



Rohani: Mosul's liberation should promote Iraq's unity

2

# IRAN DAILY



Iraq slows advance on last Daesh pocket in Mosul packed with civilians

3

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Iranian firm gets go-ahead for 50MW wind project in Sindh

4



Air pollution affects life expectancy

9



Iranians hold 'Trumpism' cartoon contest

12

## Catalonia to declare immediate independence if 'yes' wins referendum

Catalonia will declare independence "immediately" if a majority of the Spanish region's voters opt for independence in a Scotland-style referendum called for October, its ruling coalition said Tuesday.

"If the majority of votes are for creating a Catalan republic, obviously independence will have to be declared immediately," said Gabriela Serra, a member of the separatist coalition that governs Catalonia, AFP reported.

Her comments came as the coalition introduced a law aimed at extracting the northeastern region from Spain's legal system, in a bid to circumvent all legal and practical challenges for organizing a referendum.



PAU BARRENA/AFP

It will be submitted to a vote in the regional parliament, where separatists hold a majority, at the end of August.

Catalonia, a wealthy region of 7.5 million inhabitants with its own language and customs, has long demanded greater autonomy.

For years separatist politicians in the region have tried to win approval from Spain's central government to hold a vote similar to Scotland's 2014 independence referendum from Britain, which resulted in a "no" vote.

But Madrid has remained steadfast in its opposition to such a vote, which it considers a threat to Spain's unity, and this time is no different.

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

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



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## VW returns to Iran after 17-year absence

Volkswagen will start exporting cars to Iran next month, returning to the Iranian market after more than 17 years in a move that may help the German carmaker reduce its reliance on volatile markets such as China and Brazil.

Volkswagen (VW) signed an agreement with Iran's Mammut Khodro

which will import VW brand models Tiguan and Passat via eight dealerships, focusing on the greater Tehran area, VW said on Tuesday, according to Reuters.

Europe's largest automotive group is seeking to tap new overseas markets as it grapples with billions of euros in costs stemming from an emissions scandal

while pushing a strategic shift to electric cars and new mobility services.

Group deliveries to China, VW's biggest market accounting for over a third of its sales, fell 3.3 percent between January and May to 1.51 million cars. Sales in Brazil were down 1.9 percent to 116,600 cars.

Continued on Page 4

## North Korea tests first intercontinental missile

North Korea on Tuesday said it successfully test-launched its first intercontinental ballistic missile, a potential game-changing development in what may be the world's most dangerous nuclear standoff and, if true, a direct rebuke to US President Donald Trump's earlier declaration that such a test "won't happen!"

The launch appeared to be North Korea's most successful missile test yet. A US scientist examining the height and distance said the missile could potentially be powerful enough to reach Alaska, AP reported.

North Korea's Academy of Defense Science said the test of an ICBM — the Hwasong-14 — marked the "final step" in creating a "confident and powerful nuclear state that can strike anywhere on Earth."

It will be difficult to confirm many details about what happened.

US, South Korean and Japanese officials earlier assessed that the North fired an intermediate-range missile into waters near Japan.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga declined to comment on whether Japan thinks it was an ICBM, and South Korea's Defense Ministry said it was analyzing whether the North's

statement was accurate.

North Korea has previously launched satellites in what critics said were disguised tests of its long-range missile technology. A test-launch of an ICBM, however, would be a major step in developing nuclear-armed missiles that could reach anywhere in the United States. The launch sends a political warning to Washington and its chief Asian allies, Seoul and Tokyo, while also allowing North Korean scientists a chance to perfect their still-incomplete nuclear missile program. It came on the eve of the US Independence Day holiday, days after the first face-to-face meeting of the leaders of South Korea and the United States, and ahead of a global summit of the world's richest economies.

Most outside and North Korean analyses of the missile's height, distance and time in the air were roughly similar. U.S., South Korean and Japanese officials say it flew for about 40 minutes and reached an altitude of 2,500 kilometers (1,500 miles), which would be longer and higher than any similar North Korean test previously reported. It also covered a distance of about 930 kilometers (580 miles).

Continued on Page 3



The intercontinental ballistic missile Hwasong-14 is seen in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on July 4, 2017.

## UN seeks Iran's help in Geneva talks

### Fifth round of Syria talks kicks off in Astana

The United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura called for Iran's more active role in helping the UN handle the Syria peace negotiations in the Swiss city of Geneva.

In a meeting with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari on Tuesday, de Mistura urged Iran's more active contribution to UN efforts for peace in Syria within the framework of the Geneva talks, Tasnim News Agency reported.

On May 16, the sixth round of Syrian peace talks was held under the auspices of the United Nations in Geneva as part of efforts to facilitate a political resolution of the deadly conflict in the Arab country.

De Mistura also voiced UN's support for the efforts by Iran, Russia and Turkey, the three guarantors of a cease-fire in Syria, achieved after political talks in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana.

Both officials held talks on the sidelines of the fifth round of

## MPs endorse countermeasures against US sanctions

### Americans preparing to enforce "fascist policies"

Exclusive By Sadeq Dehqan



Mohammad Ebrahim Rezaei, Morteza Safari, Alireza Mahjoub

Iranian lawmakers have been mulling countermeasures over the past weeks against the US Senate's decision to impose new sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

The MPs have prepared a draft bill to counter Washington's "hostile" acts and sanctions toward Iran.

The bill will allocate about 1 trillion tomans (about \$270 million) to the country's missile activities. The same amount will be earmarked for combating terrorism.

Continued on Page 2

## Total nears deal to invest \$2b in Iran's petrochemical industry

Total and Iran have reached a preliminary agreement to build three petrochemical plants in a deal, which, if finalized, could see the French oil major investing up to \$2 billion (£1.5 billion) in Iran, said an Iranian oil industry official on Tuesday.

According to Shana, Managing Director of Iran's National Petroleum Company Marzieh Shahdadi further noted, "In the latest talks, the two sides have reached agreement for the construction of petrochemical plants with a total capacity of 2.2 million tons of petrochemical and polymer products per year."

"We predict that Total would invest \$1.5 to \$2 billion in Iran's petrochemical industry if we reach final agreement."



ngnia.ir

A spokesman for Total said: "Total and Iran's National Petrochemical Company are currently working on an in-depth study of an ethane-based petrochemical project whose figures (Capex especially) have to be fine-tuned."

The preliminary deal on the petrochemical plants follows Monday's agreement by Total to go ahead with Phase 11 of Iran's South Pars offshore gas field development project — the first major Western energy investment in the Islamic Republic since the lifting of sanctions against it.

Total's Chief Executive Officer Patrick Pouyannan said after the signing of the South Pars deal that it would open the door for more business with Tehran.

South Pars is part of the world's largest gas field which is shared with neighboring Qatar.

Total is active in both Iran and Qatar as well as the UAE.

Total's CEO told Reuters last month the petrochemical plants project in Iran was less advanced than South Pars 11 because Total would need to fund that project with loans from banks while South Pars could be developed with its own funds.

Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Amirhossein Zamani-Nia said on Monday that Iran and Total have held 'positive talks' to cooperate in petrochemicals but added that the deal was not final.

Continued on Page 4

talks on Syria which is underway in Astana.

The Iranian diplomat said the Astana and Geneva peace talks complement each other.

Jaber Ansari highlighted the technical assistance that the UN can offer for achieving an agreement on de-escalation zones in Syria, and for the Syrian-Syrian talks with the aim of launching national compromise in the Arab country.

Powerbrokers Russia, Iran and Turkey on Tuesday focused on shoring up a plan for safe zones in Syria, AFP reported.

Moscow, Tehran and Ankara agreed in May to establish four "de-escalation" zones in the war-torn country in a potential breakthrough towards calming a war that has claimed an estimated 320,000 lives.

Continued on Page 2

## MPs endorse countermeasures against US sanctions

From Page 1

Last month, the Senate voted 98-2 for new sanctions on Iran and Russia.

The bill includes new sanctions on Iran over its ballistic missile program and "continued support for terrorism."

Iranian government officials as well as lawmakers have denounced the decision taken by the US Senate.

A Member of Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee told Iran Daily that the draft drawn up by his colleagues aims to show that the Islamic Republic will not yield to restrictions imposed by Washington and its allies.

Mohammad Ebrahim Rezaei said the "psychological operations" of Americans will fail to affect countermeasures against Washington.

US Senators have said that their anti-Iran bill does not run counter to the Iran nuclear deal.

However, Rezaei described such comments as "propaganda" and in line with attempts to "shirk responsibility," which is "unacceptable."

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China — plus Germany signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program in July 2015 and started implementing it in January 2016.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limitations on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against Tehran.

The lawmaker said Americans have pledged to refrain from imposing any sanctions which will affect the JCPOA, adding that they are breaching their commitments under excuses such as Iran's missile program and its human rights record.

He said missile capabilities are an "inseparable" part of Iran's defensive system.

Rezaei said the Islamic Republic is entitled to take reciprocal actions against Washington's "non-commitment" for refusing to stick to its obligations under the JCPOA.

Iran's defensive ballistic missile program has been a bone of contention with the US. Washington claims that the projectiles are against a UN resolution which endorsed the JCPOA.

Tehran, however, says its missile tests do not breach UN resolutions because they are solely for defensive purposes and not designed to carry nuclear warheads.

Alireza Mahjoub also talked to Iran Daily about the Senate's anti-Iran bill, saying it manifests Washington's "pugnacious" and "arrogant" approach toward Iran. He said such an approach shows a "blind nationalism" and new racist policy in the US. He said the approach is also indicative of the fact that Americans are preparing to enforce fascist policies in the world.

Morteza Safari, another Member of Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told Iran Daily that the US Senate's sanctions are against the spirit of the JCPOA.

He said the Islamic Republic should take actions vis-à-vis Washington's moves against the Iran nuclear deal through JCPOA's Joint Commission as well as international courts.

The lawmaker said since other signatories of the P5+1 are siding with Iran, Tehran can put pressure on Americans through the Joint Commission, which is tasked with monitoring the nuclear deal.

# Rouhani: Mosul's liberation should promote Iraq's unity

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the liberation of the Iraqi city of Mosul should double the country's unity and solidarity.

Rouhani made the remarks in a meeting with Head of the National Iraqi Alliance (NIA) Ammar Hakim in Tehran on Tuesday, president.ir wrote.

He said the Islamic Republic continues to support Iraq's stability and unity.

Rouhani added that Iraq's stability and security will benefit both Baghdad and Tehran.

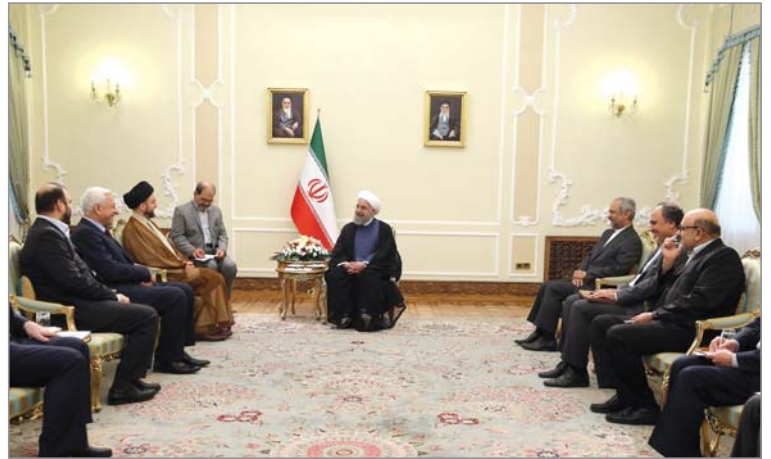
For his part, Hakim thanked Iran's support for Iraqi forces in their battle against Daesh terrorists.

He said Mosul's liberation has strengthened the country's national unity.

## Iraqi forces corner Daesh

Iraqi government forces have pushed deeper into the last pocket of Mosul controlled by Daesh terrorists as the battle for the country's second largest city approaches its end.

Commander of Nineveh Liberation Operation Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Yarrallah stated on Monday that Iraqi army forces had recaptured al-Khatouniyah and al-Tawaleh neighborhoods in the Old City as Daesh terrorists have now been mostly dislodged from western half of Mosul, and are battling to hold on to the last few streets under their control, Arabic-lan-



President Hassan Rouhani held a meeting with Head of the National Iraqi Alliance (NIA) Ammar Hakim in Tehran on Tuesday.

guage al-Sumaria television network reported.

Earlier in the day, Commander of Federal Police Forces Lieutenant General

Raed Shaker Jawdat announced in a statement that security forces had liberated Bab al-Saray area, and raised Iraqi flags above several buildings there.

