword



DOWN

- Authors / Vocalists (7)
- Fib / Truth (3)
- Ignore / Select (6)
- Rodents / Reptiles (4)
- Genuine article / Fake (9)
- Church tower / Flat roof (7)
- Happy / Unhappy (3)
- Double / Triple (9)
- Frenetic / Calm (7)
- Hires / Fires (7)
- Tried / Untried (6)
- Laugh / Cry (3)
- Rise up / Drop down (4)
- Star sign / Road sign (3)

ACROSS

- Bird / Animal (4)
- Arachnid / Fish (8)
- Active / Inactive (5)
- Gives / Gets (7)
- Start / Finish (3)
- Simple / Difficult (4)
- Gave money / Received money (4)
- Stiff / Lithe (6)
- Relating to cattle / Relating to bears (6)
- Leg bone / Arm bone (4)
- Observed / Unobserved (4)
- Short sleep / Deep sleep (3)
- Concealed / Conspicuous (7)
- Ice hut / Wooden hut (5)
- Prevent / Allow (8)
- Gives orders / Takes orders (4)

Thursday's solution



Sudoku

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

				9			6	
			1			8		
			6			5	4	
	2			7		1		
6	7		8		5		4	9
		9		3			8	
4	8				2			
		7			1			
	9			8				

£	I	9	4	8	L	7	6	S
8	7	4	I	S	6	L	9	£
S	L	6	7	9	£	I	8	4
L	8	S	9	£	7	6	4	I
6	4	7	S	I	8	£	L	9
9	£	I	6	L	4	S	7	8
4	S	£	L	7	9	8	I	6
7	6	8	£	4	I	9	S	L
I	9	L	8	6	S	4	£	7

Costly Kyle

Manchester City completed the signing of Tottenham and England right-back Kyle Walker for an initial £45 million.



Venus Williams

Five-time champion Venus Williams rolled back the years to reach her first Wimbledon final since 2009 with a clinically executed 6-4, 6-2 victory over British hope Johanna Konta on Thursday.

Williams will face Spain's Garbine Muguruza in today's final.

Venus to face Muguruza in Wimbledon final

Williams, who claimed the last of her Wimbledon titles nine years ago, was too strong for her opponent from the baseline and was able to produce booming serves whenever the Briton threatened.

After initially going toe-to-toe with the seven-time grand slam winner, Konta was unable to put Williams under sustained pressure and ended the contest a clear second best, losing eight of the final 10 games.

Konta saved two match points before Williams finally ended her resistance, smashing a

forehand that flew past the Briton and left the American to twirl in celebration on Centre Court.

"I've played a lot of finals here. One more win will be amazing. It won't be a given but I'll give it my all," Williams said.

Williams broke twice in the second set before using all her guile and experience to see it out and reach a first final in SW19 since 2009.

In the other semifinal, a visibly confident Muguruza needed just 64 minutes to beat the 87th-ranked Rybakova, who had beaten third seed Karolina Pliskova and American Coco Vandeweghe on her unexpected run to the last four.

The Spaniard was 3-0 up after just 10 minutes, her aggressive approach paying dividends against an opponent who looked nervous in what was the biggest game of her career to date.

"I think I stepped on the court super confi-

dent and I played well," said Muguruza, who is being coached at this tournament by Conchita Martinez, the only Spaniard to win the women's singles at the All England Club.

The women's tournament this year has been marked by some fiercely contested and tight battles but this was a disappointingly one-sided affair.

Muguruza appeared with heavy tape on her left thigh but there was no sign of any hindrance to her movement.

Indeed, she was simply stronger in every department, hitting 22 winners and just 11 unforced errors as she won 60 points to Rybakova's 33 with her backhand down the line, fundamental to her win.

The Venezuela-born 23-year-old, the 2016 French Open winner, was quick to the net and her groundstrokes flowed easily as she rattled off the first set in just 30 minutes.

Rybakova had done remarkably well to reach this stage after a seventh month injury layoff, getting herself into great form by winning International Tennis Federation tournaments at Fukuoka, Surbiton and Ilkley.

But this was a step too far. Even when she



Garbine Muguruza

was able to hold in the second, she needed to stage off two break points to do so.

The final point was a rare rally but it ended with Rybakova finding the net after being forced into the corner by Muguruza's relentless returns.

Pep to convince Mbappe to join Citizens

Pep Guardiola is reportedly trying to convince Kylian Mbappe to join Manchester City.

Guardiola is just one of Europe's elite bosses that want to land the Monaco's wonder kid, The Sun reported.

Real Madrid appears to be leading the race with Arsenal, Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain all considering paying the £100 million-plus fee it would take to land Mbappe.

Spanish football journalist Graham Hunter told Sky Sports that City has spoken with Mbappe's representatives and is trying to woo him to the Etihad.

Arsene Wenger has also rolled out the red carpet for the 18-year-old striker.

It has been claimed that the Gunners boss

held a three-hour meeting with Mbappe last month.

The Arsenal boss allegedly told Mbappe that he should be aiming for an Emirates move in order to further develop his career.

