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General Soleimani vows revenge against ISIS

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Quds Force chief, Major General Qasem Soleimani, said Thursday that Iranian forces will not rest until they have taken out every last terrorist from the face of the Muslim world.

The promise came after ISIS takfiri terrorists beheaded an Iranian military adviser in Syria, two days after capturing him near the Iraqi border.

Mohsen Hojaji, a member of the Iranian advisory support team in Syria, was captured by terrorists on Monday near the Tanf border crossing in south-east Syria.

Daesh released a photo of Hojaji before his execution. The act prompt-

ed widespread condemnation of the terrorist group as well as admiration of the soldiers who are fighting against it.

General Soleimani said the "horrific, inhumane crime" came in the wake of successive blows dealt on several fronts to Takfiri-Wahhabi terrorist groups, which are linked to the world's imperialist power.

"The atrocity does not fall within any Islamic, or even humanitarian, principle or law," he regretted.

Such acts would further strengthen the Iranian servicemen's resolve in pursuit of their cause "to purge every inch of the Muslim territories of their evil presence", the general noted. **->2**

China pledges neutrality, unless U.S. strikes North Korea first

Doubling down on his war of words, the U.S. President Donald Trump warned Kim Jong-un's government on Thursday to "get their act together" or face extraordinary "trouble", and suggested his earlier threat to unleash "fire and fury" on North Korea was too mild.

"Maybe that statement wasn't tough enough," Trump said, in the latest U.S. salvo in an escalating exchange of threats between the nuclear-armed nations.

A day after North Korea laid out plans to strike near Guam with unsettling specificity, there was no observ-

able march toward combat, despite the angry rhetoric from both sides. U.S. officials said there was no major movement of U.S. military assets to the region, nor were there signs Pyongyang was actively preparing for war.

Trump declined to say whether the U.S. is considering a pre-emptive military strike as he spoke to reporters before a briefing with his top national security advisers at his New Jersey golf resort.

The president insisted the North had been "getting away with a tragedy that can't be allowed". **->13**

Embassy says nothing can harm Iran-Tajikistan ties

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's embassy in Dushanbe issued a statement on Wednesday dismissing anti-Iran claims in a documentary aired by Tajikistan's state television, saying the strong affinity between Iran and Tajikistan cannot be harmed.

"There is no doubt that producers of this documentary will not succeed in causing harm to cultural and friendly relations between the Iranian and Tajik people," the statement read.

The televised program, which was aired on Tuesday, accused Iran of involvement in Tajikistan's 1992-97 civil war and murder of a series of Tajik political figures.

The statement said, "The Tajik people will not forget Iran's role in guaranteeing peace in Tajikistan and hosting talks among the warring sides to end civil war in Tajikistan in 90s."

Iran's actions in helping Tajikistan build infrastructures have no meaning but helping peace and security in Tajikistan, the statement added.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's performance in fighting terrorism is clear for the whole world like sunshine," the statement noted.

The statement also said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's embassy [in Dushanbe] believes that divisive actions are not within the framework the two nations' interests and the acts are being taken by those who cannot tolerate brotherly relations between Iran and Tajikistan."

Iran rises oil output in July: OPEC

ECONOMY TEHRAN — According to OPEC's latest monthly report published on August 10, oil production in Iran stood at 3.824 million barrels per day (bpd) in July, an increase of 7,000 bpd from 3.817 million bpd in June, based on secondary sources.

The OPEC's report also announced Iran's oil output based on direct communication. It said the country's oil production in July

reached 3.9 million bpd, a 20,000 bpd decline from 3.88 million bpd in June.

Meanwhile, the report put the country's heavy oil price at \$46.01 in July, an increase of \$1.39 or 3.1 percent from \$44.62 in June.

Iranian crude oil exports rose by 45,000 bpd in July compared to the preceding month, Shana news agency reported on August 1, citing a report by Oil Ministry.

The report did not reveal the exact vol-

ume of exports but said "The country sent over 2.2 million bpd of crude oil to European and Asian buyers in July."

Shipments to the Asian buyers including China, South Korea, India and Japan stood at 1.3 million bpd, it added.

In its Annual Statistical Bulletin report released in early July, OPEC said Iran's oil exports in 2016 reached 1.921 million bpd, a 77.6 percent rise compared to 2015.

Violating nuclear deal will be costly, Iran warns

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araçchi warned on Friday that a violation of the international nuclear agreement will be high, however Iran is ready for any scenario.

The remarks by the senior diplomat come as President Donald Trump has assigned a White House team to find a pretext to exit the U.S. from the nuclear deal, [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action].

"The JCPOA has strong status at international level and is supported by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the European Union and the international community," Araçchi said during a speech at Sasakawa Peace Foundation in Tokyo, Japan.

He also said that the U.S. action in imposing new sanctions on Iran for its missile pro-

gram is "unacceptable".

Iran's missile program is only intended for "defensive" and "preventive" objectives, he explained.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia - finalized the text of the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015. The deal went into effect in January 2016.

Last month, the two houses of the U.S. Congress ratified sanctions against Iran. The sanctions were mainly targeted at Iran's missile capability.

The U.S. Treasury Department also imposed sanctions on six Iran-based satellite companies on July 28 after Iran launched Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier rocket into space a day earlier.

'Iran one of safest countries in West Asia'

Araçchi also said Iran is one the safest and most stable countries in the volatile Middle East, noting the Iranian people are the source of the country's power and capability.

He added that terrorism is the biggest challenge to the region which poses threats against the whole world.

And an international coalition is required to counter terrorism, he said.

Araçchi also met with Taro Kono, the Japanese foreign minister, on Thursday. During the meeting, Araçchi, who once served as Iran's ambassador to Tokyo, said that the two countries should expand economic relations given the post-JCPOA atmosphere.

For his part, Kono said it is Japan's policy to expand comprehensive relations with Iran.

China protests U.S. ship near South China Sea island

China has voiced discontent with the United States after an American warship sailed near an artificial island in the disputed South China Sea.

The USS John S McCain sailed within six nautical miles of Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands on Thursday as part of a "freedom of navigation" operation, which prompted the Chinese navy to warn off the U.S. destroyer.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said on Friday the operation had violated Chinese and international law, "seriously" impairing the country's sovereignty and security as well as "endangering lives".

"China is strongly dissatisfied with this," Geng said in a statement, adding Beijing would lodge an official protest with Washington.

Nicole Schwegman, spokeswoman for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said the U.S. military forces operate in the Asia Pacific region on a daily basis.

"All operations are conducted in accordance with international law and demonstrate that the United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows," she said.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a U.S. official told AFP news agency a Chinese frigate sent radio warnings at least 10 times to the USS McCain.

"They called and said 'please turn around, you are in our waters,'" the official said. "We told them we are a U.S. [ship] conducting routine operations in international waters." The official said the interactions were all "safe and professional", with the operation lasting about six hours from start to finish.

Thursday's freedom of navigation operation was the third of its kind carried out by the U.S. since President Donald Trump took office in January.

The operation comes four days after the U.S., Australia, and Japan denounced China's island-building and militarization of the South China Sea on the sidelines of a security forum of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Philippine capital, Manila.

China claims nearly all of the sea, through which \$5 trillion in annual shipping trade passes and which is believed to sit atop vast oil and gas deposits.

(Source: agencies)



Kayak competition held at Azadi Stadium

women's kayak competition was held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium Lake on Thursday.

Flatwater kayaking is a sport that involves speed, strength and endurance in which athletes compete head to head on calm bodies of water. Further, flatwater racing boats are extremely narrow and require extensive balance and stability training.

Flatwater kayaking events are either 200, 500 or 1,000 meters, and athletes can compete individually (K1), in teams of two (K2), and in teams of four (K4).

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Russia's Rostec plans to test helicopter in Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Russia's Rostec plans to test a helicopter in Iran's hottest regions, with plus 50 degree Celsius temperatures, IRNA reported on Thursday.

IRNA said the company intends to test Ka-226 twin-engine Russian utility helicopter.

The Russian Helicopters Company (part of Rostec State Corporation) also reported on Tuesday that it, together with the Iran Helicopters Support and Renewal Company (IHSRC), will test the light utility helicopter Ka-226T for its usability at extremely high temperatures.



Two Iranian journalists charged with spying for Mossad

POLITICS TEHRAN — Two editors of Iran's Ammariyon news and analytical portal have been charged with cooperation with Israel's Mossad spy agency and arrested, a member of the Majlis said in a tweet on Friday.

Mahmoud Sadeghi said that during his meeting with officials related to the investigation of Telegram admins, he had been informed that two editors of the website had been arrested and charged with cooperation with Mossad.

The names of the arrested journalists have not been revealed.



French envoy to U.S. backs Iran-Renault deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — The French ambassador to the United States has voiced support for the \$780 million contract between Iran and the French carmaker Renault.

Tweeting on Wednesday, Gérard Araud said the deal is legal and in line with the Iran-P5+1 nuclear deal.

Araud has repeatedly supported the landmark nuclear deal, aka the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in recent weeks.

According to the Iran-Renault deal, 300,000 cars will be built in a five-year term, 30 percent of which will be exported.



Iranian MPs to vote on anti-U.S. bill on Sunday

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian lawmakers are set to vote on a motion which incorporates a host of retaliatory measures in the face of U.S. "acts of terror" and "adventurism" in the Middle East, a senior lawmaker said on Thursday.

"The bill, which was passed by the (Majlis) National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Wednesday will be put on the Majlis agenda" on Sunday, the committee spokesman Hossein Naqavi Hosseini said, Fars reported.

Naqavi Hosseini said that the bill will take into consideration the aspects of U.S. hostile measures in the region and their behavior in different areas such as acts of terrorism and human rights violations which will be put under close monitoring.

Zarif: Trump always wanted to kill nuclear deal

By Ali Kushki

TEHRAN — On Friday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif responded to Donald Trump's claim that Iran was not living up to the spirit of the nuclear deal, saying the U.S. president "always wanted to kill" the agreement.

"POTUS always wanted to kill JCPOA. To avoid isolation, he's trying to blame it on Iran. Bad faith on top of US violating the letter & spirit," Zarif tweeted.

The pent-up Trump repeated his claim on Thursday that Iran is not "living up to the spirit" of the international nuclear accord which he called a "horrible agreement."

"I don't think they're living up to the spirit of the agreement," Trump told reporters at his golf retreat in New Jersey, where he is on a 17-day working vacation. "I personally don't think they're in compliance. But we have time, and we're going to see."

"I think you'll see some very strong things taking place if they don't get themselves in compliance," he said.

Formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the deal was signed in July 2015 between Iran, the United States, Russia, China and three European powers. It gave Iran relief from all nuclear-related sanctions in exchange for rolling back its nuclear activities.

The deal went into effect in January 2016.

Since his campaign trail and eight months into his tenure, Trump has made a cascade of hostile, disquieting remarks about the nuclear deal, branding it "one of the worst deals ever made by any country in history."

Yet, Trump has not abandoned the JCPOA. In July, which marked the second anniversary of the UN-endorsed accord, Trump certified reluctantly for the second



time that Tehran was in compliance. By U.S. law, the administration is required to certify Iran's compliance every 90 days. Otherwise, Congress is given a 60-day period during which it can re-impose sanctions or pull out of the deal altogether.

Speculations are around that the erratic head of the Oval Office may refuse to certify Iran's compliance in October.

Discussing what he would declare after the next 180-day cycle, Trump told The Wall Street Journal two weeks ago: "I think they'll be noncompliant."

Also, days after the July certification, Trump was quoted as having commissioned a group of trustworthy White House staffers to make the potential case for withholding certification of Iran in October.

Already in April, the administration said it was launching an inter-agency re-

view of whether the removal of sanctions against Iran was in Washington's national security interests.

Trump's decertification bid is highly controversial, and is not likely to persuade other signatories to the deal to find Tehran in default.

Under the deal, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN nuclear watchdog, is responsible for monitoring and verifying Iran's compliance. Since the implementation of the deal the international body has confirmed Iran's compliance for six times.

However, Tehran has accused the U.S. of violating the spirit and letter of the deal, saying Washington is making efforts to prevent the country from reaping benefits from the sanctions ease.

In an interview with CNN's Fareed Zakaria

in July, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that "the United States has failed to implement its part of the bargain," citing the fact that Trump had "used his presence in Hamburg during the G20 meeting in order to dissuade leaders from other countries to engage in business with Iran."

Paragraph 26 of the nuclear deal demands the U.S. to make best efforts in good faith to sustain it and to prevent interference with the realization of the full benefit by Iran of the sanctions lifting.

Richard Nephew, who coordinated sanctions policy at the State Department under Barack Obama, said that Iran has a case.

"If he truly did wander around the G20 and said, 'Don't do business with Iran, I think that's a pretty reasonable argument for the Iranians to make,' Fox quoted Nephew as saying.

"It's easily a violation of the spirit of the deal," he added. "Based on a plain-text reading of the [nuclear deal], I would characterize that to be a breach of our obligation."

But U.S. leaders have frequently charged that Tehran breaks the "spirit" of the agreement by continuing to test-launch ballistic missiles and rockets.

Washington has imposed several rounds of sanctions over the missile and rocket launches. Iran maintains those launches are for self-defense and do not violate the deal.

"The letter and the spirit of the agreement is very clear that missiles are not part of the letter or the spirit of the agreement," Zarif said in an interview with the United States Institute of Peace in July.

UN Security Council resolution 2231, which endorses the deal, calls upon Iran "not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology."

Salehi kept as Iran nuclear chief

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN — In a decree on Thursday, President Hassan Rouhani kept Ali Akbar Salehi as nuclear chief in his new cabinet.

"In compliance with Article 124 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and in view of commitment, scientific background, successful administrative management, and precious efforts in the nuclear agreement, I appoint you (Salehi) as vice president and head of the Atomic Energy Organization," the decree said.

Salehi has been in the post since 2013 after serving as foreign minister under the Ahmadinejad administration.

Born in Karbala in 1949, the Iraqi city holy to Shiite Muslims, he grew up speaking Arabic. When he was 9, his family moved to Iran. Salehi also speaks English fluently.

With his doctorate in nuclear physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, awarded in the 1970s, Salehi has played key roles in clarifying the true nature of Iran's nuclear program.

In 1997, he became the international face of Tehran's nuclear program when he was appointed ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations' nuclear watchdog.

In that post he had to defend Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology against hostile countries that claimed Tehran was seeking nuclear weapons.

As nuclear envoy, Salehi earned respect among diplomats, many of whom harbored suspicions about Iran's true nuclear aims, but valued his reasonable approach and professionalism.

Salehi has also served as an under-secretary general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a regional grouping where his fluent Arabic was an asset.

Salehi was uniquely consequential in 2015 as he and American Ernest Moniz joined the Geneva Iran and P5+1 nuclear talks to discuss more about technical aspects of Iran's nuclear program.

President Hassan Rouhani awarded the "Medal of Merit" to Salehi for the signature achievement in 2016.

"I will take the full responsibility for technical aspects of the nuclear deal," Salehi has said repeatedly in response to opponents of the deal in Iran.

In a recent speech, Salehi talked of a "Trumpist bottleneck" ahead, saying it is hardly predictable to say what happens to the nuclear deal under the Trump administration.

General Soleimani vows revenge against ISIS

1 -> He also said Iran is proud of such martyrs who sacrifice their lives in the path of fighting oppression, comparing them to Imam Hussain (AS), the third Shiite Imam who was beheaded in the Battle of Karbala on October 10, 680 by the Yazid army.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad

Zarif, also in a post on his Instagram, said Hojaji and other martyrs have sacrificed their lives to defend innocent Muslims and fight the atrocities committed by takfiri terrorists and their supporters.

In a separate note, the Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed his condolences to the bereaved family of the slain

soldier and the Iranian nation.

In his message, Bahram Qassem said the outcome of Iranian servicemen's bravery in fighting Daesh is stability, security and peace in Iran's borders as well as dignity and empowerment for the region's Muslims.

"Now, it's our duty to once again shout

loudly at these merchants of death and terror and promoters of extremism and terrorism, and unveil their true, ugly faces before the whole world," he said.

Since takfiri terrorists emerged in Iraq and Syria, Iran has been providing advisory assistance to the two countries' armies in their fight against the terrorists.



**ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER
GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN**

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to **purchase 30,000 M/TS 10 PCT M/L CRUDE DEGUMMED SOYBEAN OIL**, through single stage international tender

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from Saturday 12/8/ 2017 until Monday 28/8/ 2017

from the secretary of tenders committee located on the 4th floor No 12, Jihad Square, Tehran, Iran).along with an official letter of introduction.

The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest on Tuesday 3/10/2017 at 15:00 (during working hours) to the secretary of tenders committee located on the 4th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Tuesday 3/10/2017 at 15:30 with the presence of bidder's representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, No 12, Jihad Square, Tehran, Iran).

Bid bond: the bid bond worth **EUR 398,354** or its equivalent in IRR equal to 15,317,500,000

For more information, you may refer to our website www.gtc-portal.com or contact us by phone no.**00982188957477** (foreign trade department) .



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Bid bond: the bid bond worth **EUR 379,302** or its equivalent in IRR equal to 14,584,900,000

For more information, you may refer to our website www.gtc-portal.com or contact us by phone no.**00982188957477** (foreign trade department) .

UN finally breaks silence on Saudi razing of Shia town of Awamiyah

The United Nations has reacted to media reports about a deadly and destructive House of Saud regime's military crackdown against an eastern Shia town, urging the regime in Riyadh to respect human rights.

Speaking at a press conference in New York, Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesman for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, said the world body could not independently verify the reports coming out of Awamiyah, but that all Riyadh's actions should be in line with its commitments to human rights.

The UN wants the Saudi regime to take human rights and international regulations into consideration before taking any action, the official was quoted as saying by the London-based New Arab media outlet.

Awamiyah is located in the Qatif region of Saudi Arabia's Shia-populated Eastern Province. The small town of 30,000 that has, since 2011, been the center of anti-regime rallies, with the protesters calling for end to the kingdom's discriminatory policies against the Shia minority.

The region has witnessed sporadic deaths of Saudi forces at the hands of unknown gunmen. Riyadh blames the Shia population for such assaults.

Since May, Riyadh has imposed a siege on Awamiyah in what it calls a "security campaign" against the gunmen there, launching almost daily attacks against the town, destroying residential areas and setting fire to buildings.

The al-Musawara neighborhood, Awamiyah's old quarter, has been the hardest hit area in the crackdown.

The regime has subjected the neighborhood to a so-called renovation pro-



ject, which has featured wholesale destruction of age-old structures, rampant raids against various targets, and reported threats against Shia residents to either leave or face potentially deadly swoops.

UN experts in April voiced concerns over the demolition of the 400-year-old neighborhood, saying the move threatens Awamiyah's cultural heritage.

Dujarric said last week that the UN "could not" enter conflict zones in the kingdom to examine the situation on the ground for itself.

His latest comments came after Reu-

ters released footage of destruction in Awamiyah, which has been almost razed to the ground.

Reuters reported that a number of journalists had been allowed into the city as the first outside witnesses of the damage caused by the Saudi military operation there.

On the lamp posts and walls, portraits of the victims, including a 16 one, could be seen, with graffiti along one rubble-strewn street reading, "The land which is mixed with the blood of martyrs gets sufficiently watered by God's light to

defeat the mighty."

New videos circulating on social media on Wednesday showed Saudi regime forces celebrating by linking arms and dancing in a circle, with their automatic weapons raised in the air, while bulldozers continued to destroy more buildings in the town.

Locals, according to the report, said nine civilians, including a three-year-old boy, had been killed in the violence over the past week and more than 20,000 had fled or been evacuated from the conflict zone. (Source: Press TV)

India in talks with Myanmar, Bangladesh to deport 40,000 Rohingya

India is in talks with Bangladesh and Myanmar about its plan to deport around 40,000 Rohingya Muslims it says are living in the country illegally, a government spokesman said on Friday, with state governments told to form task forces for the purpose.

Tens of thousands of Rohingya have fled persecution in Buddhist-majority Myanmar to neighboring Bangladesh since the early 1990s, with some of them then crossing over a porous border into Hindu-majority India.

New Delhi says only around 14,000 of the Rohingya living in India are registered with the United Nations refugee agency, making the rest illegal and liable to be sent back. India is not a signatory to UN conventions on refugees and no national law covers it.

"These things are being discussed at diplomatic level with both Bangladesh and Myanmar," Interior Ministry spokesman K.S. Dhatwalia said.

"More clarity will emerge at an appropriate time."

Junior Interior Minister Kiren Rijju told parliament on Wednesday the federal government had directed state governments to "constitute task forces at district levels to identify and deport the illegally staying foreign nationals".

Rijju was in Myanmar recently to attend an event, although it was not clear if he discussed the Rohingya issue.

Officials in Myanmar could not be contacted immediately for comment.

The Indian office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said it was "trying to find the facts" about New Delhi's plans to deport them.

Rohingya are generally reviled in India, where its 1.3 billion people are fighting for resources and job opportunities. Nationalist, anti-Islamic sentiments have also fueled hatred towards them.

More than 75,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh

since Oct. 9 after an insurgent group called Harakah al-Yaqin attacked Myanmar border police posts, prompting a huge security crackdown in which troops have been accused of murder and rape of Rohingya civilians.

A senior government official in Bangladesh, which has complained of being burdened by the heavy flow of refugees, said New Delhi was helping it solve the crisis.

The Rohingya in India live mainly in Jammu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi in the north, Hyderabad in the south, and Rajasthan in the west.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jammu, the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, drew widespread condemnation in April when it threatened to launch an "identify and kill movement" if the government did not deport Rohingya settlers there. (Source: Reuters)

Venezuela's Maduro urges direct talks with Trump

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro has offered his hand to the United States President Donald Trump while expressing interest in direct talks after a new wave of U.S. sanctions imposed on the troubled Latin American nation.

In his first address to the new, all-powerful Constituent Assembly on Thursday, Maduro instructed Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza to approach the United States and arrange a telephone conversation with Trump before next month's United Nations General Assembly.

Maduro said he had also given orders, "if it can happen", for a face-to-face meeting to be organized with Trump when heads of state and government from around the world gather in New York on September 20.

"If he's so interested in Venezuela, here I am," the socialist president said. "Mr. Donald Trump, here is my hand."

The remarks come a day after the Trump administration slapped new sanctions on eight of Venezuela's politicians and security figures.

The sanctions will freeze the U.S. assets of the officials targeted, ban them



from travel to the United States, and prohibit Americans from doing business with them.

These follow last month's U.S. sanctions on Venezuela over the election of a loyalist legislative super-body that has the power to rewrite the constitution, which Washington called "illegitimate" and in service of a "dictator".

Despite expressing his intent of wanting

a strong relationship with the United States on Thursday, Maduro used substantial parts of his three-hour-plus speech lambasting the "imperialist" U.S. for perceived actions against his government.

"We will never cede to foreign powers," he said.

Maduro earlier accused Trump of backing a failed attack on a military base that killed two people in Valencia a week ago.