He said government forces had also taken over Zulfawbeq garage and Khosro Mosque in addition to a terminal in Mosul's Old City.

## Shamkhani: Closer Iran-Russia contact prevents US intervention in Syria

A senior Iranian official voiced alarm over the repercussions of US adventurism in Syria, calling for closer Tehran-Moscow cooperation against Washington's interventionist role in the crisis-hit Arab state.

In a Tuesday phone conversation with his Russian counterpart, Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said US adventurism in Syria could fuel tensions in the Middle East and strengthen the terror groups operating in the troubled region, Press TV reported.

Shamkhani emphasized the need for "increased coordination between Iran and Russia in order to prevent the US's illegal meddling in Syria as well as any damage to this country's sovereignty and territorial

integrity."

He also said Washington attacks positions held by the Syrian Army in a bid to boost the morale of Takfiri terrorists and preserve the areas under their control, stressing that such moves are in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions as well as the UN Charter.

The US-led coalition started hitting what it says are positions held by the Daesh terrorist group in Syria in September 2014. It has obtained no permission from the government in Damascus or the United Nations for the aerial bombings.

In several occasions over the past few months, coalition jets targeted Syrian military forces, claiming

they posed a threat to US forces, an allegation rejected by Damascus.

In June, the US-led coalition downed a Syrian fighter plane and a drone operated by pro-Damascus fighters engaged in operations against Daesh.

Patrushev, for his part, underlined the need for increasing contacts between Russia and Iran to specify mechanisms for the deployment of cease-fire monitors.

He also expressed satisfaction with Tehran-Moscow cooperation against terrorism in Syria.

The fifth round of the Astana talks brokered by Moscow, Tehran and Ankara, will conclude on Wednesday.

## Canadian court upholds \$1.7 billion ruling against Iran

A Canadian court accused Iran of supporting terrorism, upholding a previous ruling that requires the Islamic Republic to pay about \$1.7 billion in damages to "American victims of terrorism."

Ontario's Court of Appeal rejected Iran's request to reconsider the ruling on Monday night, arguing that doing so would amount to a breach of Canada's Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act (JVTA), Press TV reported.

The JVTA allows victims of terrorism to sue foreign states for damages.

The accusation came despite Iran's firm response to similar cases in the past, where various American and European courts had taken punitive measures against Tehran over unproven claims of complicity in terror.

The new case was brought by families of American citizens who had been killed in a series of attacks between 1980s and 2002, mostly blamed on Palestinian and Lebanese resistance movements Hamas and Hezbollah. The families claimed that the Iranian government supported the two organizations and was therefore responsible for their actions.

The complaints were first filed in the US but the claimants turned to Canada after finding out that the Iranian government had more properties and bank accounts there.

A one-story house in Toronto, an



courthouses.co

industrial building in Ottawa and two bank accounts were among the assets that were sought in the case.

Without offering further elaboration, the court also claimed in its ruling that Iran was seeking to "frustrate" the JVTA's implementation.

The Iranian government had reportedly told the court that it had immunity in the case. It had also argued that the judgment was against international law and exceeded the maximum damages allowable in Canadian law.

Tehran also argued that the victims had to prove Iran's role in each attack instead of just repeating the US government's baseless allegations.

The court said Iran was only immune in terrorism cases that had oc-

curred before January 1985, when Canada's State Immunity Act was passed.

## A recurring trend

Last year, the US Supreme Court ruled that around \$2 billion had to be turned over to the American families of the people killed in a 1983 bombing in Beirut and other attacks blamed on Iran.

Likening the action to "highway robbery," Iran said it would seek reparations. The trend of the unfair rulings continued in March, when a New York court ordered Iran to pay \$7.5 billion in damages to families of victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks and \$3 billion to a group of insurers over related claims.

## Zarif: Iranians never forget US awarded medal to capt. who killed 290 civilians

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif stressed that Iran will never forget the US's downing of the Iran Air Flight 655, Press TV reported.

Zarif made the remark on his official twitter account on Monday, which marks the 29th anniversary of the downing of an Iranian Airbus A300B2 passenger plane by a US Navy guided-missile cruiser in the Persian Gulf waters in 1988.

"July 3, 1988, US ship shot down #IR655, killing 290 civilians. Ship capt. was awarded medal for murdering innocents. Iranians won't forget," he tweeted.

Despite being equipped with highly sophisticated radar systems, the USS Vincennes claimed that it had mistaken Iran Air Flight 655 for a warplane.

A year later, the captain of the USS Vincennes, William C. Rogers, was cleared of any wrongdoing in the incident, and was even awarded America's Legion of Merit medal by then President George H. W. Bush for his "outstanding service."

## UN seeks Iran's help...

From Page 1

But while fighting dropped off in the weeks after the deal, it has ratcheted up in some areas since, and the key international players have yet to finalize the boundaries of the zones or determine who will police them.

Russia's chief negotiator at the talks, Alexander Lavrentiev, told journalists in Astana that these issues were "under discussion" and that "an agreement has not yet been reached."

The two days of meetings, which include representatives of the Syrian government and armed opposition, is set to conclude on Wednesday with a session attended by all participants.





# Iraq slows advance on last Daesh pocket in Mosul packed with civilians

Iraqi forces slowed their advance on Tuesday through the last streets in Mosul controlled by Daesh where terrorists and civilians are packed in densely together, a commander said.

While Iraqi commanders predicted final victory in Mosul this week, US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces announced they had begun an assault on Daesh's Syrian redoubt in the Old City of Raqqa, Reuters reported.

The Iraqi military has pushed terrorists into a shrinking rectangle no more than 300 by 500 meters beside the Tigris river in Mosul; but the resistance has been fierce.

The Rapid Response Division, an elite Interior Ministry unit, called in airstrikes just 50 meters away from their targets, and the fighting got close enough at one point for the terrorists to toss a hand grenade at the troops.

It was from the pulpit of Mosul's medieval Grand Al-Nuri Mosque that, three years ago, leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a "caliphate" over parts of Iraq and Syria.

Forces retook the mosque on Thursday, prompting Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to declare an end to the group's "state of falsehood".

The number of Daesh terrorists fighting in Mosul, by far the biggest city it has ever controlled, has dwindled from thousands at the start of the US-backed offensive more than eight months ago to a couple of hundred now, according to the Iraqi military.

A commander from the Rapid Response Division estimated more than 10,000 civilians remained trapped inside the area under terrorist control, including people brought from other areas as human shields.

They are trapped with little food, water or medicine amid the Old City's maze of narrow alleyways, according to residents who have managed to escape.

"The presence of civilians has affected the troops' advance a lot. The directions from the commander-in-chief of the armed forces are to advance slowly to preserve civilians' lives and this is what we are doing," the officer said on state TV without being named.

"The area is small but the advance today is very good, relatively."

He said the progress had also been slowed by a high number of improvised explosives planted in streets and buildings.

A US-led international coalition is providing air and ground support to the offensive, which Iraq's Army and Counter Terrorism Service are also fighting in a multipronged attack.

## Territory sinking fast

With Mosul gone, the group's territory in Iraq will be limited to a few areas west and south of the city where some tens of thousands of civilians live.

In neighboring Syria, a US-backed coalition force said it had fired on two small sections of the historic Rafiqah Wall in the Old City of Raqqa, allowing them to overcome Daesh defenses.

"The portions targeted were 25-meter sections and will help preserve the remainder of the overall 2,500-meter wall," the coalition said in a statement.

Iraqi authorities are planning a week of nationwide celebrations, to mark the end of the offensive, and Abadi is expected to visit Mosul to formally declare victory.

With its territory shrinking fast, Daesh has been stepping up suicide attacks in the parts of Mosul taken by Iraqi forces and elsewhere, including a camp for displaced people west of Baghdad on Sunday.

Thousands of people have already fled the Old City this week, joining about 900,000 others, about half the city's prewar population, who have been displaced over months of grinding warfare.

Baghdadi has left the fighting in Mosul to local commanders and is believed to be hiding near the Iraq-Syrian border, according to US and Iraqi military sources.

The group has moved its remaining command and control structures to Mayadin, in eastern Syria, US intelligence sources have said, without indicating if Baghdadi was also hiding in the same area.

Baghdadi has often been reported killed or wounded. Russia said that it was highly likely Baghdadi was killed in a Russian airstrike near Raqqa on May 28.

But Washington says it has no information to corroborate such reports and Iraqi officials are also skeptical.



Fighters of Iraq's elite Counter-Terrorism Service advance through the bombed out streets of Mosul's Old City on July 3, 2017.

## Migrant influx to Europe tops 100,000 in 2017

More than 100,000 migrants have made the perilous Mediterranean crossing to Europe this year, the UN said Tuesday, amid mounting tensions among EU nations on how to tackle the crisis.

Nearly 2,250 people have died in 2017 attempting the sea crossing from North Africa, the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) added, according to AFP.

Italy has taken in nearly 85 percent of the arrivals – most of them sub-Saharan Africans crossing from Libya – and has pleaded for help from other European Union nations, saying it is struggling to cope.

"The reception of rescued migrants cannot be seen as an issue only for Italy, but a matter for Europe as a whole," IOM chief William Lacy Swing said, appealing for the rest of the EU to show more solidarity.

On Sunday, Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti called on EU neighbors to open their ports to rescue ships picking up migrants in the Mediterranean, after issuing a drastic threat to close its own ports to the boats.

But France rejected that idea, with an aide to Minniti's counterpart Gerard Colombe telling AFP this would only encourage more migrants to set sail.

EU interior ministers are due to meet in Estonia's capital Tallinn on Thursday to discuss the migrant crisis – the continent's worst since World War II – in a bid to defuse a long-running row over spreading asylum seekers across the bloc.

The EU put in place a policy in 2015 to distribute around 160,000 asylum-seekers across different countries.

But only about 20,000 have been relocated from Italy and Greece under the scheme, while Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic have flatly refused to take part.

Ministers meeting in Tallinn will also discuss proposals for a "code of conduct" for charities operating rescue boats in the Mediterranean, a plan announced by France, Germany and Italy on Monday.

Separately, foreign ministers from European and African

countries affected by the crisis will meet in Rome on Thursday with representatives of the EU and UN as part of a diplomatic push to stem the influx.

In an interview with France's Figaro newspaper, European migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos called on Tuesday for EU countries to speed up deportations of failed asylum seekers to ease the pressure, but warned this needed cooperation from their home countries.

## 'Enormous pressure'

The UN figures released Tuesday showed that between January 1 and July 3, more than 85,000 migrants landed in Italy, nearly 9,300 arrived in Greece, nearly 6,500 in Spain and over 270 in Cyprus.



Thousands of migrants, many of them from sub-Saharan Africa, have died trying to get to Europe.

thousands of migrants on its own.

"This is not sustainable. We need to have other countries joining Italy and sharing that responsibility," said Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR special envoy for the central Mediterranean. Austrian Defense Minister Hans Peter Doskozil warned Monday that Vienna is set to impose border checks and deploy soldiers on its frontier with Italy if the Mediterranean influx does not slow.

While the numbers arriving in 2017 are staggering, they remain far below last year's figures. During the same period in 2016, 231,503 people made the crossing to Europe, with the 100,000-mark passed already in February that year. But at that time most of the migrants were crossing from Turkey to Greece, and an EU deal with Ankara in March last year effectively hit the brakes on that movement.

lower than others reported.

Soon after the morning launch, President Trump responded on Twitter: "North Korea has just launched another missile. Does this guy have anything better to do with his life? Hard to believe that South Korea and Japan will put up with this much longer. Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense once and for all!"

In Beijing, China's Foreign Ministry urged North Korea on Tuesday "to stop taking actions that violate United Nations Security Council resolutions."

"We hope all relevant parties can exercise restraint, ease tensions on the peninsula as soon as possible, and bring the peninsula issue back to the correct track of peace talks and consultation," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a regular briefing.

## Three more states refuse Trump commission's voter data request

Maryland, Delaware and Louisiana on Monday joined a growing number of US states that have refused to hand over voter data to a commission established by President Donald Trump to investigate possible voting fraud.

More than 20 states, including Virginia, Kentucky, California, New York and Massachusetts, have declined to provide some or all of the information that the panel requested, saying it was unnecessary and violated privacy, reported Reuters.

Republican Trump created the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity in May after making unsubstantiated claims that millions of people voted illegally for his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton, in last November's election.



A ballot is placed into a locked ballot box by a poll worker as people line up to vote early at the San Diego County Elections Office in San Diego, California, on November 7, 2016.

