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Russia after pilot agreement with Iran



Russian Ministry of Economic Development plans to enter into a temporary pilot agreement with Iran and start free trade zone (FTZ) negotiations with India and Egypt.

According to TASS, Deputy Minister Alexei Gruzdev told reporters on Wednesday, "Regarding India and Egypt, I think we will start talks this year, probably closer to the year-end. Therefore, our agenda is fairly packed for near time."

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Iran: US playing with fire in Syria

Moscow warns Washington against unilateral actions



IRNA

Venezuela president: Helicopter strafes court in 'terrorist attack'

A police helicopter fired on Venezuela's Supreme Court and Interior Ministry in what President Nicolas Maduro said was a thwarted "terrorist attack" aimed at ousting him from power.

The confusing exchange took place as Maduro was speaking live on state television Tuesday. He later said the helicopter had fired on the pro-government court with grenades, one of which did not go off, helping avoid any loss of life, AP reported on Wednesday.

Adding to the intrigue, pictures of a blue police helicopter carrying an anti-government banner appeared on social media around the same time as a video in which an alleged police pilot, identified as Oscar Perez, called for a rebellion against Maduro's "tyranny" as part of a coalition of members of the country's security forces. Authorities said they were still searching for the man.

"We have two choices: Be judged tomorrow by our conscience and the people or begin today to free ourselves from this corrupt government," the man said while reading from a statement with four people dressed in military fatigues, ski masks and carrying what looked like assault rifles standing behind him.

Many of Maduro's opponents took to social media to accuse the president of orchestrating an elaborate ruse to justify a crackdown against Venezuelans seeking to block his plans to rewrite the constitution. Venezuela has been rolled by anti-government protests in the past three months that have left at least 75 people dead and hundreds injured.

After the incident, Maduro sounded alternately calm and angry as he told the audience about what had happened in the airspace just beyond the presidential palace.

"It could've caused a tragedy with several dozen dead and injured," he said, calling it a "terrorist attack."

Later, Information Minister Ernesto Villegas read a statement from the government accusing the helicopter of firing 15 shots against the Interior Ministry as a reception was taking place for 80 people celebrating national journalist's day. It then flew a short distance to the court, which was in session, and launched what he said were four Israeli-made grenades of "Colombian origin," two of them against national guardsmen protecting the building.

The pro-government president of the high court said there were no injuries from the attack and that the area was still being surveyed for damages.

US Republicans, facing health care revolt, delay Senate vote

A Republican rebellion forced the delay Tuesday of a Senate vote on the party's health care overhaul, an embarrassing setback for US President Donald Trump who was left scrambling to salvage the controversial plan.

viability of a years-long bid to dismantle Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act (ACA) in favor of a Republican replacement – was thrown into question, AFP reported.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch Mc-



AP

With the Senate bill delayed until after the July 4 congressional recess, the timeline of the effort – and the overall

Connell acknowledged he did not have the votes, after a non-partisan forecast projected the bill would swell the ranks

of the uninsured by 22 million by 2026 as compared to current law.

"We will not be on the bill this week, but we're still working toward getting at least 50 people in a comfortable place," he said in announcing the delay. "We're not quite there, but I think we've got a really good chance of getting there," he added. "It'll just take us a little bit longer."

Republicans hold 52 Senate seats. They need at least 50 votes, as Vice President Mike Pence would break the tie in favor of the measure.

But at least nine Republican senators have now said they oppose the bill as is. After the announcement, Republican senators headed to the White House for an urgent meeting with Trump, who made it clear that the pressure was on.

"We have to have health care, and it can't be ObamaCare which is melting down," Trump said, as dozens of lawmakers sat grim-faced around a White House conference table. But he also signaled that there might not be a path forward.

"This will be great if we get it done. And if we don't get it done it's going to be something that we're not going to like, and that's OK," Trump said.

Cyberattack sweeps globe, researchers see 'WannaCry' link

A major global cyberattack on Tuesday disrupted computers at Russia's biggest oil company, Ukrainian banks and multinational firms with a virus similar to the ransomware that last month infected more than 300,000 computers.

The rapidly spreading cyber extortion campaign underscored growing concerns that businesses have failed to secure their networks from increasingly aggressive hackers, who have shown they are capable of shutting down critical infrastructure and crippling corporate and government networks, Reuters reported.

It included code known as "Eternal Blue," which cyber security experts widely believe was stolen from the US National Security Agency (NSA) and was also used in last month's ransomware attack, named "WannaCry."

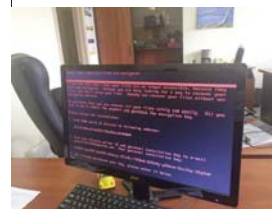
"Cyberattacks can simply destroy us," said Kevin Johnson, chief executive of cyber security firm Secure Ideas. "Companies are just not doing what they are supposed to do to fix the problem."

The ransomware virus crippled computers running Microsoft Corp's Windows by encrypting hard drives and overwriting files, then demanded \$300 in bitcoin payments to restore access. More than 30 victims paid into the bitcoin account associated with the attack, according to a public ledger of transactions listed on blockchain.info.

Microsoft said the virus could spread through a flaw that was patched in a security update in March.

"We are continuing to investigate and will take appropriate action to protect customers," a spokesman for the company said, adding that Microsoft antivirus software detects and removes it.

Russia and Ukraine were most affected by the thousands of attacks, according to security software maker Kaspersky Lab, with other victims spread across countries including Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the United States. The total number of attacks was unknown.



AP

Security experts said they expected the impact to be smaller than WannaCry since many computers had been patched with Windows updates in the wake of WannaCry last month to protect them against attacks using Eternal Blue code.

Still, the attack could be more dangerous than traditional strains of ransomware because it makes computers unresponsive and unable to reboot, Juniper Networks said in a blog post analyzing the attack.

Researchers said the attack may have borrowed malware code used in earlier ransomware campaigns known as "Petya" and "Gold-

enEye."

Following last month's attack, governments, security firms and industrial groups aggressively advised businesses and consumers to make sure all their computers were updated with Microsoft patches to defend against the threat.

The US Department of Homeland Security said it was monitoring the attacks and coordinating with other countries. It advised victims not to pay the extortion, saying that doing so does not guarantee access will be restored.

In a statement, the White House National Security Council said there was currently no risk to public safety. The United States was investigating the attack and determined to hold those responsible accountable, it said.

The NSA did not respond to a request for comment. The spy agency has not publicly said whether it built Eternal Blue and other hacking tools leaked online by an entity known as Shadow Brokers. Several private security experts have said they believe Shadow Brokers is tied to the Russian government, and that the North Korean government was behind WannaCry. Both countries' governments deny charges they are involved in hacking.

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'Deceptive' statement

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi shrugged off recent statement by the European Parliament over human rights in Iran, describing it as deceptive and "based on false speculations".

Iran FM, Italy PM discuss relations, regional issues

Political Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni on Wednesday discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations as well as developments in the region.



mfa.gov.ir

Zarif's meeting with Italian prime minister came hours after the Iranian top diplomat and Italian officials held a closed-door meeting in Rome, during which both sides discussed Iran nuclear deal and regional issues, mfa.gov.ir reported.

After the meeting, Zarif told reports that he had "good" talks with Italian officials over 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on Wednesday.

He said that they discussed developments in the Middle East, Iran nuclear deal and the role the European Union can play in implementation of JCPOA as well as cooperation with Tehran on regional issues, IRNA reported.

Zarif said that such meetings are necessary as "our condition in the region is very sensitive."

Before the meeting, the Iranian foreign minister said that Tehran and Rome have signed good agreements after a visit by the Iranian president to the European country and they are now fulfilling those agreements.

President Hassan Rouhani visited Italy in January 2016, during which the two countries signed deals worth up to 17 billion euros (18.42 billion dollars).

Italy is one of Iran's leading economic and trade partners.

Zarif was also scheduled to hold meetings with the Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano and President of the Chamber of Deputies Laura Boldrini on key regional and international issues and bilateral relations.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Iranian top diplomat attended a meeting of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) in Rome.

The Iranian minister and members of ECFR discussed various issues ranging from bilateral ties and regional developments.

He arrived in Rome on the second and final leg of his European tour after meeting senior German officials in Berlin.

Iran calls for enhanced economic ties with Croatia

Iran's Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare Ali Rabiee voiced the country's readiness to enhance ties with Croatia in political, economic and social areas.

In a meeting with Croatia's Deputy Prime Minister Martina Dalic in Tehran on Wednesday, Rabiee described the relations between Tehran and Zagreb as "historical" and said, "We have always stood by Croatia", Tasnim News Agency reported.

The 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers and the ensuing removal of sanctions have turned trade transactions into an opportunity for promotion of peace and friendship and expansion of cultural cooperation among nations, he added.

Croatia's economy minister and Marko Pavic, the country's State Secretary for Labor and Pension System, and a high-ranking delegation of businessmen were also present at the session.



The Iranian minister stressed that the two countries should make all-out efforts to deepen their mutual ties in all fields, economy in particular.

During the meeting, at least 200 Croatian firms expressed willingness to boost their ties with Iranian firms in various industrial fields, including steel, petrochemical, electricity and shipping services.

Separately, the Iranian minister held talks with Croatia's Minister of Environment and Energy Tomislav Coric and explored avenues for promoting economic cooperation between the Islamic Republic and the European country.

Coric said the country's private sector is ready to expand its economic cooperation with Iranian companies.

He added that Zagreb also seeks more maritime and port cooperation with Iran.

Iran denounces US travel ban on Muslims

Iran denounced the recent US Supreme Court ruling allowing President Donald Trump's contentious Muslim ban to be partly reinstated, saying the United States is turning a blind eye to the real culprits behind acts of terror on its soil.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday that the court order demonstrates the US administration's will to discriminate against Muslims and treat them unfairly, contrary to the American statesmen's claims, Press TV reported.

"It is regrettable that the US government is ignoring the major perpetrators of the terrorist acts in the US and gives [the world] a wrong address in broad daylight in pursuit of its shortsighted economic and business goals."

On Monday, America's highest court said a 90-day ban on visitors from the six Muslim-majority countries of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, along with a 120-day ban on all refugees, could be enforced against those who lack a "credible claim of a bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States."

Trump hailed the court's order as "a clear victory for our national security."

Qassemi said that although the majority of Muslims in the US, including the Iranians, are peaceful, respectful of the law, and against extremism and violence, the US statesmen treat them with "pessimism, insult and humiliation."

He cited Trump's stance both during



HASSAN AMMAR/AP

the US presidential election campaign and after assuming office as an example of such an insulting treatment.

Tehran would thoroughly investigate the court ruling and take appropriate countermeasures, he added.

On Tuesday Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif criticized the ruling as a "misplaced and misguided poli-

cy" and a "regrettable" decision, adding it "would be the greatest gift to extremist groups who would use it as a rallying cry to attract new followers."

The US president initially signed an executive order of the travel ban in January. Several courts, however, described the ban as unconstitutional and put it on hold.

Trump then signed a revised order in early March, excluding Iraq from the initial list of countries whose travelers were barred from the US.

The Muslim ban stirred protests inside the US and abroad, with many arguing that nationals from the countries singled out by Trump have not been involved in terror attacks on US soil.

Iran accuses US of 'brazen' plan to change its government

Iran accused US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson of "a brazen interventionist plan" and in clear violation of international law and the UN Charter to change the current government.

Iran's UN Ambassador Gholamali Khoshroo said in a letter to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres circulated on Tuesday that Tillerson's comments are also "a flagrant violation" of the 1981 Algiers Accords in which the United States pledged "not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs," AP reported.



AFP

Tillerson said in a June 14 hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the 2018 State Department budget that US policy is to "work toward support of those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of that government."

"Those elements are there, certainly as we know," he said.

Khoshroo said Iran expects all countries to condemn "such grotesque policy statements and advised the government of the United States to act responsibly and to adhere to the principles of the (UN) Charter and international law."

He noted that Tillerson's comments came weeks after President Hassan Rouhani's reelection to another four-year term and local elections in which 71 percent of the Iranian people participated.