On Thursday, Trump said he discussed Venezuela along with North Korea and Afghanistan in a security briefing with top national security aides and Vice President Mike Pence, who travels to neighboring Colombia on Sunday in a trip where discussions on how to pressure Maduro are expected to feature prominently.

"We had some very good meetings, some very good ideas, very good thoughts, and a lot of decisions were made," Trump said following the briefing, without providing details.

Maduro and his government have faced growing opposition from the U.S. and major Latin American nations over the controversial legislative super-body, which sparked months of deadly protests across the country.

Venezuela is suffering a severe economic downturn caused by low oil prices and government policies that have scared away private investment.

The country's bonds are one of the few ways the current government is able to raise money to support its collapsing economy. (Source: Al Jazeera)

U.S. alliance with Syria Kurds strengthens other armed groups: Turkey

The Turkish foreign minister has warned that the United States partnership with Kurdish militants in Syria's northern province of Raqqah will pave the way for "other terror organizations" in the region to strengthen their positions.

"Even if just for tactical reasons, the use of a terrorist organization, the YPG (People's Protection Units/Yekineyen Parastina Gel) in the Raqqah operation will lead to other terror organizations in the region gaining more ground," Mevlut Cavusoglu said in a Thursday interview with the Turkish daily *Turkiye*.

"The aim of the YPG is to make its territorial gains lasting through demographic

engineering under the cover of the fight against the Daesh (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/ISIL)," Cavusoglu said.

Ankara views the YPG as a terror organization linked to the homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê), which has long been fighting for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state.

Turkey has been on a collision course with the U.S. in Syria, with Ankara sharply criticizing Washington over its support for the YPG forces in the operation in Raqqah, which serves as the main ISIL bastion in the country.

Tensions between the two NATO (North

Atlantic Treaty Organization) powers have seen a rise in recent months after U.S.-backed YPG militants made a series of gains against ISIL at the Turkish doorstep, including the capture in May of the Tabqa town and the nearby dam from the terror group.

Cavusoglu further said Ankara has repeatedly told Washington that "fighting against one terror organization by allying with another terrorist group" is unwise and dangerous, especially for Turkey's security concerns.

"We have conveyed our sensitivities and expectations to the U.S. administration. The U.S. administration has made commitments to us on these. We will continue to monitor

the fulfillment of these commitments," Cavusoglu said.

"When the operation is concluded, the control and security of Raqqah should be handed to local Arab groups," he pointed out.

Turkey fears that the YPG will permanently hold parts of land in northern Syria after finishing with ISIL.

In May, U.S. President Donald Trump drew strong condemnation from Ankara by approving the dispatch of weapons to the YPG, which is part of the Washington-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, an alliance of Arab and Kurdish militia. (Source: Press TV)

Trump thanks Putin for expelling US diplomatic staff

The United States President Donald Trump has thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin for expelling more than 750 American diplomatic staff from Russia.

The comments were immediately criticized by current and former U.S. officials.

"I'm very thankful that he let go of a large number of people because now we have a smaller payroll," said Trump on Thursday, breaking nearly two weeks of silence on Putin's July 30 order cutting U.S. embassy and consulate staff by nearly two-thirds.

"There's no real reason for them to go back... We're going to save a lot of money."

The State Department had no immediate reaction to the comments Trump made to reporters while on vacation at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey.

Congressional committees and a special counsel are investigating the conclusions of U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia interfered in the 2016 election campaign by hacking and other methods to help Trump.

They are also looking into possible collusion between the campaign and Russian officials. Moscow has repeatedly denied meddling in the election and Trump denies any campaign collusion.

Putin, reacting to new sanctions imposed by the U.S. Congress and reluctantly signed into law by Trump, ordered Washington to cut 755 of its 1,200 embassy and consulate staff by September. Many of those affected likely will be local Russian staffers.



During his campaign and since becoming president, Trump has consistently called for better ties with Russia, declined to criticize Putin, and refused to unequivocally embrace the conclusions of the intelligence agencies.

Grotesque

Trump's remarks on Thursday were immediately denounced by current and former U.S. officials who have served both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Nicholas Burns, the State Department's third-ranking official under former president George W. Bush, called Trump's comments "grotesque".

The State Department was "horrified and rattled" by Trump's remarks, said a veteran U.S. diplomat who has served in Russia, speaking on condition of anonymity.

And Heather Conley, formerly a top State Department official dealing with European affairs, said the expulsions of hundreds of people from an important US embassy is extraordinary. (Source: Reuters)

Coach crash in China's northwest kills at least 36

A passenger coach crashed into the wall of an expressway tunnel in China's northwest, killing at least 36 people and injuring 13 others, official media reported on Friday.

The injured were sent to the hospital and rescue efforts were ongoing.

The accident occurred in Shaanxi province late on Thursday as the coach was on its way along the Xi'an-Hanzhong expressway to Luoyang, a city in central China, from Chengdu, the capital of the southwestern province of Sichuan, the Xinhua News Agency reported, citing the provincial police bureau.

Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun ordered a swift investigation into the accident, according to state broadcaster China Central Television.



Highway accidents are common in China because of high speeds, aggressive driving and a failure to leave adequate braking distance.

China does not release statistics on the total number of accidents each year, but the World Health Organization estimated in 2013 that around 250,000 people were killed on Chinese roads that year.

Beijing has vowed to clamp down on dangerous driving, but the rapid growth in car ownership and relatively lax checks on driving ability have made it difficult to curb the number of accidents, especially on rural roads.

Last month, 11 people died and nine were injured when a bus carrying 19 people collided with a lorry on a national highway in northern Hebei province.

Ten people were killed and 38 injured in March when a bus collided with a cement truck in the southwestern province of Yunnan.

At least 18 people were killed when a minibus plunged into a lake in the central city of Wuhan in December.

Last November, a pile-up on an expressway in the northern province of Shanxi killed 17 people and damaged 56 vehicles.

And in July last year, a coach crashed through a highway guard rail and plunged into a canal near the northern city of Tianjin, killing 26. (Source: agencies)

NEWS IN BRIEF



SMEs to receive \$7.87b of loans by Mar. 2018

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian deputy industry minister announced on Friday that 300 trillion rials (about \$7.87 billion) of banking facilities will be paid to domestic small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018), IRNA reported.

As Ali Yazdani said, the intended facilities will be granted to more than 10,000 inactive industrial firms, projects with 60 percent of completion, and 5,000 firms in need of renovation.



TEDPIX adds 313 points in a week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) gained 313 points to 81,579 in the week ended on Friday, Tasnim news agency reported.

Some 2.584 billion securities worth 7.834 trillion rials (about \$206.9 million) were traded through 182,000 deals in TSE.

The first market's index rose 236 points to 57,173 and second market's index added 596 points to 177,753, showing 0.414 percent growth and 0.34 percent fall, respectively, in the mentioned week.

Singapore economic growth accelerates in second quarter, beating forecasts

Singapore's economic growth accelerated in the second quarter, with its gross domestic product rising 2.9 percent on-year, beating a Reuters poll forecast for 2.6 percent growth.

Quarter-on-quarter, the economy expanded by 2.2 percent on a seasonally-adjusted annualized basis, compared with a Reuters poll forecast for just 0.5 percent growth.

Manufacturing was a key driver of the growth, rising 8.1 percent on-year in the quarter.

That was supported by the electronics and precision engineering sectors amid strong global demand for semiconductors and semiconductor-related equipment, according to a statement from Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Services sectors also expanded, with the finance and insurance sector growing 3.8 percent on-year, the business services sector up 1.8 percent on-year and the "other services industries" segment increasing 3.1 percent on-year, supported by education, health and entertainment.

The forecast-beating outcome came despite contractions in the biomedical manufacturing, construction and accommodation and food services sectors.

Singapore's MTI changed its GDP forecast range for the full year to 2 percent to 3 percent, from 1 percent to 3 percent.

Gareth Leather, senior Asia economist at Capital Economics, was generally positive on the figures.

"Today's revised estimate of Singapore's second quarter GDP suggests the economy is in better shape than previously thought," he said in a note on Friday. "Looking ahead, although rising interest rates will remain a drag on demand, the healthy outlook for exports means growth should remain relatively strong."

But while he was positive on the export outlook, he added that the rest of the economy was "less promising," as higher interest rates could pose problems for heavily indebted households.

Capital Economics forecasts economic growth of around 3.0 percent this year for the city-state. (Source: cnbc)

Iran-U.S. trade at \$77.2m in 6 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Trade between Iran and the U.S. stood at \$77.2 million during the first half of 2017, according to the latest report released by American Statistical Association (ASA).

The figure shows a decrease of 29 percent, the same report confirmed.

Iran-U.S. trade during the first six month of 2016 stood at more than \$109.2 million, it added.

During the first half of 2017, the U.S. exported \$41.3 million of goods to Iran, showing 42 percent drop in comparison with the same time span in 2016, when the figure was \$71.9 million.

The country's import from Iran was \$35.9 million in the first six months of 2017, witnessing four percent fall from \$37.3 million in the same period in 2016.

Iran-U.S. trade in 2016 stood at \$258 million, registering an 11-percent drop from \$292.3 million in 2015, according to ASA.

The value of exports from the U.S. to Iran in 2016 was \$172.1 million, decreasing 38 percent from



\$281.5 million in 2015.

The country's imports from Iran in 2016 stood at

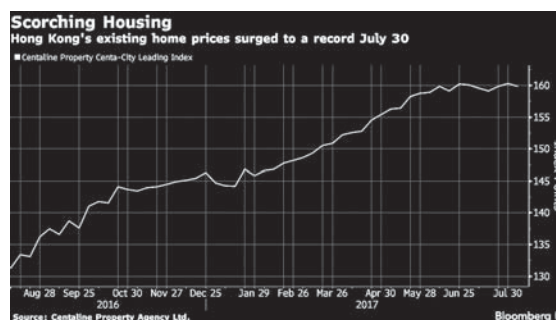
\$86 million showing an intense rise from \$10.8 million in 2015.

The world's most expensive housing market just got even pricier

The world's priciest housing market got even more expensive in the second quarter.

Hong Kong's housing affordability ratio, which measures the proportion of income spent on mortgages, worsened to about 67 percent for the quarter, the government said Friday, up from 56 percent in the year-earlier period.

The latest figures underscore the challenges that incoming Chief Executive Carrie Lam faces in taming home prices in a city where it now takes a household 18 years of median income to buy a home, according to data from Demographia.



Compared with the 1997 peak, overall flat prices in June were 94 percent higher, according to government data.

The number of residential transactions surged 43 percent to 18,892 in the second quarter, fueling rising prices. Centaline Property's Centa-City Leading Index of existing home prices surged to a record high 160.3 July 30. The index has climbed 11 percent this year, and has jumped more than 50 percent in the past five years.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Philippine Peso falls to fresh 11-year low

Philippine central bank Governor Nestor Espenilla said the peso will trade within "manageable levels" with a flexible exchange rate policy. The currency extended declines.

"We are comfortable that economic fundamentals are alright and that the exchange rate will remain within manageable levels," Espenilla said in an interview with Bloomberg Television's

Haidi Lun on Friday. "We let the exchange rate be determined by market conditions."

The peso, falling to an 11-year low as it was dragged by regional weakness on concerns over North Korea's nuclear threats, extended declines and fell as much as 0.6 percent to 51.08 per dollar after the governor's comments.

Espenilla, who began his term as central bank chief last month, inherited an economy that's facing its first current account deficit in 15 years and rising inflation pressure. The former deputy governor held monetary policy settings steady in his first rate decision on Thursday while raising inflation forecast to 3.2 percent this year and next from earlier estimates of 3.1 per-

cent and 3 percent, respectively.

The peso has lost 2.6 percent so far in the year, making it the worst performer among Asia's 12 most-actively traded currencies. Still, the exchange rate's movement "has been modest" and the effect of the currency's weakness on consumer-price gains remains "muted," Espenilla said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Britain shouldn't 'go up against' U.S. in trade talks

The U.S. may not be the best country for Britain to start its post-Brexit trade agreements with, according to Adam Marshall, director general of the British Chambers of Commerce.

"I wouldn't want to go up against them, early on, when I'm just getting on my feet again as a country going into free trade agreements," Marshall said in an interview on Bloomberg Television on Friday. "The U.S. trade representative is one of the best-oiled machines in the world when it comes to negotiating trade deals."

While the U.K. can't formally enter new trade agreements until it quits the European Union in March 2019, British Trade Secretary Liam Fox has been laying the groundwork for an accord. He visited Washington last month, and President Donald Trump said on Twitter that the countries are working on a potentially "big and exciting deal" that will make



their relationship "even better" after Brexit.

The trip wasn't so triumphantly received in the

U.K., where it was bogged down by a debate over whether a new trade deal would see Britain accept U.S. hygiene rules that allow chicken to be washed in chlorine.

Economists and trade specialists have warned that any accord will be difficult to deliver because U.S. negotiators have more experience and could bulldoze the U.K. on issues such as agriculture and financial regulation. Many of the issues that surfaced in trade negotiations between Europe and the U.S. -- which have been on hold for months -- could also arise in the talks over a U.K.-U.S. deal.

"The U.K. is just getting back into doing trade deals on its own," Marshall said. "There are lots of things you could do between the U.K. and the U.S. that would let trade flow more freely, but they're smaller than a free trade deal. Let's start there first."

(Source: cnbc)



**ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER
GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN**

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to **purchase 200 M/TS 10 PCT M/L UNSALTED LACTIC BUTTER**, through single stage international tender

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from Saturday 12/8/ 2017 until Monday 28/8/ 2017

from the secretary of tenders committee located on the 4th floor No 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran).along with an official letter of introduction.

The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest on Tuesday 3/10/2017 at 13:00 (during working hours) to the secretary of tenders committee located on the 4th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Tuesday 3/10/2017 at 13:30 with the presence of bidder's representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, No 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran).

Bid bond: the bid bond worth **EUR 63,976** or its equivalent in IRR equal to 2,460,000,000

For more information, you may refer to our website www.gtc-portal.com or contact us by phone no.**00982188957477**(foreign trade department) .



**ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER
GOVERNMENT TRADING CORPORATION OF IRAN**

The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (hereinafter referred to as GTC), affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, intends to **purchase 60,000 M/TS 10 PCT M/L ROW SUGAR**, through single stage international tender

All of qualified companies and suppliers that are interested to bid above tender are invited to receive tender documents from Saturday 12/8/ 2017 until Monday 28/8/ 2017

from the secretary of tenders committee located on the 4th floor No 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran).along with an official letter of introduction.

The bid participants are required to submit their stamped and sealed envelopes containing their offers latest on Tuesday 3/10/2017 at 15:00 (during working hours) to the secretary of tenders committee located on the 4th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Tuesday 3/10/2017 at 15:45 with the presence of bidder's representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, No 12, Jahad Square, Tehran, Iran).

Bid bond: the bid bond worth **EUR 481,490** or its equivalent in equal to IRR 18,514,253,000

For more information, you may refer to our website www.gtc-portal.com or contact us by phone no.**00982188957477**(foreign trade department) .

Oil slides toward \$48 as skepticism over OPEC-led cuts returns

Oil investors are back to being skeptical over whether OPEC-led production cuts are draining a global glut fast enough, keeping prices below \$49 a barrel and driving crude toward a second weekly loss.

Futures declined as much as 1.1 percent in New York. Neither a pledge by the two biggest producers of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to strengthen their commitment to curbs, or shrinking U.S. crude stockpiles is managing to lift prices. The International Energy Agency cut estimates for the amount of crude needed from OPEC this year and next after lowering its historical assessments of consumption in nations including China and India.

While U.S. crude inventories dropped to the lowest level since October, gasoline stockpiles last week expanded for the first time since early June, indicating that consumption boosted by the summer driving season may be waning. OPEC on Thursday raised demand estimates for its crude through 2018, but higher Libyan output is undermining its plan to shrink a global glut.

"The power of OPEC rhetoric is diminishing," said Michael McCarthy, a chief strategist at CMC Markets in Sydney. "The underlying demand picture has slightly improved, but it's a glacial improvement for the oil market."

West Texas Intermediate for September delivery lost as much as 52 cents to \$48.07 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, and was at \$48.11 at 9:03 a.m. in London. Total volume traded was about 45 percent above the 100-day average. Prices are down 3 percent this week.

Brent for October settlement fell as much as 52 cents,



or 1 percent, to \$51.38 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange. Prices on Thursday dropped 80 cents, or 1.5 percent, to \$51.90. The global benchmark is down 1.9 percent this week and traded at a premium of \$3.18 to October WTI.

The IEA cut projections for the amount of crude re-

quired from OPEC this year and next by about 400,000 barrels a day, according to a monthly report Friday. About 32.6 million barrels a day will be needed from the group this year, less than the 32.84 million it pumped in July.

(Source: Bloomberg)

IEA cuts estimates for crude needed from OPEC this year and next

The International Energy Agency cut estimates for the amount of crude needed from OPEC this year and in 2018, after lowering its historical assessments of consumption in emerging nations including China and India.

World oil markets are re-balancing as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies implement production cuts, the IEA said in its monthly report. Still, inventories remain high and the volume of crude needed from OPEC is less than previously thought as consumption in some developing nations had been overestimated, it said.

Oil prices have lost about 9 percent in London this year on concern that supply curbs by OPEC and partners including Russia aren't aggressive enough to clear a global surplus.

The agency cut projections for the amount of crude required from OPEC this year and next by about 400,000 barrels a day. About 32.6 million barrels a day will be needed from the group this year, less than the 32.84 million it pumped in July.

There are also growing doubts that all the countries involved in the accord to reduce supply are fully committed, the IEA said.

OPEC's rate of compliance with the cutbacks slipped last month to 75 percent, the lowest since the accord started in January. Iraq's implementation was just 34 percent, Venezuela's 28 percent and the U.A.E.'s 53 percent. Adherence among the non-members coordinating with OPEC was at 67 percent.

Despite the reduction in total demand estimates, the rate of growth for this year is stronger than previously



thought, at 1.5 million barrels a day.

"Producers should find encouragement from demand, which is growing year-on-year more strongly than first thought," the IEA said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Saudi, Iraq vow stronger commitment to cut oil output

OPEC's top two producers agreed on Thursday to strengthen their commitment to production cuts, as the oil cartel reported a collective increase in output last month in a setback for its deal to pump less.

The pledge from Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the first and second largest OPEC producers, came after their oil ministers met in the Red Sea city of Jeddah.

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih and his Iraqi counterpart Jabbar al-Luaybi also vowed to ensure coordination of their nations' oil policies, according to the Saudi Press Agency, as the Arab neighbors seek to up-



grade strategic ties.

OPEC states and other oil producers agreed in November to cut output until March 2018, in its long-haul gambit to erode a world oil glut and boost prices.

But despite the commitment, crude production by OPEC members saw an uptick in July, including

by Saudi Arabia which had championed efforts by the cartel and allied independent producers to extend an output freeze.

Output from the 14 cartel members hit 32.87 million barrels per day (mbd) last month, OPEC said in its monthly report on the oil market, up from 32.69 mbd in June.

The inability of some members to cut output has raised doubts about OPEC's capacity to enforce the November deal.

Saudi Arabia and Iraq have suffered huge economic pain because of sliding oil prices.

(Source: channelnewsasia.com)

China prepares for a natural gas import boom

By Irina Slav for

Last month, the International Energy Agency said that China will account for 40 percent of the global annual growth in natural gas demand over the next five years. Imports of the bridge fuel in Asia's second-largest economy are running at record rates as Beijing pushes on with its cleaner energy agenda that should see the country satisfy 10 percent of its energy needs with gas in 2020, from 5.9 percent in 2015. This shift to gas is now creating new opportunities for independent energy companies at the expense of state-owned giants.



Energy independents are building a string of LNG import facilities, Bloomberg reported earlier this week, stimulated by the government's efforts to promote gas and encourage competition, and by the attractive prices on the spot market. Having your own import and distribution infrastructure is essential for these independents, according to one Sanford C. Bernstein analyst, if they want to take full advantage of current market prices.

What the gas independents are doing is follow in the footsteps of the independent oil refiners, the teapots. In fact, some of them are teapots. There are already three LNG import terminals, developed by Jovo Energy, Guanghui Energy, and ENN Group—one of China's biggest

energy independents. Three more terminals are either being planned or are already under construction. According to ENN Group, this new capacity will boost energy consumption in China as it will bring down gas prices, and consequently, the price of electricity.

The three state energy majors own and operate 12 gas import facilities, but they buy their gas under long-term contracts. Independents are nimble and very open to the spot market, taking full advantage of the current global LNG glut that has brought prices considerably down. Spot market costs, according to analysts, could be as much as 50 percent lower than the average costs under term contracts used by state companies.

The energy independents are likely to continue enjoying strong support from the government: the country's National Development and Reform Commission said last month that China's LNG import capacity could well reach 100 million tons by 2025, from 43.8 million tons in 2015. Independents will likely account for a solid portion of the increase.

Earlier this year, a senior PetroChina official said that gas demand in China could jump by 30 billion cubic meters this year thanks to the new government policies for the energy sector. This would constitute a 14.6-percent annual increase from last year's 205.8 billion cu m in apparent consumption and an all-time high.

LNG demand in particular could rise by 5-6 million tons annually over the medium term, according to Energy Aspects analyst Michal Meidan. Already, in the first six months of this year LNG imports surged by 38.3 percent on an annual basis, to 15.89 million tons.

Most of the LNG China imported in the first half of the year came from the world's top two exporters, Qatar and Australia, but this rush to expand the import capacity is definitely good news for other exporters, notably the U.S. Thanks to the abundance of gas at home, U.S. LNG can be sold at competitive prices and win its producers a foothold in the country that's shaping up to become a top consumer of the fuel in the future.

(Source: oilprice.com)

India's refiners bet big on petrochemicals as industry reshapes

NEW DELHI (Reuters) — India's state oil refiners - long focused on churning out transport and cooking fuels - are planning a \$35 billion push into petrochemicals to meet an expected surge in demand for goods ranging from plastics to paints and adhesives.

The drive comes as the government seeks to promote durable, cheaper materials in industries such as farming and food packaging, while refiners eye long-term threats to their business from renewable energy and a shift to electric vehicles.

India's per capita consumption of synthetic polymers, for instance, used to make various grades of plastics, is just 10 kg (22 lbs) a year, compared with a global average of about 32 kg.

"India is one of the fastest growing economies globally, but our petrochemical use is one-fourth the world average. We import half of our petchem consumption," said S. Mitra, executive member at trade body, the Chemical and Petrochemical Manufacturing Association.

He estimated demand would jump from 30 million tons to 40 million tons in the three years to 2019/20, growing the country's petrochemicals market to around \$65-\$70 billion.

India's Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan said in July the government wants to set up petrochemical clusters in the eastern, western and southern regions around refineries.

The government is still formulating a national policy for petrochemicals after a white paper that proposed a fund to boost investment and encouraging the use of plastics in areas like packaging and farming wasn't taken forward.

However, India's big three state refiners, Indian Oil Corp (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL), already plan to spend about \$35 billion to boost their petrochemicals business, according to interviews with senior company executives.