Real Madrid is also interested but Wenger, like Guardiola, believes he can offer the youngster the football he needs to progress into a world-class player.

However, Arsenal will need to dig deep after already seeing an £87 million bid rejected.

The report adds the Gunners may have to shell out a world-record £130 million for Mbappe's signature instead.

There are further complications, with the player himself preferring a move to Real.

Iran crowned champion in Asian...

From Page 1

In the men's kumite bouts of the junior class, Mohammad Reza Moradi, Barbad Sedaqat and Ali Karimi from Iran won the gold medals in -61kg, -68kg and -76kg weight divisions, respectively. Their compatriot Fati-meh Sa'adati also grabbed a gold in the women's -53kg kumite contests.

In U-21 contests, Iranians won another six gold medals to add to their country's overall tally of 16 golds in the tournament.

Iran's Fati-meh Sadeqi finished first in the women's U-21 kata event. In the women's kumite contests, Sadeqi's fellow countrywomen Avishan Bagheri, Shaqayeq Vahedi and Shabnam Vahedi also defeated their rivals in the finals of the -55kg, -68kg and +68kg weight classes, respectively, to claim another three gold medals.

In the U-21 men's competitions, Dakhla Rahiminejad (-60kg) won the gold in kumite contests and Elyas Mohammadzadeh, his



Iranians collected 32 medals including 16 golds to claim the first spot in the 2017 AKF Cadet, Junior & U-21 Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan

compatriot, also clinched the same medal after overcoming his opponent in the -75kg final of the same competitions.

Iranian representatives also collected some other 16 prestigious medals including eight silvers which helped them secure the top spot

in the medals table.

Some 660 athletes from 27 countries took part in the 16th AKF Cadet, Junior & U-21 Championships which started on July 13 in the Astana Sport Complex and was wrapped up on Friday.

Juve's Bonucci agrees to join Milan



Juventus's Leonardo Bonucci celebrates after scoring against Internazionale in February 2016. He could now be on his way to Inter's neighbour, Milan.

The Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci agreed to join Serie A rival Milan.

The Italian international, who has been with the Turin club for seven years, is signing a five-year deal with the Milanese club and is hopeful of concluding the deal before the weekend, the Guardian reported.

Bonucci, regarded as one of the best defenders in the world, has not always seen eye to eye

with the Juventus manager, Max Allegri, and the pair traded insults during a game against Palermo last season, with the defender subsequently being dropped against Porto. The defender was travelling to Milan for his medical on Friday morning.

Milan will pay €40 million (£35.2 million) for the 30-year-old, who has won 70 caps for Italy, and the move

continues an incredible summer of investment by the new Chinese owners. They have already spent more than £100 million on new players, including André Silva (from Porto, £33.5 million), Ricardo Rodriguez (from Wolfsburg, £13.2 million), Hakan Calhanoglu (from Bayer Leverkusen, £22 million), Andrea Conti (from Atalanta, £21.1 million) and Mateo Musac-

chio (Villarreal, £15 million) among others.

Bonucci, who started his career at Milan's city rival Internazionale, has won the Italian league title six years in a row and claimed the Italian Cup three times in his seven years. He has reached two Champions League finals during his time in Turin, losing both, against Barcelona in 2015 and against Real Madrid last month.



Kylian Mbappe is highly in contention to become next world's most expensive footballer as European giants try to sign the French youngster.

Ludwig van Beethoven:

Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.

'Westworld', 'Saturday Night Live' lead 2017 Emmy nominations

The comedy sketch series 'Saturday Night Live' and the HBO drama 'Westworld' both earned the most Emmy nominations for individual shows with 22 nods apiece. 'SNL' is now the most Emmy nominated series of all time with a total of 231 over the history of the show.

This is the most nominations that the long-running NBC late night sketch show has ever received in a single season.

The 69th Primetime Emmy Awards nominations were announced and it looks to be the year of the freshman in one of the biggest categories.



Five new shows, including 'This Is Us', 'Westworld', 'The Handmaid's Tale', 'The Crown' and 'Stranger Things', will compete with returning nominees 'Better Call Saul' and 'House of Cards' for best drama.

'Stranger Things', which has been a breakout hit for Netflix, scored 19 nominations.

'Atlanta', 'Black-ish', 'Master of None', 'Modern Family', 'Silicon Valley', 'Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt' and 'Veep' are vying for best comedy. Two shows with very different political themes scored multiple nominations for Emmy Awards. HBO's satirical comedy 'Veep' earned 17 nominations, and the newcomer Hulu dystopian drama 'The Handmaid's Tale' earned 13.

'Veep' star Anna Chlumsky announced the nominations, along with actor Shemar Moore. The actress got a bit of a surprise when she learned that she had earned her fifth consecutive nomination for outstanding supporting actress in a comedy.

CNN received seven nominations, including a nod for W. Kamau Bell as host of 'United Shades of America' with W. Kamau Bell. CNN's travel series 'Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown' was nominated for outstanding informational series or special.

'Hope' the whale replaces 'Dippy' as London's skeleton star

'Hope' the blue whale took over as the centerpiece of the revamped atrium of London's Natural History Museum despite a spirited campaign to keep its much-loved predecessor, 'Dippy' the dinosaur.