"The people of Iran have repeatedly proven that they are the ones to decide their own destiny and thus attempts by the United States to interfere in Iranian domestic affairs will be doomed to failure," Khoshroo said. "They have learned how to stand strong and independent, as demonstrated in the Islamic Revolution of 1979."

He said Tillerson's statement also coincided with the release of newly declassified documents that "further clarified how United States agencies were behind the overthrow of Mohammad Mossadegh, the popular and democratically elected prime minister of Iran on Aug 19, 1953."

At the June 14 hearing, Tillerson said the Trump administration's Iranian policy is under development.

Larijani: Iran welcomes South Korea investments

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani reiterated the country's willingness to promote relations with South Korea in all spheres, saying the Islamic Republic welcomes investments from the East Asian nation in energy and railroad sectors.

Speaking at a meeting with his South Korean counterpart on the sidelines of the second annual meeting of parliament speakers of the Eurasian states in Seoul, Larijani expressed his gratitude to South Korea for hosting the meeting "properly" and stressed the need to organize economic and financial cooperation among Eurasian countries, Tasnim News Agency reported.

He pointed to Iran's Sixth Five-Year Development Plan and said Tehran is willing to accept South Korean investments in various projects, including in energy and railroad sectors.

Larijani described efforts to boost banking relations and facilitate visa as "a significant step" toward stronger ties between the two countries.

The speaker of the National Assembly of South Korea described Tehran-Seoul relations as growing and said parliamentary ties can help promote relations among public and private sectors of the two countries.

South Korea is one of Iran's major Asian oil customers.

The Iranian official arrived in South Korea on Monday.

There has been a new wave of interest in ties with Iran since Tehran and the P5+1 group



ICNA

of countries – Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany – reached a nuclear deal in July 2015 and started implementing it in January 2016.

The comprehensive nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), terminated all nuclear-related sanctions against Iran.

Iran: US playing with fire in Syria

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"Raising such baseless claims and embarking on measures that will have no result but the strengthening of terrorist groups and further complicating the fight against them seem highly questionable and suspicious at a time when the Syrian government has been fighting... terrorist groups tooth and nail and has been paying a heavy price for that for more than six years," Qassemi said.

He called on the international community to take appropriate measures to prevent any unilateral moves in the war-torn country.

On Tuesday Iran's foreign minister also de-

nounced as a "dangerous escalation" the White House allegations that Syria is preparing a new chemical weapons attack.

Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on his Twitter account that the warning is based on a "fake pretext" and added that it "will only serve ISIS (Daesh), precisely when it's being wiped out by Iraqi & Syrian people."

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov also said U.S. assertions that the Syrian government may be planning a chemical weapons attack complicate peace talks on Syria, RIA reported on Wednesday.

Gatilov warned the United States not to take unilateral actions in Syria.

US-led strikes kill 30 civilians in eastern Syria

A monitoring group said at least 30 civilians were killed and dozens more sustained injuries when the US-led coalition purportedly fighting the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group carried out an airstrike in Syria's troubled eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the aerial attack hit the village of Al-Dablan, located about 20 kilometers (13 miles) southeast of Mayadin town, early on Wednesday, according to Press TV.

The deadly airstrike is the second in 48 hours that the US-led coalition has conducted in Dayr al-Zawr Province.

On Monday, dozens of people lost their lives when a string of coalition strikes targeted a jail run by Daesh terrorists in Mayadin, located some 45 kilometers (28 miles) southeast of the provincial capital of Dayr al-Zawr.

The observatory said the aerial assaults left 42 prisoners and 15 Daesh terrorists dead.

The US-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be Daesh targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying Daesh.



Syria has been fighting different foreign-sponsored terrorist groups since

March 2011. UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimated last Au-

gust that more than 400,000 people had been killed in the crisis until then.

Turkey targets YPG in Syria, PKK in Iraq

Turkish forces retaliated with an artillery barrage overnight and destroyed Kurdish YPG militia targets after the group opened fire on Turkey-backed forces in northern Syria, the military said on Wednesday.

It said Turkish warplanes separately struck Kurdish militants in northern Iraq on Wednesday, killing seven from the PKK group which Ankara says is closely linked to the YPG, Reuters reported.

The strikes came after Turkey's defense minister warned that Ankara would retaliate against any threatening moves by the YPG and after reports that Turkey was reinforcing its military presence in northern Syria.

The United States supports the YPG in the fight against Daesh in Syria, while NATO ally Turkey regards them as terrorists indistinguishable from militants from the outlawed PKK which is carrying out an insurgency in southeast Turkey.

Turkey's Army said YPG machine-gun fire on Tuesday evening targeted Turkey-backed Free Syrian Army elements in the Maranz area south of the town of Azaz in northern Syria.

"Fire support vehicles in the region were used to retaliate in kind against the harassing fire and the identified targets were destroyed/neutralized," the

military statement said.

The boom of artillery fire could be heard overnight from the Turkish border town of Kilis, broadcaster Haberturk said. It was not clear whether the



alalam.ir

were casualties in the exchange of fire.

Ankara was angered by a US decision in June to arm the YPG in the battle for Daesh's Raqqa stronghold. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday that nations which promised to get back

weapons from the YPG once Daesh terrorists were defeated were trying to trick Turkey.

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Tuesday left open the possibility of longer-term assistance to the YPG, saying the US may need to supply them with weapons and equipment even after the capture of Raqqa.

Ankara considers the YPG as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is deemed a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union.

The PKK has carried out an armed battle against the Turkish state since 1984 and more than 40,000 people, most of them Kurds, have died in the fighting.

Turkish warplanes on Wednesday morning destroyed PKK shelters and gun positions during airstrikes in the Avasin-Basyan area of northern Iraq, killing seven planning an attack on Turkish border outposts, an army statement said.

Faced with turmoil across its southern border, Turkey last year sent troops into Syria to support Free Syrian Army fighting.

Erdogan has said Turkey would not flinch from taking tougher action against the YPG in Syria if Turkey believed it needed to.

EU extends Russia sanctions until January 2018

The European Union formally extended its economic sanctions on Russia on Wednesday, a widely expected step that keeps restrictions on business with Russian energy, defense and financial sectors until January 31, 2018.

The sanctions were imposed in July 2014 following the annexation of Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula to Russia in a referendum and Moscow's alleged support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. Moscow denies direct involvement in the conflict despite NATO's assertions that its troops are supporting the rebels.



spiegel.de

EU leaders agreed to the extension at their summit in Brussels last week, after France and Germany cited no progress in efforts to negotiate an end to the conflict in eastern Ukraine that has killed more than 10,000 people since April 2014, Reuters reported.

Under the sanctions that were imposed in tandem with the United States, European companies are banned from doing business with or investing in Russia's defense and energy industries, while financial ties are severely limited.

European companies cannot borrow or lend money to Russia's five main state-owned banks for more than 30 days, limiting Moscow's avenues for raising funds. Along with restrictions on business with Russia's top energy companies, exports of some energy-related equipment and technology to Russia must also be approved by EU governments.

Any lifting of sanctions on Russia is tied to the implementation of the Minsk peace deal for Ukraine which was negotiated by the leaders of France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia in 2015.

May: UK may need Brexit transition period

Britain may need an implementation period to smoothen its exit from the European Union but there will be no unlimited transition, Prime Minister Theresa May said on Wednesday.



independent.co.uk

"When we know what the future relationship with the EU will be, we may need implementation periods," May told parliament, Reuters wrote.

"But I am very clear, this does not mean unlimited transitional phase: We are going to leave the European Union. That's what people wanted and that's what we will deliver."

Six held in Spain, UK, Germany in anti-terror raids

Four men have been arrested on Majorca and two more in the UK and Germany as part of a Spanish investigation into support for Daesh, police say.

The suspects are said to have produced and spread violent videos to recruit would-be terrorists online, BBC wrote.

One was a 44-year-old man from Birmingham, described by Spanish officials as a Salafist imam.

He was held in the city's Sparkhill area under a European Arrest Warrant.

West Midlands police said he was arrested on suspicion of terrorism offences and would appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court later.

Police in western Germany said they had detained a 28-year-old Spanish national in Dortmund, emphasizing there was no indication of any planned attack in Germany itself.

The Spanish investigation dates back to 2015 when a series of videos were posted online showing how a young person in Spain was indoctrinated, recruited and eventually sent to fight along with terrorists in Syria.

Spanish authorities said the Salafist preacher based in Birmingham was known to European police and intelligence and they alleged he had travelled to Palma de Mallorca to steer the terrorist cell.

The group was based in Majorca and organized secret weekly meetings aimed at recruiting young people to travel to conflict zones to fight, the Spanish interior ministry said.

UAE urged to release activist Mansoor

A coalition of major political and human rights groups and advocates released a joint letter calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the prominent Emirati human rights activist Ahmed Mansoor.

The initiative marks 100 days of Mansoor's detention by authorities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Al Jazeera wrote.

Mansoor is being held in solitary confinement without access to a lawyer or calls to his family, according to the letter demanding his release.

He was arrested in March on charges of spreading sectarianism and hatred on social media, according to WAM, the UAE's state news agency.

"These charges relate solely to his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and therefore we consider him a prisoner of conscience," read the letter.

"The continuing detention of such a high-profile and internationally respected human rights campaigner is extremely



REUTERS

damaging to the UAE government's reputation abroad," it added.

The document was signed by 18 notable figures and eight organizations, including US public intellectual Noam Chomsky, and rights organizations Index on Censorship and PEN International.

100 days in detention

Mansoor was arrested by the UAE's authorities on March 20 after 12 plain-clothed security officials stormed his family home in Abu Dhabi and took him to an unknown location.

Mansoor has since been transferred to

Al-Sadr prison, the letter said. On April 3, he was taken from his place of detention to a prosecutor's office in Abu Dhabi for one short supervised family visit, according to Amnesty International.

WAM quoted the public prosecutor as saying in March that Mansoor, an electrical engineer and poet, had used social media "to publish false information and rumors as well as promoting [a] sectarian and hate-incited agenda".

His posts "harm national unity and social harmony and damage the country's reputation", added the prosecutor's statement. The UAE is an absolute monarchy which tolerates little public criticism of its ruling system and has previously prosecuted Mansoor and other pro-democracy activists for what it called insulting the country's leaders.

Mansoor was among five activists convicted of those charges in 2011 amid the protests calling for reform in other Arab states. He was subsequently released.

Mansoor has a seat on the advisory committee at Human Rights Watch.

PERSPECTIVE

OPEC, non-OPEC producers buttress oil market

The 13-member Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) produced about 36.4 mbd of crude oil and condensate in 2016 — the highest in the past several years. Threatened by the US shale boom, the group decided to fight for market share in 2014, resulting in an industry downturn as oil prices completely collapsed.

As the oil price rebounded from historical lows earlier last year and US shale oil output continued to drop, it seemed OPEC's strategy of fighting for market share had finally started working, even though it took much longer than the industry expected because of the resilience of non-OPEC production, especially US shale.

As the group saw the supply and demand rebalancing via market force, it is widely believed that OPEC will continue its policy of not cutting or freezing production.

However, as the oil price recovered from about \$40 per barrel to \$50 per barrel, US shale found life and reversed the trend of decline beginning in the second half of 2016.

OPEC finally gave up the fight for market share and reached a production cut deal in November 2016 to address the chronic global oil glut in order to boost oil prices.

As Iran seeks to resume its market share to the pre-sanction levels, and Libya and Nigeria look to resume production loss due to disruptions, those three countries were exempted from the cut.

The remaining 10 OPEC members participated in the deal along with 11 non-OPEC countries led by Russia. The 10 OPEC members pledged to cut about 1.2 mbd while the non-OPEC participants planned to cut 600,000 bpd starting from 2017 for six months.

In May 2017, OPEC and its allies decided to extend the production cut for nine months to first-quarter 2018. Compliance to the first cut was surprisingly high; therefore, we are expecting a decent level of compliance for the second cut period.

The production cut deals are expected to mitigate the global oil supply glut to a certain degree. As a result, OPEC production in 2017 is expected to drop by 600,000 bpd.

Since the cut is not likely to continue through 2018, experts expect that most of the OPEC countries would ramp up production starting from 2018 to compensate the impact of production cut.