As part of efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, India's government has proposed a 15-year roadmap for rolling out electric vehicles, and has been aggressively auctioning solar power generation as part of a push to triple renewable power generation capacity by 2022.

"Large portions of the future refineries should be in petrochemicals to spread the risk of a reduction in diesel consumption," said R Ramachandran, head of refineries at Bharat Petroleum Corp.

Investment push

BPCL and HPCL will each spend about \$15 billion over five years to raise the industry's share of their total revenue to 10 percent, executives from both the companies said.

Top refiner IOCL will invest 300 million rupees (\$4.7 billion) over the next 5-7 years, top executives said, boosting revenue from petrochemicals from a quarter to a third of total revenue.

Together, the three firms plan to invest 2.7 trillion rupees (\$42.3 billion) to build the world's biggest crude refinery with capacity of 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) on the country's west coast, which will be linked to a petrochemical plant.

INVITATION FOR SUBMISSION OF PREQUALIFICATION BIDS

TENDER NO. 95/1006
(PROJECT TYPE EPCF)

First announcement

On the basis of Clause (C) defined in Item 12 of the Operational Regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) Tendering Laws and Regulations circulars 100/50252 dated 23/08/09 and 100/135946 dated 12/11/2006 issued by the offices of Country Planning and Budget Organization, the Khuzestan Water and Wastewater Company proposes to tender the project below on an EPCF (Engineering, Procurement, Construction and Installation and Finance) basis to Bidders with the required qualifications and with sufficiently open capacity as follows:

Tender No.	Title of Tender	Specialization Required (Having at Least One of the Requirements Below)	Location of Document Sales	Duration for Procurement of Bidding Documents	Date and Place for Opening of Tenders
95/1006	The Construction of the Primary Module for Urban Wastewater Treatment Plants in the Cities of Shosh, Andimeshk, Izeh, Behbahan and Bostan on an EPCF Basis	1- Bidders with a number one ranking of EPC in Water, specializing in Water and Wastewater 2- Bidders with a number one ranking in Water, conditional to the introducing of a Consulting Engineer with the same ranking in Water Engineering specializing in Water and Wastewater Installations (in the form of public joint venture)	Anhar Jonooob	Until 23/Aug./2017	At 13 O'clock in the morning on 23/Sept./2017

Criteria for the Evaluation of Prequalification Bids

In addition to the criterion defined in the Prequalification documents of the aforementioned tender, and with due regards to the fact that the estimated project costs exceed that of Bidders with a number one ranking in the required specializations, all participants in the Bid must have the following conditions:

- The Bidder's company must be registered in the IRI National Tendering Data Base i.e. <http://iets.mporg.ir> and that of the Presidential Deputy for Strategic Planning and Control's database i.e. <http://tec.mporg.ir>
- The having of an Open Capacity in the First Class ranking of the specialization(s) required
- The execution and implementation of at least one similar project within the past five years with a total cost of at least one third of the current project's estimated project costs updated on the basis of current global inflation indices. Meanwhile, the contractors shall provide an agreement with foreign funder to supply 85 percent of the project funding requirements.

Address and Location for Purchasing of Prequalification Bidding Documents

Anhar Jonooob Consulting Company No. 1075, 11th Floor, Apartment 1103, Vali-e Asr Ave., before Sayee Park, Opposite the Filling Station, Shahab Building, Tehran
Tel: +98-(0) 21-88701438 and 88727855
Anhar Jonooob Consulting Company No. 98th, West Mohan Street, at the end of Phase 11, Kianpars Area, Ahwaz - Khuzestan
Tel: +98-(0)61 - 33914548

The final date for the submission of completed Prequalification Bid documents will be before nine O'clock in the morning on the day of opening of Tenders.

Address and Location for the Submission of Prequalification Bidding Documents
Security and Confidential Matters Secretariat's Offices, fifth Floor, the Khuzestan Water and Wastewater Company, 1st Square, Kianpars, Ahwaz

The Prequalification Bids submitted will be opened in the Contractual Department of the Ahwaz Water and Wastewater Company in the presence of the Bidders.

Electronic Address of Tender; Main Client, www.abfakhz.ir and IRI National Tendering Data Base: <http://iets.mporg.ir>

Public Relations and Education Department of the
Khuzestan Water and Wastewater Company

What is the fate of foreign ISIS fighters in Iraq?

As Iraqi forces raided the last Islamic State [ISIS] strongholds in Mosul's Old City, security forces arrested dozens of foreign fighters, including Russian, German and Chechen women who had joined the militant group.

Many other ISIS foreign fighters have returned to their home countries. The European Union's counterterrorism coordinator, Gilles de Kerchove, said Aug. 9 that an estimated 5,000 European fighters, mostly from France and Belgium, had been trained in Syria and Iraq, and that one-third of them had returned home.

But not all of the fighters could make it back to their home countries, as some terrorists were captured by Iraqi forces. Reuters published videos July 13 showing a group of shirtless IS fighters sitting on rubble in Mosul.

Hakim Zamili, a member of the committee, said that of those 30,000 fighters, 9,000 came from East Asia, 8,000 from Europe, 6,000 from Tunisia and 3,000 from Saudi Arabia.

Lt. Gen. Abdul Wahab al-Saadi, deputy commander of Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Bureau, told Al-Monitor via a phone call that foreign ISIS women fighters had been arrested. While saying ISIS had a large number of female fighters, he did not specify the number of women in ISIS ranks.

Saadi confirmed the arrest of a young Chechen fighter in addition to a group of foreign women, including five Germans, who were transferred to Baghdad. Saadi said that some of the women blew themselves up when Iraqi forces were conducting operations to liberate Mosul.

He said the majority of foreign fighters in Mosul were suicide bombers. "This is why they did not surrender. They were either killed in battle or blew themselves up," Saadi said.

The death penalty

More than 20 women, including the five Germans, one of them age 16, are facing the death penalty for joining ISIS. The five German women are being held in Counter-Terrorism Bureau facilities in Baghdad while their cases are being investigated.

Saadi says the women will be referred to the courts when the investigation concludes. If convicted, they would be punished following Iraq's anti-terrorism law, which calls for the death penalty. Their bodies would be handed over to Germany should the German government demand it.

Western and Arab intelligence agencies are interested in what the female fighters tell investigators, especially if the women reveal any information on ISIS-affiliated cells around the world and how fighters have been traveling to Syria and Iraq.

The head of the anti-terrorism forces, Lt. Gen. Abdul Ghani al-Asadi, said in previous statements that the foreign fighters "never surrendered" and often choose to fight to the death.

The Middle East Online website said that when the operations to recapture Mosul's Old City were launched June 16, foreigners made up 20% of ISIS fighters, or around 1,200 of about 6,000 terrorists. ISIS reportedly forced foreign fighters to stay in houses, most of which were shelled.

The U.S. Congress' Homeland Security Committee in 2015 received an assessment of the risk of foreign fighters and "terrorist" organizations in Syria and Iraq, where security officials reported that the numbers of foreign nationals traveling to areas of conflict had reached an unprecedented level.

Hisham al-Hashimi, an expert on terrorist groups and organizations, said foreign fighters were attracted to Iraq for two main reasons: media propaganda and the declaration of the state of the caliphate.

Hashimi told Al-Monitor that relatively few of the thousands of foreign fighters were arrested, saying most of them either fled or were killed during combat, because they "prefer death to being arrested."

"Many women fighters blew themselves up in the midst of Iraqi forces during the evacuation to the left [eastern] side of the city of Mosul, while others were arrested," he said. He said the numbers of arrested female fighters are relatively low.

A source in the Counter-Terrorism Bureau, who refused to be named, said 20 foreign women were arrested. The source said the five German females were found in an ISIS tunnel in Mosul's Old City and were wearing explosive belts.

Mithal al-Alousi, a member of the parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee, said foreign fighters are sent to the Radwaniyah prison in Baghdad after their health and identity are checked and verified. The consulates of the relevant countries are informed of the prisoners' names.

"As per international conventions, consulates have the right to check on their nationals in local prisons," Alousi told Al-Monitor.

Alousi denied reports that German prisoners are receiving financial or diplomatic support from the German Consulate in Iraq for their release, and said they are in good health.

Many international agreements signed by Iraq stipulate that a foreign national who is sentenced to imprisonment under the Iraqi penal code be sent to his or her home country to spend his or her time in prison there.

In the case of the death penalty against foreign nationals, the execution is carried out in Iraq, and the bodies are sent to their home country.

(Source: Al Monitor)

China has been given two headaches - Trump and Kim

Beijing unlikely to be happy with president's outburst over North Korea and some observers now feel China should push back against U.S.

By Tom Phillips

For months the U.S.'s Twitter-happy commander-in-chief has battled to convince Beijing to join his crusade against Kim Jong-un - and on Saturday he seemed to finally make headway.

After China backed a unanimous Security Council vote targeting Pyongyang, he bragged to his 35 million followers.

United Nations Resolution is the single largest economic sanctions package ever on North Korea. Over one billion dollars in cost to N.K.

Less than 72 hours later, however, and the mercurial U.S. president looked to have repaid China's support by lobbing a verbal hand grenade on to its doorstep from the comfort of a New Jersey golf club.

"North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States [or] they will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen," Trump told reporters.

The comments are likely to have enraged China's communist rulers as much as they delighted headline-writers.

John Delury, a China and North Korea expert from Yonsei University in Seoul, said Pyongyang would relish Trump's incendiary remarks, which reinforced its claim to be under siege by the U.S.

But China, which saw support for the latest UN sanctions as a big concession, would be less amused. "Trump, after running a victory lap, now unleashes this verbal tirade, heightening all the tensions ... It does not play well with Beijing," Delury said.

Beijing responded to Trump's green-side declaration with a brief foreign ministry statement. It called on "all parties to avoid any words or actions that might escalate the situation" and said "even greater efforts" were now needed to solve the issue.

But Shi Yinong, a foreign policy adviser to China's cabinet-like state council, said Trump's "extremely threatening words" - which he believed also partly targeted China - would be a great disappointment to the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, who had been seeking to help his U.S. counterpart.

"[Trump's] language is very provocative," said Shi, an international relations specialist at Renmin University in Beijing.

"It's 30% serious and 70% rhetoric. But Kim Jong-un is a paranoid guy so this kind of language and threat might have some unfortunate effect [in terms of triggering] ... some undesirable preemptive action."

Since his inauguration in January, Trump has attempted to coax Xi into doing more to help him tackle what he has called "the menace of North Korea".

"North Korea is behaving very badly ... China has done little to help!" he wrote on



"Chinese pressure has only been directed at North Korea. We should balance it and also put some pressure on the U.S. because the danger is coming from both sides," Shi Yinong, a foreign policy adviser to China's cabinet-like state council.

Twitter in March. In April, Trump tweeted: China is very much the economic lifeline to North Korea so, while nothing is easy, if they want to solve the North Korean problem, they will

—Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) April 21, 2017

Last month, following North Korea's first intercontinental ballistic missile test, Trump tweeted: "Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense once and for all!"

Trump has admitted he has refrained from challenging China over trade in order to secure its help and on the eve of Saturday's UN vote, U.S. officials delayed the expected announcement of an investigation into alleged intellectual property abuses that some feared could spark a trade war.

China's support Shi said Xi had been trying to cooperate, pointing to China's support for the recent UN sanctions. Beijing had hoped such actions and the use of quiet diplomacy could help defuse the current crisis.

"But Trump's statement goes in totally the opposite direction," Shi added, calling for Chinese moves to challenge the White House.

"Chinese pressure has only been directed at North Korea. We should balance it and also put some pressure on

the U.S. because the danger is coming from both sides," Shi said.

"China should issue a statement - just like it did a few years ago - saying: 'Anyone who wants to make fire and fury on China's doorstep will not be permitted [to do so].'"

Delury said Trump's inflammatory proclamation would complicate his efforts to get China on board.

"What he literally did is he threatened war if North Korea continues to threaten the U.S. - that's what is wild about this comment. That is not a good move if you are trying to keep the Chinese on your side because they give credence to the North Korean view that the reason for the nuclear deterrent in the first place is the American threat. And they would not see military action as being justified by any North Korean rhetoric.

"From a Chinese perspective, [Trump] is the one who has escalated."

However, Cheng Xiaohu, a North Korea specialist at Renmin University, said Beijing's ire would also be directed at Pyongyang.

Cheng said Trump's anger at Kim Jong-un's "utterly intolerable" behavior was understandable and believed China would be furious at North Korea's "irrational and unwise" provocations. "Playing with fire with a superpower can eventually get you burned," he warned.

"Trump has sent a clear message

which carries weight: [that] the U.S. is ready to use force ... Trump's team has yet to be fully formed but he is surrounded - and greatly influenced by - generals ... so if the U.S. does resort to force in the end, he has a bunch of people who have been to war before."

Cheng said China now needed to intensify its push for a diplomatic solution while also stepping up pressure on Pyongyang. "I'm quite certain that the soft approach towards North Korea has failed."

The crisis represents a severe headache for Xi, who is gearing up for two crucial and politically sensitive events in the second half of this year.

Before the year is out Trump is expected to visit China, amid warnings that ties between the world's top two economies have reached a historic "pivot point". This autumn Beijing hosts a key Communist party summit marking the end of Xi's first five-year term, at which he hopes to tighten his grip on power by installing loyalists in key positions.

Shi said China's leader needed to push back against Trump, despite concerns about the "negative impact" the Korean crisis might have on preparations for the congress. "If there is a military conflict this will have a big, big negative impact."

(Source: The Guardian)

Hope dims in Myanmar, with press at risk

There were high hopes when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy party delivered a crushing electoral blow to Myanmar's decades-long military dictatorship. But the ensuing year and a half has provided cause for dismay as well as for hope.

The army's brutal repression of the Muslim Rohingya minority has only intensified, with quiet acceptance from Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. Ethnic conflicts have increased in the face of her tepid attempts at conciliation.

The military's continued dominance of the country, despite her party's control of Parliament, restricts her ability to move the country forward. But, while Myanmar is much freer since the end of military rule, her acquiescence to repressive measures against free expression is another indication that she is part of the problem.

The government has brought 65 cases against people who posted on social media under a military-era law that criminalizes defamation. Swe Win, the award-



winning editor of the news site Myanmar Now, is facing trial under the law for comments he posted on Facebook critical of the firebrand Buddhist priest, U Wirathu. Myanmar's military is using the law to prosecute U Kyaw Min Swe, editor of the newspaper The Voice, for a satirical article mocking a military propaganda film.

The government is also silencing by criminalizing journalism. Three journalists on a reporting mission to the conflict-ridden Shan State, were arrested in June under a colonial-era law for "unlawful association" with Shan rebels. The three have been denied confidential access to lawyers, and are being tried under a media blackout.

Myanmar's Parliament reformed the country's draconian online defamation law last week, allowing people facing charges to be released on bail and barring third parties from bringing defamation charges that do not directly concern them. But this is tinkering around the edges of a law that should simply be scrapped.

Despite the considerable power of the military, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi needs to do and say more to support a truly free Myanmar. Protecting journalists and their work is a fundamental part of her job as Myanmar's first democratic leader in decades.

(Source: The NYT)

Zuma survives as South Africa sinks

Parliament has no reason to celebrate its vote of confidence in the president.

President Jacob Zuma has survived yet another attempt to oust him, beating back a no-confidence vote in South Africa's parliament. A Pyrrhic victory for Zuma's supporters in the ruling African National Congress, the outcome is a clear loss for the rest of the country.

Tuesday's vote was instigated by the opposition in April, after Zuma fired his respected finance minister, Pravin Gordhan, causing a plunge in the currency and a downgrade of the country's credit rating to junk. Gordhan had argued for sensible fiscal policies and against the

rampant cronyism in state-owned companies. Under Zuma's leadership, you can't do that.

South Africa slipped into recession in the first quarter of this year. Unemployment is at a 14-year high of nearly 28 percent. Business confidence has fallen, the economy is losing competitiveness, and foreign investors are looking elsewhere. Zuma's response has been to deepen his commitment to divisive and dishonest policies that call for "radical economic transformation" and blame "white monopoly capital" for South Africa's ills.

Voters have begun to see through it

all. Last August, they punished the ANC by giving the opposition control of three of South Africa's biggest urban centers, including Johannesburg and Pretoria. The ANC's continued support for a leader who lacks the public's trust -- Zuma's poll ratings have hit all-time lows -- seems likely to fuel their anger.

In December, Zuma hopes to hand over the reins as party leader to his ex-wife, and to isolate the ANC's would-be reformers, before presidential elections in 2019. Rather than engineer this succession, he may in the end trigger his party's collapse. In view of this week's vote, it would be hard to deny that the



party has it coming -- but so turbulent a transition is not what the country needs.

What a waste. Somewhere, Nelson Mandela is weeping.

(Source: Bloomberg)

New sanctions against Russia, a failure of U.S. strategy

By Neil Clark

Recently the U.S. congress legislated sanctions against the Russian Federation over alleged, but completely unproven, interference in the U.S. presidential elections. The vote was nearly unanimous.

President Trump signed these sanctions into law. This was a huge and stupid mistake. He should have vetoed them, even as a veto would likely be overturned. With his signing of the law Trump gave up the ability to stay on somewhat neutral grounds towards Russia. This for no gain to him at all.

Sanctions by Congress are quasi eternal. The 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment restricted trade with the then "Communist block". It was supposed to press for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union to Israel. But even after the Soviet Union broke down in the early 1990s, after the "communist block" had disappeared and long after any limits on emigrations had been lifted, the law and its economic sanctions stayed in place. It was only lifted in 2012 and only to be immediately replaced by the ludicrous Magnitsky act which immediately established a new set of sanctions against the Russian Federation and its interests.

The new additional sanctions, like the Jackson-Vanik amendment and the Magnitsky act, were shaped by domestic U.S. policy issues. There is nothing Russia could have done to avoid them and there is nothing it can do to have them lifted.

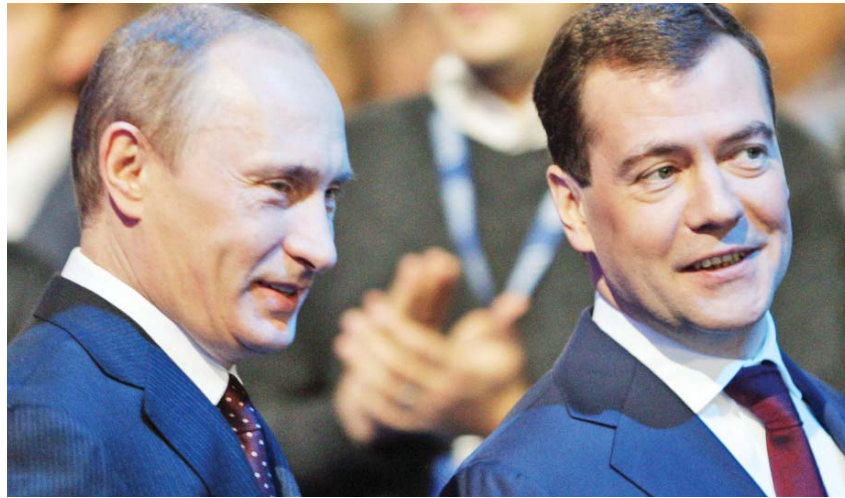
The new U.S. sanctions are not only directed against Russia but against any company and nation that cooperates with Russia over energy. This was a little disguised attempt to press Europe-

an countries into buying expensive U.S. liquefied natural gas instead of cheap Russian gas delivered by pipelines. The immediate target is the Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany which passes through the Baltic Sea to avoid potential conflict points in east Europe. The sanctions are a threat to an independent German energy policy. (Additional partners in the pipeline are Austria, France and the Netherlands.) Consequently 35% of Germans name the U.S. as a "major threat to the country". Russia is seen as such by only 33%. This view is consistent with the global perception.

These sanctions will shape U.S.-Russian relation for the next 30 plus years. On August 2 the Russian Prime Minister Medvedev pointed to the weakness of President Trump as the main reason for these sanctions:

The U.S. President's signing of the package of new sanctions against Russia will have a few consequences. First, it ends hopes for improving our relations with the new U.S. administration. Second, it is a declaration of a full-fledged economic war on Russia. Third, the Trump administration has shown its total weakness by handing over executive power to Congress in the most humiliating way. This changes the power balance in U.S. political circles.

What does it mean for them? The U.S. establishment fully outwitted Trump; the President is not happy about the new sanctions, yet he could not but sign the bill. The issue of new sanctions came about, primarily, as another way to knock Trump down a peg. New steps are to come, and they will ultimately aim to remove him from power. A non-systemic player has to be removed. Meanwhile,



With his signing of the law Trump gave up the ability to stay on somewhat neutral grounds towards Russia. This for no gain to him at all.

the interests of the U.S. business community are all but ignored, with politics chosen over a pragmatic approach. Anti-Russian hysteria has become a key part of both U.S. foreign policy (which has occurred many times) and domestic policy (which is a novelty).

Remember that Medvedev as Russian leader was, for a long time, the "hope" of the U.S. establishment. He was perceived as more amenable than the Russian President Putin. Medvedev may well become president again. But no U.S. media except the New York Post took notice of his statement. That in itself is astonishing and frightening. Can no one in the U.S. see where this will lead to? Medvedev predicts:

The sanctions regime has been codified and will remain in effect for decades unless a miracle happens. [...] [R]elations between Russia and the United States are going to be extremely tense regardless of Congress' makeup and regardless of who is president. Lengthy arguments in international bodies and courts are ahead, as well as rising international tensions and refusal to settle major international issues.

Economically and politically Russia can and will cope with these sanctions, says Medvedev. But can the U.S.?

The supreme global role of the U.S. depends on preventing a Euro-Asian alliance between, mainly, Russia and China. In his latest "grand chessboard" piece Toward a Global Realignment the U.S. strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski - ruthless, amoral and capable - asserts:

[I]t behooves the United States to fashion a policy in which at least one of the two potentially threatening states becomes a partner in the quest for regional and then wider global stability, and thus in containing the least predictable but potentially the most likely rival to overreach. Currently, the more likely to overreach is Russia, but in the longer run it could be China.

The U.S. foreign policy establishment has declared war on Russia. The confrontational position towards China, which was en vogue under Obama, has noticeably changed. The Hillary Clinton/Barack Obama "pivot to Asia" was cancelled. The anti-Chinese Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement has been called off. Military provocations of China in the South Chinese Sea have been reduced and replaced by continuous provocations against Russia in eastern Europe. These steps follow the strategy Brzezinski laid out.

Russia has historically proven to be resourceful in its policies. It is extremely resistant to pressure. With the U.S. in a less hostile position against China, the behemoth will relentlessly press its own advantage. Russia will soon be one of China's main sources of fossil energy and other commodities. There is no major reason for China and Russia to disagree with each other. Under these circumstances the hoped for Russian-Chinese split will not happen. Core European countries will resist pressures that endanger their economies.

The Brzezinski strategy is clouded by a personal hate against Russia. (He is descendant of minor noble Galician-Polish family.) It is flawed as it enables China to establish its primacy. Even under Brzezinski's framework a Russian-European-U.S. alliance against Chinese pursuit of hegemony would have been the more logical way to go.