Calling the request "repugnant," Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh said in a statement that his office had advised the State Board of Elections that the commission's request was illegal.

The request "appears designed only to intimidate voters and to indulge President Trump's fantasy that he won the popular vote," Frosh said.

The commission sent a letter to the 50 states asking them to turn over voter information including names, the last four digits of Social Security numbers, addresses, birth dates, political affiliations, felony convictions and voting histories.

Louisiana Secretary of State Tom Schedler said the presidential commission could purchase the limited information legally available to candidates running for office.

"You're not going to play politics with Louisiana's voter data," he said in a statement.

Delaware Elections Commissioner Elaine Manlove said in an interview with Milford's WXDE-FM radio that her office would not comply since some of the information was confidential. Manlove said she was working with the attorney general's office to see if the request could be denied completely.

Trump has blasted the states who have refused to turn over the data. He said in a tweet on Saturday, "What are they trying to hide?"

Trump won the White House through victory in the Electoral College, which tallies win in states, but he lost the popular vote to Clinton by some three million votes. He has claimed he would have won the popular vote had it not been for voter fraud.

Civil rights activists say the commission will encourage voter suppression by justifying new barriers to voting, such as requiring identity cards to vote.

## Sri Lanka ends decades-long occupation of Tamil port

Sri Lanka's military said Tuesday it has ended its occupation of a major fishing harbor after 27 years and allowed Tamil civilians in the former warzone to take back their land.

Security forces withdrew from the Mayiladhi harbour in the Jaffna peninsula on Monday, bowing to the longstanding demands of fishermen and their families from the minority Tamil community who have been living in camps for displaced people since June 1990, AFP reported.

"Accordingly, 187 families... are able to return to their original lands and resume their fishing livelihood after an absence of nearly 30 years," the army said in a statement. Sri Lanka's 37-year-long Tamil separatist war ended in 2009, but government forces still maintain a large presence in the former conflict zones and keep a close watch on the local Tamil population.



ASIA NEWS

The military, which is dominated by the island's Sinhalese majority, also runs hotels, transport services and other enterprises in competition with local Tamil businesses.

The UN has been pressing Colombo to step up reconciliation efforts and reduce the military's presence in former warzones, including the Jaffna peninsula, the heartland of minority Tamils.

Tamil rebels fighting for a separate homeland for the ethnic minority were defeated in a final military push after decades of conflict. Sri Lanka faced international censure during the regime of former president Mahinda Rajapakse, who refused to investigate allegations that up to 40,000 minority Tamil civilians perished in the final stages of the war.

His successor, Maithripala Sirisena, came to power after promising reconciliation and accountability for wartime atrocities, but rights groups say progress on both fronts has been slow.

## North Korea tests first intercontinental missile

### From Page 1

North Korea said the missile flew as high as 2,802 kilometers before hitting a designated target in the ocean about 933 kilometers away from the launch site in the North's northwest. It said the missile flew for about 39 minutes and was made at the highest possible angle.

Russia's military, however, said the missile flew considerably shorter and

## Non-oil exports

Pars Special Economic Energy Zone exported 13.623 million tons of non-oil products valued at \$5.7 billion during March 21-June 21, IRNA reported.

## SPECIAL NEWS

Domestic Economy Desk

## Iran, Germany, Switzerland to set up chamber of commerce

A joint chamber of commerce will be established by Iran, Germany and Switzerland by March 2018.

Announcing this, Deputy Head of Khorasan Razavi Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture Hassan Hosseini said the joint chamber will contribute to developing trade relations among them, Fars News Agency reported.

He described the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as the most significant achievement of the incumbent government in the foreign trade sector.

Hosseini underlined that, prior to the JCPOA, Iran lacked appropriate ties with other countries, while many trade transactions were resumed after the deal.

"Even though huge obstacles still exist in the way of foreign trade, the path of dialogue with foreign parties is now smooth and is being expanded," he added.

In relevant remarks in May, Germany's Deputy Foreign Minister Markus Ederer in a meeting with his Iranian counterpart Majid Takht Ravanchi in Tehran called for the expansion of all-out relations, especially in economic and trade fields.

"Berlin is determined to broaden and bolster economic relations with Tehran," Ederer said, adding, "Germany will remain committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and will spare no efforts to comply with its implementation."

The German deputy foreign minister said since the recent visit of German minister of economy and energy to Iran, a number of economic and business agreements have been signed between the two countries.

## Azerbaijani, Iranian entrepreneurs to meet in Baku

Azerbaijani and Iranian entrepreneurs will meet in Baku on Thursday to explore business opportunities.

The meeting will be held during a visit by the Chamber of Cooperation delegation from Iran's West Azarbaijan Province to Baku, said the Azerbaijan Export and Investment Promotion Foundation (AZPROMO), Trend News Agency reported.

The two countries enjoy developed political, economic and cultural relations and have signed about 50 documents on co-operation.

Iran has invested \$2.7 billion in Azerbaijan as of February 2017.

As many as 538 Iranian companies are involved in various spheres of Azerbaijan's economy. Azerbaijani companies also operate in Iran.

Iran is an important trade partner of Azerbaijan and the bilateral trade increased 70 percent in 2016.

Azerbaijan's trade turnover with Iran amounted to \$96.83 million in January-May 2017, which is 31.3 percent more than the figure for the same period of 2016, according to the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan.

AZPROMO was established by the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan in 2003 with the aim of contributing to economic development by attracting foreign investments in the non-oil sectors of economy and stimulating expansion of exports of non-oil goods.

## VW returns to Iran after...

From Page 1

VW is trying to catch up with French rivals PSA Peugeot Citroen and Renault which have been pushing hard into Iran since the country's 2015 deal with world powers that saw international sanctions lifted in return for modification on Tehran's nuclear activities.

PSA Group was the first carmaker to reenter with a deal announced last year to upgrade its Peugeot factory near Tehran and start building Citroen models in the country. A few months later, Renault SA said it would set up a new plant with capacity to build 150,000 autos per year.



tiscorvw.com

Iran auto production growth will average 11 percent through 2021, Fitch Group's BMI Research said in April. The return of European carmakers to the Iran market will boost the sector.

"We are strengthening once more our international presence," Anders Sundt Jensen, VW's project manager for Iran said in an emailed statement.

Wolfsburg-based VW, which sold its iconic Beetle in Iran in the 1950s and its Gol subcompact model in the 1990s, left the market in 2000.

Annual sales in the Iranian market are seen rising to about three million cars over the medium- to longer-term, VW said, citing government estimates.

"By returning to Iran, the Volkswagen brand is filling another blank spot on the global automobile map," Sundt Jensen said in the statement.

## Iranian firm gets go-ahead for 50-MW wind project in Sindh

Pakistan granted a power generation license to an Iranian company for its 10-year old proposed 49.5-MW wind power project in the southern province of Sindh.

The power regulator, National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), announced that it has granted a power generation license to Iran-Pak Wind Power (Pvt.) Limited (IPWPPL) for a 20-year period from the day it starts commercial operations, The Express Tribune reported.

"The project will achieve [commercial production] by June 30, 2019," NEPRA said.

The two bordering countries signed an agreement in April 2017 to open commercial bank branches to conduct trade through formal channels. Pakistan has been importing power from Iran for a long time.

According to IPWPPL's application for the grant of the generation license, the cost of the project is estimated at \$112.8 million.

The main sponsor of the IPWPPL project includes SUNIR (Iran Power and Water Equipment and Services Export Company) whereas the minority sponsors include the Planet Group and the Tufail Group of Pakistan.

SUNIR is an Iranian group company, made up of 24 independent companies involved in manufacturing of a wide range of equipment with a rich experience in engineering services and consultancy in water and electricity industries.

Since its establishment in 1994, SUNIR has successfully performed a wide range of activities in more than 18 countries.

SUNIR first expressed interest in setting up the wind power project in Pakistan in 2006. Later, it spent time on acquiring the required piece of land in the wind corridor of Sindh.



IRNA

The project also qualifies for carbon credits. "Projects coming into operation up to the year 2020 can qualify for the carbon credits," it said. IPWPPL is setting up an approximately 50-megawatts wind power project in the Jhimpir wind corridor of district Thatta.

NEPRA said that the Alternative Energy Development Board has identified two wind corridors (of Jhimpir and Gharo) in the province of Sindh. The estimated potential for these two corridors is more than 50,000 MW.

At the moment, around 13 projects with a cumulative installed capacity of around 650MW have been installed and commissioned whereas another 25 projects including IPWPPL, with cumulative capacity of around 1400MW, are in various stages of implementation.

NEPRA said that the Alternative Energy Development Board has identified two wind corridors (of Jhimpir and Gharo) in the province of Sindh. The estimated potential for these two corridors is more than 50,000 MW.

## Total nears deal to invest \$2b in Iran's...

From Page 1

An oil industry official said in January that Iran plans to build 25 petrochemical plants and is currently seeking \$32 billion in foreign investment to fund projects.

## Facilitating technology transfer

Meanwhile, in a meeting with Poyuanye in Tehran on Monday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said a multibillion-dollar gas deal signed between Iran and French energy giant, Total, will facilitate the "transfer of technological, scientific and managerial experience" between Iran and France.

President Rouhani said France holds a prominent position in the field of economy and energy technology.

"Signing and implementing this contract will be a positive step toward further expansion of economic and technological cooperation between the two countries," the Iranian president added.

He noted that his administration sought to sign the landmark nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan

of Action (JCPOA), with the P5+1 in order to lay the ground for enhancing Iran's economic cooperation with giant companies.

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council

modify its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions.

"Fortunately, the existence of political will [both] on the Iranian side and among the P5+1 countries led to the agreement

Phase 11 of South Pars field, which is the world's largest gas field.

According to Total, the project will have a production capacity of two billion cubic feet per day or 400,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day including condensate. Total added that the produced gas would supply the Iranian domestic market starting in 2021.

The first phase of South Pars gas field development project will cost around \$2 billion, the giant French energy corporation said.

The Iranian president further stated that major foreign companies can invest in projects in Iran's oil and gas sectors valued at around \$200 billion.

Poyuanye stressed the importance of making efforts to implement the deal and expressed hope that it would pave the ground for further cooperation among Iran and other European companies.

He called for bolstering cooperation between Iranian and European companies in various sectors, saying that Total had decided to boost long-term cooperation with Iran in the fields of gas, oil and petrochemicals.



SHANA

President Hassan Rouhani (R) shakes hands with Total's Chief Executive Officer Patrick Pouyanne in Tehran on July 3, 2017.

oil — the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China — plus Germany signed the agreement in July 2015 and started implementing it in January 2016.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to

with Total," Rouhani said.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Total signed the contract — the first by a European firm in more than a decade — in Tehran on Monday to develop

## Italy will ink €1.2b railway deal with Iran

Italy's state railway company, Ferrovie, will sign a memorandum of understanding, worth €1.2 billion, with the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (IRIR).

The MoU, which involves the constructing Qom-Arak high speed railway line in Iran, is to be signed in Tehran on July 11, IRNA reported.

Ferrovie Chief Executive Officer Renato Mazzoncini and IRIR Managing Director Saied Mohammadzadeh will sign the agreement, which includes building the infrastructure as well as supplying high speed trains for Iran.

The Italian company will also be responsible for holding technical courses for IRIR

personnel.

The two sides had signed an initial agreement in this respect in April 2017.

Italy was the first trade partner of Iran among the European Union member states, during the first three months of 2017, according to European Union's statistics agency, Eurostat.

Trade between Iran and Italy in the said period reached €1.2 billion, with €800 million pertaining to Iran's exports to Italy and €400 million to its imports from that country.

Italy was the first trade partner of Iran while France and Germany came second and third respectively.



IRNA



# Address African rural youth unemployment now

In 2014 alone, about 11 million young Africans entered the labor market. But many see few opportunities in the agriculture sector and are constrained by a lack of skills, low wages, and limited access to land and financial services. Combined, this makes them more prone to migrate from rural areas.

Youth employment should be at the center of any strategy to face economic and demographic challenges in Africa, the Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) José Graziano da Silva told a joint African Union-European Union meeting in Rome, according to IPS.

"Fostering sustainable agriculture and rural development is essential to absorb these millions of youth looking for a job," Graziano da Silva said.

"A sustainable world can only be achieved with the full engagement of young people. They must feel integrated and believe that a more peaceful and prosperous world is possible."

The one-day meeting, held on July 2, was co-hosted by the African Union Commission, the European Commission and the Estonian Presidency of the EU Council and was attended by ministers of agriculture of the African Union and the European Union.