Non-OPEC crude oil and condensate production increased significantly from 43.7 mbd in 2010 to 47.7 mbd in 2015. US shale, Canada oil sands, Brazil deepwater presalt and China onshore oilfields were the main sources for the non-OPEC production surge in the period.

In 2014 a supply glut sent the oil market off balance, which triggered the collapse of oil prices in the last few years. The massive investment cuts from oil companies around the world did not effectively remove the glut in 2015.

From 2015 to 2016, however, non-OPEC production dropped by 1.1 mbd to 46.6 mbd as market started to rebalance. The production drop for non-OPEC countries during 2016 mostly came from the US and China.

Experts expect that production from non-OPEC countries will start to slowly recover in 2017, mainly driven by strong shale production in the US facilitated by the recovering oil price. Newly completed oil sands projects in Canada and presalt plays in Brazil will also play roles in the turnaround.



IRNA

Industry, mine sector attracted '42% of foreign investment'

Domestic Economy Desk

Industry and mine sector drew 42 percent of the foreign investment in Iran following the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in January 2016, said the director general of Foreign Investment Office of Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade.

Afrouz Bahrami added that since January 2016, Iran attracted foreign investments to the tune of \$13 billion within the framework of 165 economic projects, of which \$5.5 billion pertained to 83 projects in the industry and mine sector, reported IRNA.

He noted that 40 projects involving investments of \$1.8 billion were completed

in the industry and mine sector adding that the remaining 43 projects worth \$3.7 billion are in their final stages.

Pointing to the recent UNCTAD report on Iran's economy, he said Iran received 64 percent more foreign investment during 2016, while developing countries received 14 percent less investment during the year compared to the figures for 2015.

The official put the annual average foreign investment in the country in the last two decades at \$2 billion.

Bahrami noted that Spain ranked top among foreign investors in Iran over the past four years with \$3 billion followed by Germany (\$1.36 billion) and China (\$1.32 billion).

He said that most of the foreign investment under the Rouhani administration went to polymer industries (\$3.5 billion) followed by metals industries (\$1.3 billion), petrochemicals (\$1.1 billion), trade (\$920 million) and the auto sector (\$410 million).

The JCPOA has offered ample opportunities for domestic and foreign investors. The interest is particularly evident in Iran's oil and gas industry as the Islamic Republic holds the world's fourth-largest proven oil and the largest natural gas reserves.

Scores of agreements have so far been signed between major international companies and their Iranian counterparts in all fields.

In May, deputy minister of industry, mine and trade said that Iran plans to attract \$50 billion in foreign investment for the mining sector by 2022 within the framework of its Sixth Five-Year Development Plan (2017-22).

Mehdi Karbasian further said that Iran welcomes the cooperation of Latin American states in mine and mineral development projects.

The country will boost its gross domestic product by developing mines, said the official adding that Latin American companies are expected to expand cooperation in this field.

He stated that based on exploratory studies, Iran has 37 billion tons of proven mineral reserves worth \$770 billion.

NIDC drills over 75km of oil, gas wells in three months

National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) drilled over 75 kilometers of oil and gas wells during the first quarter of current Iranian year (March 21-June 21), said the company's deputy managing director.

Hamidreza Khoshayand added that the company conducted drilling operations in 42 offshore and onshore oil and gas wells during the period, Shana reported.



SHANA

The wells included 14 delineation wells, one exploratory and 27 repair-wells, he added.

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) participated in 33 of the drilled wells, followed by Iranian Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (seven wells), and Iranian Offshore Oil Company (two wells), he said.

The NIDC fleet is made up of 74 light, heavy and ultra-heavy onshore and offshore drilling rigs.

Its staff includes over 17,000 employees.

The company carried out drilling of 193 offshore and onshore oil and gas wells (293 kilometers) in the year to March 20, 2017.

Iran completing 'beauty link' in NSTC scheme

Iran is preparing to launch what could be the country's most beautiful rail routes at the heart of a multimodal intercontinental transportation project — North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC).

A railway, extending 205 kilometers from Qazvin to Rasht in northern Iran, is near completion and could be among the last pieces of a rail link through which Russia would send its goods to India's Mumbai crossing several host countries, including Iran.

An IRNA report said the railway could increase the number of tourists visiting Iran's northern province of Gilan.

Situation on the shores of the Caspian Sea, Gilan is a popular destination for Iranian travelers — specifically during summers and New Year holidays. Official figures show it hosts above 30 million visitors each year.

The construction of Qazvin-Rasht railway is already seen as one of Iran's most challenging rail projects given that it traverses a wide variety terrain. A



IRNA

significant portion of the challenges involved digging 25 kilometers of tunnels and building around eight kilometers of bridges.

In Gilan, it had to be taken through jungles and above rice lands as well as rivers in a way to minimize damage to the environment.

trade.

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

Russia after pilot agreement with Iran

From Page 1

Negotiations can normally last two-three years, he said, adding, "We are certainly not in the mood to protract this process but at the same time we cannot forecast how much time will it take."

Negotiations are also underway now between the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and Iran on a pilot preferential

agreement. "Indeed these are not classic talks on the free trade zone because Iran is not a member of the World Trade Organization. Development of a preferential agreement leading to establishment of the free trade zone was the case in point from the very start," Gruzdev said.

The countries are currently negotiating the list of goods items to have special trade conditions. "There is unity from standpoint of the union; no final list because the list is the subject matter of talks," the official said.

The list will contain 200-300 positions addressing interests of Iran and the EEU at the initial phase. Iran is mainly interested in agriculture and certain positions in mechanical engineering, Gruzdev said. "The interest of the union is certainly much broader, considering the differentiation of our economy; therefore talks continue," he noted.

The pilot agreement with Iran may be signed this year, Gruzdev added.



TASS

Thail economic crisis

Thailand might encounter a repeated economic crisis like the one which occurred two decades ago, said a former governor of the Bank of Thailand over the weekend, Thai media reported.

Main Indices of TSE

Index	Value	Change	Percent
Total Index	78704.5	(2419.9)	(3.07)
Industry Index	67699.6	(1929.3)	(2.85)
Free Float Index	85830.6	(2811.8)	(3.28)
First Market Index	54247	(1778.7)	(3.28)
Second Market Index	176556.5	(4796.5)	(2.72)

Overall Index details on 20170628

First	81124.4	Change end of year(%)	887.94%
High	78760.4	Historical highest	89500.6 (20140105)
Low	78687.1	Historical lowest	100 (1369/1/6)
Close	78704.5	Base Value	100 (1369/1/6)
Change	(2419.9)		

Industry Index details on 20170628

First	69628.9	Change end of year(%)	996.78%
Max Value	67750.5	Historical highest	75181.9 (20140105)
Max Value	67694	Historical lowest	1226.8 (1377/8/25)
Closing	67699.6	Base Value	
Closing	(1929.3)		

Free Float Index details on 20170628

First	88642.4	Change end of year(%)	
Max Value	85880.1	Historical highest	105040 (20140105)
Max Value	85749.7	Historical lowest	
Closing	85830.6	Base Value	
Closing	(2811.8)		

Main Board Index details on 20170628

First	56025.7	Change end of year(%)	749.77%
Max Value	54305.1	Historical highest	67441.4 (20140105)
Max Value	54216	Historical lowest	
Closing	54247	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	(1778.7)		

Secondary Index details on 20170628

First	181353	Change end of year(%)	1305.31%
Max Value	176662.5	Historical highest	181353 (20170522)
Max Value	176550.6	Historical lowest	
Closing	176556.5	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	(4796.5)		

Major Currencies

Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2836	Chinese Yuan	0.1470
Euro	1.1361	UAE Dirham	0.2722
British Pound	1.2819	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2948
Australian Dollar	0.7594	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0089	Saudi Riyal	0.2666

Major Commodities

Crude Oil	\$44.14	Silver	\$16.76
Gold	\$1252.60	Platinum	\$921.60
Copper	\$2.64	Wheat	\$454.50

IMF cuts US outlook, calls Trump's growth target unlikely



handelsblatt.com

The International Monetary Fund cut its outlook for the US economy, removing assumptions of President Donald Trump's plans to cut taxes and boost infrastructure spending to spur growth.

The IMF reduced its forecast for US growth this year to 2.1 percent, from 2.3 percent in the fund's April update to its world economic outlook. The Washington-based fund also cut its projection for US growth next year to 2.1 percent from 2.5 percent in April, Bloomberg wrote.

The world's biggest economy will probably have a hard time hitting Trump's target of three percent annual growth as it's faced with problems ranging from an aging population to low productivity growth, and with a labor market already back at full employment, the fund said in its annual assessment of the US economy released.

Given broad uncertainty on policy, "we have removed the assumed fiscal stimulus from our forecast,"

Alejandro Werner, director of the IMF's Western Hemisphere Department, said at a press briefing in Washington.

The IMF's assessment casts doubt over a more optimistic forecast in the White House budget proposal, which projects growth will accelerate to three percent by 2020 and keep up that pace for seven more years. Even with an "ideal constellation of pro-growth policies, the potential growth dividend is likely to be less than that projected in the budget and will take longer to materialize," the IMF said in a statement.

"The US is effectively at full employment," the lender said. "For policy changes to be successful in achieving sustained, higher growth they would need to raise the US potential growth path."

Growth surges on the scale Trump is predicting have been rare in the US and abroad, according to the IMF, which said there are only a few cases of such leaps among advanced economies since the 1980s. Those

episodes mostly took place in the mid-to late-1990s, when global demand was strong, and many of the cases came when economies were recovering from recessions, the IMF said. The only time the US economy accelerated at such a pace came in the early 1980s, when it was recovering from a deep recession.

The IMF notes the US is enjoying its third-longest expansion since 1850, with "persistently strong" job growth. Growth will slip to 1.9 percent in 2019 and 1.8 percent in 2020, according to the fund's forecasts.

IMF officials said the details of the Trump administration's economic policies appear undecided. As a result, the fund didn't include in its projections the effects of any tax reforms — which the administration has said is a priority but will need congressional approval — or Trump's proposed budget cuts.

The US Treasury said it welcomes the IMF's support for the administration's "broad policy objectives".

Retirement income gender gap widens to £6,400 a year

Women expecting to retire this year will on average be £6,400 a year worse off than men — with the gap £1,000 bigger than last year — according to new research.

The study from Prudential said the gender gap reflected the fact that many women had taken career breaks and changed working patterns after having children, according to Sky News.

Women retiring this year can expect an average annual retirement income of £14,300 — that's the second highest level on record but lower than the £14,500 level in 2016.

But the level for men rose for the fifth year in a row to £20,700 — £900 higher than last year.

That is 45 percent higher than women's average income — the widest gender gap for three years.

Kirsty Anderson, a retirement income expert at Prudential, said: "The gender gap in retirement incomes continues to grow, probably reflecting the fact that



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many women will enter retirement having taken career breaks and changed their working patterns to look after dependants.

"Unfortunately, as a result, many women will end up with smaller pension pots and some are also likely to receive a reduced state pension."

"However, with a greater number of women staying in the workforce for longer these days, and employers increasingly offering more flexible working patterns, the outlook looks more positive for women's retirement incomes in the future."

Meanwhile a separate study from Scottish Widows has warned that 70 percent of 22-29 year olds are not putting away enough money to achieve their desired retirement income.

The report said four in five of young workers are now putting something away into their pension pots, with participation boosted by auto enrolment in workplace schemes.

But average contributions — including money put in by employers — are just £184 a month, only enough to help produce an annual retirement income, including state pension, of £15,200.

That falls well short of a desired income of £23,000.

Catherine Stewart, retirement expert at Scottish Widows, said: "Auto-enrolment may well be lulling people onto a false sense of security that they are putting away enough for a comfortable retirement."

"For many, that is simply not the case, particularly given retirement is looking more expensive than ever."

Rising inequality may be the real risk of automation

After all, even a century of unprecedented technological advancement in transportation, production and communication hasn't caused labor's share of national income to significantly budge.

Economists David Autor and Anna Salomons reckon that's because the primary driver of employment has actually been population growth, despite all the emphasis placed in academic circles on how machines augment human labor as well as why they will ultimately replace us anyway, Bloomberg reported.

The bigger concern, they said, is how technological advances will affect earnings distribution.