Hillary Clinton's strategy to blame Russia for her lack of likability and her failure in the election now results in a major failure of U.S. grand strategy. An organized White House policy could have prevented that but there is no such thing (yet) under Trump.

I fail to see how the current strategy, now enshrined by congressional sanctions, could ever end up in an overall advantage for the United States.

(Source: Moon of Alabama)



The issue of new sanctions came about, primarily, as another way to knock Trump down a peg. New steps are to come, and they will ultimately aim to remove him from power.

On the anniversary of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

By H. Patricia Hynes

August 6 and August 9 mark the dropping of atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an act that launched the perilous era of nuclear weapons and nuclear power. After the first atomic blast, which killed 100,000 residents of Hiroshima immediately, the grievous radiation sickness of survivors was not anticipated, nor was it believed when reported. Without any reconsideration, the United States dropped a second bomb - this one plutonium - on Nagasaki, killing 70,000 citizens outright. The American military censored all documentation and photo images of the two bombs' unparalleled human devastation, sheltering Americans from the horrors of what our government perpetrated on Japanese civilians: women, men, and children instantly reduced to ash. Likewise, the post-war U.S. occupying authority forbade Japanese citizens, under penalty of law, to own pictures of the atomic bomb destruction of both cities.

American military leaders from all branches of the armed forces, among them Generals Eisenhower, Arnold, Marshall and MacArthur; and Admirals Leahy, Nimitz, and Halsey strongly dissented from the decision to use the bombs - some prior to August 1945, some in retrospect - for both military and moral reasons. Japan was already defeated and in peace negotiations with the Soviet Union; surrender was imminent. Moreover, the Soviet Union was willing to enter the war against Japan, if necessary. Bombing dense human settlements was barbarous and would shock world opinion; and a demonstration bombing away

from residential areas (also suggested by many atomic bomb scientists) could be used instead to force immediate surrender. The top military commanders concurred that the decision to use the atomic bomb was political, not military.

Dropping the atomic bombs in World War II launched an arms race in nuclear weapons, now spread to nine countries, with the ever-present specter of their use or their theft by terrorists. In the May 2012 Vienna meeting on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the nuclear-armed countries explicitly stated their intention to maintain a nuclear arsenal for security. The same month, NATO countries convening in Chicago pronounced, "Nuclear weapons are...essential...for defense and dissuasion." And yet, paradoxically, the threat of nuclear weapons in some countries brings some nuclear-armed countries, namely the U.S. and Israel, to the brink of war - as if the existential threat is not the weapons themselves but the hands they are in.

Stepping away from aggressive power politics of nuclear nations to the real security needs of their citizens, the June 2013 U.S. Conference of Mayors, including Mayor William Martin of Greenfield, unanimously adopted a resolution calling for U.S. leadership in eliminating nuclear weapons globally and for redirecting excessive military spending to the needs of cities and towns. The mayors' statement contrasts the cuts to Section 8 housing vouchers, Head Start, federal grants to cities and towns, food stamps and delayed infrastructure projects with the \$682 billion military budget in 2012 and the Administration's re-



quest for a 23 percent increase for nuclear weapons research, manufacture and maintenance over the next 5 years.

They cited President Obama's 2009 speech in Prague declaring that, "as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act...to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." Indeed, the mayors implored the Administration to reduce nuclear weapons and military spending and to redirect those monies to create jobs, retrain displaced workers, invest in new technologies for a sustainable energy future, and restore and maintain vital public services.

More than 30 mayors sponsored this resolution for a nuclear weapons-free world; and 197 U.S. mayors are members of Mayors for Peace, the leading international organization with 5600 member cities in 156 countries devoted to protecting cities from the scourge of war and mass destruction. As their citizens' first responders, we honor their public commitment to a genuinely secure world.

Afghanistan: Why counterterrorism combat has failed

By Masud Wadan

For a moment, we will cast aside the important topics as to how terrorists are financed or the doctrine and ideology orienting gullible individuals towards terrorism and study further the root causes that form the primary grounds for promotion of terrorism.

Crises such as social destitution, ignorance, mass unemployment and a prevailing state of ignorance flash through the mind.

These are prerequisites for a nation under the evil sights of scare-mongers.

Once steeped well into these crises, a nation run out of logic can become receptive and open to almost anything, no matter how absurd it is. A severely bankrupt community living off a penny would not spare embracing a violent job, be it terrorism or crimes.

World poverty is not by accident or natural, it is rather by design to push vulnerable community members into the extremist rows or for some other economic reasons.

Terrorism's agenda include denial of minors and adults an education. It also entails dissuasion of investments and economic development by serial assassinations and abductions.

Because terrorism is a complicated phenomenon and not an organization to be led by morons, it is governed by oversee hierarchy of intellectuals. Afghanistan's drug is a weighty factor adding fuel to terrorism. As a third most lucrative illicit substance following arms sale and oil in the world, the international drug lords influencing Afghanistan's narcotics industry may never give it up under any circumstance.

In the context of almost no or modest government employment opportunities in lawless areas, an internally-supported batch of multinational terrorists arrive in broad daylight and bully villagers to grow poppy or team up with them as paid job. In many instances, ideology or a Jihadist belief is not driving them into armed ranks, but it is rather out of the endemic poverty and grassroots level life they live.

Moreover, a tight border patrol is an impactful precautionary measure to cease terrorists' inflow. Afghanistan's long unchecked border with Pakistan - where brainwashed fighters are trained to breed and spread terrorism - has been serving as an unrestrained doorstep for terrorists to Afghanistan. If the so-called "counterterrorist parties" honestly want to put an end to this drama, they should set off the crusade from the border.

Afghanistan's population is not surprisingly high to make it inconceivable to fight rampant destitution and poor livelihood. They are the primary vacuums exposing the non-violent population to extremist and ultra-orthodox beliefs leading to terrorism. Only a fraction of Afghanistan's natural resources could lift the nation out of rubble, if it is handled in bona-fide and scrupulously.

To invest on future rebellious generations, the terrorists nowadays set fire to hardly-earned private businesses and markets in a bid to force a businessman to quit and lay off personnel and lure those unemployed as a consequence.

The Afghan governments seemed not intended to fill the gap immediately to avoid terrorists' reinforcement, but it does run a ridiculous scheme to welcome those surrendering Taliban members, regardless of how many they have killed.

Now a Taliban fighter's life is placed ahead of a soldier's life. Very often, Afghan soldiers stranded in a siege by rebels have been left to die by crooked commanders or higher authorities.

Terrorism can't be fought when the rebels are vaguely provided with super arms and military hardware. They are often spotted with Humvees and Ford Rangers lined tidily as though they are donated externally. Terrorism also can't be countered when, as evidences reveal, mysterious helicopters drop cases of arms to militants, yet only the Afghan government and international forces here can fly over Afghanistan's airspace.

This is not an anti-terrorism mission when a US unmanned aircraft or fighter jet repeatedly mistakes Afghan Security Forces for militants. This is also not a war on terror when Islamic schools and seminaries operating in their thousands in Afghanistan are blatantly raising minors and teens as terrorists, which is none of the Afghan government's business now.

This week, militants raided a village in central Afghanistan and shot dead around 40 villagers including children and women. They have not been hit back and still roam at large. These evidences leave nothing to doubt about the double-game of all internal and external parties involved in anti-terrorism war.

These relentless humans known as terrorists have no room in a hostile environment and can't co-exist with a peace-seeking community, unless they are not pawns of very upper-hands. The global and domestic media may have succeeded in painting the picture of Taliban as a solid and unbeatable force, indeed, it is not so and all is meant to play up the menace of terrorism.

The terrorist factions use concepts such as massacre of innocents in international coalition's airstrikes on villages in absorbing new recruits which causes a stir and awakens a sense of antagonism against international forces. The foreign forces' intrusion into public houses and dishonor to women are among haunting stories that turn villagers hostile to outsiders.

The ignorance and lack of understanding about what is good and what is evil, is destined children to an uncertain future. As a widespread example, parents send their children to sometimes distanced seminaries and religious schools for Islamic teachings, unconscious of their fate. Almost all of these students are intended for war fronts. Many parents have come to their senses too late: their children were nurtured all the way to becoming waged fighters of little worth. This contributory part of terrorism could simply be tamed by governments by freezing these religious schools and launching awareness campaign among vulnerable communities, unless there is willfulness.

On the finance and arms side, we have a handful of reports that militants enjoy compulsory benefits from locals in the form of cash or food. They get arms and weapons as a divine gift, dropped aerially, particularly to militants operating in northern Afghanistan provinces, because they are not in close contact with their heartland, Pakistan, where they get well armed.

Afghanistan's story bears it out that terrorism is not a fight for an objective against a certain group, but shooting people to death for no reason only to send shockwaves of terror and horror across the country.

With impunity and hamstrung judiciary branch in place, Afghanistan remains to be the most favorable jurisdiction for smooth insurgency with no grave consequences for evil-doers. Then, we should stop expecting the national and foreign governments to win the war under such circumstances.

Terrorism is a nexus of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, religious misguidance and, at last, offer of wage and arms to volunteers. If the same cash and weapons are withheld to terrorists and poverty and ignorance is diminished under effective plans and borders are strictly watched, Afghanistan's most crucial crisis will be resolved. These measures will not take place so far as the interests of warmongers are concerned.

(Source: Global Research)

Dropping the atomic bombs in WWII launched an arms race in nuclear weapons, now spread to nine countries, with the ever-present specter of their use or their theft by terrorists.

We have lost the war in Afghanistan. We should get out now

In a recent meeting, President Trump correctly told his generals that they were "losing" the war in Afghanistan, rejected their proposed strategy, and sent them back to the drawing board to create a new one.

Like chronic alcoholism, compulsive American meddling in the affairs of other countries can only be recovered from by admitting the problem exists in the first place.

President Trump has partially accomplished this first step by recognizing what has been obvious for years, but an even more enlightened conclusion would be that the war has been "lost" for quite some time now and the only solution is to withdraw U.S. forces as quickly as possible.

However, that is not the new strategy that the generals will likely come up with. Instead, as in Vietnam, they will continue to say — and probably even believe — that a turnaround is still possible. They have had 16 years to "win" the war, but have abjectly failed to do so.

In any counterinsurgency war, if the insurgents are not losing, they are winning. Fighting guerrilla style means that insurgents use hit and run tactics against the weak points of a generally stronger enemy (usually government or foreign forces) and then flee before the stronger side can catch them.

Over time, the guerrillas are hoping to make the strong-party exhausted, and if it is a foreign occupier, make the

war so costly in lives and money that that participant eventually goes back home.

■ The Taliban guerrillas

The Taliban guerrillas in Afghanistan are not only winning by not losing and hanging on, they are winning absolutely by capturing and holding more of the Afghan government's territory.

Thus, after 16 years of fighting, approximately 2,400 American military deaths, more than 20,000 wounded, 1,200 U.S. civilian contractor deaths, and a whopping half trillion dollars wasted in this quagmire, instead of cutting its losses, the Trump administration seems to be willing to let the military re-escalate the war by sending 3,000 to 5,000 additional U.S. troops in.

Such forces would continue to "advise and assist" chronically illiterate, incompetent, corrupt, and AWOL Afghan security forces. And despite their job description, U.S. forces do fight in combat and still continue to take casualties.

If 100,000 U.S. troops could not subdue Afghanistan, the only way U.S.-trained Afghan forces could do so is if they were impeccably honest and competent forces who knew the pulse of the Afghan people — so they could get good intelligence on who the clandestine insurgents are and neutralize them. Yet, this pipe dream is not even worth fantasizing about.

But if the United States withdraws completely from Afghanistan, won't the country go back into chaos and be a haven for future terrorist attacks against the United States? After all ISIS is now in Afghanistan, and some sources say the group is now cooperating with the Taliban to attack U.S. and Afghan targets.

The major problem with U.S. foreign policy is that, like an addict in perpetual denial, no questions have been asked about why Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda perpetrated the 9/11 attacks from Afghanistan in the first place.

President George W. Bush told us that al Qaeda had attacked us because of our "freedoms," which enraged bin Laden, who then rhetorically asked why he hadn't attacked Sweden instead.

To understand bin Laden's motivation for the attacks is not to condone such brutal atrocities but to attempt to find a quieter change in U.S. policy that might take the fire out of the terrorists.

■ U.S. interventionism in Middle East

The U.S. government should have introspectively reached the conclusion that U.S. interventionism in the Middle East had helped create the problem, or at least exacerbated it, and had directed it more against the United States.

Donald Rumsfeld, then George W. Bush's secretary of

defense, famously asked after 9/11, "Are we creating more terrorists than we are killing?"

The United States also created what eventually became ISIS, which arose as resistance to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In Pakistan, the U.S. war in Afghanistan spilled over into that country and thus created the Pakistani Taliban.

In Somalia, U.S. support for an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia created the virulently al Shabab group.

In Yemen, empirical documentation has shown that U.S. bombing of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has increased the number of fighters being recruited by the group.

Currently, the United States is at war in at least seven Islamic countries. Non-Muslim forces fighting on Muslim land angers even moderate Muslims.

Before the American fracking boom, even when the United States was more dependent on foreign oil, it was cost-ineffective to use massive military forces to "safeguard" what was best provided by the world oil market, but now that policy is even more absurd.

If anyone doubts that a lower U.S. profile in Muslim countries would reduce blowback terrorism, the case of Lebanon in the 1980s needs to be examined.

(Source: Newsweek)

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7 imbalances that may hinder weight-loss efforts

Common health conditions like chronic inflammation, low serotonin or high cortisol levels can make it tough to shed pounds.

By Natasha Turner

Have you been unable to lose weight even with diet and exercise? No matter how an imbalance manifests on the outside, the internal reality remains the same — many hormonal imbalances lead to difficulty losing weight and an increased risk of obesity. Unfortunately, the most common imbalances can't be solved by dieting alone. In fact, they can prevent successful fat loss even when great diet and exercise plans are in place. If you haven't been successful in the past, chances are, one or more of the following hormonal imbalances could be your culprit.

■ Here are seven ways to improve your insulin sensitivity.

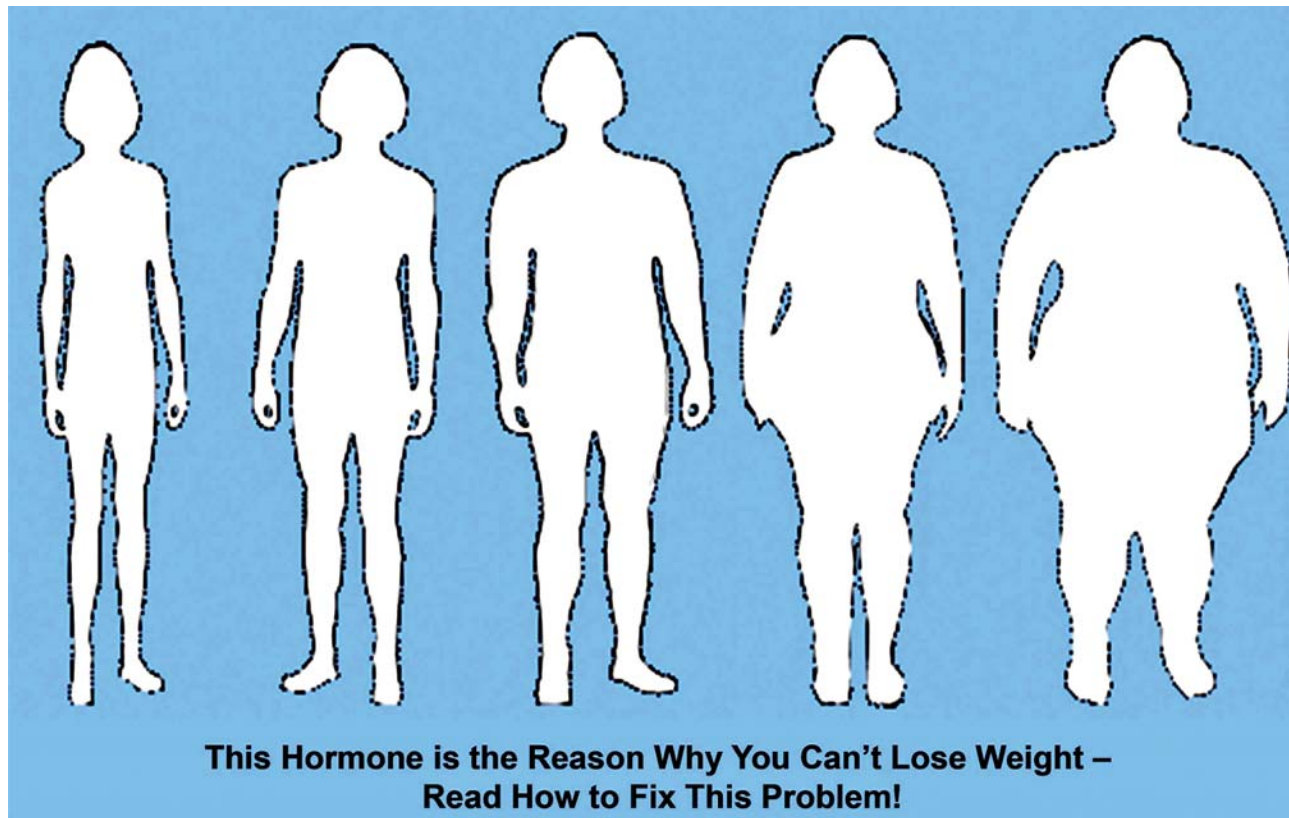
1. Inflammation
Digestive disorders, allergies, autoimmune disease, arthritis, asthma, eczema, acne, abdominal fat, headaches, depression and sinus disorders are associated with chronic inflammation, which has become recognized as a root cause of obesity and many diseases associated with aging, like Alzheimer's, heart disease, and cancer. At the 2007 Postgraduate Nutrition Symposium at Harvard University, researchers revealed findings suggesting that inflammation and excess insulin are the major contributors to rising rates of type 2 diabetes and the rising obesity rates of North America.

2. Insulin resistance
Insulin is an essential substance whose main function is to regulate glucose in the bloodstream and allow cells to use it as fuel or stored as fat.

When you have insulin resistance, your cells fail to respond properly to insulin, which causes your pancreas to produce and release even more insulin. High insulin levels encourage your body to store unused glucose as fat, and also blocks the use of stored fat as an energy source.

High insulin levels, obesity, high lipid levels and insulin resistance all characterize a disorder called hyperinsulinemia, which can be a precursor to diabetes. The leading risk factors are being overweight or obese, or leading a sedentary lifestyle.

3. Low serotonin
Serotonin exerts a powerful influence over our mood, emotions, memory, cravings (especially for carbohydrates), self-esteem, pain tolerance, sleep habits, appetite, digestion and body temperature regulation. When we're depressed or down, we naturally crave more sugars and starches



to stimulate the release of serotonin.

Plenty of sunlight, supplementing your diet with a B vitamin, and regular exercise all support serotonin. When we measure our current lifestyle against all the elements necessary for the body's natural production of serotonin, the prevalence of low serotonin is certainly not surprising.

4. Chronic stress
Under situations of chronic stress — whether the stress is physical, emotional, mental or environmental, real or imagined — our bodies release high amounts of the hormone cortisol. If you have a condition like anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder, or if you have a digestive issue such as irritable bowel syndrome, you can bet your body is cranking up your cortisol. Through a complicated network of hormonal interactions, elevated cortisol results in a raging appetite (specifically cravings for carbs), belly fat and a loss of hard-won muscle tissue, elevated blood sugar, and visceral fat storage.

Did you know that workplace stress can be as toxic to your body as second-hand smoke?

5. High estrogen
Researchers have identified excess

estrogen (in both sexes) to be a risk factor for obesity. Researchers have found that estrogen receptors in the brains of animals are responsible for controlling food intake, energy expenditure, and body fat distribution.

There are two ways to accumulate excess estrogen in the body: we either produce too much of it on our own or acquire it from our environment or diet. We're constantly exposed to estrogen-like compounds in foods that contain toxic pesticides, herbicides and growth hormones. A premenopausal woman with estrogen dominance will likely have PMS, too much body fat around the hips and difficulty losing weight. Menopausal women may experience low libido, memory loss, poor motivation, depression, loss of muscle mass and increased belly fat.

6. Low testosterone
Testosterone enhances libido, bone density, muscle mass, strength, motivation, memory, fat burning and skin tone in both men and women. When testosterone is low, an increase of body fat and loss of muscle may still happen — even with dieting and exercise.

Testosterone levels tend to taper off with

age, increased obesity and stress, but today men are experiencing testosterone decline much earlier in life — an alarming finding, considering low testosterone has been linked to depression, obesity, osteoporosis, heart disease and even death.

Dr. Mitchell Harman, an endocrinologist at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, blames the proliferation of endocrine-suppressing, estrogen-like compounds used in pesticides and other farming chemicals for the downward trend in male testosterone levels. Phthalates, commonly found in cosmetics, soaps and most plastics are another known cause of testosterone suppression.

7. Hypothyroidism
Without enough thyroid hormone, every system in the body slows down. Those who suffer from hypothyroidism feel tired, tend to sleep a lot, experience constipation and weight gain typically occurs. Extremely dry skin, hair loss, slower mental processes, feeling cold, brittle hair, splitting nails, infertility, poor memory, depression, decreased libido and an inability to lose weight are also symptoms to watch for.

(Source: chatelaine.com)

The 7 best exercises for your IT band

By Jason Fitzgerald

Runners know all too well that any sort of sharp pain—whether it's in the shins, knees, or ankles—can put a sudden end to training days. One of the most common running injuries is iliotibial band (IT band) syndrome, which occurs when the IT band becomes inflamed. The result: a sharp pain that radiates outside your knee that can stop you in your tracks.

■ IT band

So where is the IT band exactly? It's a thick, fibrous band of connective tissue that runs down the outside of your thigh, originating from your gluteal muscles and tensor fascia latae (TFL) and ultimately connecting just below your knee to your tibia. ITBS affects both seasoned and beginner runners, and if not managed correctly, it can become an ongoing and chronic injury.

What causes IT band syndrome

Because the IT band is so intricately connected to the gluteal muscles, when your glutes are weak or tired, the result is often decreased knee stability, meaning your knee can be pulled either inward or outward excessively.

A weak butt is simply a side effect of our modern lifestyles: too much sitting and not enough strength training. On the other hand, fatigue can be caused by overtraining: increasing your mileage too quickly or running too fast before you're ready.

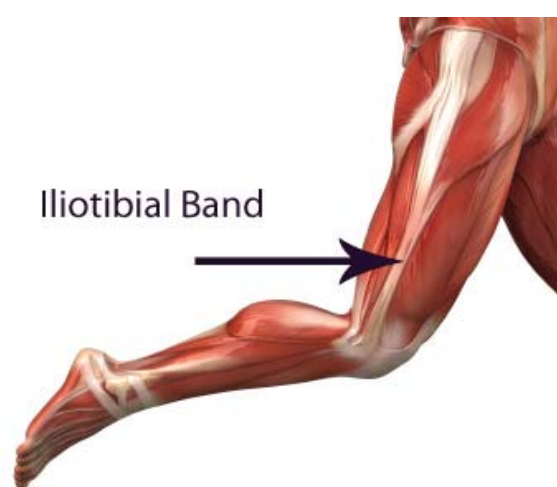
The good news? When it comes to ITBS, prevention is definitely the best medicine. Studies have shown that strengthening your hips and glutes is one of the most effective ways to prevent ITBS. But if you're already injured, don't panic. There's still plenty you can do to help treat your injury and prevent it from recurring.