The aim was to build a common vision on how to generate sustainable, inclusive jobs for African youth in the rural sector.

## Five-step solution

Graziano da Silva outlined five steps to engage youth in agriculture and rural development.

Firstly, enhance youth participation and leadership in producer organizations and other rural institutions to empower them to engage in policy dialogue.

Secondly, stimulate private sector investments to create a modern and dynamic agricultural sector and value chains, and to build infrastructure needed for agricultural investments.

Thirdly, provide rural areas with better services such as electricity, education and health.

The fourth step is to strengthen the



icrisat.org

physical, economic, social and political links between small urban centers and their surrounding rural areas.

Finally, invest more in information and communication technologies, which has the potential to improve efficiency in some farm work and facilitate access to markets, information and business opportunities.

The UN specialized agency is supporting the implementation of many programs that target youth in rural areas. Uganda, for example, has adopted FAO's Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools methodology, funded by Norway, Sweden and Belgium.

This simple but efficient program teaches vulnerable children and young people about farming and management skills, the UN agency said.

As examples, it reported that in Nigeria, it is supporting the design of the National Youth Employment in

Agriculture Program; and FAO and the New Partnership for Africa's Development have joined forces to increase jobs and business opportunities for young people in rural areas of Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger through a \$4 million grant made available by the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund.

The conference outcomes will be presented at the Africa-EU Summit in November this year and will guide future work of both the European Commission and the African Union Commission.

The joint African Union-European Union meeting in Rome was held on the eve of FAO's Conference 40th Session from July 3 to 8, 2017. It is the organization's highest governing body and sessions are held every two years.

The purpose is to convene the member nations at FAO headquarters to review and vote on the director general's proposed program of work and budget.

## Pressing issues

Participants will discuss a number of pressing issues including how to turn commitment into action to achieve the Global Goal of Zero Hunger; water scarcity, food security and a changing climate in the Near East and North Africa; sustainable solutions to prevent famine in conflict-affected countries; an action plan on food security and nutrition for Small Island Developing States; and the role of rural development in mitigating pressures that drive migration.

This year around 1,000 participants are expected to attend, including 70 ministers, 15 deputy ministers and one president. The session takes place over six days during which around 20 side events will be held, FAO informed.

FAO has 194 member states plus one member organization, the European Union, and two associate members, The Faroe Islands and Tokelau.

## Main Indices of TSE

Index	Value	Change	Percent
Total Index	78632.5	(26.7)	(0.03)
Industry Index	67701.5	(9.2)	(0.01)
Free Float Index	85767.2	(19)	(0.02)
First Market Index	54252.1	(31.7)	(0.06)
Second Market Index	176082.3	15.3	0.01

## Overall Index details on 20170704

First	78659.2	Change end of year(%)	887.04%
High	78671.2	Historical highest	89500.6 (20140105)
Low	78622.2	Historical lowest	100 (1369/1/6)
Close	78632.5	Base Value	100 (1369/1/6)
Change	(26.7)		

## Industry Index details on 20170704

First	67710.7	Change end of year(%)	996.81%
Max Value	67725	Historical highest	75181.9 (20140105)
Max Value	67696.8	Historical lowest	1226.8 (1377/8/25)
Closing	67701.5	Base Value	
Closing	(9.2)		

## Free Float Index details on 20170704

First	85786.2	Change end of year(%)	
Max Value	85854	Historical highest	105040 (20140105)
Max Value	85767.2	Historical lowest	
Closing	85767.2	Base Value	
Closing	(19)		

## Main Board Index details on 20170704

First	54283.8	Change end of year(%)	749.85%
Max Value	54284.8	Historical highest	67441.4 (20140105)
Max Value	54241.5	Historical lowest	
Closing	54252.1	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	(31.7)		

## Secondary Index details on 20170704

First	176067	Change end of year(%)	1301.54%
Max Value	176168.2	Historical highest	181353 (20170522)
Max Value	176073.1	Historical lowest	
Closing	176082.3	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)

# Egypt's central bank seen holding key interest rates

Egypt's central bank will leave its key interest rates unchanged in July, a Reuters poll showed after a hike of 200-basis points in May failed to put a lid on inflation that has soared since the currency was floated in November.

Economists expect inflation to rise in coming months due to a recent hike in fuel prices, but nine out of 10 participants polled by Reuters said the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) was unlikely to raise rates at an upcoming meeting on Thursday, Reuters wrote.

Inflation eased slightly but remained high at around 30 percent in May after the CBE hiked its overnight deposit rate to 16.75 percent from 14.75 percent and its overnight lending rate to 17.75 from 15.75 percent at its last Monetary Policy Committee meeting on May 21.

The jump in May was the first since the CBE raised rates by 300-basis points and floated the



ahram.org.eg

Egyptian pound in November as part of a \$12 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) program to revive Egypt's ailing

economy.

"Inflationary pressures from cost push factors would not be affected by another rate hike,"

said economist at Arqaam Capital Reham ElDesoki who expected no change to rates. Egypt last week hiked fuel

prices by up to 50 percent for the second time since November in another step to narrow its budget deficit.

EFG Hermes economist, Mohamed Abu Basha, said: "We expect the CBE not to react to the recent fuel price hikes as it is likely to wait for a few inflation readings to investigate any second round effects for the fiscal measures."

Electricity prices are also expected to see a jump in the coming weeks, putting more pressure on Egyptians whose incomes and salaries have been slashed in half since the November flotation.

The fuel and electricity subsidy cuts are both part of the three-year IMF reform program, which also includes tax increases and lifting restrictions on foreign currency movement put in place after the uprising as foreign reserves ran low.

# Spain's economy to grow by 2.6% in 2018

Spain's economy would grow by 2.6 percent in 2018, according to the last predictions announced by the Spanish government.

The government has revised up its economic predictions for both 2017 and 2018. The Spanish economy would grow by three percent this year, as opposed to the previously predicted 2.7 percent, and by 2.6 percent in 2018, as opposed to the previously predicted 2.5 percent, Xinhua reported.

The government also predicted a 17.4-percent unemployment rate for 2017, which is 0.1 percentage point lower than the rate previously predicted, and a 15.4-percent unemployment rate for 2018, which is 0.2 percentage point lower than previous forecast.

The government estimated that this year a total of 518,000 jobs will be created which will help cut unemployment by 488,000 to 3.75 million people.

In 2018, it is expected that there will be 503,000 jobs more, while unemployed people would fall by 393,000 to 3.36 million.

The government expects the country's unemployment rate to fall to 11.1 percent by 2020 with more than 20.5 million jobs.

Spain's Minister of Economy and Competitiveness, Luis de Guindos, said that the recovery of employment takes time, explaining that the crisis hitting Spain was hard.

However, he said that the effect of economic growth on job creation was "very intense".



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## Major Currencies

Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2815	Chinese Yuan	0.1470
Euro	1.1350	UAE Dirham	0.2722
British Pound	1.2941	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2948
Australian Dollar	0.7601	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0088	Saudi Riyal	0.2666

## Major Commodities

Crude Oil	\$46.91	Silver	\$16.09
Gold	\$1223.90	Platinum	\$913.20
Copper	\$2.70	Wheat	\$555.00



## Parts of Bam Citadel water supply system identified

Sections of the water supply system in the internal section of Bam Citadel tower were identified during the archaeological explorations in Tower 46 known as Shotor Galou located in the western fortification of the citadel located in southeastern Iran.

The Research Institute of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) quoted the head of the archaeological explorations team Assadollah Joudaki Azizi as saying that the water supply system provided water for the city's public bath through a subsidiary channel, IRNA reported.

Citing Bam as one of the most important historical cities in southeastern Iran, he added that the historical centerpiece of the city is a large and adobe complex which is known as 'Arg-e Bam' (Bam Citadel).

He said that the structure displays the profile of one of the few but at the same time traditional and historical cities of Iran. Joudaki Azizi pointed out that the outcome of research studies revealed that Bam Citadel has the structural features of a hippodamian (grid) city, of which many examples have been identified in Mesopotamia and Central Asia.

He added that with the exception of identifying the possible location of the gateway, the review and study of the structure of the water supply system in this section was needed to justify archaeological explorations of the tower.

# Amazon coral reef at risk of damage

Oil companies planning to drill near a vast coral reef at the mouth of the Amazon river have calculated that the unique ecosystem has a 30 percent chance of being affected in the event of an oil spill.

The unique reef system astonished marine biologists when its existence was widely revealed last year, and is believed it could be the home for dozens of previously unknown species. But activists warn that an oil spill could irreparably damage the 1,000 kilometer-long ecosystem before scientists have even had a chance to study it, according to The Guardian.

"It's unlike any other reef that we know about," said Sara Ayeche, an oil campaigner at the London offices of Greenpeace.

"If the companies drill there's a risk of an oil spill and if an oil spill hits the reef, then we could see parts of it destroyed before we even document them."

The Brazilian government has estimated that the Foz de Amazonas, or Amazon Mouth area, could hold 15.6 billion barrels of oil.

A consortium of oil companies led by French giant Total, and including BP and Brazil's state-run oil company Petrobras,



natgeotv.com.au

snapped up five exploration blocks in the area when they were auctioned off in 2013.

In January, Total said it had begun moving equipment to the Amazon area and planned to start drilling this year. The oil reservoirs it

hopes to reach are situated in 1,900 meters of water, nearly 200 kilometers from the coast.

Scientists from Greenpeace examined the publicly-available Environmental Impact Study Total submitted to the Brazilian

authorities and found references to the possibility of an oil spill reaching the reef.

Reef structures in the area to be drilled "present possibilities of being impacted by oil", the study said. In winter that possibility could be as high as 30.33 percent, while in summer, 20.93 percent, the study produced for Total by companies Procamo and AECOM said.

In February, BP said it planned to start drilling a block it controls by August 2018. Brazilian company Queiroz Galvão also has a block it expects to start drilling from next year.

As long ago as the 1970s, scientists suspected the existence of a reef hidden under the murky waters of the River Amazon's mouth. But it was not until 2012 that they confirmed the system existed, in conditions coral reefs are not commonly found.

Last year, a paper in Science said there were 61 species of sponge alone in the extensive reef system. Earlier this year scientists were able to film the reef from a Greenpeace ship for the first time.

"Scientists are calling it a new biome. And scientists think that there are potentially new species there but they need time to document them," said Ayeche.

## Funding climate resilience benefits all nations

A leading climate change mitigation and adaptation activist and former climate negotiator in the Caribbean said that the United States could protect its economic and political interest by helping the region to go green.

Further, James Fletcher, a former minister of sustainable development, energy, science and technology in St. Lucia, said that US President Donald Trump's emphasis on the coal industry is an attempt to increase jobs that no longer exist, while ignoring numerous opportunities in renewable energy, IPS reported.

On June 1, Trump announced that he would withdraw the United States from the global climate change deal reached in Paris in 2015, saying that the non-binding accord imposes draconian financial and economic burdens on the United States.

The US president was referring to the Green Climate Fund, for which advanced economies have formally agreed to jointly mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020, from a variety of sources, to address the pressing mitigation and adaptation needs of

developing countries.

Fletcher, who was the 15-member Caribbean Community's lead negotiator for the Paris accord, told St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Minister of Sustainable Development Camillo Gonsalves' 'Firm Mediation' podcast, that Trump is wrong.

"Those are voluntary contributions, so it isn't something that any country is mandated to do," he said of the voluntary contribution to the GCF, known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions

(INDCs).

Former US president Barack Obama had pledged \$3 billion to the GCF and delivered one billion before leaving office.

"Now, it's up to President Trump to decide whether he wants to honor that obligation, adjust it — we know he won't increase it," Fletcher said, noting that there is nothing compelling the United States to contribute any amount to the GCF.

"It's just 100 billion that we hope to raise," Fletcher emphasized.

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و کمپانی های خارجی نیازمندیم



## Probiotic supplements

Probiotic supplements may not protect babies from catching colds or stomach bugs in day care, a new clinical trial suggested.

# How you walk could be an early sign of dementia

**D**ementia is usually indicated by memory loss and changes in mood. However, scientists may have discovered a further symptom to watch out for.

Walking slower than normal could indicate dementia, express.co.uk wrote.

The study by the University of Pittsburgh discovered that even a tiny reduction in speed may be an accurate signal of the condition.

Dementia is a term which describes a set of symptoms — such as difficulties with language and problem solving — that occur when the brain is damaged by diseases or injury.

It currently affects 850,000 in the UK, but the Alzheimer's Society estimates this figure will rise to one million by 2025 — making more effective and earlier diagnosis of great importance.