Essentially, the argument that the duo puts forth is that as long as there have been humans, there have been jobs — a topic Autor, who works at the MIT Department of Economics, previously explored in a Ted Talk. They suggest that labor supply and final demand for goods and services are what actually determine the level of employment, as consuming workers have more

and more needs.

Autor's research together with Salomons, who works at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, will be presented Tuesday to central bankers from around the world at the European Central Bank's forum in Sintra, Portugal.

What has changed as a consequence of greater productivity through technological advances is how jobs are remunerated.

"Although the raw count of jobs available in industrialized countries is roughly keeping pace with population growth," the economists wrote, "many of the new jobs generated by an increasingly automated economy do not offer a stable, sustainable standard of living."

"Simultaneously, many highly-paid occupations that are strongly complemented by advancing automation are out of reach to workers without a college education."

So if the problem isn't falling aggregate labor demand, but rather an increasingly skewed distribution



GETTY IMAGES

of employment — and ultimately earnings — humans may need to re-direct the focus of what technology will mean for the future of work.

Ozone recovery may be delayed by unregulated chemicals

Recent increases in an unregulated ozone-depleting substance, could delay recovery of Antarctic ozone levels by 5-30 years, depending on emissions scenarios.

The findings, published in Nature Communications, suggest that a previously ignored chemical called dichloromethane may now be contributing to ozone depletion and should be looked at to improve future ozone predictions, phys.org wrote.

Long-lived chlorine species, such as chloro-

fluorocarbons (CFCs), led to depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer in the 1980s, most drastically seen in the Antarctic.

After introduction of the UN Montreal protocol in 1987, which regulated emissions of ozone-depleting substances, stratospheric ozone began to recover and is projected to return to pre-1980 levels in the second-half of this century.

The Antarctic 'ozone hole' is expected to fully recover sometime between 2046 and 2057.

However, atmospheric concentrations of

dichloromethane — a short-lived, ozone-depleting substance not regulated by the Montreal Protocol — have risen in recent years and could be contributing to ozone loss.

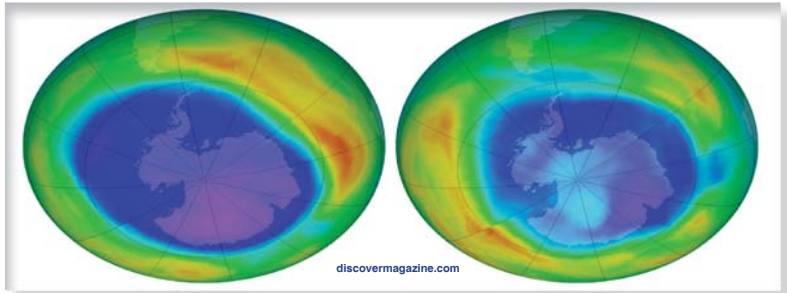
Study lead author Dr. Ryan Hossaini, from the Lancaster Environment Center at Lancaster University, said: "Dichloromethane is a man-made ozone-depleting chemical that has a range of industrial applications. Unlike CFCs and similar long-lived gases that are responsible for most ozone depletion, dichloromethane has a short

atmospheric lifetime so has not been controlled by the Montreal Protocol. Despite this, increased production has led to a rapid increase in its atmospheric concentration over the past decade.

"While ozone depletion from dichloromethane is currently quite modest, it is uncertain how the amount of this gas in the atmosphere will change in the future. Our results show that continued sustained growth in its concentration could substantially delay recovery of the ozone layer, offsetting some of the future benefits of

the Montreal Protocol."

Ryan Hossaini of Lancaster University and colleagues use simulations with a global chemical transport model to examine the sensitivity of future stratospheric chlorine and ozone levels to sustained dichloromethane growth. Measurements of dichloromethane in the atmosphere over the past two decades, provided by scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the United States, were also analyzed.



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World's first floating windfarm to take shape off coast of Scotland

The world's first floating windfarm has taken to the seas in a sign that a technology once confined to research and development drawing boards is finally ready to unlock expanses of ocean for generating renewable power.

After two turbines were floated this week, five now bob gently in the deep waters of a fjord on the western coast of Norway ready to be tugged across the North Sea to their final destination off north-east Scotland, The Guardian reported.

The £200-million Hywind project is unusual not just because of the pioneering technology involved, which uses a 78-meter-tall underwater ballast and three mooring lines that will be attached to the seabed to keep the turbines

upright. It is also notable because the developer is not a renewable energy firm but Norway's Statoil, which is looking to diversify away from carbon-based fuels.

Irene Rummelhoff, head of the oil firm's low-carbon division, said the technology opened up an enormous new resource of wind power.

"It's almost unlimited. Currently we are saying floating windfarms will work in water depths of between 100 and 700 meters, but I think we can go deeper than that. It opens up ocean that was unavailable," she said.

Offshore windfarms are springing up across the North Sea for a reason — its waters are uniquely shallow enough to allow turbines to be mounted atop steel poles fixed to the

seabed.

However, such fixed-bottom turbines can only be installed at water depths down to 40 meters, making them little use for the steeply shelved coastlines of the US west coast or Japan.

"If you look at coastlines around the world, there's few that have sufficient area at depths down to 40 meters so if they want to deploy offshore wind, they need to introduce floating wind," said Rummelhoff.

As well as opening up new frontiers such as the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, floating windfarms could be placed further out to sea to avoid the sort of aesthetic objections that scuppered a £3.5-billion windfarm off the Dorset coast.

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و مستغلات شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم

مالکین محترم
ساختمان در دست در مناطق شمال تهران
جهت اجاره به یک سفارتخانه
و کمپانی های خارجی نیازمندیم

Shift work may damage DNA, increase risk for chronic disease

When people work the night shift, their bodies might have less capacity to repair everyday damage to cells' DNA, a new study found.

The research found that people excreted lower levels of a chemical called 8-OH-dG when they worked at night, UPI wrote.

That might be a sign that the body's ability to repair DNA damage is diminished.

While this is all theoretical, a number of studies have tied shift work to higher risks of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers.

Lead researcher Parveen Bhatti, of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, in Seattle, said, "The new findings might point to one reason for those risks."

"8-OH-dG is excreted in the urine when the body repairs DNA damage that occurs during normal body processes."

"So we think lower clearance [of 8-OH-dG] likely reflects a reduced ability to repair DNA damage."

"Over time, such DNA damage might contribute to cancer or other diseases."

"The whole process might be due to insufficient levels of melatonin — a hormone that helps regulate the body's internal 'clock'."

The brain churns out melatonin in response to darkness, and night-shift workers tend to have lower melatonin levels compared to people who work days.

However, a researcher who reviewed the study was cautious about interpreting it.

Kathryn Reid, who studies sleep and circadian rhythms at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, in Chicago, said, "The results are interesting."

"But they didn't link shift work to



hss.com

actual DNA damage and it's not really clear how melatonin fits in.

"This doesn't show that it's cause-and-effect."

The findings, reported in the journal Occupational and Environmental Medicine, are based on 50 men and women who worked the night shift in health care jobs.

Overall, Bhatti's team found, the workers had lower levels of 8-OH-dG in their urine when they worked at night, versus nights where they were able to sleep.

Bhatti said, "The results bolster an earlier study in which his team followed 223 workers — including the 50 in this one."

There, the researchers found that workers' 8-OH-dG levels were lower during daytime sleep, versus nighttime sleep.

The researchers also saw evidence that lower melatonin levels correlated with lower 8-OH-dG.

The 50 workers in the latest study were those who'd shown the biggest drop in melatonin during night work versus night sleep.

Bhatti said, "We think melatonin might be driving this."

He acknowledged, though, that his findings so far don't prove that.

"I'd like to do a trial where we give melatonin to shift workers with low melatonin levels, then see if it affects this biomarker."

But until more research is done, he does not suggest shift workers use melatonin supplements in the hopes of preventing DNA damage.

Bhatti added, "I'm cautious about melatonin supplements."

"They're not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. You don't know how much melatonin you're getting, or what kinds of fillers are being used."

Plus, Reid added, "Melatonin can make people feel groggy, which is probably not a good idea for workers who need to be alert at night."

For now, Bhatti suggested that shift workers be 'extra vigilant' about maintaining a healthy lifestyle — eating a balanced diet, not smoking and getting regular exercise.

Unfortunately, he added that eating well and exercising can be challenging for shift workers.

"That's where I think employers can help. They can try to provide access to healthy food and more opportunities for employees to exercise."

Risk of heart disease

Researchers said that adults who suffer from persistent mental distress, including depression and anxiety, are four times more likely to die from heart disease.

Obesity risk factors decline in test of prevention program for preschoolers

A new study found that preschoolers from low-income families who took part in a two-year community-wide intervention program showed improvement in weight.



annandale-umc.org

The intervention program detailed in the study, which was published in Obesity, promoted healthy eating and lifestyle habits resulting in preschoolers consuming fewer sugary beverages, getting more sleep and improving weight, according to UPI.

Dr. Jennifer Woo Baidal, assistant professor of pediatrics and director of pediatric weight management at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC), said, "Evidence strongly suggested that instilling healthy habits in young children is a necessary cornerstone in efforts to prevent obesity and its sequelae."

"Though some progress has been made in reducing childhood obesity, not all families are aware that certain strategies — like eliminating sugary drinks, limiting screen time, getting enough physical activity and sleep — help young children achieve and maintain a healthy weight."

"Solutions that can be scaled-up are urgently needed to prevent obesity in young children at highest risk."

The study tested the childhood obesity prevention program at the Massachusetts Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration, or MA-CORD, program for families from low-income communities with high obesity rates.

The MA-CORD program was implemented at two community-wide offices for the Special Supplemental for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC, program.

Researchers found that children participating in the intervention program engaged in more physical activity and less screen time compared to their peers who were not in the program.

Rachel Colchamiro, director of nutrition services for the Nutrition Division at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, said, "Overall, the intervention had a positive impact on reducing obesity risk factors among the children in our study."

"But the smaller impact on reducing body mass index may be due to factors that can't be easily controlled, such as access to high-quality, nutritious foods in the community and the challenge of measuring rapid changes in growth during early childhood."

"Because obesity disproportionately affects lower-income families, incorporating WIC providers and community systems into multi-sector obesity prevention efforts could yield high results at a national level."

Five signs you could be suffering from stomach cancer

Stomach cancer affects thousands of people every year. Experts believe up to 7,000 people receive a diagnosis of the disease every year in the UK.

The organ helps to digest food and can expand to hold around one liter of food, experts suggested, express.co.uk reported.

Stomach cancer is more common among men and those who are over the age of 55.

It is also more likely to occur in smokers, people who are overweight or obese, people with a diet low in fiber and high in processed food or red meat.

People who eat a lot of salt and pickled food can also be at risk of the disease.

Macmillan Cancer Support said, "Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) — a common stomach infection can increase the risk of developing stomach cancer if it's present over a long time."

NHS Choices said that there are several types of stomach cancer, although more than 95 percent of cancers develop in the cells

of the stomach lining and known as adenocarcinomas.

The early symptoms of stomach cancer are similar to the symptoms of some common stomach conditions.



express.co.uk

These can include heartburn or indigestion which is persistent.

Indigestion or heartburn — also known as dyspepsia — can sometimes be a symptom of pancreatic cancer.

Other symptoms can include burping a lot, having no appetite and feeling full after eating only a small

amount of food.

Weight loss is also a key symptom of the condition.

Other symptoms can include pain and swelling in the abdominal area or feeling or being sick.

The procedure commonly takes around ten minutes — although people can't eat or drink for several hours before the test.

A study, published in the British Journal of Cancer revealed those who reported being overweight at the age of 20 were about 60 to 80 percent more likely to develop stomach cancer in later life compared to people who maintain a healthy weight.

Being overweight or obese is the single biggest preventable cause of cancer in the UK after smoking and contributes to around 18,100 cases of cancer every year.

Researchers found people who gained more than three stone (20kg) during adulthood were also twice as likely to develop esophageal cancer compared to people who had little weight change.

Dr. Jessica Petrick, study author, said, "This study highlights how weight gain over the course of our lives can increase the risk of developing these two cancer types, both of which have extremely poor survival."