■ The ITBS rehab routine

If you've been diagnosed with ITBS, the first thing you need to do is stop running—completely—for seven to 14 days.

But just because you're not running doesn't mean you should be sitting on the couch! Like most running injuries, recovery requires some active work. These exercises are specifically designed to treat ITBS and get you back to running healthy.

Perform these moves every other day while injured, and use the alternating days for core work or other strength exercises that don't aggravate the area. This



routine can help heal your IT band injury within a week or two if it's a minor case. (If the pain persists, find a doctor who specializes in running injuries.) For the workout:

- You'll need a piece of rubber tubing, also called a therapy band or theraband, for extra resistance. (Start with low or medium resistance bands and move to a stronger resistance when it becomes too easy.)

- Modify the number of reps or take extra time between exercises if necessary.
- If you don't currently have ITBS, you can do this routine once a week for prevention.

1. Lateral leg raise
Lie on your right side with a theraband around ankles. Lift your left leg to about 45 degrees in a controlled manner, then lower. Do 30 reps per side.

2. Clamshell
Lie on your right side with your knees together and a theraband around lower thighs. Your thighs should be about 45 degrees from your body and your knees bent at 90 degrees. Open your legs like a clamshell without moving your pelvis; keep it slow and controlled. Do 30 reps per side.

3. Hip Thrust
Lie faceup with your knees bent and feet on the ground. Lift one leg so your weight is on the opposite

leg and your back. Using your glutes, lift your hips, then lower. Do 25 reps per side.

4. Side step/shuffle

Place a theraband around your ankles (the band should be tight enough so it provides constant resistance). With knees slightly bent, take 10 lateral steps. Still facing the same direction, take 10 more steps back to starting position. That's one set. Do 5 sets of 10 steps in each direction.

5. Pistol squat

Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent. Lift your right foot off the ground and extend it forward. Lower into a squat position, sending hips back as if sitting back into an imaginary chair with knees safely positioned over feet. Return to starting position. Do 10 reps per side.

6. Hip hike

Stand on your right foot. With your pelvis in a neutral position, drop the left side so it is several inches below the right side of your pelvic bone. Activate your right hip muscle to lift your left side back to starting position. Do 20 reps per side.

7. Iron cross

Lie faceup with your arms out to your sides. Swing your right leg over your torso and up to your left hand. Repeat with your left leg. Do 10 reps per side.

■ More recovery advice

- Foam roll—gently.
- A foam roller can help the healing process, but avoid rolling the IT band itself, as it may aggravate it further. Instead, gently roll the hips, glutes, quads, and hamstrings for about one minute per muscle to loosen the muscles and any scar tissue that may be constricting movement.

- Ice it.
- Ice may provide some pain relief, especially in the initial stages of your injury. Try icing any painful areas after performing the routine for about 15 minutes.

- Try a test run.
- If you haven't felt pain in seven to 14 days, then it's time for a short, easy test run. Use a treadmill or stick to a flat, even surface (downhill running makes ITBS pain worse because it makes the supporting musculature that caused the injury in the first place to work overtime).

(Source: greatist.com)

20 best testosterone-boosting foods

Man-up at meal times!

Starting around the age of 30, a man's testosterone levels begin to dip and continue to decline with age, and can lead to loss of drive, low mood and problems with concentration and memory. Give that hormone a boost by adding these testosterone-boosting foods to the menu...

Honey

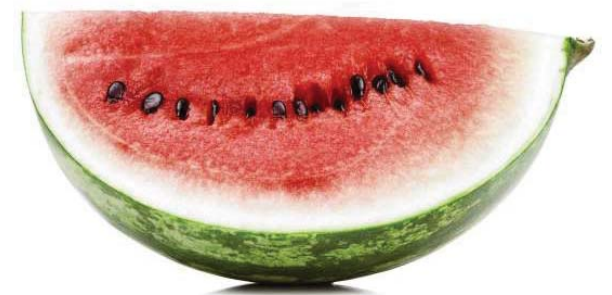
Known as nature's healer, honey contains boron, a mineral associated with high testosterone levels, and nitric oxide, which opens up blood vessels.

Cabbage

Loaded with vitamins and minerals, cabbage contains indole-3-carbinol, which reduces levels of the female hormone estrogen, making testosterone more effective.

Asparagus

A known aphrodisiac, asparagus contains folic acid, potassium and vitamin E, which are all essential for healthy testosterone production.



Garlic

The allicin compound found in garlic lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol, in turn allowing testosterone to do its stuff. Eat it raw for best effects.

Eggs

The saturated fat, omega-3s, vitamin D, cholesterol and protein in eggs are all vital for testosterone production.

Bananas

The bromelain enzyme in bananas helps boost testosterone levels. And it's a slow-release energy source too... perfect for a night.

Watermelon

Scientists at Texas A&M University discovered that watermelons contain an amino acid called citrulline, which is converted into arginine in the body. The result? Boosted blood flow, making this tasty fruit a natural boost alternative.

Ginseng

A 2002 study from the University of Ulsan College of Medicine found that Korean red ginseng helped 60 per cent of patients with dysfunction.

As well as lowering the stress hormone cortisol, citrus fruits contain vitamin A required for testosterone production, and can also help lower oestrogen levels.

Almonds

Just a handful of these nuts could boost the drive of both men and women, and that's because they contain plenty of zinc, a testosterone booster and enhancer.

Oysters

Zinc is vital for testosterone production — and oysters are by far the richest source of the mineral. Don't like oysters? Cheeses, particularly Swiss and ricotta, are also good sources.

Porridge oats

Oats pack a powerful punch — as well as containing zinc and L-arginine, they're also high in B vitamins, which are linked with boosting your drive.

Citrus fruits

As well as lowering the stress hormone cortisol, citrus fruits contain vitamin A required for testosterone production, and can also help lower oestrogen levels, thus allowing the male hormone to do its work.

Spinach

This leafy green is proven to lower oestrogen levels, and is rich in magnesium and vitamins C and E — all essential testosterone building blocks.

Grapes

According to research conducted at the University of Hong Kong, eating a bunch of red grapes a day can raise testosterone levels.

Wild salmon

Aside from containing high levels of magnesium, vitamin B and omega-3s for healthy testosterone production, researchers at Graz Medical University in Austria found that wild salmon lowers the levels of Sex Hormone Binding Globulin (SHBG) which renders testosterone useless.

Avocado

American researchers at Penn State University found that men with high intakes of monounsaturated fat — found in foods like avocado, nuts and vegetable oils — had lower LDL cholesterol and more testosterone.

Tuna

Vitamin D can help boost testosterone levels by up to 90%, according to researchers at Graz Medical University in Austria. If you don't get much sunshine, add more tuna and eggs to your diet.

Pomegranate

A paper in the International Journal of Impotence Research reported that 47% of impotent men who drank a glass of pomegranate juice a day saw an improvement in their condition.

Meat

A meat-free diet is believed to lower testosterone levels, but be careful how much you put on your plate. Researchers at the University of Utah say that a diet high in saturated fats found in beef and lamb can also make testosterone levels dip.

(Source: msn.com)

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

Here are high rated IT titles in the world that reviewed by savvy tech users:

- 1** U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said an Obama-era experimental defense outpost in Silicon Valley would grow in importance under the Trump administration and that the nation's technology entrepreneurs were vital to national defense.
- 2** Chinese startup Toutiao raising funds at over \$20 billion valuation. Chinese news aggregator Toutiao, backed by Sequoia Capital and CCB International, is raising at least \$2 billion at a valuation of over \$20 billion in its latest funding round, people familiar with the matter told Reuters.
- 3** A former head of MIS has spoken out against curtailing use of encryption in messaging apps despite warning that Islamist terrorism will remain a threat for up to another 30 years. Jonathan Evans said the terrorist threat to Britain was a "generational problem", and suggested the Westminster Bridge attack in March may have had an energizing effect on extremists.
- 4** Amazon to take on Ticketmaster in lucrative ticketing market. According to four sources talking to Reuters, Amazon see the lucrative US ticketing market as ripe for attack. Consumers dislike ticket fees, and venue owners, sports leagues and teams want more distributors for their tickets as they seek to boost sales.
- 5** Battle for power at Uber as investor sues ex-CEO Travis Kalanick alleging fraud. Benchmark Capital accuses Travis Kalanick of fraud to 'increase his power over Uber for his own selfish ends' as former CEO calls the case 'riddles with lies'
- 6** Nintendo faces lawsuit over the Switch's detachable controllers. Wikipad's creators say it's too similar to their own hardware.
- 7** Gmail for iOS will warn you about visiting phishing links. A warning will pop up when you click on a suspicious link within the app.
- 8** LG might finally enable FM radios in US phones. The device maker has partnered with NextRadio to let users to tune into local FM stations.
- 9** Snap co-founders will not sell shares as stock slumps on earnings miss. Snap Inc Chief Executive Officer Evan Spiegel said that neither he nor co-founder Bobby Murphy would sell shares of the Snapchat parent this year, but that failed to soothe investors after quarterly results fell short of analyst expectations.
- 10** FCC wants mobile data to count as broadband internet. The idea would further cut off poor and rural areas from decent internet, say critics.

Microsoft claims Surface reliability isn't really that bad

Consumer Reports said that it would no longer recommend Microsoft's Surface laptops and tablets because of "poor predicted reliability" compared to other brands, based on its surveys. Now Microsoft has responded, with a statement saying that it is "disappointed" in the decision and providing some of its own data.



The company says it has "learned a lot" while building Surface devices, with 1-2 failure and actual return rates for the Surface Pro 4 and Surface Book that are "significantly" lower than the 25 percent number CR found. Meanwhile, its "incidents per unit" is claimed to have improved to the point that is below one percent. The Surface line has certainly had its share of issues over the years, with some issues fixed via software updates, but it's tough to say who is right on this one -- most of the laptops I've had from any company have failed to last beyond a year without at least one significant issue. (Source: Microsoft)

Intel's 18-core chip was a risk

By Devindra Hardawar

Intel's high brass made a decidedly un-Intel move last August. During a routine business meeting at the company's Santa Clara headquarters, they decided to upend their desktop CPU roadmap for 2017 to prepare something new: the beastly 18-core i9-7980XE X-series. It's the company's most powerful consumer processor ever, and it marks the first time Intel has been able to cram that many cores into a desktop CPU. At \$2,000, it's the sort of thing hardware fanatics will salivate over, and regular consumers can only dream about.

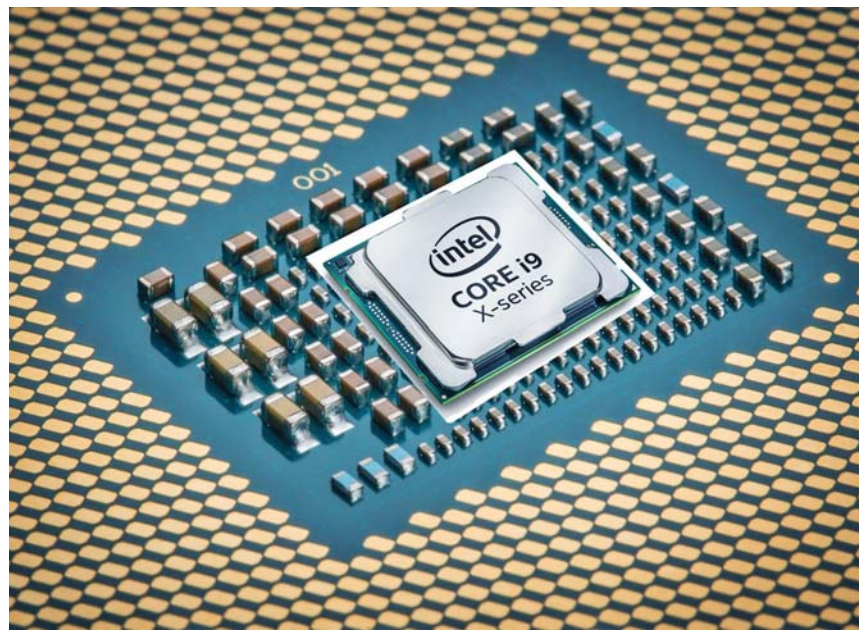
The chip's very existence came down to a surprising revelation at that meeting last year: Intel's 10-core Broadwell-E CPU, which was only on the market for a few months and cost a hefty \$1,723, was selling incredibly well. And for Intel, that was a sign that there was even more opportunity in the high-end computing world.

"The 10-core part was absolutely breaking all of our sales expectations," Intel's Anand Srivatsa, general manager of its Desktop Platform Group, told Engadget in an interview. "We thought we'd wait six months or so to figure out whether this was actually going to be successful. But within the first couple months, it was absolutely clear that our community wanted as much technology as we could deliver to them."

Who wants a \$2,000, 18-core processor?

Most consumers these days don't need a full-size desktop. That's no surprise. The rise of smartphones, tablets and ultraportable laptops — along with hybrid devices like Microsoft's Surface — saw to that. But while it might seem like high-end desktop users are merely a niche audience, Intel recognized that they were a niche worth catering to.

As always, there are the gamers who want to eke out the best possible performance. But now that plenty of video game fanatics are broadcasting their exploits live on services like Twitch, there's more demand for computing power than ever before. Their systems need to ensure that their games look good — especially if they're playing at high resolutions like



4K — but they also need to handle video encoding and streaming at the same time without any hiccups.

There are also around 130 million content creators out there, according to Intel's stats. Armed with high-quality cameras and easy-to-use editing tools, they cater to online audiences hungry for video. And of course, they want machines that can also handle a few games as well.

With all of that in mind, Intel set out to make its most uncompromising enthusiast processors yet. Reaching 18 cores was the most prominent achievement, but the entire X-series family (which steps all the way down to four cores) also has plenty of features to satisfy more demanding users.

Meet the Core i9 X-series family

Although we got a taste of Intel's new lineup back in May at Computex, the company today is officially revealing specs for the higher-end i9 family, codenamed "Basin Falls." At the top end, the 18-core i9-7980XE features a base speed of 2.6GHz, and a Turbo Boost 2.0 speed of 4.2GHz. It might seem odd for the creme de la creme of CPU these days to rock a base clock under 3GHz — especially at \$2,000 — but the boost figure is more important when you're actually trying to get work done. The chip can also reach up to 4.4GHz with Turbo

Boost 3.0, which ups the performance even more on two cores.

It'll be a while before we know just how well these chips actually perform, but Intel gave us a small preview from its own benchmarks: The 16-core i9 CPU reached a Cinebench R15 score of 3200 while running an NVIDIA GTX 1080Ti GPU. That puts it right below a 24-core Xeon E5 2697, according to 3D Fluff's database. Another point of comparison: Intel's quad-core i7-7700K — its fastest consumer CPU from earlier this year — scored just 966 on that same benchmark.

You'll be able to get your hands on the 14-18 Core i9 CPUs on September 25th, while the 12-core will arrive sooner, on August 28th. The other chips are already available.

Broadwell-E, which debuted at Computex in 2016, was the next major CPU milestone. It was the first time Intel managed to deliver a 10-core desktop chip, and even at \$1,723, enthusiasts ate it up. Its early success put Intel on the path to developing the 18-core i9 Extreme Edition, by forcing it to open up its roadmap. Without the success of Broadwell-E, Intel would have stuck to its original plan and waited much longer before making the jump to 18 cores.

Turbo Boost Max

This time around, with the Core i9 X-series chips, Intel made Turbo Boost Max both more powerful and easier to use. It can now push two cores and four computing threads up to 4.5GHz, instead of just getting a single core to 4GHz.

That makes it just as powerful as its fastest single-threaded performer, the Core i7-7700K, which should be a boon for gamers. And Intel also made Turbo Boost Max natively compatible with Windows, so you don't have to worry about managing a driver and any additional software to take advantage of faster speeds. The OS will do all the work for you.

Intel v. AMD, again

If you've been feeling nostalgic for an old-school computing hardware war, we're about to get one. AMD also announced its Threadripper CPUs for high-end desktops a few months ago, and, as usual, they're significantly cheaper than Intel's offerings. The 16-core AMD 1950X will cost \$999, with speeds between 3.4GHz and 4GHz. That's the same price as Intel's 10-core i9 X-series processor, while the 16-core model will run you \$1,699.

This is a familiar battle. AMD gained a reputation among enthusiasts for delivering CPUs that were a better overall value than Intel's. But while it hasn't innovated much on the desktop front over the past few years, AMD is betting big on its new Ryzen CPU architecture, which could give it more of a fighting chance against Intel. The Threadripper scored 2,876 on Cinebench R15 — but while that's below Intel's 16-core X-series result of 3200, it's also \$699 cheaper.

Looking ahead

It'll be years before most consumers need a CPU as extravagant as Intel's 18-core powerhouse X-series. And by the time they do, you can bet that an equivalent chip will be much cheaper. But the fact that it exists tells us a lot about Intel's current priorities. The company is finally betting big on enthusiasts. And since plenty of its high-end innovations will eventually trickle down to rest of the market, that's ultimately a good thing for everyone.

(Source: Engadget)

AMD's beastly 16-core Ryzen Threadripper CPU is available today

We already knew a lot about AMD's monstrous \$1000 16-core 1950X Threadripper CPU (and slightly cheaper 1920X \$800 12-core version), but the company released a few more details as the processors went on sale today. AMD is adding a third to the lineup: The 1900X is an 8-core, 16-thread version for \$550 that'll be out on August 31st for anyone who wants a powerful budget GPU with a base clock speed of 3.8 GHz and boost of 4.0 GHz.

That's even more value for AMD to brag about as the



company grapples with Intel for the top-tier consumer processor crown. Soon after the former had announced its Threadripper series, Intel fired back with its 18-core i9 Extreme Edition — but given that CPU's \$2,000 price tag, AMD is still fiercely competing at half the price. If you want the leading 1950X Threadripper or the lower-powered but less pricey 1920X, you can buy them today on motherboards from manufacturers like ASRock, ASUS, Gigabyte, and MSI.

(Source: AMD)

Toyota, Intel, others to form auto big data consortium



Toyota Motor Corp, chipmaker Intel Corp and other technology and auto companies are forming a consortium to create an ecosystem for big data used in connected cars.

Swiss telecom equipment maker Ericsson (ERICB.ST), Japanese auto parts maker Denso Corp and telecoms firm NTT DoCoMo Inc are also part of the group, called the Automotive Edge Computing Consortium.

The consortium aims to use data to support emerging services such as intelligent driving, creating maps with real-time data and driving assistance based on cloud computing, Toyota said in a statement.

(Source: Reuters)

Nvidia shares fall on data center revenue



Nvidia Corp's quarterly revenue in its widely watched data center and automotive businesses missed estimates, dragging down the chipmaker's shares that have nearly tripled in value over the past 12 months.

Nvidia shares were down 6.6 percent at \$153.87 in extended trading. Shares have risen 181 percent over the past year, the strongest performance across the benchmark S&P 500 index. Nvidia came to prominence in the gaming industry for designing graphics-processing chips, but in recent years has been expanding into newer technologies including cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and self-driving cars.

(Source: Forbes)

China Investigating Tencent, Baidu and Weibo over Cyber Laws



China is investigating its top social media sites, including WeChat and Weibo, for failing to comply with cyber laws, the latest step in the country's push to secure the internet and maintain strict Communist Party control over content.

President Xi Jinping has made China's "cyber sovereignty" a top priority and has also reasserted the ruling party's role in limiting and guiding online discussion. Surveillance is being further tightened ahead of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party later this year.

(Source: Fortune)

Google cancels diversity meeting because of alt-right trolling

Google has canceled its company-wide meeting meant to address the ongoing controversy caused by the anti-diversity "manifesto" written by a former engineer.

The meeting was canceled due to safety concerns, after several employees' names were published in online forums, according to the company.

In an email sent to Google employees Thursday, CEO Sundar Pichai said they had made the decision to cancel the meeting because staffers were "concerned about their safety and worried they may be 'outed' publicly for asking a question in the Town Hall."

Recode first reported the cancellation and Pichai's email to staff.

Prior to the scheduled town hall meeting, employ-



ees had been submitting and voting on questions they wanted Pichai to address. But many of those questions — and the names of the people who asked them —

leaked out onto online forums and social media accounts popular within the alt-right community.

We've confirmed that a number of Google employees have been named on social media accounts and forums that cater to the alt-right.

Pichai said the company is working on a way to "step back and create a better set of conditions for us to have the discussion" promising "several forums ... where people can feel comfortable to speak freely," but didn't provide details.

"We'll find a better way to help our employees connect and discuss these important issues further," a Google spokesperson said in a statement.

(Source: mashable)

Startup to put cellphone tower on the moon

An astronaut wandering the moon next year could use a smartphone to call home. A German startup is preparing to set up the first telecommunication infrastructure on the lunar surface.

The German company Part Time Scientists, which originally competed for the Google Lunar X Prize race to the moon, plans to send a lander with a rover in late 2018 to visit the landing site of Apollo 17.

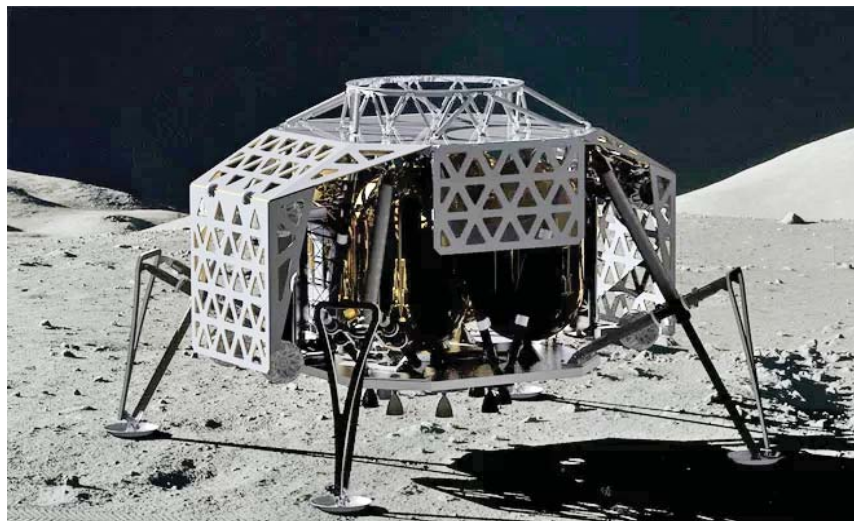
Launched in 1972, this was NASA's final Apollo mission to the moon. Instead of using a complex dedicated telecommunication system to relay data from the rover to the Earth, the company will rely on LTE technology — the same system used on Earth for mobile phone communications.