In the study, the scientists discovered a connection between slowed walking speed and declining mental ability.

This link appears in the right hippocampus — a region deep in the brain that is crucial for memory and spatial orientation.

The researchers believe that by regularly measuring the walking speed of older people, doctors could identify the beginnings of cognitive decline.

Andrea Rosso, lead study author and assistant professor of epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh, said, "Prevention and early treatment may hold the key to reducing the global burden of dementia, but the current screening approaches are too invasive and costly to be widely used."

"Our study required only a stopwatch, tape and an 18-foot-long hallway, along with about five minutes of time once every year or so."

The researchers looked at 175 adults between the



unforgettable.org

ages of 70 and 79 over a 14-year period.

While all the participants experienced reduced walking speed over time, those who slowed by 0.1 seconds more per year than their peers were 47 percent more likely to develop cognitive impairment.

Previous research has shown slowing in the participants' gait or walking speed, was associated with cognitive impairment.

However, the new findings reveal that slowing gait and cognitive decline are linked to a shrinkage of the right hippocampus — also the only area of the

brain where they found this association.

The results were even true when muscle weakness, knee pain and diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension were taken into account.

Rosso said, "A fraction of a second is subtle, but over 14 years, or even less, you would notice."

"People should not just write off these changes in walking speed. It may not just be that grandma's getting slow — it could be an early indicator of something more serious."

## Shingles increases heart attack, stroke risk

Getting shingles may increase your risk of a heart attack, stroke or other heart problems by as much as 40 percent, Korean researchers found.

Quoting study author Dr. Sung-Han Kim of Asan Medical Center in Seoul, Reuters.com reported, "But vaccination can help prevent shingles, which is caused by herpes zoster — the same virus that causes chickenpox."

"Individuals should talk with their doctors about preventing shingles until further studies elucidate the effect of vaccination on cardiovascular outcomes."

Kim and his colleagues analyzed the medical records of more than 23,000 shingles patients between 2003 and 2013 and compared them with the same number of patients who didn't get shingles.

People who got shingles were more likely to be female and have common heart risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and older age, the study found.

But they also were less likely to smoke, got more exercise and were in a higher socioeconomic

class, according to the report in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

After adjusting for these and other factors that could influence the risk of heart problems, the researchers



medicalnewstoday.com

ers found that overall, having shingles was associated with a 41-percent increased risk of any heart-related problem, a 35-percent increased risk of stroke and a 59-percent increased risk of a heart attack.

The odds of stroke were especially high in people at the age of 40 or younger, whose risk was 3.74 times that of peers without a history of shingles.

The risks for both stroke and heart attack were also highest in the first year after the onset of shingles and dropped over time.

Kim stressed that patients and doctors should be aware of the increased risks, although

shingles, the virus may move through the skin and directly attack and inflame blood vessels, as well as certain nerves."

Inflamed blood vessels may cause the blood to clot, setting the stage for a heart attack or stroke.

Inflammation of nerves can cause the severe pain — called post-herpetic neuralgia — that often accompanies shingles.

Schwamm added, "There's no definitive proof of the relationship between inflammation and clotting, but the evidence is growing and it's very intriguing."

"And it emphasizes the value of trying to prevent shingles in the first place by getting vaccinated."

"Whether treating shingles will reduce the risks is unknown."

Dr. Talia Swartz, an assistant professor of infectious diseases at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, said that the findings are consistent with previous studies linking shingles with heart attack and stroke.

"Nevertheless, the study has some limitations."

There may have been

undocumented differences between patients in the two groups, as well as differences in shingles severity among those who got the disease.

In addition, the incidence of shingles in people under the age of 65 is much higher in the study than in the US and so the findings may not hold true here.

Swartz said, "In the US, shingles rates in people under 40 are expected to fall because so many were vaccinated for chickenpox as children and rates are low in those who had the chicken pox vaccine."

"As for the shingles vaccine, it not only helps prevent the condition in people over 60, it may prevent a recurrence in those who have already had shingles."

"So even people who have already had shingles should get the vaccine."

Regarding the heart attack and stroke risks, both Schwamm and Swartz stress that following a healthy lifestyle is the best way to lower risks — keep cholesterol, blood sugar and weight under control, exercise regularly and don't smoke.

## Researchers create antioxidant-rich purple rice

Researchers in China have successfully created genetically modified purple rice that is rich in antioxidants and thus has the potential to reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases.



twitter.com

The added health benefits of the new rice came from high levels of anthocyanins, a group of antioxidant-boosting pigments that also provide the purple, red or blue colors of many fruits and vegetables, news.xinhuanet.com wrote.

According to the study published in the journal Molecular Plant, "Consumption of rice rich in anthocyanins can benefit human health, decreasing the risk of certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other chronic disorder."

However, previous attempts to engineer anthocyanin production in rice have failed because the underlying biosynthesis pathway is highly complex.

To address this challenge, Yao-Guang Liu of the South China Agricultural University and his colleagues first set out to identify the genes related to anthocyanin production in different rice varieties.

The team also pinpointed the defective genes in japonica and indica, subspecies that do not produce anthocyanins.

Then, the researchers developed what they called "a highly efficient, easy-to-use transgene stacking system" and used it to insert eight genes needed to produce anthocyanin into the japonica and indica rice varieties.

As expected, the resulting purple rice had high anthocyanin levels and antioxidant activity.

Liu said, "This is the first demonstration of engineering such a complex metabolic pathway in plants."

In the future, the researchers believed that their strategy could be used for the production of many other important nutrients and medicinal ingredients.

The researchers now planned to evaluate the safety of the new purple rice as biofortified food and they will also try to engineer the biosynthesis of anthocyanins in other crops to produce more purple cereals.

Liu said, "Our research provides a high-efficiency vector system for stacking multiple genes for synthetic biology and makes it potentially feasible for engineering complex biosynthesis pathways in the endosperm of rice and other crop plants such as maize, wheat, and barley."

## Cooling cap to prevent hair loss from chemo

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is clearing the way for expanded use of the DigniCap Cooling System that reduces hair loss after chemotherapy.

Hair loss is one of the most common negative side effects of chemotherapy treatment and is used mostly with solid tumor cancers, UPI reported.



mysanantonio.com

The FDA first approved use of the DigniCap System in 2015 for breast cancer patients, announcing that the cap is now being recommended for patients with solid tumor cancers in other parts of the body as well.

The cooling cap system is a computer-controlled cooling cap that offsets the effects of chemotherapy on hair and minimizes hair loss.

DigniCap had been widely used in other countries before being approved for use in the US, according to its manufacturer, Dignitana.

Dr. Binita Ashar, director of the Division of Surgical Devices, in the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health, said, "We are pleased to expand the use of this product for cancer patients with solid tumors to potentially minimize chemotherapy-induced hair loss."

"Managing the side effects of chemotherapy is a critical component to overall health and quality of life."

The DigniCap is worn by patients during treatment as it circulates liquid to the cap to cool the scalp.

The cap is covered by a second cap made of neoprene — a type of rubber that holds the cooling cap in place and provides insulation to prevent loss of cooling.

The cooling effect constricts blood vessels in the scalp to reduce the amount of chemotherapy that reaches the cells in hair follicles.

The cold temperatures decrease the activity of hair follicles, slowing cell division and limiting the effects of chemotherapy on them.

In clinical trials in 2015 that included 122 women with Stage I and II breast cancer undergoing chemotherapy, more than 66 percent of patients treated with DigniCap reported losing less than half of their hair.

## High-fat diet in pregnancy may increase breast cancer risk

A recent study with mice at Georgetown University shows a high-fat diet during pregnancy can increase the risk of breast cancer over generations.

Researchers fed pregnant mice a high fat diet from common corn oil, which resulted in genetic changes in the mice substantially increasing the risk of breast cancer within three generations of female offspring, according to UPI.

The study, published in Breast Cancer Research, revealed a number of genetic changes in the first and third generation females in mice that were fed high-fat diets during pregnancy.

Through a gene screen, researchers found several genes in women linked to increased breast cancer risk, increased resistance to cancer treatment, poor cancer prognosis and improved anti-cancer immunity.

Leena Hilakivi-Clarke, a professor of oncology at

Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, said, "Studies have shown that pregnant women consume more fats than non-pregnant women, and the increase takes place between the first and second trimester."



tribecanydentistoffice.com

"Of the 1.7 million new cases of breast cancer diagnosed in 2012, 90 percent have no known causes. Putting these facts and our finding, together really does give food for thought."

The amount of fat fed to the mice matched what a human might eat on a daily basis, with the mice in the high-fat and control groups eating the same amount of calories and weighing the same amount.

Hilakivi-Clarke added, "But our experimental mice got 40 percent of their energy from fat, and the control mice got a normal diet that provided 18 percent of their energy from fat."

"The typical human diet now consists of 33 percent fat." The research found that eating a high-fat diet before and during pregnancy increased the risk of breast cancer in subsequent generations but did not cause inheritable changes in the germ cells.

## Indian astronomers discover giant radio galaxies

A team of astronomers from India has reported the discovery of a large number of extremely rare kinds of galaxies called 'giant radio galaxies' (GRGs) — the largest galaxies known in the universe.

The last six decades of radio astronomy research has led to the detection of thousands of radio galaxies. However, only about 300 of them can be classified as GRGs. The reasons behind their large size and rarity are unknown, tribuneindia.com reported.

Lead researcher Pratik Dabhadre, at Inter-University Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA, Pune) and also at the Netherlands Leiden Observatory, said: "The huge size of GRGs has defied any theoretical explanation so far. Our work will help in understanding how these galaxies grow to be so large."

He said in a statement: "We are studying whether they are born in regions of very sparse galaxy density, or they have extremely powerful, well-collimated, long-lasting radio jets which allow them to expand to very huge distances."

The team carried out a systematic search for these radio giants and found a large sample of GRGs, using a nearly 20-year-old radio survey.

In the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, the scientists report the discovery of 25 GRGs from the National Radio Astronomy Observatory Very Large Array Sky Survey.

These extremely active galaxies harbor a super massive black hole 'central-engine' at the nucleus, which ejects a pair of high-energy particle jets nearly at the speed of light, which terminate into two giant radio lobes.

According to Joydeep Bagchi, "Understanding the life-cycle of the black hole's energetic activity, properties of the matter which falls into it, and the influence of the surrounding medium which acts on the lobes far away from the host galaxy, and provides a 'working-surface' for the radio jets to act, are among the most important problems in this field."

These behemoths span nearly three million light years across, or even more sometimes. This size corresponds to stacking nearly 33 Milky Way like galaxies in a line.

Since the GRGs are known to expand to such large sizes, they are believed to be the last stop of radio galaxy evolution.

The first GRG was discovered in the 1970s using the Westerbork Synthesis Radio Telescope in the Netherlands in 1974.

Since then, all major radio telescopes and powerful computer simulations have been used in an effort to unravel their mysterious nature.

## Seawater makes ancient Roman concrete stronger

Most people think of sea water as corrosive and erosive. But centuries of exposure to seawater has made ancient Roman concrete stronger. Now, researchers know how.

In a new study, researchers detailed the chemical effects of seawater on the minerals and microscale structures inside ancient Roman concrete, upi.com reported.

The analysis of geologists at the University of Utah showed seawater encourages the growth of interlocking minerals that bolster cement's cohesive bonds.

The phenomenon explains why 2,000-year-old Roman piers and breakwaters are not only still standing, but stronger today than they were 1,000 years ago.



fer4.com

The Romans made concrete by mixing a mortar of volcanic ash, lime and seawater.

They added chunks of volcanic rock to the mortar to strengthen and complete their cement mix. The aggregate cement was used in a variety of buildings, as well as marine infrastructure, including sea walls that protected harbors and the boats they sheltered from rough seas.

Portland cement, the variety used most frequently today, isn't all that different from Roman concrete. Both are a combination of mortar and aggregate.

But, unlike Roman cement, Portland cement specifically features sand and gravel that won't be reactive with the mortar. Portland cement features inert aggregate — when aggregate reacts with mortar, disruptive gels can form.

University of Utah geologist Marie Jackson said in a news release, "This alkali-silica reaction occurs throughout the world and it's one of the main causes of destruction of Portland cement concrete structures."

But not all reactive byproducts are destructive. Jackson's research suggested Roman concrete features a variety of reactive mineral compounds that strengthen the microstructures inside cement.

In the latest study, Jackson and her colleagues, including scientists at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, used advanced imaging technologies, called microdiffraction and microfluorescence, to observe the effects of seawater on important interlocking minerals in Roman cement.