Painless flu jab patch for people scared of injections

A 'painless' sticking plaster flu jab that delivers vaccine into the skin has passed important safety tests in the first trial in people.

The patch has a hundred tiny hair-like microneedles on its adhesive side that penetrate the skin's surface, bbc.com reported.

It is simple enough for people to stick on themselves.

That should help more people get immunized, including those who are scared of injections, experts said.

Unlike the standard flu jab, it doesn't need to be kept in the fridge, meaning pharmacies could easily stock it on their shelves for people to buy.

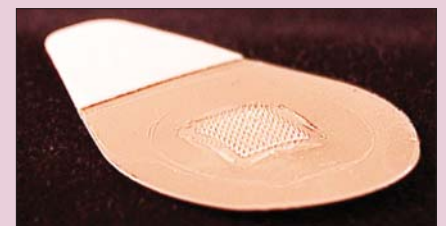
Volunteers who tested it said they preferred it to injections.

It offers the same protection as a regular vaccine, but without pain, according to its developers from Emory University and the Georgia Institute of Technology, who are funded by the US National Institutes of Health.

The patch punctures the uppermost layers of the skin, whereas regular flu injections go all the way through and into muscle.

Lead researcher Prof. Mark Prausnitz, who is also part of a company that wants to license the technology, said, "If you zoom in under the microscope what you'll see are microscopically small needles. They puncture painlessly into the skin."

His team tested the patch alongside flu injections. Some of the 100 volunteers got the regular shot in the arm, while others applied the microneedle



The patch is a few centimeters in diameter and has tiny, hair-like needles in the center. BBC

patch to their wrist for 20 minutes.

Most said using the patch was painless, but some experienced mild side effects — redness, itching and tenderness in the area of skin area where it had been applied. These symptoms got better on their own over days.

Easy to use

Experts said that the patch could revolutionize how flu and other vaccines are given, although more clinical tests over the next few years are needed to get the patch system approved for widespread use.

Dr. Nadine Roupel, from Emory University, said, "We could envisage vaccination at home, in the workplace or even via mail distribution."

The patch can be thrown in the bin after it is used because the microneedles dissolve away.

And because it can be safely stored for up to a year without refrigeration, it could prove extremely useful in the developing world.

Experts from Public Health England said it might also be good to use in young children, who tend not to like needles, although the UK has already introduced a nasal spray flu vaccine for them.

John Edmunds, an expert in infectious diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said, "This study is undoubtedly an important step towards a better way to deliver future vaccines."

Other researchers have also been looking at pain-free skin delivery. A flu shot syringe that uses a microneedle has already been approved for use in the US.

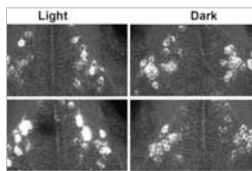
Scientists in Australia have been designing a nanopatch with even smaller needles.

How and why does light affect sleep?

Many studies have explored the effects of light on the circadian rhythms of plants and animals, including humans. But few have looked at the direct effects of light on sleep.

Researchers at the California Institute of Technology set out to determine how and why light directly impacts sleep, UPI reported.

Scientists wanted to know why darkness is soporific and why brightness can disrupt deep sleep.



Because zebrafish are translucent, researchers could monitor how light and darkness impacted neural protein biomarkers and altered sleep patterns.

Testing in Caltech labs revealed a light-sensitive neural protein key in maintaining the proper balance between wakefulness and sleep.

Researcher David Prober, a professor of biology at Caltech, said, "Researchers had previously identified the photoreceptors in the eye that are required for the direct effect of light on wakefulness and sleep."

"But we wanted to know how the brain uses this visual information to affect sleep."

In the lab, researchers tagged the brain protein prokineticin 2, or Prok2, with bioluminescent markers in zebrafish models.

Zebrafish follow a diurnal sleep-wake pattern similar to humans. They're also translucent, making it easy to monitor neural activity. Scientists engineered several zebrafish to over-express the Prok2 protein.

The fish with an excess of Prok2 were more likely to fall asleep during the day and wake up at night. These effects were dependent on external light, not circadian rhythm.

Zebrafish with mutated Prok2 receptors showed the opposite effects. Their sleep-wake patterns were less influenced by light.

Prober said, "Though diurnal animals such as zebrafish spend most of their time asleep at night and awake during the day, they also take naps during the day and occasionally wake up at night, similar to many humans."

"Our study's results suggest that levels of Prok2 play a critical role in setting the correct balance between sleep and wakefulness during both the day and the night."

In follow up tests, researchers found Prok2 influences other proteins important to sleep patterns, including the protein galanin, which is active in a sleep-promoting brain region called the anterior hypothalamus.

Light and darkness proved less disruptive to the sleep patterns zebrafish than were engineered to over-express Prok2 but under-express galanin.

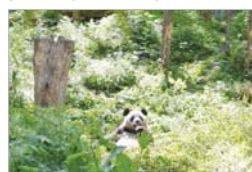
Prober and his colleagues shared the results of their experiments in the journal *Neuron*.

Panda conservation offers broad ecological benefits

Panda conservation benefits a variety of plants and animals, not just pandas, new research found.

Analysis of habitat restoration projects in China suggested panda conservation efforts offer broad ecological benefits, including boosts in biodiversity, UPI wrote.

Panda conservancy also guards against the negative consequences of global warming.



A panda munches on bamboo in a forest preserve in China.

Jianguo Liu, director of the Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability (CSIS) at Michigan State University, said, "Sometimes unintended consequences can be happy ones and give us ways to do even better as we work toward sustainability."

"Pandas are leading us to even greater ways to care for nature and health of humans and the planet."

Due to the panda's slow metabolism and limited diet — bamboo is lacking in nutritional density — the species need vast amounts of forest to survive.

Most panda conservation efforts in China involve the restoration and protection of forests. Bigger, healthier forests offer benefits to a range of species.

CSIS researcher Andrés Viña said, "Reserves are created thinking about the pandas — but we wanted to see if they provide more benefits than just the pandas."

"A lot of work is focused in regards to the pandas, but we wanted to ask about other animal and plant species. How are these nature reserves doing for biodiversity and for carbon sequestration?"

Satellite data, including remote sensing, suggested forest restoration and the expansion of forest preserve allows for denser canopies and higher rates of CO₂ absorption.

But not all forest conservation efforts are equally effective. The new research — published in the journal *Ecosphere* — showed conifers planted during some early restoration projects were placed too close together.

The especially dense canopy blocked too much sun and prevented the development of sufficient bamboo yields.

In future restoration projects, Viña believes conservationists should plant a great variety of native tree species and leave more space between trees.

Viña added, "We are seeing efforts that are moving in the right direction and showing positive results for nature and for humans."

"Now it's time to continue those efforts, and fine tune them to continue to get even more benefits."

Physicists make quantum leap in understanding life's nanoscale machinery

A diagnostic technique that can detect tiny molecules signaling the presence of cancer could be on the horizon.

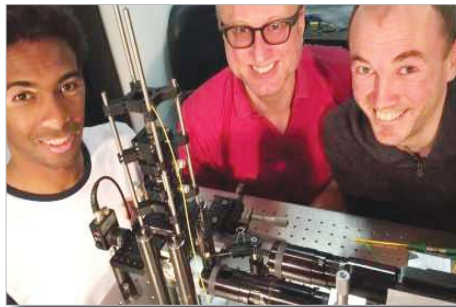
The possibility of an entirely new capability for detecting cancer at its earliest stages arises from University of Queensland physicists applying quantum physics to single molecule sensing for the first time, phys.org reported.

Australian Research Council Future Fellow Professor Warwick Bowen said, "The research demonstrated how quantum technologies could revolutionize the study of life's nanoscale machinery, or biological motor molecules."

"Motor molecules encode our genetic material, create the energy our cells use to function and distribute nutrients at a sub-cellular level."

Unlike methods currently available, the technique helps us observe the behavior of single biomolecules without large-label particles or damaging light intensities."

PhD student Nicolas Mauranyapin said that motor molecules drove all of life's primary functions, but scientists did not yet completely understand their



Nicolas Mauranyapin (L), Prof. Warwick Bowen (C) and Dr. Lars Madsen.

phys.org

workings.

"Our research opens a new door to study motor molecules in their native state, at the nanoscale."

Project researcher Dr. Lars Madsen said, "The project applied techniques

used to detect gravitational waves from black holes in outer space to the nanoscale — super small — world of molecular biology."

"The techniques required to detect extremely faint signals produced by

distant black holes were developed over decades.

"Our research translates this technological development over to the bio-sciences and offers the possibility of a new biomedical diagnostics technique capable of detecting the presence of even a single cancer marker molecule."

Researchers from five countries — Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, France and Pakistan — were involved in the project.

It is funded by the US Air Force Office of Scientific Research, which aims to use the technique to help understand stress on pilot behavior at the sub-cellular level.

The project is part of the University of Queensland Precision Sensing Initiative, a joint initiative of the schools of mathematics and physics and of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering.

It was supported by the Australian Research Council Center of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems, which aims to develop next-generation quantum technologies for future Australian industries.

Boaty McBoatface submarine back home

Boaty McBoatface, the UK's favorite yellow submarine, has returned from its first major science expedition.

The vehicle was used in the Antarctic to map the movement of deep, cold water as it moves away from the White Continent towards the Atlantic Ocean, according to bbc.com.

Scientists said this flow of water plays an important role in helping to regulate the Earth's climate system.

Boaty made a total of three dives, reaching down to 4,000m below the surface.

And by all accounts, it acquired a remarkable set of new data.

Prof. Alberto Naveira-Garabato from the University of Southampton, the lead scientist for the investigations conducted from the deck of the Royal Research Ship James Clark Ross, said, "We were extremely pleased with Boaty's performance."

"Boaty's longest dive was over three days, covering 180km. Boaty flew through some very strong currents, very close to the ocean bottom and encountered some really steep

terrain. And it did this while running through a very complex sampling pattern."

Boaty carries the name that a public poll had suggested be given to the UK's future £200m polar research vessel.

The government felt this would be inappropriate and directed the humorous moniker go on a submersible instead (the ship will be called the RSS Sir David Attenborough).

Southampton's National Oceanography Center (NOC) — the home of Boaty — is actually going to use the brand on three robots in its new Autosub Long Range class.

These subs have proven their capabilities in various sea trials but the Antarctic venture was the first full science expedition, proper.

Boaty was programmed to swim through a narrow gap in the ocean-floor ridge that extends northeast of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Known as the Orkney Passage, this opening is a critical "valve" in the so-called "great ocean conveyor" — the relentless system of deep circulation that helps redistribute all the



Boaty undertook three dives with the longest conducted over three days.

bbc.com

heat energy that has built up in the climate system.

There is evidence that this flow of bottom-water is warming, perhaps because of a strengthening of the winds over the Southern Ocean.

Naveira-Garabato said, "When the winds change speed they can lead to an acceleration or deceleration of the currents carrying the bottom-water out of Antarctica."

And when these currents change speed they will produce more or less turbulence depending on whether they go faster or slower and that can change how

much heat gets mixed into the currents from above, because the waters above are warmer."

That could have a number of important implications, not least for sea-level rise, because if the bottom-water is warming it will expand and push up the ocean surface.

Boaty took temperature, salinity (saltiness), current and turbulence measurements on its deep dives.

Dr. Povl Abrahamsen from the British Antarctic Survey said, "On the cruise, we also took lots of measurements from the ship using profiling

instruments, giving us very high-resolution in depth, but at a fixed point in time and space."

"And we recovered instruments that had been moored in the area over the last two years, giving us good coverage in time, but again at a fixed point and depth."

"The data from Boaty fills in the gaps between these measurements, yielding data that we can't get in any other way."

The sub's exploits were not all trouble free, however. At the start of one dive, Boaty encountered a swarm of krill so dense that its echo sounders thought it was approaching the seabed even though it was only at 80m depth. The sub returned to the surface as a consequence.

Abrahamsen said, "Boaty is cutting-edge technology and is still under development. As is always the case when pushing the boundaries, a few minor mishaps did occur."

"But we learn from these problems, rectify them and it makes Boaty more reliable in the future, enabling it to undertake more complex missions, farther away from ship support."