Embedded electronics

"We are cooperating with Vodafone in order to provide LTE base stations on the moon," Karsten Becker, who heads embedded electronics development and integration for the startup, told space.com.

"What we are aiming to do is to provide commercial service to bring goods to the moon and also to provide services on the surface of the moon," Becker added.

Part Time Scientists has a launch contract for late 2018 with Space X as a secondary payload on the Falcon 9 rocket.



Becker said the company believes it will be the first private entity to reach the surface of the moon, suggesting that none of the Google Lunar X Prize participants are likely to meet the December 2017 deadline for the competition. (Part Time Scientists itself withdrew from the Google Lunar X Prize earlier this year due to the time constraints of the competition.)

The Falcon 9 will carry the team's spacecraft, Alina, to the geostationary transfer orbit, a highly elliptical Earth orbit whose highest point is 26,000 miles (42,000 kilometers). From there, Alina will

"Using the LTE modem to transmit our data is much more energy efficient than using direct Earth communication," Becker explained.

continue on its own to the moon.

"We will soft-land on the moon and disembark our two rovers, the Audi Lunar Quatro rovers, with which we are going to drive up to Apollo 17," Becker said.

The "two rovers are essentially mobile phones that will communicate our video stream to Alina, which serves as an LTE base station, and Alina will communicate the data to us," he said.

The two rovers

The two rovers, which appeared in this year's "Alien: Covenant" film, will examine in detail the Apollo 17 spacecraft to see what has happened to it in its 45 years on the lunar surface.

"Using the LTE modem to transmit our data is much more energy efficient than using direct Earth communication," Becker explained.

The rover gets 90 watts of energy from its solar panel, half of which goes to driving, Becker said; previously, the other half would have to go to the modem for communicating directly to Earth. "With LTE, it's significantly less," he said.

Additionally, relaying data via the base station rather than directly to Earth solves difficulties with pointing the rover's antenna in the rough lunar terrain, Becker said.

(Source: space.com)

Greenland wildfires triggered by rising temperatures, scientists warn

Greenland is burning. Not all of it — this northern island is mostly ice — but a cluster of large wildfires is currently spreading through western Greenland, near the town of Kangerlussuaq, a base camp for researchers studying the island's ice sheets. The strange event has surprised researchers, who are unaccustomed to blazes of this size in the area.

At first, scientists thought traces of smoke in the satellite data from this region were anomalies in the data, says Jessica McCarty, assistant professor of geography at Miami University of Ohio. But a closer look revealed that the area was burning.

The fires started on July 31 and are still going strong. Researchers suspect that the fire is fueled by peat, a dark soil rich in organic material found throughout the northern latitudes. Besides peat, only grasses and rocks make up the landscape in this region, McCarty says. The largest of these fires covers an area that is 3,000 acres in size, and the blaze is likely the largest ever observed on the island, says Jeff Weber, a scientist with the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado.

Climate change

Climate change has almost certainly contributed to this fire. Research shows that warming

temperatures associated with human influences have already led to the melting and degradation of west Greenland's permafrost, soil and sediment that usually stays frozen year-round. Rain has been sparse this summer, and temperatures have been slightly warmer than average, drying out the soil and grass and setting the stage for the fire, McCarty adds.

It's unclear how the fire started. McCarty suspects it was ignited by people camping or driving ATVs in this area. But Sander Veraverbeke, an assistant professor at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam who specializes in forest fires and satellite data, thinks the initial spark probably came from lightning.

Veraverbeke and colleagues showed in a paper published in late June in Nature Climate Change that warming temperatures are leading to more lightning strikes in the boreal forests of Canada and Alaska.

Tundra and forests

Although this area is much farther north, and consists of tundra rather than forests, he suspects that as the climate warms, Greenland will also experience more lightning strikes.

Researchers haven't carefully tracked lightning strikes or wildfires in Greenland because neither occurrence



was common. That will now change. "Now, we're going to have to start monitoring Greenland for wildfires, and that's not something we'd ever really thought about," McCarty says.

The scientific record contains many studies involving wildfires and Greenland (some of them invoking the favorite "fire and ice" theme in the title — academics have to have fun too), but very few involve current conflagrations. Rather, they detail the deposition of char from forest fires far afield in the old layers of ice.

(Source: Newsweek)

Scientists create safer pig organs with goal of transplants for humans

Scientists at a Massachusetts company seeking to make pig organs safe enough to be transplanted into humans have used gene-editing technology to clone piglets that lack a potentially dangerous retrovirus, according to a study released on Thursday.

The breakthrough, according to authors of the study published in the journal Science, could help pave the way for transplantation of whole pig organs into humans, without fear of patients being infected with the pig retrovirus. But other hurdles remain.

Transplants from pigs could offer a new potentially life-saving alternative for patients diagnosed with organ failure and no other viable treatment options. A shortage of available human organs has led scientists to study the possibility of animal donors to close the gap.

Organ transplant

About 20 people die each day in the United States while awaiting an organ transplant, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing.

The latest experiment was conducted

by scientists at the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based company eGenesis. They used a technology known as CRISPR that works as a type of molecular scissors, trimming away unwanted parts of a genome.

The scientists created pig genes that lacked the problematic retrovirus, then used a cloning technique to produce pig embryos, according to a statement from eGenesis. The embryos were implanted into normal sows, and the mother pigs later gave birth to the cloned piglets.

The clones, which were born without the retrovirus, will be monitored for long-term effects from the procedure.

"This research represents an important advance in addressing safety concerns about cross-species viral transmission," Luhan Yang, co-founder and chief scientific officer at eGenesis, said in a statement.

Viable source

Pigs have long been seen as a viable source for organ transplants to humans because their organs are similar in size.



Scientists have specifically studied the potential for transplanting swine hearts, kidneys, livers and lungs.

Scientists in decades past experimented with transplanting chimpanzee organs into human patients but turned their focus to pig organs instead after finding them to be more suitable donor candi-

dates.

One key remaining obstacle is how to produce pig organs that, once transplanted, will not produce an immunological rejection in human patients -- an issue also under study by eGenesis scientists, the company said.

(Source: Reuters)

Moalem Insurance holds international event in Tehran

Moalem Insurance Company (MIC) held a huge international conference on Thursday and Friday with about 800 agencies from across the country and many other invitees.

In his opening speech, MIC CEO Mohammad Ebrahim Tahsiri said the company has named the current fiscal year one for marketing development and customer satisfaction as a show of care for customers.

During the two-day event, Paul Archer and Markus Kramer taught the audience successful marketing and branding techniques.

Paul Archer is a specialist in selling and helps clients to improve their sales, their sales coaching and improve customer engagement. He has worked with clients who want to boost production from their B2B sales teams, their face to face B2C teams, telephone based Inside Sales teams. He is a Master Practitioner in



NLP, a qualified sales coach, author and a member of the Professional Speaking Association. His style is energetic and inspiring and all of his workshops and events are packed full of practical sales ideas that can be used the very next day.

Kramer has more than two decades of expertise in helping Aston Martin (Global Chief Marketing Officer), Harley-Davidson (Marketing Director EMEA), Ferrari (Consulting) as well as companies such as Mazda and Honda to take their fascinating brands to more people in more places around the world.

MIC WAS established in 1994 with a prior registered name of "Export and Investment Insurance Company (EIIC)" with participation and partnership of insurance industry of Iran and banking system for the purpose of developing export activities and providing credit insurance coverage against available risks. After assignment of main part of the share of the "export and investment insurance company (EIIC)" and in the bases of shareholder's decision making, the name of company changed to Moalem insurance company (MIC) In July 2007.

Mega-tsunami could be triggered by an Alaska quake

Scientists onboard the R/V Marcus G. Langseth research vessel anticipated a routine cruise along the Alaska Peninsula in summer 2011.

Columbia University seismologist Anne Bécel and her colleagues had set out to map the area's tectonic plates. But what they found alarmed them. The team discovered undersea plate alignments resembling the faults that gave way in March of that year to the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan that killed more than 15,000 people, displaced some 228,000 more and caused about 127,000 buildings to collapse.

With two such potentially catastrophic crustal configurations now known to exist on the planet, the finding suggests more such alignments may disfigure Earth's surface, a possibility that necessitates more thorough mapping of the ocean floor and tectonic plates.

"We were not looking for any kind of tsunami structure," says Bécel, lead author of a paper describing the new finding, published in the August issues of Nature Geoscience. In 1964 a region of this same tectonic clash, called the Alaska - Aleutian Subduction Zone, produced the magnitude 9.2 "Good Friday" earthquake, the second-strongest quake ever recorded.

The Alaska-Aleutian Zone hugs the southwestern chain of Aleutian Islands off Alaska, which are result of the Pacific Plate slowly diving beneath the North American Plate. One spot where the two plates engage, called the Shumagin Seismic Gap, has never been known to initiate a major quake. Here, the descent of the Pacific Plate has pushed against and cracked the North American Plate in several places, creating fault lines of various lengths and depths. Previous researchers thought each fragment in the Shumagin Gap was slowly creeping past the others in a fashion that would cause only mild quakes.

(Source: Scientific American)

Why abseiling spiders don't spin out of control: new research

Seeing an abseiling spider descend gracefully using its dragline silk instead of spinning unpredictably and uncontrollably, led us to try and understand the science behind it.

Spiders use dragline silk for the outer rim and spokes of spider webs, as well as using it as a lifeline when dropping to the ground. This is the strongest of the silks produced by spiders, as it must support their entire weight. It is known to have extraordinary properties, and is stronger than steel by weight. Spiders manufacture it at room temperature from simple sustainable materials so that it has no detrimental environmental impact.

But spiders dangling from a dragline silk are also rotationally stable, which is very different to loads suspended from a single, manmade rope — whether a natural rope like hemp, or a steel cable.

Torsion, or the act of twisting, is known as the most sensitive way to study the mechanical properties of materials. Henry Cavendish used a torsion pendulum in the 1700s to detect the gravitational attraction between metal balls in the laboratory. His experiment was known as "weighing the Earth", because it measured Newton's universal gravitational constant "G". Charles-Augustin de Coulomb also used it to establish his law of electrostatic attraction.

(Source: The Conversation)

Scientists discover two 'potentially habitable' nearby planets

If you're a little bored of life on Earth, have no fear; scientists have discovered two potentially habitable planets orbiting a sun just 12 light-years away.

The team of astronomers which includes researchers from the UK's University of Hertfordshire and the University of California Santa Cruz, revealed that four Earth-size planets in total have been detected orbiting the sun-like star, known as the tau Ceti.

They dubbed two of the four planets "super-Earths," so-called because they have masses of around 1.7 Earth mass, larger than Earth but among the smallest planets ever detected around the nearest sun-like stars.

The "(habitable zone) is the 'Goldilocks' region around a star where the planet is not too hot or too cold and thus is able to sustain liquid water on its surface," Dr. Fabo Feng, the study's lead researcher, told CNN.

Feng added that the planets are likely made "made of rocks rather than ice" which would increase the chances of them supporting life.

The researchers detected the planets by monitoring the star for tiny variations in its movement that could have been caused by a planet's gravitational pull.

"We measured the variation of the motions of the star through spectroscopic observations," Feng said.

Spectroscopy is a technique that, according to NASA's website "measures light that is emitted, absorbed, or scattered by materials."

The variations caused by a star and those caused by a planet are very similar and the scientists had to develop a sophisticated technique to detect what Feng calls "weak planetary signals."

(Source: CNN)



Welfare organization empowers breadwinner women

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 180,000 breadwinner women across the country are currently supported by the State Welfare Organization, said Habibollah Masoudi-Farid, the deputy director of the organization.



The women and their children receive allowances, and benefit from health, insurance, and job creation services, as well as down payment for housing, IRNA quoted Masoudi-Farid as saying.

Currently, there are around 2.5 million breadwinner women in the country, he said, adding a number of 180,000 families, making up 500,000 people, are receiving financial aids from the organization.

About 71 percent of breadwinner women have taken the responsibility of their families due to loss of their husbands, he stated.

Some 11 percent of breadwinning women are divorced, 10 percent are disabled or handicapped or have drug-addicted husbands, and about 5 percent of them are unmarried girls who are taking caring of their parents or their whole families, the official explained.

Flood leaves 2 dead, 2 missing in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Severe flood in Golestan Province in northeastern part of Iran has so far claimed two lives and left 2 missing.

Heavy rain and storm happened on Thursday evening across Aliabad, Kalaleh, Gonbad-e Kavus and Azadshahr countries, Fars reported.

One individual died after falling from the roof of a house due to heavy wind in Gonbad-e Kavus, Iran's Emergency Medical Services official Hassan Nouri announced.

Two individuals onboard a car in Aliabad are still missing and one found dead, however the car has been found, he noted.

Search and rescue is still going on in the region, he concluded.

LEARN ENGLISH

Buying a Car

A: Hi there, can I help you folks?

B: I'm just **browsing**; seeing what's on the lot. My daughter wants a car for her birthday, you know how it is.

C: Dad! I'm sixteen already and I'm, like, the only one at school who doesn't have a car!

A: She is right, you know. Kids these days all have cars. Let me show you something we just got in: a 1996 **sedan**. Excellent **gas mileage**, it has **dual airbags** and anti-lock **brakes**; a perfect **vehicle** for a young driver.

C: Dad, I love it! It's awesome! Can we get this one please?

B: I see... What can you tell me about this one?

A: Oh, that's just an old World War Two tank that we use for TV commercials. Now about this sedan...

B: Whoa, whoa wait a minute. Tell me more about this tank.

A: Well, Sir, if you are looking for quality and safety then look no further! Three inches of **reinforced** steel protect your daughter from **short range** missile attacks.

B: Does the sedan protect her from missile attacks?

A: It does not.

B: Well, I don't know. Let me **sleep on it**.

A: Did I mention the tank is a tank?

B: I'll take it!

C: Dad!

Key vocabulary

browse: look around to see if anything is interesting

sedan: a car with four doors

gas mileage: the amount of gas used per mile

dual airbags: two airbags, one for the driver and one for the passenger

brake: a device that slows down or stops something

vehicle: something that carries people from one place to another

reinforce: strengthen, make something stronger

short range: (especially of a vehicle or missile) only able to be used or be effective over short distances

sleep on it: think about something further and make a decision later (informal)

Supplementary vocabulary

minivan: a vehicle that is larger than a car, has four doors and is shaped like a box

SUV: a large vehicle that is suitable to run on rough surfaces

sale: an event where goods or services are sold at a price lower than usual

promotion: something (usually advertising) that is done to increase sales

discount: the amount of reduction in price

bargain: something bought or sold at a price lower than its actual value (Source: irlanguage.com)

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

Najafi sole candidate for Tehran mayor

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Mohammad Ali Najafi remains the sole candidate who is widely expected to take up the post of Tehran mayor in the coming days or possibly weeks.

Out of Najafi's six rivals for the post two -Habibollah Bitaraf and Mohammad Shariatmadari- were named for cabinet ministers and the rest withdrew their candidacy over the last few days.

According to Morteza Alviri, the interim chairman of the new Tehran city council, Najafi is the final candidate for the post and he will be formally elected as the mayor at the first session of the council which is said to fall on August 23.

Najafi, 66, is a reformist figure who held office at the Education Ministry from 1988 to 1997. He then served as the head of the Budget and Planning Organization until 2000. The former board member of Sharif University's school of mathematics won a seat at Tehran city council in 2006.

In 2013, with Hassan Rouhani elected as the president he was named among the proposed cabinet members for the Education Ministry, however he didn't manage to secure the required votes for the post.

He also served as the director of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handi-



crafts Organization in 2013 but resigned in the same year and was appointed as vice president for economic affairs.

In 2014 he was appointed as the caretaker for the Ministry of Science and Research to replace the then Science

and Research Minister Reza Faraji-Dana.

In his proposed plan for Tehran titled "Tehran: City of Hope, Participation, and Prosperity" presented to the council on Thursday, Najafi has said that he has no links with any political group and that he would steer clear of politics during his term as mayor.

He further highlighted that he would make people with disabilities a priority, establish constructive relations with the administration and appoint directors with urban planning and management experiences.

In an interview with the national TV, he made a commitment to Tehraners to create better living conditions by the end of his four-year term at the municipality.

"I would make use of all the existing facilities to fulfill the citizens' demands which is to live in a reasonable degree of mental and physical comfort."

The pro-reform Hope list succeeded to win all the 21 council seats in Tehran on May 19 election, concurrent with the presidential election. The new Tehran city council, the fifth of its kind, has not formally convened yet and as per a statement issued by the Interior Ministry the inaugural session of the council will take place on August 23.

International Youth Day: "Youth Building Peace"

International Youth Day, August 12, 2017, is dedicated to celebrating young people's contributions to conflict prevention and transformation as well as inclusion, social justice, and sustainable peace.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development committed to fostering peaceful and inclusive societies and affirmed that "Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security".

Goal 16 aims to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. The World Program of Action for Youth, which provides a policy framework and practical guidelines to improve the situation of young people, also encourages "promoting the active involvement of youth in maintaining peace and security".

Background
In 1985, the UN celebrated the first International Year of Youth. On its 10th anniversary, the General Assembly adopted the World Program of Action for Youth, setting a policy framework and guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people.

15 Priority Areas adopted by the General Assembly:

- Education
- Employment
- Hunger and poverty
- Health
- Environment
- Drug abuse
- Juvenile delinquency
- Leisure-time activities
- Girls and young women
- Participation
- Globalization
- Information and communication technologies

- HIV/AIDS
- Youth and conflict
- Intergenerational relations

On 17 December 1999, in its resolution 54/120, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998) that 12 August be declared International Youth Day.

Since the adoption of Security Council Resolution S/RES/2250 (2015) in 2015, there is growing recognition that as agents of change, young people's inclusion in the peace and security agenda and in society more broadly, is key to building and sustaining peace. Another Security Council Resolution S/RES/2282 (2016) reaffirms the important role youth can play in deterring and resolving conflicts, and are key constituents in ensuring the success of both peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Today, the World Program of Action for Youth plays a prominent role in youth development. It focuses on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.

The United Nations Program on Youth serves as the Focal Point on Youth at the UN. It undertakes a range of activities to promote youth development including supporting intergovernmental policy-making, conducting analytical research and increasing the effectiveness of the UN's work in youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among UN entities through the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

(Source: un.org)

Muslim sues airline after being ordered off flight for 'casually mentioning 9/11'

A Muslim man is suing an airline over claims he was marched off a plane by police after "innocently" mentioning 9/11.

Mohammad Khan, from north London, alleged Virgin Atlantic staff "racially and religiously profiled" him over a "harmless" conversation with a flight stewardess and another passenger.

The 26-year-old said he was escorted off his flight from London Heathrow to Atlanta, Georgia, following a "massive overreaction" by cabin crew.

The Middlesex University graduate was travelling to the U.S. for an interview for a business internship in Medellin, Colombia.

He said another passenger, who he had not met before, had complained about the length of airport security queues as the plane taxied on the runway.

Mr. Khan told the London Evening Standard: "I totally innocently said 'there's been more security since 9/11', then asked the stewardess 'I bet your job has changed since 9/11', but she looked stunned."

The plane was turned around and taxied back the terminal where he was led off by police officers.

Mr. Khan said: "I was racially and religiously profiled. It was a complete overreaction to completely innocent and harmless comments. I know this would not have happened if I was a white man in his 60s who had done the same thing."

"It totally ruined my trip and I felt humiliated. I was made to feel like a criminal."

He said he was not formally interviewed by police, who accepted there



had been a "misunderstanding". But Virgin Atlantic would not allow him back in the flight, on January 8 last year.

Mr. Khan was denied a refund on his £560 ticket and was forced to spend £817 on flights with another airline.

He has since been battling for compensation and his solicitors recently submitted a final claim for £5,000 plus legal costs.

Mr. Khan said he would sue in the county court for breach of contract and racial discrimination if the airline did not meet the demand.

A Virgin Atlantic spokesman said Mr. Khan was removed from the flight after "multiple customers and crew reported hearing highly inappropriate comments concerning security".

He added: "This is not a decision we take lightly and although such security events are rare, we have a responsibility to report them to the relevant authorities to ensure the safety and security of our aircraft, customers and crew."

"Our team has been in regular contact with Mr. Khan and his lawyers, and we have offered to refund his flights."

(Source: Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Tehran subway greatly helps cut harmful emission: CEO

Tehran subway system had a significant part in reducing air pollution in the capital during the past years of its daily operation.

Subway system has helped cut some 1.4 million tons of harmful emission in Tehran over the past 11 years, Mohammad Ahmadi Bafandeh, CEO of Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operation Company has said.

Commenting on public transportation's direct impacts on minimizing air pollution Bafandeh further highlighted using the subway has resulted in 4.5 billion liters less petrol consumption over the same period.

مدیرعامل شرکت بهره‌برداری مترو تهران: مترو عامل کاهش گازهای آلاینده از هوای پایتخت

مترو تهران در طول سال‌های گذشته نقش مهمی در کاهش آلودگی هوای پایتخت ایفا کرده است.

مدیرعامل شرکت بهره‌برداری مترو تهران محمد احمدی بافنده گفت: استفاده از مترو به عنوان حمل و نقل عمومی طی ۱۱ سال اخیر باعث کاهش بیش از یک میلیون و ۴۰۰ هزار تن گازهای آلاینده هوا پایتخت شده است.

بافنده با اشاره به تأثیر مستقیم حمل و نقل عمومی در کاهش آلاینده‌های خطرناک افزود: استفاده از مترو باعث صرفه جویی بیش از ۴/۵ میلیارد لیتر بنزین و گازوییل نیز شده است.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Stitch in time saves nine

Explanation: if you fix a small problem right away, it will not become a bigger problem later

For example: Let's patch the roof before that hole gets bigger. A stitch in time saves nine.

PHRASAL VERB

Dish something up

Meaning: to put food for a meal into dishes, ready to be eaten

For example: Could you dish up the vegetables?

ENGLISH IDIOM

Bend the truth

Explanation: if you bend the truth, you say something that is not entirely true

For example: Ok, I bent the truth a bit. I told him it was my natural color, but I didn't say that my hair-dresser helped me to keep it natural!

U.S. company offers to fund renewed search for MH370

Relatives of passengers aboard missing flight MH370 have demanded Malaysia accept a United States exploration firm's offer to take up the hunt for the aircraft, which was suspended earlier this year.

No trace of the Malaysia Airlines plane, which disappeared in March 2014 with 239 people on board, was found during a lengthy deep-sea hunt in the southern Indian Ocean off western Australia, with the years-long search called off in January.

The U.S. company Ocean Infinity - a seabed exploration firm with a fleet of advanced underwater search vehicles - has said it will take on the financial risk of a renewed search for the missing Malaysian airliner.

Families of those on the plane when it went missing urged the Malaysian government on Friday to agree to a private-sector hunt for the flight's wreckage.

Malaysia, Australia, and China suspended a nearly three-year search in the southern Indian Ocean in January after scouring 120,000 square kilometers of remote seabed and failing to find any trace of the airliner.

Ocean Infinity said it remained hopeful that Malaysia would accept its offer to continue the search using a team of advanced, fast-moving deep-sea drones



fitted with sonar equipment.