Their observations suggested volcanic ash is dissolved by seawater filtering through the cement, creating space for new minerals to grow. Scientists determined the minerals are formed from highly alkaline leached fluids.

The most common interlocking minerals are Al-tobermorite and phillipsite, both of which form platy shapes that reinforce the cement's structural matrices.

# Scientists baffled by strange sea creatures near Alaska

Strange sea creatures that resemble large pink thimbles are showing up on the coast of southeast Alaska for the first time after making their way north along the West Coast for the last few years.

Scientists said the creatures are pyrosomes, which are tropical, filter-feeding spineless creatures usually found along the equator. They appear to be one long pink tube, but in reality, they're thousands of multi-celled creatures mashed together, generally about six inches (15 centimeters) long, according to yahoo.com.

Pyrosomes have been working their way north, Ric Brodeur, a researcher with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, told the Associated Press.

Brodeur, who is based at the agency's Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Newport, Oregon, said pyrosomes were first seen on the Oregon coast in 2014 and every year since.

More recently, the animals have made their way further north on the Washington State coast, Canada's British Columbia and Alaska.

Jim Murphy, a biologist



yimg.com

with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said pyrosomes spotted near Alaska this year marked the first documented presence of the animals that far north, and their appearance is cause for concern.

"It means that we are clearly

seeing really big changes in the marine ecosystem," he told The Juneau Empire.

Researchers have speculated that the bloom is tied to warmer ocean temperatures in the Pacific Ocean in recent years. But temperatures have nearly cooled back to normal this

year, Murphy said, and these pyrosomes started showing up in the middle of winter.

Leon Shaul, a biologist with Fish and Game, has been tracking the appearance of pyrosomes in southeast Alaska. He said he's 'emailed the whole world' about the

issue, but hasn't heard much back.

Brodeur told the AP that it's also unusual how close to shore the pyrosomes have come, although they are now being found farther offshore again.

He said the creatures have a low nutritional value, and that raises concerns on how they will affect the fish that eat them.

"They're not the greatest food for the animals out there, compared to the things they normally have," he said.

Pyrosomes aren't harmful to humans, but they have puzzled those who've encountered them.

Angler Don Jeske was fishing for king salmon in February when he said he found himself surrounded by millions of the tube-shaped creatures and he'd never seen anything like it in his 50 years of trolling around Sitka, a fishing town about 90 miles southwest of Juneau.

"They were all over out there, they were everywhere... I would say millions, not hundreds of thousands," he said. "This is a weird organism, man."

## Frog evolution linked to dinosaur asteroid strike

The huge diversity of frogs we see today is mainly a consequence of the asteroid strike that killed off the dinosaurs, a study suggested.

A new analysis shows that frog populations exploded after the extinction event 66 million years ago, BBC wrote.

It would appear to contradict earlier evidence suggesting a much more ancient origin for many key frog groups.

The work by a US-Chinese team of researchers is outlined in the journal PNAS.

Frogs became one of the most diverse groups of vertebrates, with more than 6,700 described species. But a lack of genetic data has hampered efforts to trace their evolutionary history.

The new study shows that three major lineages of modern frogs, which together comprise about 88 percent of living frog species — appeared almost simultaneously.

This impressive diversification of species appears to have occurred on the heels of the asteroid, which struck what is now the edge of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico.

Releasing upwards of a billion times more energy than an atom bomb, the



bbc.com

space impact wiped out three-quarters of all life on Earth. But it also appears to have set the stage for the rise of frogs.

The scientists sampled a core set of 95 genes from the DNA of 156 frog species. They then combined this data with genetic information from an additional 145 species to produce a detailed family tree of frogs, based on their genetic relationships.

Using frog fossils to provide ground truth for the genetic data, the researchers were able to add a timeline to their family

tree. The three biggest frog groups — the hylodidae, microhylidae and the natantura — all trace their origins to an expansion that occurred after 66 million years ago.

"Nobody had seen this result before," said coauthor Peng Zhang, from Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China.

"We re-did the analysis using different parameter settings, but the result remained the same. I realized the signal was very strong in our data. What I saw could not be a false thing."

Another author, David Blackburn,

from the Florida Museum of Natural History, explained: "Frogs have been around for well over 200 million years, but this study shows it wasn't until the extinction of the dinosaurs that we had this burst of frog diversity that resulted in the vast majority of frogs we see today."

Blackburn said the speed at which frogs diversified after the impact suggests that the survivors were probably filling up new ecological niches.

The Chicxulub event would have destroyed a large proportion of the vegetation on Earth. But as forests began to recover after the event, frogs seem to have been one of the groups that made the most of the new habitats.

The researchers point out that none of the frog lineages that originate before the extinction and survive through the asteroid impact happen to be adapted to living in trees.

"All origins of arboreality (e.g. within hylodids or natanturans) follow the [Chicxulub extinction event]," the authors write in their PNAS paper.

This, they argue "supports the hypothesis that the [Chicxulub] mass extinction shaped the current diversity of frogs".

## Scientists design robot to aid visually-impaired schoolchildren

A pair of researchers from France and Switzerland have designed a robot to help visually-impaired children navigate classroom environments.

According to UPI, lead researcher Alexandre Foucqueteau, a student at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, named the robot Cellulo.

The miniature robot scoots around the floor as directed by a visually-impaired student. As the robot bumps into obstacles, it identifies the object — whether a table, chair or bookcase. The robot can help visually-impaired school children gain their bearings and develop an understanding of the classroom layout.



newsline.com

The technology sounds simple, but training the robot to interact with a variety of inanimate objects wasn't easy.

Researchers wanted the robot to successfully identify objects,

but they also wanted it to be helpful.

To ensure the work would prove beneficial, Foucqueteau sought the help of research partner Agnieszka Kolodziej, a

doctoral student in cognition and language at the University of Toulouse who is studying how blind people learn language and gain spatial awareness.

"I spent five months observing classes of visually-impaired children aged between three and nine years old," Kolodziej said in a news release.

"The classes were very mixed, and the learning tools available did not really meet their needs. Thanks to our partnership with EPFL, we've been able to come up with a really fun and interactive project."

The robot isn't so much a guide dog as it is a memory and learning tool.

"This is how it works: The robot stops, moves back and

vibrates when it touches something," Foucqueteau said.

"The child then has to say what the robot has hit. If the child is spatially lost and doesn't know, the tablet can say what it is — the crayon cupboard or the teacher's desk, for instance."

Foucqueteau made sure to design a hardy, durable robot that can constantly bump into large, solid objects without suffering structural damage.

Foucqueteau is now working to perfect the robot's software so as to diversify its abilities and make the robot even more interactive. He hopes to develop gameplay features, such as a virtual treasure hunt, to further enhance learning.



# Air pollution affects life expectancy



mirror.co.uk

Air pollution for city-dwellers is nothing new, but many might be horrified to learn how badly the problem could be affecting them.

Original estimates put the damage of exposure to air pollution at a couple of years off the average human's lifespan. But a new formula developed at a university in Denmark paints a much bleaker picture, mirror.co.uk wrote.

It estimates that air pollution will be responsible for knocking a decade off your life expectancy.

Professor Mikael Skou Andersen from Aarhus University calculated that an increase of pollution particles by 10 micrograms per cubic meter will kill the population 10 years earlier.

The UK government is currently facing legal action from environmental group ClientEarth for failing to

properly tackle nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution.

But Andersen believes governments will never take the problem of air pollution seriously until someone can prove the financial cost of premature deaths. This was the goal that spurred his research.

"The existing literature is ambiguous and there are differences in the approaches adopted in the EU and the USA for how to account for such costs," he said.

"People are willing to pay a price to reduce risks for dying prematurely, provided we have an understanding of the implications and magnitudes of such risks."

In the United States, cost-benefit analysis of reducing air pollution is calculated based on the number of lives saved — and each life is currently estimated to be worth \$7.4 million (£5.7 million).

However, Europe estimates cost based on life

expectancy and assumes that most victims are in their 70s and 80s. If only a year or two is lost from this age bracket, then there's not much of a financial consequence.

But if between nine and 11 years — what Andersen's research shows — is lost, then the financial impact is much greater. In fact, it could run into the billions.

"There is concern about air pollution and its health impacts, more so following 'diesel-gate'," said Andersen.

"But many European countries are unable to meet the air pollution standards they have agreed to in the European Union. We need to understand the true impact of long-term exposure to air pollution to develop better informed policies and reduce fossil fuel consumption."

The study is set to appear in the August issue of the scientific journal Ecological Indicators.

## Firearm restrictions not enough to prevent suicides

Restricting access to firearms just for people with known mental health or substance abuse problems and those who previously tried to kill themselves won't prevent many suicide deaths, US researchers said.

According to Reuters, half of all suicide deaths in the US are due to firearms. How many could be prevented by limiting firearm access for substance abusers, people with a mental health condition and people with a history of suicide attempts?

Jennifer Boggs of Kaiser Permanente Colorado in Denver and her colleagues wrote in the Annals of Internal Medicine: "Few."

The researchers reviewed the medical records of 2,674 adults and teenagers who died by suicide between 2000 and 2013 and had been patients of a network of health care systems participating in a suicide risk identification study.

A bit more than half, 55 percent, had a mental health or substance abuse problem and about 43 percent of those committed suicide with a firearm.

Only 11 percent had previously attempted suicide, of whom a little more than a third, committed suicide with a firearm.

Overall, 671 people with no mental health or substance abuse condition committed suicide by firearm during the study period compared with 627 who had one or both diagnoses.

Only 109 who previously attempted suicide used a firearm to kill themselves compared with 1,189 who did not.

Put another way, only about a quarter of individuals with a known mental health or substance abuse problem committed suicide by firearm, as did just four percent of those who had previously attempted suicide.



usnews.com

Based on the findings, the authors suggest that suicide prevention efforts expand beyond firearms to include people who may be thinking of using other means of suicide.

"To truly make a difference in reducing suicide rates, we need to find and help more of the people who are at risk," Boggs said.

"Most people who die by firearm suicide haven't sought or received care for a mental health or substance abuse condition and therefore are unlikely to be identified in advance," she added.

Dr. Paul Appelbaum of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City said that all health professionals should be aware of suicidal thinking in their patients, ask about access to firearms and advise families to remove guns from the home.

That said, many suicidal people aren't in contact with the medical system. "Even when they are, suicide is difficult to predict," he said by email.

"Unless the overall prevalence of firearms in our society is reduced," said Appelbaum, who was not involved in the study, "it will be difficult to prevent the use of guns in suicides."

## Haiti could stem cholera epidemic by end of 2018

Haiti could stem its seven-year-long cholera epidemic by the end of 2018 as the number of reported cases has dropped sharply, government and United Nations officials said.

The Health Ministry said Haiti has had about 7,400 suspected new cholera cases since the start of the year, compared with almost 20,200 at the same point last year, Reuters said.

Donald Francois, head of the Health Ministry's national cholera program said in an interview: "We have never seen so few cases. With the cases we've seen, we think we can eliminate cholera by the end of 2018."

There were more than 18,600 cases in the first six months of 2015 and some 7,451 in the same period in 2014, according to Health Ministry figures.

An estimated 9,300 people have died and more than 800,000 have fallen ill from cholera since UN peacekeepers accidentally introduced the disease in 2010 when they dumped infected sewage into a river outside of Port-au-Prince.

A program to provide residents with water purification tablets and efforts to find the source of new outbreaks has likely led to the decline in cases, said Marc Vincent, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative for Haiti.

A cholera vaccination drive in November targeting more than 800,000 people also probably boosted immunity, Vincent said.

Still, with funds to combat cholera slow to trickle in and Haiti needing vast improvements to its water and sanitation systems, the country remains vulnerable to new outbreaks.

About 40 percent of Haiti's population are without daily access to clean water and less than one in four residents has regular use of a toilet, according to Pan-American Health Organization and World Bank figures.

"The number of reported cases can certainly decline dramatically and even fall to zero. Most likely, though, there will continue to be a low-level number of cases, maybe seasonally, maybe year-round," said Ronald Waldman, a global health professor at George Washington University.

Waldman said Haiti could expect periodic spikes of cholera during natural disasters such as hurricanes.

Former UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon apologized in December for the handling of the outbreak and announced a \$400-million trust fund to fight cholera and to rebuild communities struck by the illness.

## Infant mortality racial gap increasing in US

Infant mortality rates recently increased for blacks in the United States, whereas the rates in whites continued to decline, a new study showed.