New research published in *Astrophysical Journal* reveals that one of the two black holes in a gigantic, bulging galaxy about 750 million light years from Earth seems to be orbiting around the other.

If confirmed, it is the first duo of black holes ever shown to be moving in relation to each other, news.xinhuanet.com wrote.

Potentially, it is the smallest ever recorded movement of an object across the sky, also known as angular motion.

Roger W. Romani, professor of physics at Stanford University and coauthor of the paper, said, "If you imagine a snail on the recently discovered Earth-like planet orbiting Proxima Centauri, a bit over four light years away, moving at one centimeter a second, that's the angular motion we're resolving here."

Researchers led by Greg Taylor, a professor of physics and astronomy at the University of New Mexico, have taken snapshots of radio galaxy 0402+379, the one containing the two black holes over the past 12 years.

Officially discovered in 1995, the galaxy was confirmed in 2006 to have a supermassive black-hole binary system with an unusual configuration.

Research reveals two black holes moving in relation to each other



relativelyinteresting.com

With a combined mass 15 billion times that of the Sun, the black holes are among the largest ever found.

Karishma Bansal, a graduate student in Taylor's lab and lead author of the paper, said, "The black holes are at a separation of about seven parsecs, which is the closest together that two supermassive black holes have ever been seen before."

In the recent paper, the team reported that one of the black holes moved at a rate of just over one micro-arcsecond per year — an angle about one billion times

smaller than the smallest thing visible with the naked eye. Based on this movement, the researchers hypothesize that one black hole may be orbiting around the other over a period of 30,000 years.

Although it is not the only supermassive black-hole binary ever found, the researchers believe that 0402+379 likely has a special history.

Romani said, "We've argued it's a fossil cluster. It's as though several galaxies coalesced to become one giant elliptical galaxy with an enormous halo of X-rays around it."

Researchers believe that large galaxies often have large black holes at their centers, and if large galaxies combine, their black holes eventually follow suit.

It's possible that the apparent orbit of the black hole in 0402+379 is an intermediary stage in this process.

Taylor said, "For a long time, we've been looking into space to try and find a pair of these supermassive black holes orbiting as a result of two galaxies merging. "Even though we've theorized that this should be happening, nobody had ever seen it, until now."

A combination of the two black holes in 0402+379 would create a burst of gravitational radiation.

However, this theorized convergence between the black holes may never occur.

Given how slowly the pair is orbiting, the researchers think the black holes are too far apart to come together within the estimated remaining age of the Universe, unless there is an added source of friction.

By studying what makes this stalled pair unique, the researchers try to better understand the conditions under which black holes normally merge.



ft.com

Number of Britons in long-term poverty rose in 2015

The number of people in the UK in long-term persistent poverty rose for the first time for three years in 2015, according to new data from the ONS.

However, Britons were less likely to experience long-term poverty — defined as a low household income relative to the national average during the current year, and at least two of the three years before that — than in most of the other 28 EU states, where it has been rising since 2008, ft.com wrote.

Robert Joyce, head of poverty, incomes and inequality at the Institute for Fiscal Studies think-tank, said that the new figures confirmed “that having a low income is more likely to be a temporary state of affairs for households in the UK than it is for households in much of the EU, including France and Germany”.

The UK has the EU's fifth-lowest rate of persistent poverty, at 7.3 percent of the population, or about 4.6 million people, and scores better than France and Germany.

On short-term measures of poverty in a current year, Britain had the 13th highest rate of the 28 EU member states, at 16.7 percent. This was the same as Germany, and close to the EU average of 17.3 percent.

“We have at least as many people with a low current income as they [European nations] do,” said Joyce, “but fewer people with a persistently low income. This suggests that the incomes of low-income families here are relatively volatile.”

Thirty percent of the UK population was at risk of short-term poverty between 2012 and 2015.

Long-term poverty has affected more women than

men since data collection began in 2008. However, the gap grew to its largest in 2015, with 8.2 percent of women in persistent poverty compared with 6.3 percent of men.

The ONS data hint at the psychological strain of long-term poverty — just over a third of people living in persistent poverty reported high levels of anxiety, compared with a fifth of the general population.

David Finch, senior economic analyst at the Resolution Foundation, said that although it was encouraging that the risk of staying poor was lower in the UK than in the rest of Europe, “the risk is that the coming welfare cuts could push our persistent poverty rates in the wrong direction”.

UK unemployment is at a 40-year low but wage growth has fallen behind inflation.

When cutting access to healthcare, there's a price to pay

By Eduardo Porter*

Senators, the United States is a sick country. Four years ago, a panel of experts convened by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council set out to assess the nation's health compared with that of 16 other rich nations.

Americans, they found, had the second-highest mortality from noncommunicable conditions — like diabetes, heart disease or violence — and the fourth highest from infectious disease. In terms of infant and maternal mortality, Americans are the worst off, nytimes.com wrote.

From adolescence to adulthood to old age, the chances of dying an early death are higher in the United States than in any of the other 16 countries. A 15-year-old American girl has a 1 in 25 chance of dying before she turns 50 — twice the risk found in the comparison group.

And early death is hardly surprising, since Americans lead a pretty sickly life. Teenagers and young adults report higher rates of obesity, chronic illness, sexually transmitted infections, mental illness and injuries than in peer countries, according to the report. Americans in their 50s have higher rates of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

The figures also reflect a toll in the workplace. The United States ranks in the bottom fourth among the 30 industrialized nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in terms of days lost to disability: Women will lose 362 days between birth and their 60th birthday; men about 336. Mental health problems like depression will account for most.

And the American deficit has been getting worse.



prodtutture.com

“Each year, other high-income countries are improving their health at a much faster rate than the United States, and the United States currently ranks lowest on a variety of health measures,” the report by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council noted.

I bring this up, senators, because you are considering a bill that would drive a stake through the Affordable Care Act. As you mull the legislation over your holiday recess, think about the consequences of cutting access to care for millions of mostly poorer, sicker and older Americans.

Of course, the dismal health situation is not all the fault of the healthcare system — which, until the passage of the Affordable Care Act, was the only one in the developed world that routinely barred access or limited care for millions of people of modest means.

That is because violence accounts for a large share

of Americans' excessive mortality and accidents take a disproportionate toll. Nor is the healthcare system entirely to blame for the nation's elevated obesity rate — a leading cause of problems like diabetes.

Americans die from noncommunicable diseases at higher rates than citizens of many other advanced countries. And many people here have at times been reluctant to see a doctor because of the cost.

What's more, the United States' higher tolerance of poverty undoubtedly contributes to higher rates of sickness and death. Americans at all socioeconomic levels are less healthy than people in some other rich countries. But the disparity is greatest among low-income groups.

Still, senators, you are not off the hook. Limited access to healthcare may not entirely account for the poor health and the early deaths of so many of your fellow Americans. But it accounts for a good chunk.

A study about equity in access to healthcare for 21 countries in 2000 revealed that the United States had the highest degree of inequity in doctor use, even higher than Mexico — which is both poorer and generally more inequitable.

In 2015, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States government spent 8.4 percent of its gross domestic product to pay for healthcare for about half of all Americans, including Medicare, Medicaid and subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. That year, Britain spent 7.7 percent to cover virtually all of its citizens. Finland, Canada and Italy spent even less.

*Eduardo Porter writes the Economic Scene column for The New York Times.

One in three poor people stays out of social security net in South Korea

One in three low-income people in South Korea don't benefit from the country's income security systems, a study said, calling for their reform or new plans.

Nearly 36 percent of South Koreans in the poor class didn't bask in any of the country's five social security systems as of 2015, including the state pension program and unemployment benefits, according to the study by Kang Shin-wook, a researcher at the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, according to Yonhap.

The study is based on a survey of people aged 18 or older on the country's welfare situation. It defined those in the poor class as people whose income was less than 50 percent of the nation's median household income.

It also estimated those in the poor class at 19.5 percent of South Korea's 50 million population.

“About 35 percent of the total population are not

protected by any of the five income security systems,” Kim said.

“That means there is room for improvement in terms of their inclusiveness.”

The study also showed the social security schemes were out of reach for 57.3 percent of working-age people aged 18 to 64, who were employed for six months or shorter per annum.

About 22 percent of the nation's long-term poor, who belong to the poor class for three years running and amount to 13 percent of the population, were unable to benefit from any of the five social security systems, it added.

In light of their low inclusiveness, Kim said, there is a need to upgrade the current income security systems or craft new ones in order to better protect people in poverty.



/koreaxpose.com

Rising violence takes huge psychological toll in Rio favelas

Almir Arruda rode his bicycle quickly across the City of God slum in Rio de Janeiro when he heard there was a shootout between drug traffickers and police near his 4-year-old daughter's preschool.

Arruda, a 43-year-old unemployed construction worker, arrived to find children and teachers lying on the floor to protect themselves as the pounding of bullets continued nearby. He scooped up daughter Jamile, who looked terrified, and they rode the bike a few blocks until Arruda stopped to wait out the shooting — and started crying, abcnews.go.com reported.

“If it hits me I don't care, but what if it hits her?” Arruda said, talking about stray bullets through tears and over the sounds of gunshots close by. “I feel like a prisoner in the community.”

Amid a sharp increase in violence in favelas, or slums, millions of Rio residents are facing daily stresses akin to those in a war zone. Heavily armed drug traffickers battle for control of many favelas, and violent police operations add to the death toll and sense of fear. Last year, 920 people died during police raids or patrols in Rio state, more than double the 413 in 2013, according to Rio's Public Security Institute. And this year's figure is up by almost 60 percent over 2016.

To document the psychological impact of the violence on favela residents, an Associated Press team spent eight days with two families in the City of God, a slum of about 50,000 residents made famous by the 2002 Oscar-nominated film of the same name and visited six years ago by then US president Barack Obama.

While there, the AP witnessed children, even toddlers, talking about violence in their community, mothers forcing their children to take cover during police patrols and a man recovering after being shot. The roar of gunfire was often present, prompting residents to break up activities when they believed the skirmish to be particularly close.



abcnews.com

Different than hundreds of other Rio favelas that grew out of squatter communities, City of God was built in the 1960s as a housing project for people who had been forced out of other favelas. It sits just a few miles from the Olympic Park in upscale Barra da Tijuca. Despite proximity to wealth, government services are practically non-existent. Parts of the slum are covered with garbage and the stench of sewage permeates the air.

While teeming with residents, even during the day the streets are often empty because violence can erupt at any moment — residents even complain that police operations happen while children are in school.

When residents leave the slum to go to work, relatives and friends stay in touch via texts. They let them know if there has been a shooting, in which case they have to wait until it's over to return.

E-cigarettes lead to 'real' smoking by teens

Teens and young adults who use electronic cigarettes — also known as vaping — are almost four times as likely as their non-vaping counterparts to begin smoking traditional cigarettes, a new review suggested.

“E-cigarette use increases the risk of subsequent cigarette smoking, even for teens and young adults who might not be at the highest risk for smoking,” reported philly.com quoting study lead author Samir Soneji.

“This increased risk may counter the successful tobacco control efforts that have produced a steady decline in smoking since 1998,” he said.

Battery-powered e-cigarettes deliver nicotine through vapor instead of smoke. Their effect on public health is still being debated. Some say they may help adults wean themselves off tobacco cigarettes, while others feel they may introduce kids to smoking, according to background information in the study.

Teens also seem to be picking up on public health messages themselves, and all types of smoking may be losing a bit of their 'cool'.

A June 16 report from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that fewer teens are vaping. The report said that an estimated three million teens smoked e-cigarettes in 2015. By 2016, that number had fallen to 2.2 million. Fewer teens are using tobacco, too. An estimated 4.7 million teens used tobacco in 2015 compared to 3.9 million in 2016, the report found.

The new review looked at the results of nine studies. The studies included more than 17,000 teens and young adults aged 14 to 30 when the studies began. Fifty-six percent of the study volunteers were female.

When the studies were combined, the researchers found that an estimated 30 percent of teens who had ever used an e-cigarette went on to use traditional cigarettes. Only about eight percent of those who never used e-cigarettes went on to smoke tobacco cigarettes.