"The terms of the offer are confidential, but I can ... confirm that Ocean Infinity have offered to take on the economic risk of a renewed search," the company said in an email, the AP news agency reported.

"We're in a constructive dialogue with the relevant authorities and are hopeful that the offer will be accepted," it added.

Voice370, a support group for families, said under the terms of the offer made in April Ocean Infinity "would like to be paid a reward if and only if it finds the main debris field."

"Why hasn't Malaysia accepted this win-win offer?" Voice370 asked in a statement.

Malaysia did not immediately respond on Friday to the families' question.

The group said the offer should be accepted "without further delay" and urged authorities to provide them with details.

"We are constantly in limbo. They [authorities] do not engage us. It is upsetting and frustrating," Grace Nathan, a Malaysian lawyer whose mother Anne Daisy was on the plane, told AFP news agency. "We are always kept in the dark."

An international board of experts has concluded, based on an analysis of Boeing 777 debris that drifted and washed up on western Indian Ocean beaches, the flight most likely crashed in a 25,000 square kilometer area of ocean on the northern boundary of the last search zone, far southwest of Australia.

But Malaysia, Australia and China agree the newly identified area is too big to justify resuming the publicly funded search, which has already cost \$160m.

Australia has coordinated the search on Malaysia's behalf because the plane is believed to have crashed in Australia's zone of search and rescue responsibility on March 8, 2014, after flying far off course on a journey from Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

Transport Minister Darren Chester declined to comment on the possibility of a private search.

(Source: agencies)

Kenya's election chief: 'Hacking attempt did not succeed'

Kenya's electoral commission chairman has admitted its database was a target of an unsuccessful hacking attempt, but it has failed to convince the opposition, which continues to dispute the results.

Wafula Chebukati's remarks came on Thursday following allegations by opposition leader Raila Odinga that hackers infiltrated the database and manipulated results in favor of President Uhuru Kenyatta after Tuesday's vote.

Chebukati said "hacking was attempted but did not succeed" and tallying of final results was continuing.

With results from 99 percent of polling stations counted, Kenyatta held a strong lead.

Britain and the United States joined foreign observer missions from the European Union, African Union, Commonwealth and the Carter Center in urging party leaders to be patient and refrain from inflaming tensions ahead of the release of final results, expected on Friday.

But the opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) doubled down on accusations the counting process was a "sham" after Odinga claimed on Wednesday that hackers broke into the electronic tallying system and manipulated results.

One of NASA's leaders Musalia Mudavadi provided documents purportedly obtained from the servers of the electoral commission (IEBC) via a "confidential source" showing that Odinga had 8.04 million votes,

leading Kenyatta on 7.75 million.

This was despite the fact that results streaming onto the IEBC website showed Kenyatta with 8.1 million votes to Odinga's 6.7 million.

"We demand that the IEBC chairperson announce the presidential election results forthwith and declare Raila Amolo Odinga... as the duly elected president," said Mudavadi.

Hundreds of Odinga supporters, mainly young men, poured onto the streets of the opposition stronghold of Kisumu in celebration. At least one truck of anti-riot police followed them, a Reuters witness said. There were pockets of similar celebrations in opposition strongholds in Nairobi as well.

IEBC chief Wafula Chebukati rejected this demand, saying the commission would only announce final results once all the forms from constituencies had arrived at the tallying center in Nairobi and been validated.

Earlier, a team headed by former United States Secretary of State John Kerry also called for calm and restraint on Thursday, as protests called by the opposition turned violent on Wednesday, claiming the lives of at least five people.

Kerry also told Al Jazeera that the allegations need to be examined but were "not a reason to stop the process or question the entire election."

Odinga's claims were enough to spark isolated pro-



tests in his strongholds in several Nairobi slums and the western city of Kisumu on Wednesday.

A relative peace returned to the streets on Thursday. There were violent protests in one Nairobi neighborhood, Kawangware slum, where police fired live rounds and tear gas as they clashed with opposition supporters.

And later on Thursday, Mohamud Saleh, north eastern regional coordinator, said police was trying to restore calm in the county of Garissa where a town market was burnt by arsonists amid an opposition protest.

(Source: agencies)

China pledges neutrality, unless U.S. strikes North Korea first

Trump escalates threats on N. Korea as tension rise

1 → "North Korea better get their act together, or they are going to be in trouble like few nations have ever been in trouble," Trump said, flanked by Vice President Mike Pence. Accusing his predecessors of insufficient action, Trump said it was time somebody stood up to the pariah nation.

Though tensions have been building for months amid new missile tests by the North, the pace has intensified since the United Nations Security Council on Saturday passed sweeping new sanctions Trump had requested. The sanctions prompted the new heated volley of rhetoric.

In the latest move by North Korea, its military announced a detailed plan to fire four Hwasong-12 missiles over Japan and into waters around the tiny U.S. territory of Guam, home to two U.S. bases and 160,000 people.

North Korea said its military would finalize the plan by mid-August, then wait for Kim's order. U.S. allies Japan and South Korea quickly vowed a strong reaction if the North were to follow through.

Trump echoed that threat on Thursday, insisting if North Korea took any steps to attack Guam, its leaders would have reason to be nervous.

"Things will happen to them like they never thought possible, OK?" Trump said. He did not specify what they might be.

Guam lies about 3,400 kilometers from the Korean Peninsula, and it's extremely unlikely Kim's government would risk annihilation with a pre-emptive attack on U.S. citizens.

It's also unclear how reliable North Korea's missiles would be against such a distant target, given that its military has struggled to target effectively in the past.

Trump said he would soon announce a request for a budget increase of "bil-

ions of dollars" for anti-missile systems.

But as it is, the U.S. has a robust military presence in the region. Any order by the president could be executed quickly.

Current and former U.S. officials said if war did come, the U.S. and its allies would likely hit hard and fast, using air strikes, drone operations and cyber-attacks aimed at military bases, air bases, missile sites, artillery, communications, command and control headquarters and intelligence gathering and surveillance capabilities.

Key threats would be North Korea's small but capable navy, including its submarines that can move quietly and attack. And Pyongyang also has significant cyber abilities, although not as sophisticated as America's.

The North has also been preparing for ground war for decades, and would be a formidable force on the border.

"Do I have military options? Of course I do. That's my responsibility," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Wednesday. But he said the Trump administration wants "to use diplomacy."

To that end, Trump said he "of course" would always consider negotiations with North Korea, but added that talks have failed for the last 25 years.

The U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, in Asia this week, said North Korea could signal it was ready for such talks by halting any missile tests for an extended period.

■ **China to remain 'neutral' if North Korea attacks U.S. first**

A Chinese state-run newspaper has suggested Beijing would "stay neutral" if North Korea strikes first in a conflict with the United States, despite a mutual defense pact between the Asian allies.

The nationalistic Global Times tabloid said on Friday in an editorial that Washington and Pyongyang were playing a "reckless game" that could lead to "miscalculations and a strategic war."

"China should also make clear that if North Korea launches missiles that threaten U.S. soil first and the U.S. retaliates, China will stay neutral," the editorial said.

However it added: "If the U.S. and South Korea carry out strikes and try to overthrow the North Korea regime and change the political pattern of the Korean peninsula, China will prevent them from doing so."

The commentary came after Washington warned North Korea this week it faced "fire and fury like the world has never seen" if it continued to threaten the U.S. with its missile and nuclear programs.

That prompted a defiant Pyongyang to threaten a missile attack on Guam, a tiny U.S. territory in the Pacific that is home to major U.S. air and naval facilities.

China - which has been accused by the U.S. of not doing enough to rein in its longtime ally - has maintained that political dialogue is the only solution.

As tension soars in the region, South Korea's media called on Friday for Seoul to build nuclear weapons of its own to defend itself.

South Korea, which fought a war alongside the U.S. with the North that ended in a stalemate in 1953, is highly technologically advanced and analysts estimate it could develop an atomic device within months of deciding to do so.

"Now is time to start reviewing nuclear armament," the Korea Herald said in an

editorial.

The South, which hosts 28,500 American troops, is banned from developing its own nuclear weapons under an atomic energy deal it signed in 1974 with the U.S., which instead offers Seoul a "nuclear umbrella" against potential attacks.

But with Pyongyang regularly threatening to turn Seoul into a "sea of flames" - and nagging questions over Washington's willingness to defend it if doing so put its own cities in danger of retaliatory attacks - the South's media are leading calls for a change of tack.

After Pyongyang conducted two successful tests of an intercontinental ballistic missile last month, putting much of the mainland U.S. within reach, the paper warned: "Trust in the nuclear umbrella the U.S. provides to the South can be shaken."

The U.S. stationed some of its atomic weapons in the South following the 1950-53 Korean War, but withdrew them in 1991 when two Koreas jointly declared they would make the peninsula nuclear-free.

But Pyongyang carried out its first nuclear test in 2006 and formally abandoned the deal in 2009.

A conflict between the North and the U.S. could have devastating consequences for Asia's fourth-largest economy, with Seoul within range of Pyongyang's vast conventional artillery forces.

"A catastrophe is looming," the South's top-selling Chosun daily said in an editorial this week. "All options, even those considered unthinkable so far, must be on the table."

North Korea has staged five atomic tests as it seeks to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the continental United States.

(Source: agencies)

Israeli settler runs over four Palestinian kids

An Israeli settler has deliberately smashed his car into a group of Palestinian children in the occupied territories, injuring four of them.

The incident took place on Thursday evening in Silwan town, south of the al-Aqsa Mosque in East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

According to reports, the children, including two brothers, were hospitalized. The settler fled the scene.

Hit-and-run incidents targeting Palestinians have been prevalent in different parts of the occupied West Bank, with most of them usually ignored by Israeli authorities. Some of such events have even resulted in fatalities.

On May 3, an Israeli settler deliberately ran over an eight-year-old Palestinian child, identified as Laith Yousif Shatat, as he was standing outside his school in the eastern part of Yatta city, located approximately eight kilometers south of al-Khalil (Hebron).

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

■ **Five Palestinians shot in Ramallah**

Meanwhile, undercover Israeli troops shot at least five Palestinians during clashes in the central West Bank town of Beit Rima.

Palestine's Health Ministry said the injured were taken to hospital after being targeted with live bullets in the lower parts of their bodies.

The incident took place in the village of Nabi Salih, northwest of the city of Ramallah, early on Sunday and Israeli police identified the victim as 34-year-old Amar Halil.

One of the protesters needed extra medical care at another hospital as his condition deteriorated.

Israeli forces also stormed a Palestinian home during the ongoing protests and used excessive amounts of tear gas and live bullets to disperse demonstrators.

■ **Israeli army reveals details of Gaza border wall**

Elsewhere, Israel has revealed the construction of a sensor-equipped underground wall alongside the 60km border with the Gaza Strip, which it described as a counter-measure to Hamas tunnels leading outside of its coastal territory.

Israeli media published new disclosures by the military on Thursday about the project, costing \$1.1bn and to be completed within two years under an accelerated schedule.

The underground wall, which will be built from concrete and be fitted with sensors, is expected to reach dozens of meters deep into the ground and to stand at six meters high from ground level.

Israel has described it as a territorial counterpart to its Iron Dome short-range rocket interceptor, capable of blunting Hamas's limited means of challenging its superior armed forces.

The Israeli Haaretz newspaper reported that in recent months, Israel had brought foreign laborers and contracted companies to flatten the area around the border.

Hamas accused Israel of belligerence.

The occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed new tensions ever since Israeli forces introduced restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East al-Quds (Jerusalem) in August 2015.

More than 300 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces in the ongoing tensions since the beginning of October 2015.

(Source: agencies)

Cambodia PM gives ultimatum to Laos over 'invasion'

Cambodia's prime minister on Friday issued a six-day ultimatum to Laos to pull back its troops who have allegedly trespassed into a border area or face a military response.



About 30 Laos soldiers crossed into Cambodian territory in April in northern Stung Treng province despite repeated requests by Phnom Penh for them to leave the area, according to Prime Minister Hun Sen.

He said he had been in touch with the government in Laos.

"I appeal to Laos Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith to withdraw troops from Cambodian territory without any conditions," Hun Sen said during a ceremony in the capital, Phnom Penh.

Military commanders have been ordered to deploy troops along with multiple rocket launchers to the border area, he said, giving Laos the "ultimatum" of pulling out by August 17.

"We are friends, but a friend cannot step on [our] head," he said, adding he was running out of patience with "the invasion" by Laos troops.

"We are not waging war, but we just want our land back." Calls and emails to the Laos Embassy in Phnom Penh were not returned.

Cambodia and Laos share a 540km land border but large tracts have not been officially demarcated, leading to territorial squabbles.

The Laos border is hard to police with increasing amounts of drugs - mainly methamphetamine and heroin - being moved from Laos into Cambodia.

(Source: agencies)

Neymar cleared to make PSG debut

PARIS (Reuters) — World-record signing Neymar looks set to make his debut for Paris St Germain on Sunday after the French football federation confirmed it had received the player's transfer certificate.

The Brazilian, whose 222 million euros (\$262 mln) signing from Barcelona doubled the world-record transfer fee, was prevented from playing in PSG's first Ligue 1 match of the season against Amiens last week because his registration had gone through too late.

PSG travel to En Avant Guingamp on Sunday.

"One thing is clear: we want him to make his debut (on Sunday)," PSG coach Unai Emery told reporters. "He's been good in training. He is ready. We want him to be in the squad and to



start. He's a player we need."

"I think he is ready to start the game."

The French football federation (FFF) confirmed that Neymar was now licensed to play in France.

"The FFF confirms it has received the transfer certificate of Neymar Jr, sent by the RFEF (Spanish football federation)," the FFF said on its Twitter feed on Friday.

PSG opened the season by beating Amiens 2-0 at the Parc des Princes last Saturday. They ended last season as runners-up to Monaco after winning four successive Ligue 1 titles.

German broadcasters clinch Olympics rights deal with Discovery

FRANKFURT (Reuters) — German state broadcasters ARD and ZDF have struck a deal with Discovery Communications for the right to show the Olympic Games from 2018 to 2024, after months of tough talks.



ARD did not say on Friday how much the broadcasters were paying to sub-license the rights, but said the deal "takes into account the financial abilities of the public broadcasters".

U.S.-based Discovery won the European broadcast rights for the Olympics from 2018 to 2024 for 1.3 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in 2015, beating national public broadcasters such as the BBC and France Television.

It had been expected to pass on some lucrative rights, but last November ARD and ZDF said they would not show the Olympic Games for the first time, having failed to clinch a deal.

Media reports have said the two sides disagreed on the price of the sub-licence, with ARD and ZDF wanting to pay no more than 100 million euros (\$118 million) for the broadcast rights in Germany and Discovery demanding at least 150 million euros.

They said last month that talks had resumed.

ARD said on Friday the broadcasters would not be able to show all events at the Pyeongchang Winter Games live due to the short lead time, saying they would offer only highlights of figure skating, short track speed skating and snowboarding.

Barcelona could still sign Ousmane Dembele

Ousmane Dembele's transfer to Barcelona could still happen, Borussia Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke has suggested.

Dortmund said in a statement to the stock market on Thursday that they had turned down a first bid from Barcelona for Dembele, 20, reported to be €100 million. Dortmund are reported to be asking for around €130-150m for the France international.

The Bundesliga club said the Barca offer "did not correspond to the player's extraordinary footballing value and status as well as to the current economic market situation of the European transfer market," and added that "a transfer of the player to FC Barcelona is at present not more than likely."

However, Dortmund are still willing to listen to Barcelona if they significantly increase their offer for Dembele, who is currently suspended for missing training without permission on Thursday and is reportedly set for a fine in excess of €100,000.

"If someone bids €500m, he'll get every player," Watzke told Funke Media. "It's never over before the end of the transfer period."

Barca, who have plenty to spend following the departure of Neymar to Paris Saint-Germain for €222m, have also been targeting Philippe Coutinho, though Liverpool's owners FSG said on Friday that they would not be considering any offers for the midfielder.

Dortmund, meanwhile, have postponed their friendly at FSV Zwickau on Sunday as they do not feel they can "name a strong team."

(Source: ESPN)

Russian dopers ordered to return Olympic medals, some say no

MOSCOW (Reuters) — The silver medals Russian sprinter Tatyana Firova won at the Beijing and London Olympics are stored in a safe in her apartment near Moscow in defiance of the International Olympic Committee, which has wanted them back for months.

Firova is one of six athletes who told Reuters they had yet to return Olympic medals and diplomas from the Beijing and London Games that were revoked over the last year after their samples, or those of relay teammates, tested positive for banned substances.

Two of these athletes said they had no intention of returning them, while three others said they would do so but were unclear how to proceed, had logistical constraints or were awaiting the outcome of an appeal. Another athlete was undecided.

"I don't want to return my medals because I think no one would have deserved them more," said Firova, who was stripped of her Beijing silver medal in the 4x400-metre relay after banned substances, including the anabolic steroid turinabol, were found in her samples.

Russia's athletics federation told Reuters that three stripped Olympic medals and one diploma had been returned, and that several appeals were still being heard. In February, it said 23 medals needed to be handed back.

The federation is already suspended over a 2015 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report that exposed systematic state-sponsored doping in Russian athletics. It remains unclear if not returning medals could lead to additional disciplinary measures or stop Russian athletes going to the Olympics.

It is also unclear whether the International Olympic Committee can compel athletes to return medals.

"They are not a police force," Olympic historian Bill Mallon said of the IOC.

"I think all they'll end up doing is reissuing the medals to the other people and saying, 'well, that person has a medal they don't deserve'."

The fact many medals have not been returned points to a broader issue with the culture of Russian sport.

While Russia has pledged to cooperate with global sports bodies over its anti-doping program, it has never acknowledged state support for doping. Many in Russian sport, from officials to athletes and coaches, do not believe there was wrongdoing, and say their country is being unfairly targeted.

In a report last week, an International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) task force monitoring reforms at the Russian federation said it had yet to demon-



strate "that it has established a strong anti-doping culture within its sport, or that it has created an open environment that encourages whistleblowing".

The IOC did not respond to Reuters questions about what it could do if athletes refuse to return medals, saying it had already received a number of medals and was in contact with the relevant Olympic committees about the issue.

The Russian Olympic Committee, responsible for returning the medals to the IOC, did not reply to a request for comment.

RUSSIAN OBJECTIONS

The IAAF said Russia's athletics federation had yet to meet several reinstatement criteria, while WADA said Russian national anti-doping agency RUSADA still had to meet 12 conditions to regain accreditation.

The Russian athletics federation has warned athletes that their failure to return stripped medals could hinder its efforts to be reinstated in the IAAF, which has cleared dozens of Russians to compete internationally as neutral athletes.

A federation official attributed the resistance to the fact that many of these athletes no longer compete, meaning they cannot be punished by measures such as exclusion from the national team.

Firova, who also has to surrender her 4x400-metre relay silver medal from London after a teammate's samples were retested, said she was sentimentally attached to her Olympic hardware.

"It's the objective proof of my labor," she said.

In Firova's case for the Beijing Games,

the IOC ruled that she "has the medal, the medalist pin and the diplomas obtained in the Women's 400m and the Women's 4x400m relay withdrawn, and is ordered to return these".

Firova said she has appealed the decision but the outcome of her case would have little impact on her actions.

"From the very start of all this, I made the decision not to give it back," she said of her Beijing silver, although she might be willing to return the medalist pin and diplomas.

NOTIFICATIONS

Since Beijing and London, some Olympic medals and diplomas could have been sold, misplaced or lost, complicating Russia's efforts to have them returned.

"I don't know whether I've lost it or not, but I haven't seen it in a while," former decathlete Alexander Pogorelov, who was stripped of his Olympic diploma for a fourth-place finish in Beijing after turinabol was found in his samples, told Reuters.

"But even if I did find it, I probably wouldn't give it back because I think I earned it honestly," said Pogorelov, who now heads the sports committee of the city of Bryansk.

Some athletes said the Russian federation had not asked for the return of medals and diplomas, which its president denied.

"They are lying about the fact they weren't notified," athletics federation president Dmitry Shlyakhtin told Reuters, insisting it had contacted them by phone, e-mail and mail.

Sports minister Pavel Kolobkov

downplayed the issue of medals not being promptly returned.

"Many athletes don't give back their medals, not only athletes in Russia," he told Reuters last month.

RECLAIMING PRIZES

Organizers of other sports events have also faced obstacles in reclaiming medals or prize money from Russian dopers.

The London Marathon has been trying to reclaim money from Russia's Liliya Shobukhova, who won the 2010 title and was runner-up in 2011 before being banned for doping.

Shobukhova was sued in Britain and the marathon's organizers are now waiting for a hearing in Russia to have the judgement applied there.

"We will spend whatever money it takes to pursue her and get the money back, even if it makes no commercial sense," the race's chief executive Nick Bittel told Reuters this week.

Shobukhova declined to comment.

Veteran U.S. Olympic high jumper Chaunte Lowe is in line to receive bronze from Beijing, her first Olympic medal, after Russia's Anna Chicherova was stripped of it and the fourth and fifth place finishers were disqualified for doping.

But Chicherova has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, saying she would only return her medal if her "guilt will be proven irrevocably".

"Obviously it would have been a great feeling to be able to go to the Olympics and experience having a ceremony," Lowe told Reuters. "A medal doesn't replace a ceremony."

Taylor still not happy after winning another world title

LONDON (Reuters) — Double Olympic champion Christian Taylor continued his dominance of the triple jump when he won his third world title on Thursday, once again beating fellow American Will Claye into second place.

Taylor leapt 17.68 meters with his third attempt to win by five centimeters, clinching the title when Claye was given a red flag on his last attempt. Portugal's Nelson Evora, Olympic champion in 2008, took bronze with 17.19.

The 27-year-old Taylor became the first triple jumper to win three world crowns, having also claimed victory in Daegu in 2011 and Beijing two years ago. He also took gold at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics with Claye finishing second on both occasions.

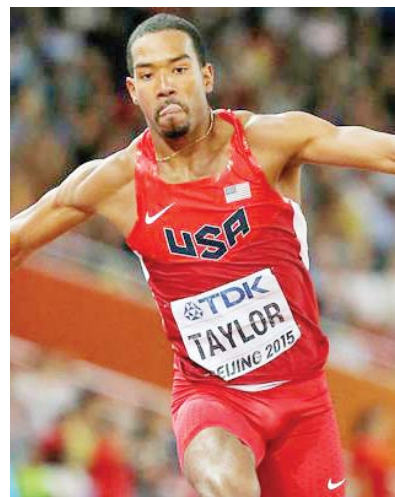
But he had made it clear beforehand that his ambition was to break Jonathan Edwards's long-standing record of 18.29 meters, set in 1995.

"I have this watch from my sponsor with 18.30 on it," Taylor said. "I will try to fight, I will get this number. The record is still on. I am still motivated to break that record."

"My motivation is to be the best athlete. This was not the night, I am a little disappointed. But the season is not yet over."

Edwards said beforehand that he thought his world mark could be under threat. In the event, the contest turned into something of an anti-climax with both producing their best jumps in the third round.