The towering replica diplodocus skeleton had been in the museum for more than 100 years and news of its impending demise in 2015 sparked an outcry from dinosaur fans.

Some 14,000 people signed a petition to stop the move, while the hashtag #avedippy trended on Twitter.

However, the museum said the skeleton of the blue whale, the largest animal to have lived on Earth and which has been hunted to near extinction, would better raise awareness of mankind's impact on nature.

The 25.2-meter (83-foot) real skeleton suspended from the ceiling is proof that "by using science and evidence, we can make good choices about the future, about sustainability", Museum Director Michael Dixon told AFP.

Richard Sabin, the museum's leading whale expert, said exhibiting 'Hope' in the atrium also showed that the Natural History Museum was "a museum of the future, a relevant museum that can be used to have debates, to answer those big questions in society".

The whale was previously in the mammals section but was not fully in view and will now take center stage in the diving lunge feeding position in Hintze Hall — a cathedral-like space built in the late 19th century.

Fans of 'Dippy' need not despair as the replica dinosaur will be preserved for posterity in a bronze cast to be placed outside the museum.

Prince William's wife Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, was due to attend a gala launch reception for 'Hope' on Thursday along with famous British conservationist David Attenborough.

There were estimated to be around 250,000 blue whales in the world's oceans in the 1800s but commercial hunting brought the species to the brink of extinction in the 1960s with just 400 specimens left.

Legal protection from hunting has since seen their levels rise up to around 20,000 now.

The skeleton on display is of a whale that became stranded in Wexford Harbor in Ireland in 1891, 10 years after the opening of the Natural History Museum.

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Iran short film 'Retouch' qualifies for four int'l festivals

Iranian short film 'Retouch' by Kaveh Mazaheri qualified for screening in four international festivals.

According to Fars News Agency, the film will be screened in festivals in South Africa and Kosovo as well as in the US.

Among the events is Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF), which was launched in 1997 and takes place every year in Providence and Newport, Rhode Island, the US as well as satellite locations throughout the state.

The flick will also be featured in Dokufest, an International Documentary and Short Film Festival founded in 2002, which is held in the Kosovo town of Prizren. It is

an annual festival held in August. It has since grown into a cultural event that attracts international and regional artists and audiences. Films are screened throughout the eight-day festival and accompanied by programs, activities and workshops.

The other event is the Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF) — an international film festival held annually during the summer in New York City to showcase the works of both emerging and experienced Asian and Asian American filmmakers and media artists across a diverse range of genres and styles.

'Retouch' will also make it to the Durban International

Film Festival (DIFF), an annual film festival that takes place in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. It is one of the oldest and largest film festival in Southern Africa and presents more than 200 screenings celebrating the best in South African, African and international cinema.

'Retouch' was introduced to the Academy Awards through Poland's Krakow Film Festival in June as well as the New York-based Tribeca Film Festival in April.

Produced by the Iranian Young Cinema Society, the short film is about a young woman whose husband dies before her eyes and she just observes the tragic scene.

New doc on late Iranian director Kiarostami

Art & Culture Desk

Iranian director Ehsan Naji has created a new film about the prominent Iranian auteur Abbas Kiarostami.

Production of the 118-minute documentary 'Kiarostami Continues' began in 2016 and ended in early 2017.

Naji told the media that the base of the documentary is like Kiarostami's "Life, and Nothing More..." but the difference is that the subject is the late director himself.



Kiarostami, who died in July 2016, was an Iranian film director, whose 'Taste of Cherry' grabbed the Palme d'Or at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival.

He is mostly known as a screenwriter, film editor, art director and producer as well as a poet, photographer, painter, illustrator and graphic designer.

The cinematic works of the internationally acclaimed filmmaker have been hailed by festivals around the world.

China strengthens protection of cultural heritage

China will strengthen protection of cultural heritage in the second half of 2017 and carry out random inspections in provinces where cultural relics are common according to a senior cultural official.

A special investigation will be carried out in provinces and regions where crimes are committed against cultural relics, said Liu Yuzhu, head of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, Xinhua reported.

At a symposium in Maanshan city in eastern China's Anhui Province, Liu urged local officials to draw lessons from cases of tomb robbery, including the Ming

imperial tombs and Eastern Qing royal Tombs.

Local authorities were also asked to complete a full investigation to check potential safety hazards before the end of August. "Being afraid of taking responsibility and failing to report facts are prominent problems in protecting cultural relics," Liu said.

In the last three years, the number of such cases reported to cultural heritage bureaus was much lower than the number of actual crimes and one-third of cultural heritage cases were exposed by the media or reported by the public.



Tehran's ensemble, conducted by Iranian composer Milad Omranloo, in collaboration with French Embassy, staged a concert at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

MOJTABA ARABZADEH/iranonline.ir

Weather



32 23

Amol



38 29

Jiroft



28 24

Ramsar



35 23

Shahriar



38 23

Shiraz



34 ^ 24

Tehran



34 22

Dushanbe



43 29

Mecca



16 12

Saint Petersburg



35 24

Tokyo



25 18

Toronto