When the researchers looked at the past 30 days, 21.5 percent of those who'd smoked e-cigarettes went on to smoke regular cigarettes. Less than five percent of those who hadn't smoked e-cigarettes tried regular cigarettes.

The new report didn't observe if people kept smoking over long periods. It also didn't examine whether smoking affected their health.

Woman said to be oldest person in world celebrated 131st birthday with some of her 56 descendants

A woman claimed to be the world's oldest person celebrated her 131st birthday on Sunday with some of her 56 descendants in attendance.

The China News Service reported that Alimiha Seiti was born on June 15, 1886, according to mirror.co.uk.

Alimiha, who lives in Shule County in the Kashgar region of China's western Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, says she loves talking to people and often sings when she is in a good mood.

The gregarious lady says she loves having visitors and that someone comes to see her most days.

Local doctor Abdul Rusuli reportedly checked her over on her birthday and found normal blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

It was not reported how



Alimiha Seiti, being born in 1886, claims she is 131 years old.

ASIADWIRE

Alimiha celebrated her birthday but some of her family were there.

The Gerontological Society of China named Alimiha as the country's oldest person in a 2013 report and a London body

carrying the Flag World Records recognizes her claim to be the world's oldest person.

But Guinness World Records, with a different standard of proof of age, lists Jeanne Calment as the world's oldest ever

person.

Frenchwoman M.S. Calment was born in 1875 and died in 1997, having lived 122 years and 164 days.

The oldest man ever was Jiroemon Kimura of Japan, who died on June 12, 2013 after having lived 116 years and 54 days.

Alumina is said to have been born in the same year that Karl Benz pioneered the first successful gasoline-powered car in Karlsruhe, Germany.

It's also when Lord Salisbury resigned as British prime minister, before William Ewart Gladstone introduced the first Irish Home Rule Bill to parliament.

In 1886 Apache chief Geronimo surrendered to the end last major US-Indian war, while the Statue of Liberty was dedicated by US president Grover Cleveland in a ticker-tape parade.

Med student walks three miles on hands

A Florida man walked more than three miles on his hands in hopes of breaking a world record and raising funds for charity.

Ashwin Kalyandurg, 22, walked 3.17 miles on his hands, surpassing a 2002 Guinness World Record by 100 meters, during an event to raise funds for four charitable organizations, according to UPI.

"Everything is in pain," Kalyandurg said after completing the record-breaking feat.

Kalyandurg, a senior medical student at Nova Southeastern University, performed the world record attempt at the Pledge-Per-Step Challenge in Boca Raton to raise funds for Eat Better Live Better, The Unicorn Children's Foundation, The Pediatric Oncology Support Team and End Polio Now.

He took breaks throughout the three-mile journey, which took about eight hours, and has



SUN SENTINEL

Ashwin Kalyandurg, 22, walked 3.17 miles on his hands, beating a Guinness World Record and raising funds for four charitable organizations

submitted his record attempt to Guinness for approval.

For two months leading up to the event, Kalyandurg trained his body by climbing palm trees, doing push-ups and walking up and down parking garage ramps on his hands.

Kalyandurg had walked on his hands for charity in the past, walking for about 12 hours to

benefit the American Cancer Society at his university.

With his most recent charitable event complete, Kalyandurg was prepared to refocus on his studies.

"I have my board exam to become a doctor next week," he said.

"So after this event, I'm going to study."

A huge infestation of crabs at airport

Passengers on one plane got a rather bizarre surprise when they turned up to collect their suitcases from the airport carousel.

Most travelers are used to standing beside the conveyor belt to wait for bags to make their way off the plane — but while you might expect the odd pram, or huge musical instrument, it's not every day you spot an infestation of crabs, mirror.co.uk wrote.

The crustaceans appeared to shocked passengers, who were waiting to collect their suitcases after a flight.

As the carousel moved around, crabs appeared on the belt, many clinging onto the bags.

Others decided to make a break for it, with one crab even managing to make it off the conveyor and leaping for freedom (otherwise known as the airport floor).

It is not known where the bizarre video was filmed, although one user suggested the incident occurred at an airport in New York.

It appears that the crustaceans had escaped from box they were being shipped in.



FLY HEIGHT

In the strange clip, you can see man putting the lid back on a wooden crate, filled with even more crabs.

Let's hope he managed to get them all rounded up and to safety after their ordeal.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



FAISAL MAHMOOD/REUTERS

People take a fairground ride during the Eid al-Fitr holiday in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

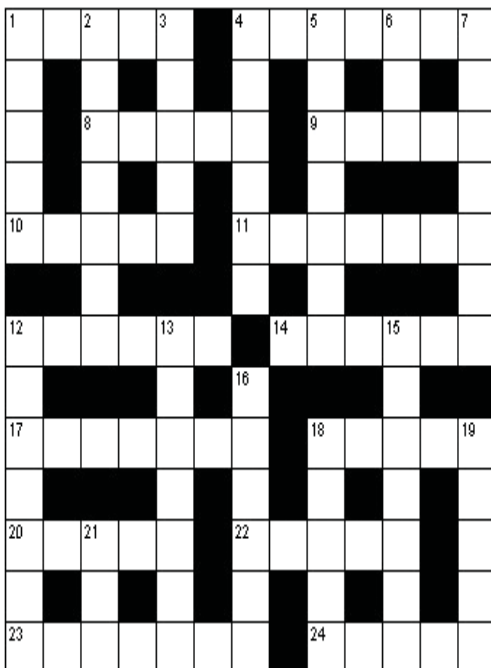
The dolphins, the whales, and the sprat

The dolphins and whales waged a fierce war with each other. When the battle was at its height, a sprat lifted its head out of the waves and said that he would reconcile their differences if they would

accept him as an umpire.

One of the dolphins replied, "We would far rather be destroyed in our battle with each other than admit any interference from you in our affairs."

True or False Crossword



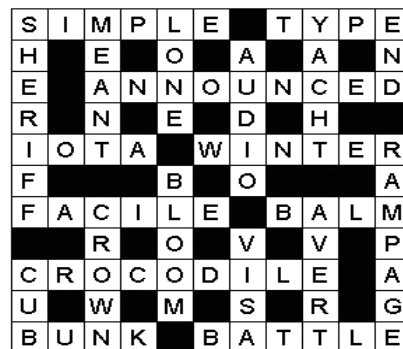
DOWN

1. Fish / Bird (5)
2. Player / Umpire (7)
3. Useful / Useless (5)
4. Relating to bears / Relating to cats (6)
5. Go forward / Retreat (7)
6. Atmosphere / Water (3)
7. Fleeting / Everlasting (7)
12. Generosity / Greed (7)
13. Ill-defined / Well-defined (7)
15. Type of power / Type of song (7)
16. Flimsy / Hardy (6)
18. Capture / Release (5)
19. Push / Pull (5)
21. Append / Deduct (3)

ACROSS

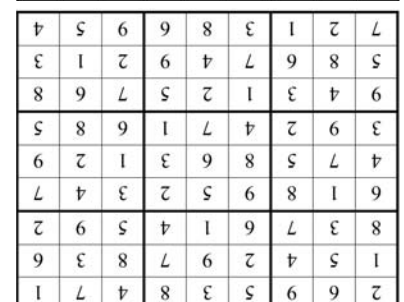
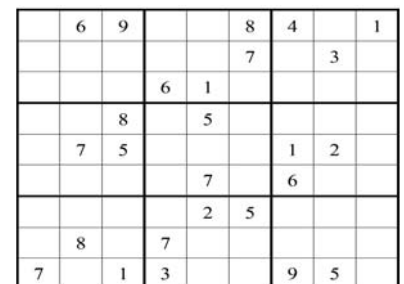
1. Star / Planet (5)
4. Alert / Unwitting (7)
8. Discovers / Misplaces (5)
9. Piece of poetry / Piece of cake (5)
10. Tardy / Ahead of time (5)
11. Nine-sided shape / Square (7)
12. River / Street (6)
14. Dog house / Stable (6)
17. Fruit / Vegetable (7)
18. Headwear / Footwear (5)
20. Angry / Happy (5)
22. Lift / Lower (5)
23. Young / Old (7)
24. Comfortable / Spooky (5)

Yesterday's solution



Sudoku

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



Totti to Tokyo?

Italian 40-year-old superstar, Francesco Totti, who recently made a tearful farewell to Roma after 25 years at his boyhood club, is wanted by Japan's J-League club, Tokyo Verdy, officials told AFP.

Six people charged with Hillsborough manslaughter

Six people including two former senior police officers were charged with criminal offences relating to the deaths of 96 people at the 1989 FA Cup semifinal between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough football ground and the alleged police cover-up which followed.

David Duckenfield, the South Yorkshire officer who was in command of policing at the match, has been charged with manslaughter of 95 people – the 96th, Tony Bland, died four years later after his life support was switched off, the Guardian reported.

Sue Hemming, the Crown Prosecution Service head of special crime and counter-terrorism division, said the CPS would allege that Duckenfield's failure to take personal responsibility on the day was "extraordinarily bad

and on a public office.

On the four charges of misconduct in a public office relating to Bettison, Hemming said the officer allegedly told lies about his involvement in the disaster. "Given his role as a senior police officer, we will ask the jury to find that this was misconduct of such a degree as to amount to an abuse of the public's trust in the office holder," she said.

Graham Mackrell, the Sheffield Wednesday chief executive and officially designated safety officer for the Hillsborough stadium, has also been charged with breaching the terms of the ground's safety certificate and failing to take reasonable care under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

The three other men are all charged with doing acts with intent to pervert the course of justice, for the process by which statements made by South

Hemming added: "Following our careful review of the evidence, in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors, I have decided that there is sufficient evidence to charge six individuals with criminal offences.

"Criminal proceedings have now commenced and the defendants have a right to a fair trial. It is extremely important that there should be no reporting, commentary or sharing of information online which could in any way prejudice these proceedings."

Families of those who died gathered at Parr Hall, a venue in Warrington, near Liverpool, to hear the news directly from representatives of the Crown Prosecution Service.

The charges are the latest significant landmark in a 28-year campaign for accountability fought since the disaster by the families of the 96 people who died, survivors of the crush and



and contributed substantially to the deaths of each of those 96 people who so tragically and unnecessarily lost their lives."

Sir Norman Bettison, the former chief constable of Merseyside and West Yorkshire police, who was an inspector in the South Yorkshire force at the time of the disaster, has been charged with four counts of miscon-

Yorkshire police officers on duty at Hillsborough were subsequently reviewed and charged.

Donald Denton, the South Yorkshire police chief superintendent who operated in a senior role in that process, his deputy, chief inspector Alan Foster, and the then South Yorkshire police solicitor, Peter Metcalf, have all been charged.

the wider Liverpool and football supporting communities.

Last April the jury, which heard new inquests into the deaths, determined following two years of evidence that the 96 people had been unlawfully killed, and that the conduct of Liverpool supporters who attended the match did not contribute to the dangerous situation.

Ex-FA head: England 2018 bid plan a 'form of bribery'

A plan for England to play a friendly in Thailand to win backing for the 2018 World Cup bid was "a form of bribery", investigators were told.

Ex-Football Association chairman Geoff Thompson made the admission when interviewed during an inquiry into the 2018 and 2022 World Cup hosting bids, BBC reported.

On Tuesday, football's world governing body FIFA released the full 2014 report of the investigation.

That followed leaked extracts being published by German newspaper Bild.

The 422-page report was written by former FIFA independent ethics investigator Michael Garcia.

He quit in protest when the organization only released a 42-page summary of his document.

That version cleared Russia and Qatar, winners of the 2018 and 2022 hosting rights respectively, of corruption allegations.

However, it was critical of the actions of some FIFA executive committee members and some of the bidding teams, including England's.

The full report goes into more detail about this conduct, and also cites an interview given by the 2018 England World Cup bid chief Thompson around the national team's plans to travel to Thailand to secure a vote for their bid.

The offer to stage the friendly was made only eight days before the vote in 2010 to decide the 2018 and 2022 hosts. The offer was withdrawn three weeks later, by which stage it was clear Thailand had not supported the English bid.

The FA was open at the time about the friendly being arranged to win support.



Qatar was awarded the 2022 World Cup in 2010, with Russia given the 2018 tournament.