Claye led after the first round with 17.54 before Taylor took the initiative in



the second with a jump of 17.57.

Claye briefly regained the lead with 17.63 in the next round but Taylor immediately took it back with the decisive jump.

"Will makes it tough every time," he said. "If you do not have a rivalry - like I have with Will Claye - then the sport is boring."

"One month ago we did a competition in the mountains, we are trying everything to do this number, even in the mountains."

Claye felt he should have performed better on the night.

"You can never complain about the silver medal," he said. "But I felt like I should have executed better today."

"With Christian, we both were in a good shape, he is not unbeatable. He just executed better and I was missing five centimeters."

Carlo Ancelotti relaxed over Bayern Munich legends' criticism

Carlo Ancelotti has said he doesn't feel under any added pressure after former Bayern players Dietmar Hamann and Steffen Effenberg criticised his management.

Dietmar Hamann told Sky Deutschland Ancelotti is "under pressure" for failing to develop young players "in the way the club expected," adding there's a "good chance" Bayern would fail to win the Bundesliga this season.

"Last year he had three of the best young players in Europe with Kingsley Coman, Joshua Kimmich and Renato Sanches in his squad," Hamann said, but added none of them had developed sufficiently under Ancelotti.

Former Bayern captain Steffen Effenberg said this could prove to be Ancelotti's final season at the club, and it would not surprise him if Bayern failed to win the Champions League over the next 10 years.

Responding to the remarks, Ancelotti said: "There are a lot of critics but I don't feel the pressure. I like to be here, I like my club, my players, and my supporters. I cannot say Effenberg or Hamann are wrong -- as everyone can have their opinion in football."

"We have to respect these opinions but I don't feel under pressure from these critics. These have to be balanced with the opinions of the people that work with you and the supporters."

Ancelotti confirmed that Arjen Robben and David Alaba will return for Saturday's DFB Pokal opening round match in Chemnitz.

Robben, 33, missed the Bayern's 12-



day tour of China and Singapore, opting to remain in Munich to continue his recovery from a calf injury he picked up playing tennis while on holiday.

The Netherlands captain also missed the Audi Cup at the start of the month and Bayern's German Super Cup penalty shootout win over Borussia Dortmund last weekend, while Alaba, 25, limped off late on in the 3-0 Audi Cup defeat to Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool with a foot injury, but like Robben, has returned to training in midweek.

Following five defeats in six pre-season games, Bayern won their first trophy of the season with a 7-6 penalty shootout win over Borussia Dortmund in the German Super Cup last weekend.

Meanwhile, FIFA referee Bibiana Steinhaus will officiate in her first Bayern game.

(Source: Soccernet)

Team Melli remain as Asia's best in FIFA Ranking

S P O R T S The Islamic Republic of Iran dropped one place to 24th but remain Asia's top ranked team, in the latest FIFA World Ranking which was released on Thursday.

Japan moved up two places to 44th to be Asia's second best ranked team ahead by Australia, who at 45th, maintained the position they were at in the July rankings.

Korea Republic improved to 49th, up two places and are the continent's fourth best ranked team.

Saudi Arabia complete Asia's top five, moving up two places to 59th in the FIFA Ranking.

Asia's teams will be in action in the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 Qualifiers and AFC 2019 Asian Cup Qualifiers later in August and early September.

Iran have already confirmed their place as the first Asian team to earn a place in Russia next year.

Brazil have returned to the top of the FIFA World Ranking after a one-month hiatus, replacing reigning FIFA World Cup champions Germany (2nd, down 1), who slipped back into second spot.

Argentina remain in third but the heavyweight trio are accompanied in the top five by two sides reaching unusually heady heights. Switzerland (4th, up 1) have reached their highest position since the very first month of the World Ranking (they were third in August 1993), while Poland (5th, up 1) are at an all-time high. Neither have dropped in the standings for 11 months.

Portugal (6th, down 2) make way for the pair, while Belgium (9th, up 1) are the only other climber within the top ten.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be released on September 14.



Shojaei, Haji Safi barred from Iran national team for playing against Israelis



S P O R T S Iran national football team captain Masoud Shojaei and midfielder Ehsan Haji Safi have been barred from the team duty for life after they faced an Israeli club in the Europa League.

Both Shojaei and Hajisafi had refused to play in the away leg in Israel, despite facing "pressure" and "financial fines" from their club but they played at the home leg on August 4, where Panionios lost the game 0-1 and the tie 0-2 on aggregate.

Iran's football federation "strongly condemned" the players last week, saying it is reviewing the case and would make a final decision after speaking

with both players.

Iran's deputy sports minister Mohammad Reza Davarzani as telling state television: "It is certain that Masoud Shojaei and Ehsan Haji Safi will never be invited to the national football team because they violated the red line."

Haji Safi has made 84 caps and score six goals for Team Melli, while Shojaei has 71 caps and eight goals.

Iran already qualified for the 2018 World Cup, becoming the first Asian team to do so, in June. Shojaei played 70 minutes in the clinching win over Uzbekistan, while Haji Safi was on the bench.

Iran to play friendly with Russia in October



S P O R T S Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has reached an agreement with the Russian Football Union (RFU) to hold a friendly football match on October 10, a source close to the situation told TASS on Friday.

Iran football team, which hold 24th place in the most recently published FIFA World Rankings list, have already passed the qualifying round for the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

"The Russian Football Union and the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran have reached an agreement on the friendly football match," the source said in an interview with TASS.

"Our federation assumes that the match will be held on October 10 in Russia and everything has been agreed upon," the source said. "We are now waiting for the confirmation from the Russian side regarding the venue for the upcoming match."

The news about the talks on holding a friendly football match between the Russian and Iranian teams was first voiced in July by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko, who also holds the post of the RFU president.

Russia, ranked 62nd in FIFA World Rankings, played a friendly match against Iran in Abu Dhabi, the UAE in February 2011, losing the game 0-1.

Iran down S. Korea at FIVB Volleyball World Championship Asian Qualifier



S P O R T S Iran defeated South Korea in straight sets (25-10, 27-25, 25-18) in Pool A of the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship Asian Qualifier at the 6,000-seater Rezazadeh Gymnasium on Friday.

The five-day tournament, which is being held from August 10 to 14, served as the Asian qualification round, where only top two out of five participating teams will make the cut for the next year's FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship in Bulgaria & Italy between Sep-

tember 10 and 30.

Iran will face powerhouse China on Saturday.

The FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship qualification has brought five teams, namely Iran, South Korea, China, Qatar and Kazakhstan together.

The top two teams in each pool will qualify for the 2018 World Championship.

Japan and Australia have already booked their place in the championship as the Pool B top two finishers.

Mexico City 2017: Siamand Rahman knows no limits

Being the world's strongest Paralympian and having won multiple titles on the powerlifting international stage does not help Siamand Rahman feel satisfied. On the contrary, the Iranian seeks to make history again at the Mexico City 2017 World Championships.

"My main goal is to win the gold medal and relying on the Almighty God once again to break the world record and to hoist the flag of my dear country," he said.

In Mexico City, Rahman will compete in the men's over 107kg, facing the likes of Egypt's Amr Mosaad and Jordan's Jamil Elshebli.

If he is in top form, there is nothing his opponents can do to beat him. Last year, Rahman cleared the bar at unprecedented 310kg at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, winning his second successive Paralympic gold.

A testament to his dominance was the fact that Mosaad won the silver medal with a lift of only 235kg.

Rahman believed he was capable of lifting over 300kg, but he thought of it as an eventuality, not as



a possibility.

"I had a good feeling. The fact is that everyone was waiting for my 300kg record and I had undergone very

hard training to be able to keep my promise," he said.

"I was very delighted and happy that I could have the flag of my country hoisted at such important competition and to make the people of my country happy. It had great meaning to prove that the Paralympic athletes of our country can also be brilliant and proud of their own success."

Rahman has become one of the most recognised faces in Paralympic sports and credits his family and coaches for helping him along the way.

"The people around encouraged me, especially my father and mother. They had the greatest role for encouraging me to be active in powerlifting," he said.

"The kindness and respect from the people of my country made me continue, despite the barriers on my way, and try to achieve my goals all these years."

The Mexico City 2017 World Para Powerlifting Championships will take place between 30 September-6 October.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Iran rout Maldives at Asian Women's Volleyball Championship

Though practically eliminated from the quarter-finals, Iran still finished the group stage round on a winning note after ripping Maldives 25-4, 25-13, 25-14 at the SMM 19th Asian Senior Women's Volleyball Championship on Friday.

Failing to score an upset against Chinese Taipei and Thailand for a spot in the Top 8, Iran vent their ire on the lowly Maldives as all of their spikers chipped in points in the one-sided affair marred by a 6.1 magnitude earthquake at the latter part of the game.

"We had two difficult matches against Chinese Taipei and Thailand and we had a normal match against Maldives," said Iran head coach Mirmostafa Shojaei.

Hard-hitting spiker Mina Roosta led the balanced scoring with 9 points while Mahdieh Khajehkolaei, Mahsa Saberi and Neda Chamlanian had 8 apiece.

The Iranians were so dominant for the oppositions that they almost blank Maldives in the first set, where they only gave away 4 points – all from their errors.

Maldives would then try to at least give themselves some morale boost from the humiliating opening frame in the ensuing sets, managing to score 13 of their 31-point total.

Both Iran and Maldives will figure in classification matches as the tournament continues on Sunday.

"We are readying ourselves for future matches," said Shojaei. (Source: asianvolleyball)



Iran beaten by Netherlands at World Junior Water Polo Championships

Iran were defeated against Netherlands at the FINA World Men's Junior Water Polo Championships on Friday.

In the classification 13-16 semifinals, Netherlands downed Iran 14-5 with Sam van der Burg leading the way with five goals.

Iran will face the loser of Japan and Egypt in the competition's Day 8 for the 15th place.

Iran have lost to Russia, Greece, USA and Netherlands and defeated Puerto Rico and South Africa so far.

The 19th edition of the FINA World Men's Junior Water Polo Championships is taking place in Belgrade, Serbia, from August 5-20, 2017.

The competition gathers 20 teams from the five continents, an increase of two teams since the previous edition two years ago in Almaty (KAZ), where 18 teams battled it out for the crown. (Source: Tasnim)

Iran claims six medals at 2017 IFMA Youth Worlds

Iranian Muaythai boxers have put on satisfactory performances at the 2017 edition of International Federation of Muaythai Amateur (IFMA) Youth World Championship in Thailand, and managed to take home six medals.

On Thursday and the final day of the competitions at the National Stadium of Thailand in the Pathum Wan district of Bangkok, Sajjad Sattari, Mohammad Reza Chabok and Saeed Ekwampour overpowered their opponents and clinched three gold medals.

Earlier in the tournament, Amir Hossein Zolfi, Hossein Abdi and Hassan Mahmoudzadeh had received three bronze medals.

Muaythai is a combat sport of Thailand, which uses stand-up striking along with various clinching techniques.

It includes combat on shins and is known as "the art of eight limbs."

Muaythai is characterized by the combined use of fists, elbows, knees, shins, being associated with a good physical preparation that makes a full-contact fighter very efficient. (Source: Press TV)

Olympic champion Perkovic dominates discus qualifying

LONDON (Reuters) — Double Olympic champion Sandra Perkovic looks set to land a second world title to go with her global collection as she dominated qualifying in the discus on Friday.

After an initial no-throw, the Croatian launched a huge second round throw of 69.67 metres, an effort that only she has bettered this year, to lead the qualifiers into Sunday's final.

Back in the stadium where she won Olympic gold in 2012, Perkovic's effort was more than four metres longer than the next best, the 65.58m recorded by Cuban champion Yaime Perez.

"I do not like it when I start with a no-throw, it makes me feel very nervous as it happened to me in Rio," said Perkovic, who last month launched a 71.41m throw, the best by any athlete for 25 years.

"So I was very focussed in the second round and made it safe to the final."

An even more relieved thrower was Cuba's other major medal hope, reigning world champion Denia Caballero, who was on the verge of elimination before surpassing the automatic qualifying mark of 62.50m with her final attempt of 63.79.

"I was very tense because of a poor throw and then a no-throw so it's good to be in the final," said Caballero. "I feel relieved now and in the final, you can expect a surprise from me."

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Actor Jamshid Mashayekhi calls on artists to condemn massacre of Afghan villagers

A R T TEHRAN — Veteran Iranian actor Jamshid Mashayekhi has called on artists to condemn the ISIS-Taliban massacre of the Afghan villagers in the northern province of Sare-Pul last Sunday.



Actor Jamshid Mashayekhi (Mehr/Masud Saki)

He made the request on Thursday during a call to Abbas Azimi, the director of the Institute for the Veteran Artists, Azimi said in a press release.

According to media, over 60 people, including women, children and elderly men, most of them members of the largely Shia Hazara community, were killed overnight on Sunday in a joint ISIS-Taliban attack on Mirza Olang village in the Afghan province.

Artists mix media to explore pains of war in Iraq

A R T TEHRAN — A group of Iranian artists have mixed portraits of a number of Iraqi people in the warzones with other media to show the pain and suffering caused by war.

The portraits have been taken by photographer Farshid Zolfagharifard nine months ago.

"Pairs of sad eyes were common to all the portraits when I looked at the collection," he told the Persian service of ISNA on Thursday.

Thus, Zolfagharifard decided to remove the mouths from the portraits in order to make the visitors turn their

attentions to the eyes.

He selected 28 photos and asked 28 artists to create replacements for the mouths in the photo.

The collection titled "Smile Iraq!" was put on display in an exhibition at Barsam Gallery in Tehran on today.

"Each pair of the eyes have stories as long as a 20-volume collection; the true stories that all are about war, death, and misery," Zolfagharifard said.

Among the artists which helped Zolfagharifard build up the collection are Siavash Ebrahimi, Abolfazl Baqeri, Sadra Baluti, Mahsa Hayatipur and



A work from photographer Farshid Zolfagharifard's collection on display at Barsam Gallery in Tehran

Hossein Sepehri.

The exhibition will run until August

17 at the gallery located on 22 Parastu St. off Vali-e Asr Ave. near Fatemi St.

"Kupal" to compete in Hungarian film festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Kazem Mollai's drama "Kupal" will compete in the Jameson CineFest International Film Festival in Miskolc, Hungary.

Starring Levon Haftvan, the film will be screened in the official competition of the event that is scheduled to be held from September 8 to 17, the organizers announced.

"Kupal" tells the story of a hunter and a taxidermist, called "Dr. Ahmad Kupal". On the last day of the year,

moments before the turn of the year, he faces an unexpected challenge.

In addition, "From Hasaki with Love", a short film by Iranian director Mohammad Farahani, will be screened in the event.

The film is about a girl whose family members have been murdered. In order to show her protest to the ongoing massacre, she decided to burn herself in front of a webcam.



Levon Haftvan in "Kupal"

Bruce Springsteen Broadway-bound for solo 'words and music' show

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Bruce Springsteen is headed to Broadway for an eight-week solo theater run that he says will feature "just me, the guitar, the piano and the words and music."

"Springsteen on Broadway" will start Oct. 3 in a 960-seat theater, in stark contrast to the vast stadiums the singer-songwriter plays on his world tours, promoters said on Wednesday.

Springsteen, 67, is expected to perform songs from across his 40-year career, interspersed with readings from his 2016 memoir "Born to Run."

"I wanted to do some shows that were as personal and as intimate as possible," Springsteen said in a statement. "Some of the show is spoken, some of it is sung. It loosely follows the arc of my life and my work."

New Jersey-born Springsteen and his E Street band have become one of the most iconic U.S. rock bands of the past 40 years, releasing music like "Thunder Road" and "Glory Days" that capture the dreams and



Bruce Springsteen performs during The River Tour at the LA Memorial Sports Arena in Los Angeles, California, U.S. on March 17, 2016. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni/File Photo)

disappointments of ordinary working Americans.

Springsteen's 2016-17 world tour with the E Street band was one of the top 10 music tours of the last five years, grossing more than \$306 million, according to touring publication Pollstar.

Tickets for the Broadway show, which runs until Nov. 26, go on sale to pre-registered fans on Aug. 30.

Oscar-winning Coen brothers to bring Western anthology series to Netflix

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Oscar-winning filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen are transitioning to the small screen with a new Western anthology for Netflix Inc, the online streaming company said on Wednesday, the latest talent to join the platform's growing roster.

The Coen brothers, known for witty crime thrillers such as "Fargo" and "No Country for Old Men," will write and direct "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs," a six-part anthology series set in the American frontier and starring Tim Blake Nelson as Buster, Netflix said in a statement.

The series will debut in 2018, and comes after the success of cable network FX's anthology series "Fargo," an expansion of the Coen brothers' 1996 film of the same name. The Coens are executive producers on the "Fargo" series but did not write or direct any episodes.

The news follows on the heels of Netflix's announcement this week that David Letterman was returning to television with a six-part interview series for the streaming platform due next year, and the acquisition of comics publisher Millarworld.



Directors Joel Coen (L) and Ethan Coen pose for a photo in Los Angeles, California, November 15, 2013.

(Reuters/David McNew/File Photo)

It also comes after Disney, the world's biggest entertainment company, said this week that it would stop providing new movies to Netflix starting in 2019 in order to launch its own streaming service and capture digital viewers who are dumping traditional television.

Netflix, along with rivals such as Amazon.com Inc and Time Warner Inc's HBO, is spending billions of dollars to buy and produce its own content and stream it straight to consumers.

Seeking bigfoot: TV naturalist Attenborough gets comic homage

EDINBURGH (Reuters) — Did you hear the one about the British naturalist, the marmot, the grizzly bear and the South African poacher?

A one-man show at the Edinburgh Fringe, part of the world's biggest arts festival, pokes family-friendly fun at a national institution, 91-year-old TV zoologist David Attenborough, who is famous for series such as The Blue Planet and Life on Earth.

Comedian Tom Neenan says the award-winning broadcaster, who since the 1950s has shared his love of nature with millions of viewers in Britain and around the world, is a perfect antidote to the cast of "villains" dominating public life.

In his show, Neenan, 31, plays Attenborough as an earnest young man in a safari jacket, seeking his big career break via a quest for a mythical creature, the sasquatch, or bigfoot.

Neenan, who has worked mostly for the BBC as a comedy writer, was inspired in a roundabout way by the political maelstrom unleashed by Britain's vote to leave the European Union and Donald Trump's election to the U.S. presidency.

"A lot of people around me were mixed in with the



Naturalist David Attenborough arrives for a memorial service for his brother Richard Attenborough at Westminster Abbey in London March 17, 2015.

(Reuters/Suzanne Plunkett/File Photo)

time," he told Reuters. "I was trying not to wallow in all the negativity that was around by beaming in on what was the most joyous thing I could think of. And it was him as a young

man becoming the Attenborough we know."

On his travels, the young Attenborough of the show meets a host of comic characters and ribs a couple of British institutions such as the BBC itself, with a marmot and a dose of scatological humor thrown in for good measure.

Attenborough's long list of achievements includes the commissioning of the ground-breaking program "Monty Python's Flying Circus" in the 1960s, so Neenan felt a humorous homage was entirely appropriate.

"(Attenborough) has had so many jobs and done so many things that doing a slightly absurdist show about him doesn't feel out of place," Neenan said, who wears heavy-rimmed spectacles and adopts Attenborough's distinctively earnest style.

The real Attenborough, due to come to Edinburgh for a TV festival at the end of the month, is invited to a performance. But Neenan says he will be nervous if the great man turns up.

"One of the reasons not to invite him is that the venue gets so hot ... if he can come, he'd be completely within his rights to fall asleep -- but I'd be devastated."

Outrage against Indian TV soap for glorifying child marriage

MUMBAI (Reuters) — A television soap opera that shows a 10-year-old boy married to a 19-year-old woman has outraged Indian viewers who want to ban the "bizarre show" for glorifying child marriage.

The show "Pehredar Piya Ki" ("Husband's Guard") was launched last month on Sony Entertainment Television - a popular Hindi general entertainment channel in India - and is aired every weekday night in the prime 8:30 p.m. slot.

By Thursday, a Change.org petition urging information and broadcasting minister Smriti Irani to ban the show had garnered nearly

50,000 signatures, just 48 hours after its launch.

The petitioner Mansi Jain questioned the influence the soap would have on viewers and said it showed the child perform marriage rituals such as putting vermilion on the older actor playing his wife.

"This soap is encouraging, glorifying and promoting child marriages and will negatively affect the entire society," Asha Bajpai, professor of law at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"And what about the 10-year-old boy playing the husband's role? What kind of values are we inculcating in him at this young, impres-

sionable age?"

The legal age for marriage in India is 18 for women and 21 for men. But child marriage, though illegal, remains widespread in parts of the country.

Along with Niger, Guinea, South Sudan, Chad and Burkina Faso, India has one of the world's highest rates of child marriage, despite moves to toughen penalties against the crime.

The Child Marriage Prohibition Act imposes a \$1,500 fine and two years in prison for parents caught marrying off their underage children.

India has been cracking down on child marriages and campaigners said such shows could dent progress.

The show's actors have defended the story on social media, saying the soap is purely entertainment and does not promote child marriage.

Sony Entertainment Television officials remained unavailable for comment on the story. On its website, however, Sony boasts a record of riveting drama.

"With our prudent story telling, we continue to rule the roost with stories that are relevant, engaging and entertaining."

NEWS IN BRIEF

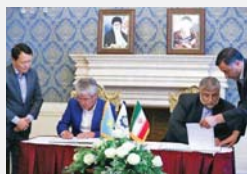


Italian saxophonist Mario Ciaccio to hold master class in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — Italian saxophonist Mario Ciaccio is scheduled to hold a master class in Tehran.

The weeklong master class is scheduled to open at the Rishah Dar Khak Music Academy on August 21, the academy announced in a press release on Friday.

Collaborating with several Italian and French orchestras and musical institutions, Ciaccio has won twelve chamber music awards at Italian and international events.



Iran, Kazakhstan sign cultural MOU

A R T TEHRAN — A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been signed between Iran and Kazakhstan to expand cultural relations.

The MOU was inked by the director of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) Abuzar Ebrahimi-Torkaman and Kazakhstan's Minister of Culture and Sports Arystanbek Mukhamediuly on Thursday, the ICRO announced.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Multimedia

Atashzad Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures and paintings by Roya and Morteza Dehqan.

The exhibit titled "Common Experience" runs until August 20 at the gallery located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

An exhibition of Sculptures and paintings by Jafar Najibi, Robab Zali and Negar Najibi is currently underway at Laleh Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until August 22 at the gallery located on Fatemi St., near Laleh Park.

Illustration

An exhibition of illustrations by Aida Naji, Mobina Karimzadeh, Sara Sarabi, Mahta Barati, Elalheh Dowlati, Hanieh Karimi and a number of other artists is underway at Shalman Gallery.

The exhibit named "One Thousand and One Nights" will run until August 17 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

Photo

Photos by Milad Karamuz are on display in an exhibition at Mehrva Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Hall of Mirrors" will be underway until August 21 at the gallery located at 38 South Aban St. off Karim Khan Ave.