The difference in mortality rate between black infants and white infants, per 1,000 births, fell from 8.6 to 6.6 from 2005 to 2012, and then rose to 6.9 in 2015, the authors said.

Corinne A. Riddell, PhD, from McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and colleagues, published their findings online in a research letter in JAMA Pediatrics, UPI wrote.

"The sustained progress in reducing infant mortality among black infants since 2005 has stalled in the past few years," they wrote.

"This has led to increases in the absolute inequality in infant mortality between black and white infants during the past three years."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the infant mortality rate in the United States dropped 15 percent from 2005 to 2014.

The researchers therefore aimed to determine whether both black and white infants benefitted equally from the

decline.

In their cross-sectional study, the researchers analyzed data from the US National Vital Statistics System from 2005 to 2015.

They examined trends in overall and cause-specific infant mortality rates between non-Hispanic black and white infants, as infant mortality is widely used as a measure of population health.

The infant mortality rate for black infants fell from 14.3 to 11.6 per 1,000 births from 2005 to 2012, then plateaued until 2014, and then rose from 11.4 to 11.7 per 1,000 births from 2014 to 2015.

In contrast, the mortality rate for white infants decreased from 5.7 to 4.8 per 1,000 births during the 10-year period.

The researchers also determined rates for the top four causes of infant death, as well as for an additional category comprising all other causes.

The top cause of death among black infants is short gestation and low birth weight, with blacks experiencing almost four times as many deaths as whites in this category.



cbsistatic.com

Although deaths from short gestation and low birth weight decreased for black infants between 2005 and 2011, they more recently plateaued.

The mortality rate in this category for black infants vs white infants was 309.2 vs 78.2 deaths per 100,000 births in 2005 compared with 263.4 vs 74.5 in 2012 and 256.9 vs 69.7 in 2015.

For the three other top causes of death

(congenital malformations, sudden infant death syndrome, and maternal complications), the mortality rates decreased among both black and white infants from 2005 to 2015.

However, deaths related to both sudden infant death syndrome and congenital malformations increased for black infants from 2014 to 2015, the authors added.

Millions of children in England are growing up in vulnerable or high risk environments, according to a pioneering report, which warns that an 'unacceptably high' number face having their future chances of happiness blighted.

Anne Longfield, the children's commissioner for England, said it was impossible to know the true total and the numbers she had uncovered in a report were 'only the tip of the iceberg', reported The Guardian.

Longfield and a team of experts calculated that among the children in jeopardy were 580,000 receiving some form of care or support from the state, 670,000 whose families were seen as vulnerable and 370,000 whose actions put them at risk.

Within the last group, Longfield found, were an estimated 46,000 or more gang members aged 10 to 18, almost 55,000 children reported as missing and nearly 160,000 excluded from school.

The category of children in vulnerable families included more than 27,000 children living with an adult currently having drug or alcohol treatment and almost 120,000 who were homeless or living in temporary accommodation.

Those getting support from the state included almost 400,000 children deemed in need and more than 30,000 involved with the criminal justice system.

The report listed a fourth broad category, that of children who experienced long-

term health.

The team stresses that while all efforts were made to avoid double counting within each broad category, many children would face vulnerabilities or risks across more than one, meaning a com-



tindall.org.nz

term health or mental health problems, or who had special educational needs or a disability, which covered a total of 2.3

bined total can not be safely estimated.

Longfield said: "The truth is nobody knows the exact number of vulnerable



## Baby survives after being shot while still in womb

A baby has survived being shot while still in the womb after his nine-month-pregnant mother was hit by a stray bullet.

The bullet pierced through the hip of Claudineia dos Santos Melo during an alleged gun fight between drug traffickers and police in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, [daily.iran.co.uk](http://daily.iran.co.uk) wrote.

It entered the 29-year-old's womb, hit the child in the lungs, tore off part of his ear and caused spinal cord injury.

Three suspects are under arrest and could be charged after eyewitnesses identified them as the reported shooters.

The baby, named as Arthur, was born after an emergency cesarean section and immediately underwent two life-saving operations last Friday.

He is in a neonatal intensive care unit at the Adão Pereira Nunes State Hospital, in the Baixada Fluminense and could be left a paraplegic said doctors.

Rio Health Secretary Dr. José Carlos Oliveira, a gynecologist, said: "It's a miracle of God this baby hasn't died. His condition is very serious and he remains sedated with a bilateral chest drain."

"We're waiting for his health to stabilize and improve before doing any more surgery."

An X-ray shows a lesion in the baby's vertebra, near the



[daily.iran.co.uk](http://daily.iran.co.uk)



thorax.

Melo, 29, is being kept in the Moacyr do Carmo, Municipal Hospital and another emergency unit a few miles away

but in the same Rio neighborhood. She has a fractured iliac wing but 'no apparent bleeding'.

Her condition is reported as stable and she has not required surgery.

However, physicians reported there could be a "risk of infection due to there being an exposed fracture without treatment. Medical care will include venous antibiotics for 10 days".

Melo, a treasurer at a supermarket in the South Zone of Rio, had just started maternity leave

when she called me to say she had been shot but kept repeating that everything was okay with the baby. I'm told local people helped to get her to hospital.

"It was only when I arrived at the hospital that I found out the shocking state of my son's health and my wife's condition."

Da Silva, 27, a refrigeration lecturer, who has been commuting between the two hospitals separating his wife and child, said: "I do not want to know who shot my family. I don't really care."

"All I care about right now is the health of my wife and my son and I'm praying that they both improve quickly and the predictions of my son's state isn't as bad as the doctor's say it is."

Melo, who is awake, has been receiving visits from concerned friends and family and is being kept up to date on her newborn son's condition.

She will be offered psychological counselling to help her deal with the trauma, said Oliveira.

According to detectives investigating the incident, armed criminals shot at a police vehicle which was driving along the road where Melo was hit by a lost bullet on Friday afternoon.

Three men have been arrested and are being linked to the crime after eyewitnesses identified them as suspects to police.

Investigators are also examining images of security cameras to help clarify the facts.

## Mexican mayor marries crocodile to 'bring luck' to local fishermen

A Mexican mayor has married a crocodile in a bizarre ceremony as part of an age-old tradition to 'bring luck' to local fishermen.

The female crocodile — known as 'The Princess' — was baptized then subsequently

dressed in a custom-made wedding dress and had her jaws clamped shut for the big day, according to [mirror.co.uk](http://mirror.co.uk).

She also wore a veil as she was paraded through streets, accompanied by band music.

After the procession, the reptile was married to the mayor of San Pedro Huamelula Victor Aguilarand in the town hall.

The croc got hitched as part of a ritual which has been practiced by the Chontal Indians since 1789.

They believe the ceremony will bring good luck and prosperity to local fishermen along the Pacific coast of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca State.

According to custom, the crocodile is regarded as a princess, and it's believed she will bring peace and prosperity to their community.

Aguilar said: "The marenos [referring to the local residents], call her 'The Princess'."



## PICTURE OF THE DAY



Ellyn Evans and his co-driver Daniel Barritt, from the UK, race their Ford Fiesta WRC during the special stage of the Orlen Rally Poland, Chmielewo, Poland.

## RSPCA rescues fox from 'grave mistake' in cemetery

Animal rescuers in Britain said they responded to a cemetery where a not-so-clever fox made a 'grave mistake' and ended up with its head trapped between gravestones.

The RSPCA said a member of the public contacted the group June 29 and reported a fox at St. Mary Magdalene Church's graveyard in Leamington Spa, England, had its head caught between two headstones, UPI reported.

The charity said Inspector Georgia



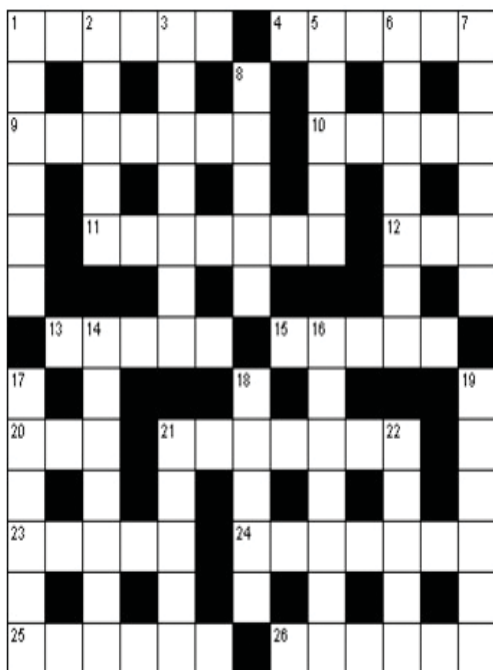
RSPCA

McCormick was dispatched to the scene of the fox's 'grave mistake'.

"I'm not sure how he managed to get there, or how long he had been there for, but he really was in a tight spot. The call came into us at 11 a.m., and as foxes are nocturnal animals I can only imagine he had been there from the night before," McCormick said.

"I managed to carefully free him and check him over — thankfully he wasn't injured and so he was released back into the wild," she said. "I dread to think what could have happened to him if we hadn't have been contacted."

## True or False Crossword



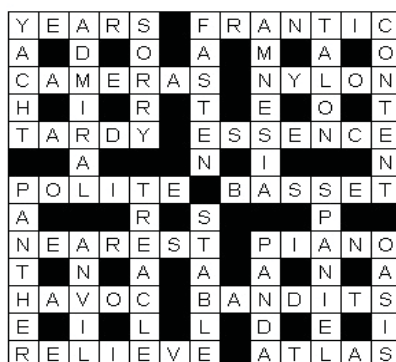
## DOWN

1. Benevolence / Malevolence (6)
2. Furniture item / Item of clothing (5)
3. Day of the week / Month of the year (7)
5. Hinders / Assists (5)
6. Spartan / Luxurious (7)
7. Enlighten / Deceive (6)
8. Indicates stop / Indicates go (5)
14. Tool / Lawn (7)
16. Plants / Clouds (7)
17. Consent / Refusal (6)
18. Horse / Buffalo (5)
19. Serpents / Fish (6)
21. Character / Carapace (5)
22. Grab / Release (5)

## ACROSS

1. Inactivity / Movement (6)
4. Danger / Safety (6)
9. Crustacean / Mammal (7)
10. Tripod / Ladder (5)
11. Shoes / Flags (7)
12. Beginning / Conclusion (3)
13. Map / Telescope (5)
15. Frequently / Infrequently (5)
20. Hat / Pouch (3)
21. Landlubbers / Mariners (7)
23. Precede / Result (5)
24. Stone pillar / Staircase (7)
25. Used for drying / Used for painting (6)
26. Valuables / Debts (6)

## Yesterday's solution



## Sudoku

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

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

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





NICK POTTSPA

José Mourinho is concerned that no more major signings will be in place when the preseason tour starts on Sunday.

## Mourinho unhappy with lack of summer transfer

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho is unimpressed by the club's lack of summer transfer dealings.

After United's Europa League final win against Ajax on May 24, Mourinho said he had given executive vice chairman Ed Woodward a list of transfer targets, BBC reported.

Senior United figures spoke privately about signing three or four players.

There could be developments later this week, but so far the only new signing has been 22-year-old defender Victor Lindelof from Benfica for £31 million.

It is understood Mourinho wants at least one forward to compensate for the loss of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, 35, because of injury, as well as a holding midfielder player.

Efforts to sign Atletico Madrid forward Antoine Griezmann, 26, for a fee that would have come close to the world record £89 million United paid Juventus for midfielder Paul Pogba 12 months ago were compromised by Ibrahimovic's major knee injury, which will keep him out until the New Year.

Atletico was also banned from buying players during the current transfer window and Griezmann signed a new contract, retaining a 100-million-euro release clause.

Another potential target, Everton striker Romelu Lukaku, 24, is thought to be more interested in joining Chelsea, so Real Madrid's Alvaro Morata, 24, has emerged as United's preferred striking option.

However, efforts to do a deal with Real have, thus far, met with frustration.

His father and agent met with Real of-

ficials at the Bernabeu on Monday and although it is still anticipated a transfer will happen, United's departure for the five-match preseason tour of the USA on Sunday has created an artificial deadline there is no certainty of meeting.

Tottenham's Eric Dier, 23, and Chelsea's Nemanja Matic, 28, have been spoken of by club officials as possible additions to fill the holding midfield role.

However, any attempt to get Dier would involve protracted discussions with Tottenham, which United has never found easy.

It is understood Chelsea will not even entertain the prospect releasing Matic until the Blues have completed the transfer of 22-year-old France midfielder Tiemoue Bakayoko from Monaco.