But Garcia's report reads: "Top English football officials recognized that arranging friendships with a team from an executive committee's home country in order to advance the England 2018 bid was improper.

"Geoff Thompson candidly told the investigatory chamber he 'didn't think it was appropriate' to organize the proposed England-Thailand match or other friendlies targeting teams associated with executive committee members 'because I think it's a form of bribery'.

"The game's cancellation only

underscores the improper relationship between the 24 November 2010 offer to play the game and the 2 December World Cup vote."

'Report vindicates 2022 bid'

Qatar World Cup organizers said the surprise publication of FIFA's Garcia Report "vindicated the integrity" of its successful bid to host the 2022 tournament.

In a statement, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy also questioned the timing of the publication, which comes as Qatar faces political isolation from many neighboring countries, AFP reported.

"We believe the extent of our co-operation with this investigation and the conclusions drawn represent a vindication of the integrity of our bid," read the statement.

"We will continue to dedicate ourselves toward delivering on the promises we made during our bid and hosting an historic first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East." Although the long-awaited report from US independent investigator Michael Garcia highlighted an array of potentially suspect financial dealings, there appeared to be no "smoking gun" which could end up denying Qatar the World Cup.

Iran scales Great Wall of China



Iran's captain Rasoul Aqcheli (R) scored 24 points as Iran beat China 3-2 in FIVB U21 World Championship in the Czech Republic on June 28, 2017.

Iran overcame China in a five-set thriller in the FIVB U21 World Championship in Brno, the Czech Republic, to stay in contention with a place in the semifinals.

Captain Rasoul Aqcheli was Iran's hero again as the team snatched a 3-2 (25-17, 23-25, 26-24, 20-25, 15-10) victory over China, fivb.com reported.

Iran and China came into this all-Asian Pool E fixture of the competition on the back of 3-2 defeats at the hands of Cuba and Poland, respectively, on the preceding night.

The Chinese blocking contributed a fantastic 30 points to the squad's tally, but this was not enough for the victory. Iran's Ali-Agha Mojarad himself scored nine kill blocks, while Aqcheli became the overall best scorer of the match with 24 points. Lying Zhou was China's top scorer with 22 points. He and his teammate Yuntai Yu made seven blocking points each.

In the first three sets, China played very well at blocking, but only in the second this led the side to the eventual success – 25-23.

In the first and the third sets, Iran's spikers, led by captain Aqcheli, still managed to outplay the opponents en route to the final scores of 25-17 and 26-24, respectively.

In set four, the Chinese block was not just good, it was phenomenal, delivering as many as 10 stuffs toward the 25-20 win. The tie-breaker was quite one-sided, although the Chinese blockers were still able to sneak in three of the team's 10 points in the set, however Iran managed to take the decisive set 15-10.

On Tuesday night Iran had to go in a tie-breaker for the third match in a row only this time Cuba proved to be the better team in the fifth set as the Caribbean side won it 15-8.

Cuba piled up as many as 17 kill blocks on the way to a 3-2 (25-22, 25-

23, 19-25, 13-25, 15-8) victory over Iran's fighting squad, with Melgarejo topping the overall scorers' chart of the match with 20 points.

Cuba's great blocking and fewer mistakes led the side to a close 25-22 win in the first set. This continued in the second set as the Caribbean side doubled its lead after 25-23. In the third set Iran was able to cope better with the Cuban blocking. With Shayan Shahsavand also chipping in with three aces, the Asian squad won the set by 25-19. Led by captain Aqcheli, it was the Iranian blockers that made the big difference in the fourth set, which their team won by a landslide 25-13.

With Melgarejo on fire, the Cubans broke way to a 15-8 win and stamped the victory.

The top two finishers of the Pool E and F will qualify for the semifinals of the competition with the four bottom sides of the two pools set to decide the fifth to eighth standings.

Germany, Spain set U21 Euro final date

Southampton's Nathan Redmond missed the crucial penalty as England agonizingly lost on penalties to Germany in the semifinals of the European U21 Championship in Poland on Tuesday.

Germany goalkeeper Julian Pollersbeck saved Redmond's spot kick to consign England to a 4-3 defeat in the shootout after the match had ended 2-2 at the end of 90 minutes and extra time, AFP reported.



Nathan Redmond (R) looks dejected after his penalty miss meant England was knocked out of the European U21 Championship in Poland on June 27, 2017.

The Germans will face Spain in Friday's final in Krakow after a brilliant second-half hat trick from the Atletico Madrid midfielder Saul Niguez handed Spain a 3-1 win over 10-man Italy in the night's other last-four tie.

Spain is bidding to win the continental title in the age group for the fifth time and equal Italy's record in the process.

Germany's only previous triumph came in 2009 when they outclassed England in the final.

Murray named top seed of Wimbledon

Britain's defending champion Andy Murray was named top seed as the 'big four' in men's tennis head the rankings for Wimbledon.

Novak Djokovic is second, Roger Federer third and Rafael Nadal fourth seed, BBC reported.

It is the first time since Wimbledon 2014 that the four players have been named top seeds for a Grand Slam and keeps them apart until the semifinals.

German Angelique Kerber is the top women's seed with Britain's Johanna Konta sixth.

The draw will be held on Friday for



GLYN KIRK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

the tournament, which starts on Monday, July 3.

Murray, who won Wimbledon for the second time last year, pulled out of his scheduled warm-up match at the Hurlingham Club on Tuesday with a sore hip but the 30-year-old Scot still

plans to play an as-yet-unnamed opponent on Friday.

With the men's seedings taking into account recent grass court form, Djokovic and Federer move up two places from their world ranking, with Nadal and fifth seed Stan Wawrinka dropping two.

The Queen's Club champion Feliciano Lopez is ranked 25, but will be seeded 19th for Wimbledon.

Women's seedings reflect the world rankings, with Simona Halep second behind Kerber, while 26-year-old Konta looks to get further than the second round for the first time.

Defending champion Serena Williams is absent because she is pregnant.

» Art & Culture

UNESCO names Sharjah as World Book Capital for 2019

The UNESCO crowned Sharjah with the prestigious 'World Book Capital' for 2019 for the quality of its literary and cultural activities and for its efforts to make books accessible to the entire population of the nation.

The emirate was selected because of its innovative and inclusive application, with a community-focused activity program containing creative proposals to engage the very large migrant population, a UNESCO statement said, according to oncindia.com.



sharjahupdate.com

"I applaud the nomination of Sharjah as the World Book Capital as well as the efforts undertaken by the city to make reading available to as many people as possible, in particular the marginalized populations, as a motor for social inclusion, creativity and dialogue," said UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova.

The accolade is an important addition to Sharjah's existing portfolio of milestones like, 'Capital of Arab Culture' (1998), 'Capital of Islamic Culture' (2014) and 'Capital of Arab Tourism' (2015).

The Sharjah is the first in the PGCC and third in the Arab world and Middle East, to have received this recognition. The PGCC countries include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Sharjah has been chosen for the quality of its literary and cultural activities, and for its unflinching efforts to make books accessible to the entire population of the nation, the statement said.

Manuscript uncovers traces of Byzantine, Ottoman empires

The two-volume, handwritten manuscript 'Istanbul and the Bosphorus: Traces of Byzantium and Ottoman Empires in Istanbul' by Ottoman historical culture researcher Mehmed Ziya Bey, was republished in Latin by Culture, Incorporated of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

The manuscript was deemed one of the most valuable of its kind ever written in Turkish on the history of Istanbul after 'Seyahatname' (Travelogue) by Evliya Celebi. It offers a wealth of information on the history of Istanbul with 826 pages which shed light on the history of the 8,500-year-old city, dailysabah.com reported.

Ziya Bey's work depicts the events, legends, culture, architecture and neighborhoods of the ancient city, offering a wide and comprehensive perspective as well as information on the topography of the city. He also offers insight to the historic paintings, sketches and photographs that have withstood the test of time and are historical documents in their own right.

The first book of two books that have been printed in one volume consists of eight chapters. The first chapter is a prologue about the history of Istanbul in Byzantium times, while the second chapter provides information on the 14 major terrains of Istanbul as well as the Hagia Scala Church, known today as the Toklu Ibrahim Dede Grand Mosque, the Ayos Nicolas and the Ayos Priscus Church, known as the Toklu Ibrahim Dede Tomb.

The third chapter sheds light on the ancient Theodosius walls and other regions of the city, including civil and military gates. Finally, information regarding the historic meeting of Mehmed the Conqueror and Kaiser Emanuel in Besiktas is also explained. Chapter four depicts the topography of Yenibosna (Hedemon) and Ayvansaray (Vlaherna), while the fifth chapter discusses the general history of Istanbul's city walls, the history of the Isaac Angelos Tower and its condition at the time the manuscript was written.

The sixth chapter explores information about the gates of the city of Istanbul.

Chapter seven is about the ports of Istanbul along the Marmara shores as well as the Boucoleon Port. The topographic properties of district quarters and neighborhoods located around the walls on the shores of the Marmara Sea are also provided in the eighth chapter along with information on the Ayos Lazaros Church.

The second volume consists of seven chapters in which the writer focuses the glorious days of Istanbul during the Byzantine times. In the first chapter, the writer explores these days of glory before describing the buildings and streets located in the city center in the second chapter along with information about the graves of Revani Celebi and Payzen Yusuf Pasha.

The third chapter explores the official lives and social lives of the Byzantine emperors and their communities; the life of the emperors, cultural ceremony traditions, the fashion traditions of clerics and soldiers, culinary traditions, industry and trade, family and parenting.

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ABOUBAZ AHMADZADEH/IRNA

The 10th Folk Music Festival is underway in the southeastern Iranian city of Kerman until June 30, 2017.

Iran's Qasemi hunts US Snake at 'Lunch Time'

Art & Culture Desk

Iranian short film 'Lunch Time' won the best short student film award at the 2017 Snake Alley Festival of Film in the US.

The 15-minute film by Alireza Qasemi, which was featured in the sixth edition of the US festival, recalls the story of a high school girl who goes to a hospital to identify the body of her mother who passed away recently, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

'Lunch Time' was recently placed among the official selections for Court Metrage of the 70th Cannes Film Festival in France. It also won the Best Cinematography Award at Flamingo Film Festival.

Snake Alley Festival of Film was held from June 21 to 24, 2017 in Burlington, Iowa hosting 70 films from a number of countries. The festival is dedicated to showcasing the best short films from around the world. Films were screened at the beautifully restored Capitol Theater in the heart of downtown Burlington, Iowa. The theater boasts state of the art equipment and can comfortably seat more than 400 people.

The festival derives its name from Snake Alley, a street constructed in 1884 and designed to connect an upscale residential neighborhood to the business district of downtown Burlington. Named by Ripley's 'Believe It or Not' as "The Crookedest Street in the World", it remains the city's #1 tourist attraction drawing visitors from around the world.



amazon.com

Iranian musician among Canadian Immigrant Award winners

Iranian composer and orchestra conductor Maziar Heidari has been placed among 2017 RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award winners.

Canadian Immigrant magazine announced winners of its ninth annual RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards which chooses and celebrates the success stories of Canadian immigrants who have made an influential contribution to Canada. The award is sponsored by Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), canadianimmigrant.ca reported.



iranart.ir

Heidari, an Iranian musician residing in Canada, has been selected as one winner of the 2017 edition.

The Iranian-born composer pursued a master's degree in conducting at the University of Toronto. He is now composer for the National Ballet of Canada. Thirteen Strings Orchestra in Ottawa and has also formed Heidari Music to share his talents in composing, playing and teaching piano.

While in Iran, Heidari studied with famous Iranian composer Farhad Fakhreddini, who introduced one of his pieces into Iran National Music Orchestra's repertoire.

Another noteworthy achievement of the Iranian composer has been his selection as a classical judge for the 2017 Juno Awards — Canada's most prestigious music award.

RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrants is a peoples' choice award that recognizes inspirational immigrants who have moved to Canada, achieved success and made a positive difference living there.

» Weather



52 32

Ahvaz



40 16

Borujerd



31 22

Rasht



38 24

Semnan



38 17

Arak



38^ 26

Tehran



28 16

Bishkek



32 24

Istanbul



34 21

Amman



31 17

Minsk



23 15

Moscow