United officials also spoke to Inter Milan about winger Ivan Perisic, 28, but that move is hampered by the Italian side's improved financial situation, meaning the Italians have no urgent need to sell.

The situation is somewhat different to 12 months ago, when Ibrahimovic, center-half Eric Bailly and midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan were all signed two weeks before Manchester United went on its preseason tour of the Far East, with Pogba coming in later.

Mourinho is mindful his squad needed improving, as – despite winning the EFL Cup and Europa League last season – the Red Devils finished sixth in the Premier League. Four matches against Manchester City, Real Madrid and Barcelona in particular will offer an indication about how much improvement is required.

## Messi to pen new contract

Lionel Messi will sign a new Barcelona contract when he returns from his honeymoon in the middle of this month.

The Argentine attacker, who got married on Friday, was set to return to the Catalan capital with his family at the weekend, but will now not be back until around July 12, goal.com reported.

After the wedding, Messi and his wife changed their plans and are now on their honeymoon.

On July 12, Barcelona's players are expected at the training ground in Sant Joan Despi for medical examinations ahead of the club's preseason preparations, so Messi will be back for that.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is out of contract in 2018, but a new agreement is all but finalized after months of negotiations between the player, his father Jorge and the club.

Messi will put pen to paper on a fresh agreement that will take him up until 2021

with the option of one further season and the deal should make him the world's highest-paid player with wages in excess of €22 million per year after tax.

After playing at the World Cup, the Copa America and the Copa America Centenario in the last three summers, Messi has had a rare break this time and will therefore return to training along with the rest of his teammates to prepare for a new season which kicks off with a Spanish Supercopa series against Real Madrid in August.

Messi's wedding was a big Barca affair as teammates past and present were invited to the party in Rosario, with Carles Puyol, Xavi, Dani Alves, Samuel Eto'o, Gerard Pique, Neymar and Luis Suarez all in attendance. The Argentine made his Barca debut in 2004 and has won 30 trophies during his time at the Catalan club, scoring more than 500 goals. This new contract could see him retire at Camp Nou.



GETTY IMAGES

# Murray, Nadal through, Wawrinka out of Wimbledon 2017



GETTY IMAGES

Rafael Nadal booked his 850th win on tour at his 50th Wimbledon match on July 3, 2017.

Andy Murray and Rafael Nadal eased past opponents on the first day of the Wimbledon 2017 while fifth seed Stan Wawrinka was knocked out by Daniil Medvedev in the biggest shock on day one.

Murray began the defense of his title with a straight-set win over Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik on Centre Court, BBC reported. The Scot won 6-1, 6-4, 6-2, despite a hip injury which disrupted his buildup.

The 30-year-old will face Germany's Dustin Brown – the man who beat Rafael Nadal in 2015 – in round two.

"With the adrenaline, it helps numb some pain that you might have and I moved well," Murray told BBC Sport.

"I thought I did pretty well for the first match."

"In the first few days, normally the court is a bit lush and can be a bit slippery, but I didn't feel like I was losing my footing at all."

Spanish world number two Nadal beat John Millman 6-1, 6-3, 6-2.

He will next face American world number 43 Donald Young, who was 2-1 up in sets when opponent Denis Istomin retired.

Nadal missed last year's Wimbledon because of injury and was play-

ing his first tournament match on grass in two years.

He is looking to secure a second Grand Slam title in 2017 after winning last month's French Open.

"I have been playing good tennis since the beginning of the season," said Nadal.

"The clay-court season has been special and emotional and here I have an opportunity to perform on grass."

Three-time Grand Slam champion, Wawrinka, needed ice on a knee injury between points as he fell to a 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 loss on Centre Court.

Medvedev's victory over world

number three came just hours after the 21-year-old moved into the world's top 50 for the first time.

It was his first Grand Slam victory on his Wimbledon debut, and he celebrated by dropping to the court in front of the net and kissing the ground.

"At 5-1, I started thinking about what to do after the match and I kissed the grass because it was my first Grand Slam win, even though people do it when they win Wimbledon," he said.

"One year ago I was 250th in the rankings and if someone said I would not only play on Centre but win I would say: 'You are joking!'"

## Donnarumma agrees new Milan mega deal



GETTY IMAGES

Gianluigi Donnarumma's new deal includes one buyout clause worth £88 million.

Gianluigi Donnarumma agreed a new five-year AC Milan deal with one buyout clause worth £88 million.

That enormous figure – dependent upon Champions League participation – is designed to fend off interest from Real Madrid, The Sun reported.

The 18-year-old goalkeeper, a target for Man United earlier this summer, has a second buyout clause in his new contract.

If Milan does not make Europe's top competition then he can go for £44 million.

Earlier this month, Donnarum-

ma's agent Mino Raiola put the youngster's future at the club in doubt by claiming the shot stopper had been "bullied" by the side. But now it appears a resolution has been found with Donnarumma pledging his future to manager Vincenzo Montella.

Donnarumma's current contract runs until 2018 but he is set for an extended stay in Serie A with this latest big money offer.

It is believed all parties interested are happy with the terms and that the Italy keeper will put pen to paper imminently.



Mark Twain:

Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

## South Korea, Iran commemorate 1,300 years of cultural exchange

South Korean Cultural Week began in Tehran on Monday to promote traditional Korean culture to commemorate the millennium-old relations between the two countries' along the Silk Road.

This year has been designated as the year of South Korea-Iran cultural exchange, to mark the 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries, The Korea Herald reported.

However, cultural exchanges between Seoul and Tehran go back much further, back to the time of the Silla Kingdom and the Persian Empire.

"We hope that through cultural encounter, our culture will take a step closer toward everyday lives of Iran people. We also hope for it to be a catalyst to more active cultural exchanges between Korea and Iran," said a South Korean Culture Ministry official.

As part of the weeklong event, an exhibition of calligraphy and traditional Korean craftsworks titled 'Korea-Iran 1,300 years of relations, the Silk Road' will run until Friday.

The event, which is being held at Milad Tower Exhibition Hall, features 51 pieces of calligraphy work — including 28 in Persian — along with performances by artists from the two countries.

Some 90 pieces of traditional Korean crafts are also on exhibit while hands-on programs are available, allowing visitors to try making traditional crafts from both Korea and Iran.

On the last day of the culture week, National Orchestra of Korea will demonstrate traditional Korean music through the 'Arirang Fantasy' concert at Vahdat Hall.



# IRAN DAILY

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A picture taken on July 3, 2017 shows a cartoon of US President Donald J. Trump, at an exhibition of the Islamic Republic's 2017 International Trumpism cartoon and caricature contest, in the capital Tehran.



Iranian cartoonist Hadi Asadi poses for a picture with a trophy and an award next to cartoons of US President Donald J. Trump, at an exhibition of the Islamic Republic's 2017 International Trumpism cartoon and caricature contest, in the capital Tehran on July 3, 2017.

## Iranians hold 'Trumpism' cartoon contest

Iranians organized a 'Trumpism' cartoon contest, in which hundreds of participants were invited to submit artwork mocking the US leader.

The same organizers held a Holocaust cartoon contest last year, which they said was meant to highlight the West's double standards on free speech and not to cast doubt on the Nazi genocide.

According to abcnews.go.com, the logo for the contest is based on the Nazi emblem, with a diagonal 'T' in a white

circle against a red background. One cartoon shows President Donald Trump painting a Hitler-like mustache on the face of the Statue of Liberty.

Hadi Asadi of Iran, who won first prize and a \$1,500 award, said he wanted to highlight the "money-mindedness and warmonger nature" of Trump. His cartoon shows Trump wearing a jacket made of dollar notes while drooling on books, a reference to cultural material.

"I wanted to show Trump while trans-

pling symbols of culture," said Asadi, who produced the cartoon in two weeks using a stylus pen digital printing method.

Contest organizer Masoud Shojai-Tabatabaei said the aim of the contest and exhibition is to show wrong behaviors by Trump in the framework of satirical portraits. Trump and violence against women, media as well as building walls were among themes of the contest.

The exhibition, which opened Monday

and will continue for one week, includes the works of some 1,614 Iranian and foreign participants from 74 countries, including four works from American cartoonists, of which two were awarded citations.

American Robert Jones Clayton's cartoon shows the cover photo of two copies of Time magazine, one with Trump's picture and the other with Adolf Hitler. Both men are portrayed as Time's Person of the Year and Trump tells Hitler: "It is a great honor" and in return Hitler replies "Ja".

American Ed Wexler's work shows Trump saying 'Fake news' while running away from a snowball, on which a red star with a hammer and sickle emblem is seen, a reference to Russian connections to Trump.

## Chicago library seeks help transcribing magical manuscripts

The Newberry Library in Chicago is home to some 80,000 documents pertaining to religion during the early modern period, a time of sweeping social, political and cultural change spanning the late Middle Ages to the start of the Industrial Revolution.

Among the library's collection of rare Bibles and Christian devotional texts are a series of manuscripts that would have scandalized the religious establishment. These texts deal with magic — from casting charms to conjuring spirits — and the Newberry is asking for help translating and transcribing them, smithsonianmag.com wrote.

As Tatiana Walk-Morris reports for Atlas Obscura, digital scans of three magical manuscripts are accessible through Transcribing Faith, an online portal that functions much like Wikipedia. Anyone

according to the Transcribing Faith website — but also includes Latin prayers and liturgies that align with mainstream religious practices. An untitled document known as the 'commonplace book' explores strange and fantastical occurrences, along with religious and moral questions.

'Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits' by Increase Sather, a Puritan minister and president of Harvard who presided over the Salem Witch Trials, presses a righteous condemnation of witchcraft.

Newberry has brought the manuscripts to light as part of a multidisciplinary project titled 'Religious Change: 1450-1700', which explores the relationship between print and religion during this period. The project features a digital exploration of Italian broadsides — advertisements for Catholic celebrations and feasts — a blog and a podcast.

In September, a gallery exhibition — also titled 'Religious Change: 1450-1700' — will focus on the ways that print galvanized the Reformation, the 16th-century religious movement that led to the foundation of Protestantism. One of the items that will be on display is a copy of Martin Luther's German translation of the New Testament, which made the Bible accessible to ordinary lay people for the first time.



## Kiarostami transformed Iranian children's cinema into global brand



The late Iranian auteur Abbas Kiarostami turned Iranian children's cinema into a global brand, said the president of the 30th International Film Festival for Children and Youth.

In a meeting with members of the jury for international films, Alireza Rezadad said Isfahan is an exceptional city in Iran and that is the reason that the festival is being held in Isfahan. The international festival has been held for the last 30 years, icff.ir reported.

He said, "Unfortunately we lost Abbas Kiarostami last year. He was the filmmaker who introduced Iranian cinema to the world and made it a global brand. Majid Majidi is another professional

director working in children cinema. I liked to pay tribute to these great filmmakers."

The international jury also paid tribute to late Kiarostami.

He added, "Iran has much potential for the growth of animators and we must use these potentials."

The festival must take animation industry seriously, encourage animators and attract the attention of the audience to animation."

He concluded, "I like to thank the CIFEJ (Centre Internationale de Film pour l'enfance et La Jeunesse) jury and a jury committee from China for contributing to this festival."

## 'Release from Heaven' catches HK Best Animation Award

Iranian animated piece 'Release from Heaven' by Ali Noori-Oskoueie won the Best Feature Animation Award in the summer edition of Hong Kong International Film Festival.

The festival's panel of jury commended Noori-Oskoueie's courage in combining innovative artistic techniques to accomplish an engaging narrative of a multi-layered story while wisely utilizing music and sound, Mehr News Agency reported.



Set in a war-torn country, the 76-minute animation narrates the story of a female writer and teacher, Sareh, who has to accompany two of her students on a life changing mission and find their fathers.

"The animation is the suppressed

scream of innocent children whose beautiful childish world is brutally destroyed as they enter the dirty world of adults," the director said about his film.

The Hong Kong film festival was held from June 28 to July 3, 2017.

'Release from Heaven' has also been nominated for Best Animation Award at SICAF film festival in South Korea.

The animation had its market premiere on May 22 as the opening film of

Animation Day in Cannes film festival.

The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society (HKIFFS) is a charitable, non-profit and non-governmental organization dedicated to the discovery and promotion of creativity in the art and culture of film.

## » Weather

 36 18 Arak	 33 27 Astara	 36 22 Birjand	 40 18 Qazvin	 38 24 Mashhad	 39 <sup>^</sup> v26 Tehran	 33 20 Kabul	 19 8 Minsk	 19 7 Stockholm	 40 24 Tashkent	 30 21 Tripoli
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